

The Influence of Gender Role Stereotype on Negotiation Performance

Wei Lu^{1,*}

¹ *Sichuan University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China*

* *Corresponding author. Email: 423758120@qq.com*

ABSTRACT

There has existed a rooted stereotype that female negotiators are less competitive in distributive negotiation. The long lasting stereotypes on gender differences are likely to influence the behaviour of negotiators in several ways, and both the existence and the awareness of the existence of the gender role may unconsciously guide the way negotiators behave. Although impossible to avoid being influenced by the stereotypes, several possible methods, including the use of moderation, playing to the strength and explicitly addressing the stereotypes, could be applied to reduce the impacts.

Keywords: *Gender role stereotype, Negotiation performance, Influence.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Negotiation has increasingly become an indispensable part of our life. Behavior shown by negotiators is considered influential to the potential negotiation outcomes.¹[1] As far as the negotiators themselves are concerned, gender has long been thought to be the most fundamental personal characteristic which should be considered when comparing the performance of different negotiators.² There has existed a rooted stereotype that men are likely to be more independent, rational, and assertive whereas women tend to be more emotionally attached, with concern for others and be passive in negotiation.³ [2] Distributive negotiation is typically a situation where one party's gain is the other party's loss,⁴ [3] and therefore is a situation where competitive negotiation behaviour is considered more likely to gain. As a result of the

gender stereotype, female negotiators are thought to be less competitive in distributive negotiation.

This essay will firstly examine the existing pervasive cultural stereotypes and status characteristics of gender role, and assess how these stereotypes and the gender role influence the way negotiators behave. Finally some suggestions will be provided to suppress the effect of gender-based stereotypes. This essay will argue that the long lasting stereotypes on gender differences are likely to influence the behaviour of negotiators in several ways, and both the existence and the awareness of the existence of the gender role may unconsciously guide the way negotiators behave.⁵ Although impossible to avoid being influenced by the stereotypes, several possible methods, including the use of moderation, playing to the strength and explicitly addressing the stereotypes, could be applied to reduce the impacts.

2. THE PERVASIVE GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE CURRENT SITUATION

Gender is one of the most essential and stable attributes of an individual,⁶[4] and therefore people

1. M. Teresa Canet-Giner and M. Carmen Saorín-Iborra, 'The Influence of Gender Role on Negotiation Development and Outcome: A proposal for Strategic Alliance Negotiation' (2007) 26(3) EOI 209

2. *ibid* 211

3. Laura J. Kray and Leigh Thompson, 'Gender Stereotypes and Negotiation Performance: An Examination of Theory and Research' (2004) 26 ROB 103, 106

4. Linda L. Putnam and Deborah M. Kolb, 'Rethinking Negotiation: Feminist Views of Communication and Exchange' Center for Gender in Organizations Working Paper 1/2000, 7 <www.simmons.edu/som/cgo> accessed 18 March 2015

5. Kray et al. (n3) 105

6. Deborah M. Kolb, 'Too Bad for the Women or Does It Have to Be? Gender and Negotiation Research Over the Past Twenty Five Years' (2009) 25(4) NJ 515, 518

want to have a better understanding of how the gender could influence human behaviour. Activity is seen as gendered when "its attributes are more commonly associated with one gender than the other; thus making dimensions linked to the other gender less valued".⁷ Negotiation is a gendered activity where masculine stereotypes are usually associated.⁸ [5] For example, gender stereotypes have rooted in our minds that we tend to hold the belief that men are effective negotiators who are strong, dominant, assertive and rational while women are often related to words such as weak, submissive, accommodating and emotional.⁹ A female is considered less likely to initiate a negotiation, less confident in negotiations, and more negatively disposed toward negotiation and more likely to set a lower goal compared with male negotiators.¹⁰ [6]

As a result of the gender stereotypes existing in society, discrimination persists in different situations, while it is not necessarily intentional or overt.¹¹ [7] It has been globally demonstrated that gender-based inequalities are pervasive in many areas, for instance, personal earnings, social status, and even political participation.¹² Although women in recent decades take up to about 50 percent of the labour force and even to a higher degree in numbers than men, they are still not given parity in senior positions in their job positions and career opportunities.¹³ [8] Studies have showed that between 2004 and 2007, women founded only 3% of technology firms and just 1% of high-tech firms. Moreover, venture capital investments are more reluctant to invest in firms which are women-owned.¹⁴ [9] As a result of different expectations attached to female negotiators, there are fewer

chances for women to get involved in quality negotiation than their male counterparts.¹⁵ [10]

3. THW INFLUENCE OF GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPES ON BEHAVIORS

Gender roles are defined as "expectations about what is appropriate behavior for each sex",¹⁶ or "the attitudes, behaviors, rights, and responsibilities that a society associates with each sex".¹⁷ They are defined as a result of making comparison among groups of individuals, and they typify the expectations of men and women.¹⁸ [11] Studies on gender roles generally demonstrate that men are considered to be more agentic (such as self-reliant and ambitious) while women tend to be more communal (such as interdependent and caring for others).¹⁹ [12] The existence and awareness of stereotypes influence individual behaviour, and these stereotypes are reinforced through daily interactions because of the adjustment made by individuals in order to comply with these stereotypes. The different standards of judgment used when comparing each gender also makes it more difficult to eradicate the entwined stereotypes.

The existence of the gender role stereotypes confines different genders to perform in certain ways, and people may find it hard to avoid being influenced by them. The gender-based stereotypes in regard to negotiation usually assume that women are less likely to initiate a negotiation and care more about relationships,²⁰ [13] while men are assertive and more concerned with individual gains.²¹ [14] Therefore, the existing stereotype incurs "social backlash"²² where women may be

7. Putnam et al. (n4) 7
 8. Elizabeth Layne Paddock, 'Gender and Negotiation' (2012) PN 293, 312
 9. Kray et al. (n3) 104
 10. Karin Klenke, 'Gender Influences in Decision-Making Processes in Top Management Teams' (2003) 41(10) MD 1024, 1027
 11. Julian Walker, Nana Berekashvili and Nino Lomidze, 'Valuing Time: Time Use Survey, the Capability Approach, and Gender Analysis' (2014) 15(1) JHDC 47, 47
 12. *ibid*
 13. Amanda B. Diekmann and Monica C. Schneider, 'A Social Role Theory Perspective on Gender Gaps in Political Attitudes' (2010) 34(4) PWQ 486, 488
 14. Justine E. Tinkler et al., 'Gender and Venture Capital Decision - Making: The Effects of Technical Background and Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Evaluations' (2014) SSR 1, 1

15. Judith M. Gerson and Kathy Peiss, 'Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations' (1985) 32(4) SP 317, 323
 16. Canet-Giner et al. (n1) 212
 17. *ibid*
 18. Jose Apesteguia, Ghazala Azmat and Nagore Iriberrri, 'The Impact of Gender Composition on Team Performance and Decision Making: Evidence From the Field' (2012) 58(1) MS 78, 79
 19. Carol T. Kulik and Mara Olekalns, 'Negotiating the Gender Divide Lessons From the Negotiation and Organizational Behavior Literatures' (2012) 38(4) JM 1387, 1392
 20. Julia B. Bear and Linda Babcock, 'Negotiation Topic As A Moderator of Gender Differences in Negotiation' (2012) 23(7) PS 743, 743
 21. Edward W. Miles and Margaret M. LaSalle, 'Gender and Creation of Value in Mixed-motive Negotiation' (2009) 20(3) IJCM 269, 270
 22. Mara Olekalns et al., 'But Can I Trust Her? Gender and Expectancy Violations in Negotiation' (2011) Melbourne

perceived as demanding and pushy and violate the gender injunction when they frequently initiate negotiations.²³ There are equally theories about the 'social cost' to be incurred if women engage in the competitive dimension of negotiation since their behavior is inconsistent with their gender role.²⁴ A study took place in 2002 asked the participations to write down the most recent negotiation they had initiated or involved, and the result showed that for men the most recent one occurred about an average of two weeks ago; however, for women the most recent one took place a month ago.²⁵ As a result, women tend not to choose negotiation if there exists other choice and result in more mutual beneficiary outcomes in negotiations. Therefore the awareness of the existence of the stereotypes make individuals tend to behave in a way that is less likely to arouse backlash.

Moreover, people are influenced unconsciously to some extent because the biased views are so deeply rooted in minds and society. It has been argued that even when individuals consciously try to obtain gender equality and behave in an unbiased way, they may still be affected by gender stereotypes because they aware others' believe in gender difference.²⁶[15] For example, when a group of interviewers are asked to assess the performance of candidates, even one of the interviewers personally believes that a woman candidate performed better, he or she may still be biased because the awareness of the fact that most other interviewers may not think women could be as competent as men. The deeply rooted bias not only influence how individuals behave themselves, but also influence how they consider others' believes, and it is hard to avoid being influenced even they are trying to do so.

It is also argued that when we judge individuals we may unconsciously compare them using "within-category" judgment standards.²⁷ [16] For

instance, women acting in a counter- stereotypical manner such as over-independent and highly assertive usually are less acceptable than a man who acts different from the masculine-stereotype in our daily life.²⁸ Studies show that a woman who acts in a masculine manner or possesses masculine characteristics which are thought to be suitable for a manager is considered less hireable for the position than a man acting in a similar fashion.²⁹[17] Therefore, there emerges a double standard, where women have to be greater than good and make fewer errors in order to be equally competitive as men.³⁰ What is considered good for a man may not necessarily constitutes good for a woman. However, the "discrimination" may not necessarily been intentionally imposed. This may be as a result of unconsciously using "within-category" judgment standards.

Finally, people adjust their behaviors in compliance with the stereotypes; therefore reinforce the gender role stereotypes through the daily interactions. The pre-existing conditions have created obvious difference between gender roles, which makes the disadvantaged group find it hard to perform based on the existing inequity conditions.³¹ As a result, people tend to gradually adjust their behaviors in order to feel less struggle if they are criticized by behave in a certain way. The 'stereotype threat' concept implies that people are encouraged to do things that conform to the existing stereotypes and as a result this makes these stereotypes become more plausible in the eyes of others and even in the person's own eyes.³² It is suggested that when there is a conflict occurs between one's occupied social role and one's gender stereotype, people are more likely to adhere to stereotype expectation because gender is widely accepted as one's most pervasively and consistently salient role.³³ For example, as the distributive negotiation requires competitive behaviors, which is more consistent with agentive behavior, female

Business School Working Paper 1/2011
<http://works.bepress.com/mara_olekalns/26> accessed 13 March 2015

23. Kulik (n19) 1393

24. Miles (n21) 271

25. Rekha Reddy, 'Do Men and Women Negotiate Differently — and Why Does it Matter?' 2014 Laneyb <<http://www.laneyb.com/read/do-men-and-women-negotiate-differently-and-why-does-it-matter-279231/>> accessed 2 April 2015

26. Isabelle Plante et al., 'Gender Stereotype Endorsement and Achievement-related Outcomes: The Role of Competence Beliefs and Task Values' (2013) 38(3) CEP 225, 226

27. Monica Biernat and Kathleen Fuegen, 'Shifting Standards and The Evaluation of Competence: Complexity in

Gender - Based Judgment and Decision Making' (2001) 57(4) JSI 707, 708

28. Miles (n21) 271

29. Tineke M. Willemsen, 'Gender Typing of The Successful Manager — A Stereotype Reconsidered' (2002) 46(11-12) SR 385, 386

30. Tinkler (n14) 5

31. Deborah Kolb and Kathleen L. McGinn, 'Beyond Gender and Negotiation to Gendered Negotiations' (2008) Harvard Business School Working Paper 9/2008 64 <<http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/09-064.pdf>> accessed 8 April 2015

32. Canet-Giner et al. (n1) 213

33. Diekman (n13) 492

negotiators may temper their ambitiousness and aspiration in order to comply with the gender stereotype expectation.³⁴[18] Therefore, the concern over confirming the gender stereotypes result in lower expectations and anxiety and then lead to worse performance; thus unintentionally reinforce the stereotypes.³⁵[19]

4. POSSIBLE METHODS TO REDUCE THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPES

It has been discussed above that the entwined gender role stereotypes are influential as to how negotiators behave. Although it is impossible to fully avoid being influenced. There are some suggestions to suppress the impacts of these gender role stereotypes.

4.1 Moderation of Gender Role Stereotypes

It has been argued that not only gender role but also the contextual factors can exert influence and act as the guidance to negotiation behaviors.³⁶ Female negotiators could make use of moderators to reduce the chances of being criticized as a result of gender-based stereotypes.

One moderator concerned with whether negotiators negotiate on behalf of other people or for themselves. As discussed above, female negotiators are said to be less assertive and care more about the relationship with their counterparts.³⁷[20] Therefore, assertive and pushy negotiation behaviour frequently backfires for women. However, studies have illustrated that when women are advocating interests for other people, they are faced with less backlash.³⁸[21] This is because in some circumstances the pushy behaviours could be said to be a tool with which the negotiators use to advocate benefits for their clients. Even though the negotiation outcome may have an impact on the salary of the negotiator, the counter-

stereotypes behaviours are more likely to be justified by the fact that it is for the benefit of other people instead of for the sole benefit of the negotiators themselves.

Another moderator is based on the information the negotiator possesses and criteria he or she applies. It is argued that people become more acceptable to the outcome when objective criteria are applied and therefore a feeling of fairness arises.³⁹[22] Providing that the negotiator collects sufficient concrete information this leads to a conclusion which is uncontroversial, and therefore the behaviour is more justifiable because all reasonable negotiators in such a situation are likely to come to the same conclusion.

4.2 Playing to a Strength

More emphasis has been placed on how women act worse in distributive bargaining because they are considered to be more cooperative and less assertive. However, the characteristic of caring more for others and being more likely to share information with the counterparty could become a strength in the context of integrative bargaining for its contribution to mutual gains.⁴⁰ Females are expected to be more accommodating and tend to use 'soft' communicative styles.⁴¹[23]Therefore, female negotiators are more likely to become win-win negotiators who pursue the maintenance of existing relationships and result in mutual-beneficial outcomes. There are an increasing number of companies seeking to increase the number of female managers for their feminine qualities, such as the ability to give support to employees in a communal way of communication, and a collaborative rather than a hierarchical style.⁴² Therefore, instead of trying to act in a masculine way, female negotiators can make use of their unique characteristics where these traits are welcomed.

4.3 Explicit Endorsement of Negative Gender Role Stereotypes

Studies have shown that if people are explicitly endorsed with the negative gender stereotypes, they tend to focus more on traits which are positively

34. Edward W. Miles, 'Gender Differences in Distributive Negotiation: When in the Negotiation Process Do the Differences Occur?' (2010) 40(7) EJSP 1200, 1201

35. Megan A. Alderden and Sarah E. Ullman, 'Gender Difference or Indifference? Detective Decision Making in Sexual Assault Cases' (2011) JIV 399, 401

36. Bear (n20) 743

37. Kevin W. Westbrook, C. Steven Arendall and Walton M. Padelford, 'Gender, Competitiveness, and Unethical Negotiation Strategies' (2011) 26(4) GM 289, 293

38. Elizabeth Layne Paddock and Laura J. Kray 'The Role of Gender in Negotiation' Michael Benoliel (eds) in *Negotiation Excellence: Successful Deal Making* (RCSB 2011)

39. Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes* (Second edition, RHBB, 2011) 43

40. Reddy (n25)

41. Craver C B, 'Gender and Negotiation Performance' (2002) 4(3) SP 183

42. Willemsen (n29) 385

related to the proposed stereotype and act against the negative stereotypes and therefore perform better.⁴³ Kray defined this as "stereotype reactance", where people are explicitly acknowledged by the negative facts of one stereotype and then tend to act inconsistently with that stereotype.⁴⁴ A study on the influence of gender-specific messages on individual performance, which concluded that gender related messages have a stronger effect on females than males, and females are much more likely to be influenced by implicit messages than explicit ones.⁴⁵ [24] Therefore, if female negotiators are explicitly acknowledged by gender stereotypes, they may have a chance to find ways to act against them and thus be less influenced by the stereotypes. However, this may not be the best way because where females react aggressively against the stereotypes they may be faced with the risk of being caught by the backlash.

5. CONCLUSION

Gender stereotypes are entwined in our minds to the extent that male negotiators perform better in negotiations. These stereotypes have far-reaching influences both on the way individuals behave and the way they tend to behave in the future. Gender-based stereotype fines different genders to certain ways which they are expected to act, and unconsciously acting as the guidance for individuals as how they should and are suggested to perform and these stereotypes are reinforced by people through daily interaction. As a result of the long existing stereotypes, females are disadvantaged in several ways such as work opportunities and social status. It is unlikely that people could totally eradicate the influence of these gender role stereotypes. However, female negotiators are suggested to use moderators based on situations and information to reduce the chances of being criticized. Moreover, there are some situations where feminist characteristics are welcomed therefore female negotiators could make use of their traits instead of being forced to act in a masculine manner. Although a large amount of research has been conducted on gender stereotypes and the influence of the gender role, the findings are not consistent with each other and therefore further studies are still needed to deal with the controversial theories behind this topic. For

example, more studies could be made on how gender difference could affect the performance of lawyers, judges, company managers and leaders, and to what extent these influences should be mitigated.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Wei Lu.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Teresa Canet-Giner and M. Carmen Saorín-Iborra, 'The Influence of Gender Role on Negotiation Development and Outcome: A proposal for Strategic Alliance Negotiation' (2007) 26(3) *EOI* 209
- [2] Laura J. Kray and Leigh Thompson, 'Gender Stereotypes and Negotiation Performance: An Examination of Theory and Research' (2004) 26 *ROB* 103, 106
- [3] Linda L. Putnam and Deborah M. Kolb, 'Rethinking Negotiation: Feminist Views of Communication and Exchange' Center for Gender in Organizations Working Paper 1/2000, 7 <www.simmons.edu/som/cgo> accessed 18 March 2015
- [4] Deborah M. Kolb, 'Too Bad for the Women or Does It Have to Be? Gender and Negotiation Research Over the Past Twenty Five Years' (2009) 25(4) *NJ* 515, 518
- [5] Elizabeth Layne Paddock, 'Gender and Negotiation' (2012) *PN* 293, 312
- [6] Karin Klenke, 'Gender Influences in Decision-Making Processes in Top Management Teams' (2003) 41(10) *MD* 1024, 1027
- [7] Julian Walker, Nana Berekashvili and Nino Lomidze, 'Valuing Time: Time Use Survey, the Capability Approach, and Gender Analysis' (2014) 15(1) *JHDC* 47, 47
- [8] Amanda B. Diekmann and Monica C. Schneider, 'A Social Role Theory Perspective on Gender Gaps in Political Attitudes' (2010) 34(4) *PWQ* 486, 488
- [9] Justine E. Tinkler et al., 'Gender and Venture Capital Decision - Making: The Effects of Technical Background and Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Evaluations' (2014) *SSR* 1, 1

43. *ibid* 386

44. *ibid*

45. Marina A. Pavlova et al., 'Gender Stereotype Susceptibility' (2014) 9(12) *PO* 1, 8

- [10] Judith M. Gerson and Kathy Peiss, 'Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations' (1985) 32(4) SP 317, 323
- [11] Jose Apestequia, Ghazala Azmat and Nagore Iriberry, 'The Impact of Gender Composition on Team Performance and Decision Making: Evidence From the Field' (2012) 58(1) MS 78, 79
- [12] Carol T. Kulik and Mara Olekalns, 'Negotiating the Gender Divide Lessons From the Negotiation and Organizational Behavior Literatures' (2012) 38(4) JM 1387, 1392
- [13] Julia B. Bear and Linda Babcock, 'Negotiation Topic As A Moderator of Gender Differences in Negotiation' (2012) 23(7) PS 743, 743
- [14] Edward W. Miles and Margaret M. LaSalle, 'Gender and Creation of Value in Mixed-motive Negotiation' (2009) 20(3) IJCM 269, 270
- [15] Isabelle Plante et al., 'Gender Stereotype Endorsement and Achievement-related Outcomes: The Role of Competence Beliefs and Task Values' (2013) 38(3) CEP 225, 226
- [16] Monica Biernat and Kathleen Fuegen, 'Shifting Standards and The Evaluation of Competence: Complexity in Gender - Based Judgment and Decision Making' (2001) 57(4) JSI 707, 708
- [17] Tineke M. Willemsen, 'Gender Typing of The Successful Manager — A Stereotype Reconsidered' (2002) 46(11-12) SR 385, 386
- [18] Edward W. Miles, 'Gender Differences in Distributive Negotiation: When in the Negotiation Process Do the Differences Occur?' (2010) 40(7) EJSP 1200, 1201
- [19] Megan A. Alderden and Sarah E. Ullman, 'Gender Difference or Indifference? Detective Decision Making in Sexual Assault Cases' (2011) JIV 399, 401
- [20] Kevin W. Westbrook, C. Steven Arendall and Walton M. Padelford, 'Gender, Competitiveness, and Unethical Negotiation Strategies' (2011) 26(4) GM 289, 293
- [21] Elizabeth Layne Paddock and Laura J. Kray 'The Role of Gender in Negotiation' Michael Benoliel (eds) in *Negotiation Excellence: Successful Deal Making* (RCSB 2011)
- [22] Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes* (Second edition, RHBB, 2011) 43
- [23] Craver C B, 'Gender and Negotiation Performance' (2002) 4(3) SP 183
- [24] Marina A. Pavlova et al., 'Gender Stereotype Susceptibility' (2014) 9(12) PO 1, 8