

# Who Goes to the Bargaining Table? The Influence of Gender and Framing on the Initiation of Negotiation

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Unlike typical negotiation experiments, these studies investigated when men and women initiate negotiations in the absence of overt prescriptions to negotiate. Using a new experimental paradigm, the authors showed that the framing of situations is a critical driver of gender differences in initiating negotiations. Drawing on literature on language, power, and politeness, the authors argued that framing situations as opportunities for negotiation is particularly intimidating to women, as this language is inconsistent with norms for politeness among low-power individuals, such as women. By contrast, framing situations as opportunities for asking is much less intimidating to women, as this language is more polite and role-consistent. Consequently, gender differences in initiating negotiations persisted when situations were framed as opportunities for negotiation yet were eliminated when situations were framed as opportunities to ask. Moreover, primed power attenuated gender differences in aversive reactions to the negotiation frame. In all, the studies presented begin to elucidate the reasons for gender differences in initiating negotiations and further illustrate that such effects depend on the situation.

*Keywords:* negotiation, gender, framing

In virtually all experimental negotiation research, individuals are instructed to conduct a negotiation. Often negotiators are given explicit instructions—that is, to make offers and receive counteroffers, to achieve as much value for themselves as possible, and so forth. Although this research has illuminated the psychological and behavioral processes that are related to negotiation strategies and outcomes, there is little research on the perception of the negotiability of situations when negotiation is not prescribed or on the tendency to initiate negotiation more generally.

This void in the literature is significant because many situations are not transparently negotiable. For example, although many Americans probably know that the price of a car is negotiable, most situations are far more ambiguous. Consider the case of a university professor. Although it is typical to negotiate over salary and teaching load when one is first hired, what is negotiable after one is on the job is far less clear. In fact, numerous resources can be negotiated throughout one's faculty career, including reduced teaching loads, summer support, increases in pay, office space, computer upgrades, and so forth. However, these situations need to be recognized as negotiable and capitalized on, often on an individual basis. Otherwise, the status quo is likely to remain.

Indeed, recent changes in the workplace highlight the need for individuals to initiate negotiations if a change or improvement of circumstances is desired. Because of new emerging forms of organization (flattened hierarchies, lower formalization, increased participation), the steady decline of unionism (dropped from 20.1% of the workforce in 1983 to 13.5% in 2001), and increasing rates of job turnover (39% of the workforce changed jobs between May 2001 and May 2002; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002, 2006), employees have opportunities to bargain that are unprecedented (Rousseau, 2005). In her book on idiosyncratic deals, Rousseau (2005) cited evidence that 30% of individuals graduating with a master's in business administration (MBA) negotiated customized employment relationships (special deals), and 25% of health care workers in a hospital negotiated special arrangements for themselves. These statistics suggest that if the flexibilities of contracts are not made explicit, then individuals' effectiveness and success will depend on recognizing opportunities to negotiate for resources.

Surprisingly, despite the employment trends described earlier, which suggest that increasing opportunities for negotiations are prevalent, there is a dearth of research on who initiates negotiations and whether these opportunities are disproportionately capitalized on by certain people in general or by men or women in particular. The question of whether and why gender differences exist in the propensity to initiate negotiations is important, given the persistent wage gap (Keaveny & Inderrieden, 2000), glass ceiling (Tharenou, 2001), and the fact that women advance in their careers at much slower rates than do men (Tharenou, 1999; Valian, 1998).

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Babcock, Gelfand, Small, and Stayn (2006) provided some initial evidence that women are less likely to initiate negotiations. They sampled 227 working adults and asked how recently they had initiated negotiations. Men indicated that they had initiated negotiations two to four times as recently as women. A separate study comparing male and female master's degree students found that among graduating MBA students, 51.9% of men negotiated their job offer, whereas only 12.5% of women did. Not surprisingly, women received average annual starting salaries that were 8.5% lower than those of men. Although there could be other explanations for this gender salary gap, the possibility that some of the gap could be attributed to gender differences in initiating negotiations is intriguing. When projected across the course of women's careers, this starting salary gap would be even more striking because raises, bonuses, and other compensation are typically based on initial salary (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991).

Nevertheless, although Babcock et al.'s (2006) studies provided initial evidence for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiation, they were field studies that had a number of limitations. For example, the first study relied on retrospective reports that could have been subject to biases, and the second study could not control for gender differences that might have existed in the graduate students' bargaining leverage (e.g., other job offers).

### Overview of the Current Research

The purpose of this research was to more systematically examine gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations and the psychological mechanisms that account for such differences. Our first aim was to replicate Babcock et al.'s (2006) research by examining gender differences in a controlled setting using a newly developed negotiation paradigm. In this method, participants played a word game in exchange for cash and were subsequently offered the minimum payment possible. We measured whether participants negotiated higher payment from the experimenter. This method simulates important advancement opportunities (asking for more money for a task) but allows us to control for the variability in industry norms, job characteristics, work experience, and so forth. By introducing this new method, we extended Babcock et al.'s (2006) findings and broaden the scope of current negotiation research from primarily examining what happens at the negotiation table to examining who gets to the table in the first place.

Our second aim was to further explore the possible mechanisms that account for gender differences in initiating negotiations. We argue that although women are less likely to initiate negotiations than men, it is possible that women are not unaware of such opportunities to negotiate; rather, it is the framing of situations that is a critical driver of gender differences in initiating negotiations, with some frames exacerbating and some frames attenuating gender differences. Drawing on literature on language, power, and politeness (Areni & Sparks, 2005; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1975; Morand, 2000), we explored the notion that framing situations as opportunities for negotiation is particularly intimidating to women, as this language implies a face-threatening act that is inconsistent with norms for politeness among low-power individuals, such as women (Brown & Levinson, 1987). By contrast, we expected that framing situations as opportunities for asking would be much less intimidating to women, as this language is

indicative of a linguistic gesture of politeness and deference used when attempting to get something from another, which is consistent with low-power social roles (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Studies 2–4 illustrated support for these notions, showing that gender differences do in fact persist when situations are framed as opportunities for negotiation yet are dramatically reduced when situations are framed as opportunities for asking. In Study 5, we further explored these effects by showing that it is social power that is a key driver of differential reactions of men and women to these frames. We showed that when primed with power, gender differences in reactions to opportunities to negotiate are greatly attenuated. In all, the studies presented begin to elucidate the reasons for gender differences in initiating negotiations and further illustrate that such effects depend on the situation.

In what follows, we first situate our study of gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations within the larger negotiation literature, discussing how gender has typically been examined in negotiation research. We then provide more background on our cognitive approach to gender differences, discussing the psychology of framing in negotiations. Drawing on linguistic theory of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), we then describe the theoretical rationale for why different frames might be more or less intimidating—and produce less initiating of actual negotiation behavior—than other frames. As these frames are intricately linked to social power, we discuss why power might be a key explanation for gender differences in reactions to different frames. We then describe five studies that systematically examined gender, framing, and the initiating of negotiations using a newly developed experimental paradigm.

### Gender Differences in Negotiation

Negotiation researchers have long been interested in gender differences in negotiation. As early as 1975, Rubin and Brown (1975) reviewed over 65 studies investigating the role of gender in negotiation and bargaining. Since then, there have been numerous studies of gender differences in negotiation styles, strategies, and tactics (e.g., Clark, 1983; Kyl-Heku & Buss, 1996; Lind, Huo, & Tyler, 1994; Maxwell, 1992; Putnam & Jones, 1982) and gender differences in outcomes (e.g., Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Mesch & Dalton, 1989; Neu, Graham, & Gilly, 1988; Wachter, 1999; Watson & Hoffman, 1996). Studies have also examined gender differences in time to reach an agreement (Griffith, 1991; Neu et al., 1988), negotiator goals or expectations (Major, Vanderslice, & McFarlin, 1984; Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993), perceptions of conflicts (e.g., Haferkamp, 1991–1992), and satisfaction (Papa & Natalie, 1989).

Despite the quest to document gender differences in a wide range of negotiation phenomena, however, findings have been highly inconsistent. Rubin and Brown (1975) documented 21 studies that found men behaved more cooperatively than women in bargaining experiments, 27 studies that concluded women behaved more cooperatively than men, and 20 studies that found no differences among men and women. Other, more recent meta-analyses (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998) have shown that the magnitude of gender differences tends to be small and that there are situational moderators of gender differences.

This inconsistency, however, has proven to be a breakthrough in gender and negotiation research, as scholars have increasingly advocated a more contextual and dynamic approach to gender differences that documents the conditions under which gender differences are exacerbated and attenuated in negotiation (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Gelfand, Major, Raver, Nishii, & O'Brien, 2006; Kray, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2001, 2002). For example, Bowles et al. (2005) showed that the roles that are activated at the negotiation table (i.e., whether one is negotiating for oneself or on the behalf of others) are important triggers for gender differences. Likewise, Kray et al. (2002) showed that gender differences in negotiation behavior are strongly affected by cognitive constructs that are accessible at the negotiation table. Gender differences were amplified when stereotypes of the masculinity of negotiation were subtly primed (causing stereotype threat), whereas gender differences were diminished when the stereotype was overtly primed (causing women to react against the stereotype). Gelfand et al. (2006) similarly argued that gender differences in negotiation are exacerbated in situations that make the relational self accessible and are reduced in situations in which the relational self is inhibited or less applicable. In all, these newly emerging social-cognitive approaches offer a promising and contextually rich perspective to gender and negotiation research.

In this article, we took a cognitive approach to gender differences in propensity to initiate negotiations. We theorized that women's feelings about, and behaviors of, initiating a negotiation are partly due to the way in which that behavior is framed. To this end, we drew on research in judgment and decision making (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1984), in the cognitive tradition in negotiation (e.g., Neale & Bazerman, 1991), and on language and power (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and examined how subtle cues in the environment affect the propensity to negotiate among men and women.

Research on framing effects has shown that judgments and decisions are highly sensitive to varying descriptions of a prospect (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). For instance, framing a risk in terms of gains versus losses (e.g., a 90% chance of survival vs. a 10% chance of death) should rationally not affect choices. However, people are more risk averse when a prospect is described as a gain than when an identical prospect is described as a loss. Framing effects can occur because different descriptions may be associated with quite different construals and feelings (McFarland & Miller, 1994). For example, Liberman, Samuels, and Ross (2004) found that players were much more likely to defect in a Prisoner's Dilemma-type game when the experiment was described to players as the "Wall Street Game" as opposed to the "Community Game," even though the payoff matrices were identical. Thus, the context of the game influenced participants' construal of the situation and their subsequent behavior.

In this research, we examined how differential frames, namely, negotiating versus asking, affect the propensity to negotiate among women and men. More specifically, we proposed that framing situations as an opportunity for negotiation is threatening to women, which inhibits their propensity to initiate a negotiation. In contrast, however, describing the identical situation as an opportunity for asking is less threatening to women and reduces gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations.

Scholars have long argued that language not only reflects a representational function but also serves a social function (Brown

& Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). In any encounter, speakers are concerned with maintaining their own and others' face and use varying degrees of politeness strategies to avoid threatening others. In their seminal work on politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that the use of politeness was intricately tied to social power: Individuals who hold low-power positions are more inclined to use polite speech (such as carefully worded requests rather than direct demands) to avoid imposing on others, as low-power individuals do not have the appropriate status to impose on others (Lakoff, 1975; Morand, 2000). Moreover, politeness is particularly important when a low-power individual is engaging in a face-threatening act, such as criticizing, disagreeing, or attempting to get something from another person (e.g., information, a favor, resources), and is used as a way to "minimize or defray" that threat (Morand, 2000, p. 237).

We contend that the concept of negotiation is one such face-threatening act, as it implies demands being made from a position of power. By contrast, asking conveys a weaker stance and is considered a linguistic gesture of politeness used when attempting to get something from another person. Simply put, asking implies linguistic deference (Brown & Levinson, 1987), in which speakers acknowledge restraint to minimize imposing on others, and is particularly important for low-power individuals. For example, a low-power person might say, "May I borrow a dollar?" rather than, "Give me a dollar," to minimize the face-threatening act of requesting money (Morand, 2000, p. 237). Drawing on this theory, we reasoned that the language or frame of asking would be less threatening than the frame of negotiating among women, given they tend to have lower power in American society (Eagly & Wood, 1982; Henley & LaFrance, 1984). We expected that the language of negotiation would be less threatening to men, given that it is congruent with their position of high power in society. Indeed, women have been found to prefer more indirect, polite speech, as compared with men (Holtgrave, 1997). By extension, we expected women to react more positively to the framing of indirect polite asking than the direct powerful frame of negotiating. In Studies 2–4, we directly tested these notions and showed that women perceive opportunities for negotiating as much more aversive than opportunities for asking and that these frames affect actual rates of initiating negotiations.

Of importance, in their classic work, Brown and Levinson (1987) cautioned that women might not prefer polite language in all situations but rather that it is their typically low-power status that leads them to generally prefer politeness. However, power can vary by situation. A number of recent empirical studies have shown that situationally primed power is related to a diverse set of approach-related behaviors, with an increased attention to rewards in the environment and means for obtaining rewards (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; see also Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). For example, Galinsky et al. (2003) showed that the situational experience of power leads individuals to act against an annoying stimulus in the environment, to take resources when they are available, and to take action in competitive situations. Furthermore, power is associated with perceived freedom, control, and influence (Keltner et al., 2003; Kipnis, 1972). Consistent with this, the possession of power increases the propensity to negotiate (Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). Therefore, it is critical to examine what happens when women feel powerful, because power is one critical driver of politeness and

thus may mitigate negative reactions to frames of negotiation. In Study 5, we directly tested this notion by manipulating power among men and women and examining their reactions to negotiating versus asking frames. We reasoned that priming men and women with power would attenuate differences in their reactions to negotiating.

### Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to develop an experimental paradigm to examine gender differences in initiating negotiations and to replicate and extend Babcock et al.'s (2006) research. This study explored whether people would ask for more money in a situation in which the option of negotiation was not made explicit. Participants were told that they would receive cash payment (\$3–\$10) for their participation in a word game task. Following the word game, all participants were offered the minimum (\$3) payment from the experimenter. Participants were not informed of how the payment was determined, nor were they given any performance feedback. If they initiated a negotiation, they could receive more money (up to \$10), and if not, they received just \$3. This situation intentionally mirrors many real-world situations in which individuals could negotiate and receive a better deal, but because the negotiation opportunity is not explicit, only those who initiate negotiations can realize a gain. We predicted that more men than women would initiate a negotiation for higher payment. In addition to testing our prediction about gender, this study served as a pilot test to validate that the task (playing the word game) was gender neutral. Specifically, we sought to make certain that men and women did not differ in their perceived or actual performance in the game.

#### Method

*Participants.* A total of 74 individuals (35 men and 39 women) participated in exchange for cash payment of between \$3 and \$10. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 40 years old, with a mean of 23 years.

*Procedure.* Instructions explained that participation included four rounds of the word game "Boggle," to be played alone in a private cubicle. For each round, the participant was instructed to shake a cube of lettered dice so that all letters fell into a grid at the bottom of the cube. A timer was set, and participants searched the grid of letters for as many words as possible until time was up. They were instructed to search for and list all words formed from letters that adjoined horizontally, vertically, or diagonally to the left and right or up and down. According to the game rules, no letter could be used more than once within a single word.

The four rounds of the game each lasted 3 min. When participants were finished with all four rounds, instructions reminded them, "You have now completed four rounds of Boggle and will be compensated between \$3 and \$10. Please indicate to the experimenter that you are finished, so that he or she can score your rounds. Then you will be paid."

The game Boggle is typically played competitively, and players can gauge their own performance by comparing it with the performance of others. However, when played autonomously, as in our design, a player has no external cues to make this evaluation. Moreover, because the maximum number of words possible in any

given round depends on how the lettered dice fall, the maximum possible score can vary greatly from game to game, so there are no evident reference points. These properties of the game limit self-assessment to merely internal cues, which may differ by gender.

*Experimenters.* Two experimenters (one man and one woman) conducted the study; each presided over approximately half of the sample. Experimenters were naive to the hypothesis of the study. They were trained to standardize their interactions with participants and to adhere to specific scripts (discussed later) for offering payment to each participant.

*Dependent measure.* Each participant waited approximately 3 min in a cubicle while the experimenter tallied the words. Then, the experimenter approached the participant privately, held out \$3, and said, "Here's \$3. Is \$3 OK?" If a participant asked for more, then the experimenter gave the participant the requested amount up to the \$10 maximum. If the participant complained but did not ask for more, then the experimenter did not offer more and the participant received \$3. If the participant asked further questions about how the payment was determined, then the experimenter explained that a full report of the research would be provided to them when the study was complete. The crux of this payment procedure was that any participant could receive \$10, but only if he or she initiated a negotiation with the experimenter. If, instead, the participant accepted the offer or complained about the offer but did not ask for a larger payment, then the payment remained at the minimum, \$3.

*Additional measures.* At the end of the study, participants answered a series of questions designed to assess perceptions of their performance in the game. Last, participants self-reported their age, gender, and student/nonstudent status.

#### Results and Discussion

Of the 74 participants, 9 participants (12.2%) asked for more money. This low rate of requesting more cash payment is not surprising, given the relative lack of any available cues in the situation informing participants that asking was acceptable or strategically wise. However, this prime-free experimental context provided a precise means of measuring base rates of initiating negotiation in the absence of such cues and external motivating factors. Because all 9 individuals who negotiated asked for the maximum payment (\$10) or for more than the maximum, all 9 received \$10. Therefore, we used a binary dependent variable in all analyses (asked for more: yes–no). All 9 participants (8 men, 1 woman) who requested more money asked one experimenter (the woman).

*Gender differences.* Of the men, 23% requested more money, whereas of the women, only 3% asked for more, which was a significant difference,  $\chi^2(1, N = 74) = 7.11, p < .01$ . The gender difference in asking for more remained significant when we excluded participants who interacted with the experimenter that no one asked,  $\chi^2(1, N = 33) = 4.15, p < .05$ .

These differences in the propensity to initiate negotiation were not driven by actual or perceived gender differences in performance. There was no gender difference in Boggle performance ( $M_{\text{Men}} = 11.57, SD = 4.69; M_{\text{Women}} = 10.29, SD = 5.89$ ),  $t(71) = -1.02, p = .31, \eta_p^2 = .02$ . Moreover, men and women did not differ in their perceptions of their own performance. In response to the question, "Compared with the average student, how well do

you think you did today in Boggle?" participants rated their performance on a 5-point rating scale (ranging from 1, *Much worse than the average student*, to 5, *Much better than the average student*). There was no gender difference ( $M_{\text{Men}} = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ;  $M_{\text{Women}} = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ),  $t(68) = -0.95$ ,  $p = .35$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ . Of interest, perceived and actual performance were correlated for women ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but not for men ( $r = .22$ ,  $p = .21$ ). Neither perceived nor actual performance was correlated with initiation of negotiation for either gender ( $r = .16$ ,  $p = .36$ , and  $r = .07$ ,  $p = .70$ , respectively, for men, and  $r = .22$ ,  $p = .18$ , and  $r = .08$ ,  $p = .62$ , respectively, for women).

To complete our analysis of this study, we estimated a logit model where the dependent variable was whether the participant asked for more money (a binary measure) and the independent variables were gender (1 if male, 0 if female) and the continuous measure of actual Boggle performance. This analysis indicated that even when we controlled for Boggle performance, the effect of gender remained significant and large,  $B = 2.36$ ,  $p < .04$ . Because the magnitude of coefficients in a logit model were difficult to interpret (Greene, 1993), we translated the coefficients into odds ratios. The odds ratio coefficient on gender indicated that when we controlled for performance, men were 10.6 times as likely as women to ask for more money.<sup>12</sup>

**Summary.** This study showed a gender difference in the propensity to initiate a negotiation. To our knowledge, it is the first laboratory study on negotiation in which participants were not informed explicitly that negotiation was the prescribed behavior. As predicted, men were far more likely to ask for money than were women, despite no apparent gender differences in actual and perceived performance. In this study, all of those who negotiated did so with a female experimenter. It is possible that this was due to expectations that women would provide more money than men. However, given that the experimenters also may have varied on a number of characteristics (e.g., personality, attractiveness, height, attire; Rosenthal, 1966), this may not be a reliable finding. In the studies that follow, we trained professional actors who were matched on attractiveness and height to minimize potential experimenter effects, as this was not the focus of the current theory and research.

## Study 2

In Study 1, we examined rates of initiating negotiation in a situation with few cues about the negotiability of the situation. Without any explicit cue to initiate a negotiation, the overall asking rate was low (12.2%). In the next study, we examined the question of how cues about the negotiability of the situation affect asking rates of men and women. More specifically, in this experiment, we used an identical paradigm as in Study 1, but we varied situational ambiguity by providing information to some participants about the possibility of initiating negotiation with the experimenter. We reasoned that two possible patterns could emerge. On the one hand, gender differences in the initiation of negotiation may depend on the strength of the situation (Mischel, 1977). Strong situations limit the number of acceptable behavioral patterns and reduce individual variation. By contrast, individual differences are more likely to emerge in weak than in strong situations (Mischel, 1977), because actors in weak situations rely on internal cues, such as attitudes, traits, and values, to guide behavioral responses (Dykman, Abramson, Alloy, & Hartlage, 1989; Snyder & Ickes, 1985).

The situation participants faced in Study 1 was notably weak—lacking explicit cues to negotiate. It is possible that gender differences could be eliminated in a stronger situation or one in which cues for the opportunity for a negotiation were more apparent.

On the other hand, an equally plausible alternative is that gender differences would persist despite cues to negotiate. This could occur because recognizing that an opportunity to negotiate exists may not be the only factor inhibiting women from initiating a negotiation. Women may fail to initiate a negotiation even when cued that negotiation is possible because they find negotiation to be particularly intimidating. Some evidence for this notion can be found in the literature. For example, Babcock et al. (2006) asked individuals to rate their feelings toward the prospect of initiating a negotiation and reported that women found the prospect to be more anxiety provoking than did men. Stevens et al. (1993) similarly found that women had lower self-efficacy about negotiating as compared with men. In all, it is possible that the prospect of negotiating has negative connotations for women, suggesting that gender differences would persist when cues to negotiate are given. We investigated both possibilities in this study.

As in previous studies, participants were told that they would receive cash payment ranging from \$3 to \$10 for their participation in a word game task. Again, all participants were offered the minimum (\$3) from the experimenter with no feedback on their performance. The control condition provided no cue (as in Study 1). In the treatment condition, we provided a cue to negotiate.

## Method

**Participants.** A total of 67 individuals (33 men and 34 women) participated in exchange for cash payment of between \$3 and \$10. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 46 years old, with a mean of 21 years.

**Procedure.** All procedures and measures matched those in Study 1, with additional instructions necessary for the manipulation. The experimental manipulation consisted of two variations of written instructions given to participants just after they finished the Boggle task. In the control condition, instructions were identical to those given in Study 1 following the Boggle task: "You have now completed four rounds of Boggle and will be compensated between \$3 and \$10. Please indicate to the experimenter that you are finished, so that he or she can score your rounds. Then you will be paid." Thus, the control condition instructions gave no indication that negotiation was an option (nor did they explicitly state that it was not an option). The payment negotiable cue condition consisted of the following additional statement, "The exact payment is negotiable." Thus, this cue directly informed participants that negotiation was a viable option.

When participants finished the Boggle task, a written announcement placed in front of them while they waited for the experimenter, who was scoring their rounds. The notice thanked them for partici-

<sup>1</sup> When we controlled for perceived performance rather than actual performance in the logit model, the odds ratio coefficient on gender remained large and significant ( $B = 8.80$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

<sup>2</sup> We also tested for gender differences in whether participants complained about the payment but did not follow up with a request for a higher payment. We found no significant gender differences in complaining ( $p > .87$ ) in Study 1 or in the subsequent studies, so we do not discuss it further.

pation and repeated the manipulated instructions above about the nature of payment determination. The experimenter left participants alone for 3 min so that they had sufficient time to review this message and to consider possible negotiation strategies.

**Experimenters.** As in Study 1, two hypotheses-naive experimenters (one man and one woman) each conducted the study on approximately half of the sample. For this study, we made efforts to control for experimenter effects by hiring and training acting students from a reputable drama program to play the role of the experimenters. The two experimenters, despite different genders, were similar in appearance (height, weight, and attractiveness). They adhered to the same scripts for offering payment to all participants. Nevertheless, we controlled for possible idiosyncratic experimenter effects prior to examining our hypotheses.

### Results and Discussion

Across the two conditions, 22.4% of participants asked for more money. Figure 1 presents the proportion who asked by gender in each condition. The graph shows a 13% gender difference in the propensity to initiate negotiation in the control condition and a 42% gender difference in the negotiate condition.

To examine whether gender differences would depend on the situational cues, we estimated a logit model where the binary dependent variable was assigned a 1 if the participant asked for more money and a 0 if he or she did not ask (see first column of Table 1). The independent variables included a binary variable for gender (coded as 1 if the participant was male and as 0 if the participant was female), a binary variable that controlled for the experimenter, and a binary variable for the experimental condition (the condition that cued the participants to negotiate was coded as 1 and the control condition was coded as 0). The likelihood ratio tests suggests that the overall model was significant,  $\chi^2(3, N = 67) = 19.4, p < .001$ . The coefficient on gender was significantly different from zero ( $p < .01$ ), and the odds ratio coefficient suggested that men were 8.3 times as likely to initiate negotiations as women are. The coefficient on the experimental condition was also large and significant ( $B = 12.1, p < .01$ ), indicating the participants did initiate more negotiations when explicitly cued to

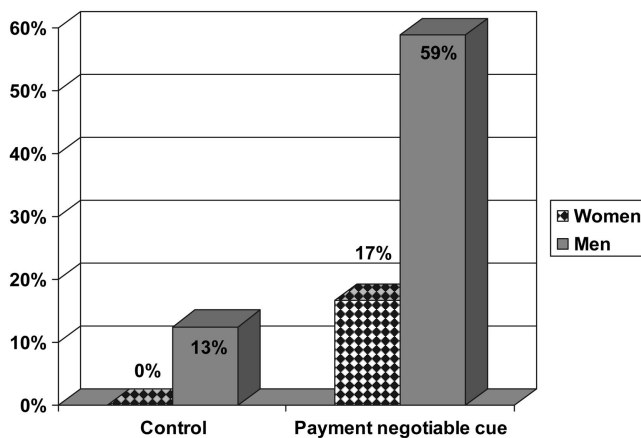


Figure 1. Percentages of men and women who asked for greater compensation in Study 2.

Table 1  
Logit Model for the Initiation of Negotiation in Study 2

Variable/statistic	Value	
	Basic model	With Boggle performance controlled
Gender (1 = male, 0 = female)		
<i>B</i>	2.12**	2.56**
<i>SE</i>	.77	.90
Odds ratio	8.33	12.93
Condition (1 = negotiate, 0 = control)		
<i>B</i>	2.50**	2.35**
<i>SE</i>	.86	.90
Odds ratio	12.14	10.53
Experimenter		
<i>B</i>	0.06	0.04
<i>SE</i>	.70	.78
Odds ratio	1.06	1.04
Boggle performance		
<i>B</i>		−0.07
<i>SE</i>		.08
Odds ratio		0.94

Note. The dependent variable was whether participants asked for more money; it was coded as 1 if participants negotiated for more money and 0 if they did not.

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

do so. The experimenter effect was not significantly different from zero ( $p = .93$ ).

Since 0% of the women asked for more in the control condition, we could not test the interaction between gender and experimental condition in the logit model because the model is not identified (i.e., there is no variation in the dependent variable in this condition—it is 0 for every female participant in the control condition). However, we could examine the interaction by exploring whether there was an overlap between the 95% confidence interval around the gender difference in the percentage who asked in the negotiate condition and the 95% confidence interval in the control condition. The confidence interval for the gender difference in the negotiate condition was  $0.42 \pm 1.96(.15) = .13-.71$ , where 1.96 is the cutoff value for a 95% confidence interval and .15 is the standard error of the gender difference. For the control condition, the 95% confidence interval was  $0.13 \pm 1.96(.09) = -.05-.31$ . Because these confidence intervals do indeed overlap, we can conclude that the gender difference is not different across the two conditions ( $p < .05$ ).<sup>3</sup>

As in the previous study, there were no gender differences in perception of Boggle performance,  $t(52) = -1.54, p = .13, \eta_p^2 = .04$  ( $M_{Men} = 3.21, SD = 0.83; M_{Women} = 2.85, SD = 0.93$ ). Men did perform better than women this time ( $M_{Men} = 9.38, SD = 5.80; M_{Women} = 7.02, SD = 3.50$ ),  $t(57) = 3.56, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .06$ . In this study, there was no significant correlation between perceived and actual performance for either men ( $r = .17, p = .41$ ) or women ( $r = .02, p = .94$ ).

Because there were gender differences in actual Boggle performance, it is important to control for performance in the equation of

<sup>3</sup> If an interaction term between gender of participant and gender of experimenter was incorporated in the model, then the interaction was not significant ( $p > .5$ ).

whether the participant initiated a negotiation. We did this in the second column of Table 1. The coefficients on gender and experimental condition remained large and statistically significant once actual performance was controlled. As in Study 1, the results were comparable if perceptions of Boggle performance were used instead of actual Boggle performance.

*Summary.* This study replicated the gender differences in the initiation of a negotiation found in Study 1. As predicted, providing cues about the negotiability of payment did indeed increase the rates of asking. However, direct cues about the negotiability of payment did not eliminate gender differences.

The majority of women did not negotiate, even when told explicitly that payment was negotiable. This raises the question of why asking rates were so low among women (relative to men) in the negotiate cue condition in which negotiating was explicitly suggested to them. One possibility is that women reacted with discomfort and/or anxiety to the prospect of initiating negotiation (Babcock et al., 2006), which prohibited them from behaving in their own interest by negotiating for more money. We further explored this issue in the following study.

### Study 3

The purpose of Study 3 was to explore men and women's perceptions and feelings about the prospect of negotiating. On the basis of our results from Study 2, we reasoned that even when information exists about the viability of negotiating for greater payment, women might still opt out because of their negative feelings about negotiating.

Although prior research documents that women feel more apprehension about negotiation than do men (Stevens et al., 1993; Watson & Hoffman, 1996), an empirical question is whether alternative frames, such as asking, carry the same negative connotations for women. On the basis of research on the language of politeness, we hypothesized that framing situations as an opportunity for negotiation would be particularly threatening to women. Relative to negotiating, asking may be perceived to be a state of placing oneself in a submissive role (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Morand, 2000), which is more consistent with extant gender roles (Holtgrave, 1997; Lakoff, 1975). Thus, this frame may be viewed less negatively among women.

Moreover, framing the initiation of negotiation in a different way could alter behavior as well (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Liberman et al., 2004; McFarland & Miller, 1994). If changing the frame has no effect, then the prospect of asking for something for oneself would be just as inhibitive for women as the prospect of negotiating because, arguably, the two frames describe the same behavior. However, for women, the prospect of asking might provoke a less inhibitive response than the prospect of negotiating because the meaning of the cue is far less strongly associated with high-power behavior. To test this, we first explored gender differences in perceptions and feelings about the two frames in Study 3. In Study 4, we examined behavioral effects resulting from the two frames. Finally, in Study 5, we directly tested the notion that gender differences in power help to explain the differential response to asking versus negotiating among men and women.

### Method

*Participants.* A total of 108 individuals (62 men and 46 women) completed a survey as part of a series of surveys for which they received course credit. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 34 years old, with a mean of 19 years.

*Procedure.* Each participant received one of two versions of a short survey; one framed the prospect as "negotiating" and the other as "asking." Half of the participants (randomly assigned) were instructed, "We are interested in your thoughts and feelings about negotiating for things for yourself." The other half were instructed, "We are interested in your thoughts and feelings about asking for things for yourself." Participants then rated the degree to which they expected negotiating/asking for things to be easy/difficult, nonthreatening/scary, agonizing/fun, and overbearing/reasonable. Each of these word pairs possesses a valence interpretation: One endpoint is positive, and the opposite is negative. Each pair of antonyms was presented as opposite ends of a 7-point rating scale with *extremely* denoted at each endpoint, followed by *quite* at Points 2 and 6, then *slightly* at Points 3 and 5, and *neither* at the midpoint. After reverse scoring so that higher scores meant more intimidating for all items, a factor analysis produced a single factor that accounted for 58.50% of the variance ( $\alpha = .73$ ). All items had factor loadings above .70.

*Demographic measures.* After completing the rating task, participants were asked to self-report their age, gender, and highest degree achieved.

### Results and Discussion

The means by condition are presented in Figure 2. To compare the effects of the frame across male and female participants, we conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with both gender and frame as independent variables and average intimidation as the dependent variable. The results revealed no main effect of gender,  $F(1, 104) = 1.53, p = .22, \eta_p^2 = .02$ ; a significant main effect of frame,  $F(1, 104) = 21.30, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$ ; and a significant interaction between gender and frame,  $F(1, 104) = 13.47, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .12$ . Men did not differentiate between negotiating and asking ( $M_{\text{Negotiate}} = 3.71, SD = 0.78$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Ask}} = 3.54, SD = 1.00$ ),  $t(60) = 0.52, p = .72, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . However, consistent with our expectations, women considered negotiating to be a great deal more intimidating than asking ( $M_{\text{Negotiate}} = 4.14, SD = 1.04$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Ask}} = 2.66, SD = 0.65$ ),  $t(44) = -5.49, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .41$ .

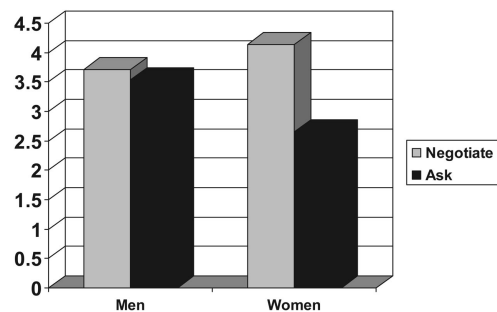


Figure 2. Average intimidation by condition in Study 3. Scales ranged from 1 to 7.

Thus, the feeling about the prospect depended on frame and gender.

This study showed that men and women reacted differently to the prospects of asking and negotiating. These results suggest that the provision of external cues about the negotiability of the situation may affect women and men differently, depending on the nature of the cue. If the prospect of asking is much less intimidating for women than the prospect of negotiating, then cues to ask might be more effective at increasing rates of initiating a negotiation for women. We tested this prediction in Study 4.

#### Study 4

In this experiment, we returned to the method used in Studies 1 and 2 in which participants could initiate a negotiation for (and receive) greater cash payment for their participation in a word game task after being offered the minimum (\$3 from a range of \$3–\$10). However, this study consisted of three conditions: (a) control, (b) negotiating cue, and (c) asking cue. Study 3 provided suggestive evidence that men and women have different perceptions and feelings about engaging in negotiating versus asking. In the current study, we examined the behavioral consequences of these differing perceptions and feelings. Specifically, we tested the prediction that cuing to ask would increase rates of the initiation of a negotiation for more money among women (more so than cuing to negotiate), thereby reducing the gender gap.

#### Method

**Participants.** A total of 153 individuals (81 men and 72 women) participated in exchange for cash payment of between \$3 and \$10. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 56 years old, with a mean of 22 years.

**Procedure.** All procedures and measures matched those in Studies 1 and 2. We selected two new hypotheses-naive experimenters (one man and one woman) closely matched on appearance and attire to control for experimenter effects as much as possible. As in Study 2, the experimental manipulation consisted of providing distinct cues regarding the viability of initiating a negotiation with the experimenter for more money. Because the rate of initiating a negotiation with the experimenter remained relatively low even with the cue to negotiate in Study 2, we added an additional sentence to the two treatment conditions, informing participants that many participants negotiate/ask for higher payment. We reasoned that this social comparison information would likely boost rates of asking for more compensation. It is important to note that this was done across both the asking and negotiating conditions.

The first condition was a control condition, which replicated the exact instructions in Studies 1 and 2 (no cue). In the second condition, participants read a negotiating cue: "You will be compensated between \$3 and \$10. The exact payment is not fixed, and you can negotiate for more if you want. Many participants negotiate for a higher payment." In the third condition, participants read an asking cue: "You will be compensated between \$3 and \$10. The exact payment is not fixed, and you can ask for more if you want. Many participants ask for a higher payment." As in Studies 1 and 2, the dependent variable was whether participants initiated a negotiation with the experimenter for greater compensation.

#### Results and Discussion

Across the three conditions, 51.0% of participants asked for more money. There were no experimenter effects. Of the participants who interacted with a male experimenter, 52.9% asked for more, whereas of those who interacted with a female experimenter, 49.4% asked for more,  $\chi^2(1, N = 153) = 0.18, p = .67$ .

**Gender differences.** Figure 3 displays the proportion of participants who asked by gender and frame. In the control condition, the percentage of men who initiated negotiations was 21% higher than the percentage of women. In the negotiate condition, this percentage difference was 25%. By contrast, in the ask condition, the percentage of women who initiated negotiations was 4% higher than the percentage of men who negotiated. Both men and women found approximately 12 words per Boggle round on average ( $M_{Men} = 12.75, SD = 7.33; M_{Women} = 12.35, SD = 6.15$ ),  $t(151) = 0.36, p = .72$ .

To test the hypothesis that gender differences would depend on the situational cues, we conducted a logit regression with a dichotomous dependent variable assigned a 1 if the participant asked for more money and a 0 if they did not ask (see Table 2). The independent variables included dummy variables for gender, the negotiate cue, and the ask cue, as well as interaction terms of negotiate cue with gender, ask cue with gender, and the control variables (i.e., experimenter and actual Boggle performance). Overall, the model was highly significant, as indicated by the likelihood ratio test,  $\chi^2(7, N = 153) = 53.77, p < .001$ .

For this model, the coefficient on gender was positive as predicted but not significant at the .05 level ( $B = 2.12, p = .06$ ; odds ratio = 8.36). Because of the interactions in the model, this coefficient illustrated the gender difference in the control condition and thus the findings generally replicated those of Study 1, which showed that women initiated negotiations less than men when given no situational cues. Both dummy variables representing the two cues were significant ( $B = 3.53, p < .001$ , for negotiate cue;  $B = 4.20, p < .001$ , for ask cue). Because women were coded as 0 in the gender dummy variable, these coefficients illustrated the effects of each cue on women's propensity to initiate a negotiation relative to the control condition.

We next tested whether gender differences diverged across the control frame and the negotiate frame. The test for this is the interaction between gender and the negotiating cue dummy, and it

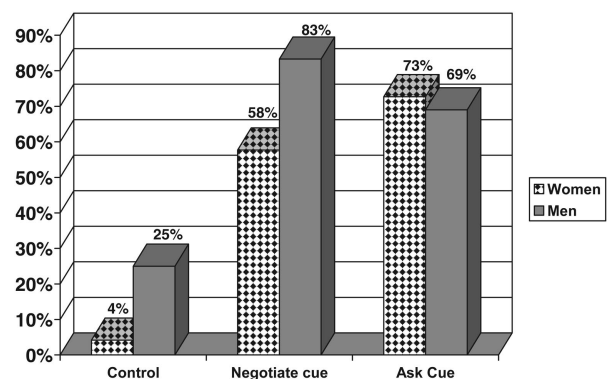


Figure 3. Percentage of participants who asked for greater compensation in Study 4.



Table 2  
*Logit Model for the Initiation of Negotiation in Study 4*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Odds ratio
Gender (1 = male, 0 = female)	2.12 <sup>†</sup>	1.12	8.40
Ask cue condition	4.20 <sup>***</sup>	1.14	66.80
Negotiate cue condition	3.53 <sup>***</sup>	1.10	34.10
Gender × Ask Cue Condition	-2.53 <sup>*</sup>	1.28	0.08
Gender × Negotiate Cue Condition	-0.84	1.31	0.43
Experimenter	-0.00	0.40	1.00
Boggle performance	0.04	0.03	1.04

*Note.* The dependent variable was whether participants asked for more money; it was coded as 1 if participants negotiated for more money and as 0 if they did not.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ . <sup>\*</sup>  $p < .05$ . <sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p < .001$ .

was nonsignificant ( $B = -0.84$ ,  $p = .52$ ), indicating that, consistent with Study 2, gender differences did not change even in the presence of this cue (see Figure 3). However, consistent with the hypothesis that cuing to ask reduces the gender gap, there was a significant interaction between gender and the asking cue dummy ( $B = -2.53$ ,  $p < .05$ ). As can be seen in Figure 3, this reflects the fact that the gender gap was eliminated in the asking cue condition, despite a significant gender difference in the control condition. Neither of the control variables (performance and experimenter) was significant ( $B = 0.04$ ,  $p = .20$ , and  $B = -0.00$ ,  $p = .99$ , respectively).

Another way to examine the data is through chi-square tests comparing men and women within each experimental condition. Men asked for higher payments significantly more frequently than did women in the control condition,  $\chi^2(1, N = 52) = 4.31$ ,  $p < .04$ , and more in the negotiate cue condition,  $\chi^2(1, N = 50) = 3.91$ ,  $p < .05$ , replicating our previous findings. However, cuing to ask completely eliminated the gender effect,  $\chi^2(1, N = 51) = 0.30$ ,  $p = .58$ .<sup>4</sup>

In summary, gender differences in the initiation of negotiation appear to depend on the frame of a cue to ask for greater compensation. That is, cuing to negotiate boosted rates of initiating a negotiation among men and women, but the gender gap persisted. However, cuing to ask rather than to negotiate enabled women to act in a manner contrary to the typical pattern. Thus, introducing a new framing of the behavior was sufficient to eliminate the gender gap in the initiation of negotiation.

### Study 5

Having shown that the way in which negotiations are framed affects the rates at which men and women initiate negotiations, we set out to examine what explains the differential response to asking versus negotiating among men and women in Study 5. As noted in the introduction, we speculated that women's relative lack of power in society (Eagly & Wood, 1982; Henley & LaFrance, 1984) might lead them to view the prospect of negotiating as intimidating. If true, then priming women with power might make negotiating less intimidating.

To examine whether power moderates the interaction between gender and cue, we conducted a study that first primed half of our participants to feel powerful and then asked them to reflect on their

thoughts and feelings about the prospect of either asking or negotiating. We predicted a three-way interaction of gender, framing, and power. Specifically, in the absence of the power prime, we expected that our results would replicate those in Study 3, in which women felt more intimidated by the prospect of negotiating than by the prospect of asking and no framing effect was apparent for men. We predicted that the power prime would not affect men but would eliminate the framing effect for women by reducing their intimidation toward the prospect of negotiation.

### Method

*Participants.* A total of 149 individuals (70 men and 79 women) completed a short survey as part of a series of surveys for which they received course credit. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 60 years old, with a mean of 25 years.

*Procedure.* We manipulated both power and frame of the prospect between participants. For the power induction, half of the participants were primed to experience power and the other half engaged in a control prime. The power prime was adapted from Galinsky et al. (2003) and involved having participants recall a situation in which they possessed power over someone else. To minimize heterogeneity in the types of instances different people recalled, we tried to be specific about the meaning of power. The instructions were as follows:

Please recall a particular incident in which you had power over another individual or individuals. By power, we mean a situation in which you had control and influence over others. Please describe this situation in which you had power—what happened, how you felt, and so on.

In the control condition, instructions read:

Please describe the way you typically spend your evenings. Begin by writing down a description of your activities, and then figure out how much time you devoted to each activity. Examples of things you might describe include eating dinner, studying for a particular exam, hanging out with certain friends, watching TV, and so on.

Next, each participant received one of two versions of a short survey, which were the same manipulations that we used in Study 3. Instructions for half of the participants (randomly assigned) read, "We are interested in your thoughts and feelings about negotiating for things for yourself." Instructions for the other half read, "We are interested in your thoughts and feelings about asking for things for yourself." Participants then rated the degree to which they expected negotiating/asking for things to be easy/difficult, nonthreatening/scary, agonizing/fun, and overbearing/reasonable. These word pairs were used in Study 3, and, as in the former study, each of these word pairs possesses a straightforward valence interpretation: One endpoint is positive, and the opposite is negative. Each pair of antonyms was presented as opposite ends of a 7-point rating scale with *extremely* denoted at each endpoint,

<sup>4</sup> When we included an interaction term between gender of the participant and gender of the experimenter in the model, an unexpected pattern emerged: In the ask and negotiate cue conditions, participants were more likely to negotiate with a same-sex experimenter ( $ps < .05$ ). This is not consistent with the previous studies reported, and we elaborate on gender of the experimenter in the General Discussion section.

followed by *quite* at Points 2 and 6, then *slightly* at Points 3 and 5, and *neither* at the midpoint. Agonizing/fun and overbearing/reasonable were reverse scored so that higher scores on all items reflected greater intimidation to the prospect. A factor analysis produced a single factor ( $\alpha = .67$ ). All items had factor loadings above .65.

**Demographic measures.** After completing the task, participants were asked to self-report their age, gender, and highest degree achieved.

**Perceptions of power.** To examine whether men and women felt equally powerful as a result of the power prime, participants were asked to recall what they wrote about at the beginning of the study and to recall how powerful they felt in that particular instance on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely powerless*) to 7 (*completely powerful*). The results showed that when primed with power, men and women reported equivalent levels of experienced power,  $t(69) = -0.81, p = .42$ , as was intended by the manipulation.

### Results and Discussion

As in Study 3, we averaged responses to the four items listed above to create an average intimidation to the prospect score. To test whether the experience of power moderates the interaction between gender and the cues, we first conducted an ANOVA with power, frame (ask/negotiate), and gender as the independent variables and average intimidation as the dependent variable. Results revealed a main effect of power only at a .10 alpha level,  $F(1, 141) = 3.11, p < .08, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , no main effect of gender,  $F(1, 141) = 2.05, p = .16, \eta_p^2 = .01$ , and a main effect of frame,  $F(1, 141) = 4.22, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , indicating that negotiating was perceived to be more intimidating than was asking. However, these main effects were qualified first by a two-way interaction between power and gender,  $F(1, 141) = 10.81, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$ , indicating that power decreased intimidation for women but not for men. Furthermore, there was a two-way interaction between frame and gender,  $F(1, 141) = 15.98, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .10$ , indicating that the negotiate cue was more intimidating than the ask cue for women but had no such effect on men. The final two-way interaction between power and frame was also significant,  $F(1, 141) = 9.22, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$ , indicating that power reduced the

intimidation of the negotiate cue but not the ask cue. However, all of these two-way interactions were qualified by a three-way interaction among power, frame, and gender,  $F(1, 141) = 8.38, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$ . This three-way interaction reflects the fact that the effects of framing of the prospect depended on both power and gender and on the interaction of power and gender.

Figure 4 presents the means across gender, frame, and power prime. Consistent with what we found in Study 3, in the conditions that did not manipulate power, women found the prospect of negotiating to be much worse than the prospect of asking ( $M_{\text{Negotiate}} = 5.10, SD = 0.93$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Ask}} = 3.33, SD = 0.89$ ),  $t(38) = -6.01, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .49$ . Also consistent with Study 3, men did not distinguish between these frames in these conditions ( $M_{\text{Negotiate}} = 3.38, SD = 1.03$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Ask}} = 3.65, SD = 1.16$ ),  $t(33) = 0.70, p = .49, \eta_p^2 = .02$ . When power was primed, consistent with our predictions, women no longer differentiated between negotiating and asking ( $M_{\text{Negotiate}} = 3.48, SD = 0.82$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Ask}} = 3.46, SD = 0.50$ ),  $t(33) = -0.08, p = .94, \eta_p^2 = .00$ , and neither did men ( $M_{\text{Negotiate}} = 3.59, SD = 0.83$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Ask}} = 3.90, SD = 0.83$ ),  $t(33) = 1.10, p = .28, \eta_p^2 = .03$ .

To consider the data in a different way, one could say that women who were cued to negotiate found the prospect significantly less intimidating when they were first primed to experience power than when they were in their natural state ( $M_{\text{Power}} = 3.48, SD = 0.82$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Control}} = 5.10, SD = 0.93$ ),  $t(43) = 6.19, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .47$ . However, power did not affect women's level of intimidation toward the prospect of asking ( $M_{\text{Power}} = 3.46, SD = 0.50$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.33, SD = 0.89$ ),  $t(32) = -0.53, p = .60, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . The power prime did not affect men's level of intimidation for either the prospect of negotiating ( $M_{\text{Power}} = 3.59, SD = 0.83$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.38, SD = 1.03$ ),  $t(31) = -0.63, p = .53, \eta_p^2 = .01$ , or asking ( $M_{\text{Power}} = 3.59, SD = 0.83$ , vs.  $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.65, SD = 1.16$ ),  $t(35) = -0.73, p = .47, \eta_p^2 = .02$ .

This study extends the evidence of the previous two studies by highlighting the role of power in moderating gender differences in reactions to the prospects of asking and negotiating. When women are primed to experience power, their aversion to negotiating is diminished such that they react much more like men typically do. Put differently, these results show that women's intimidation at the prospect of negotiating relative to the prospect of asking can be

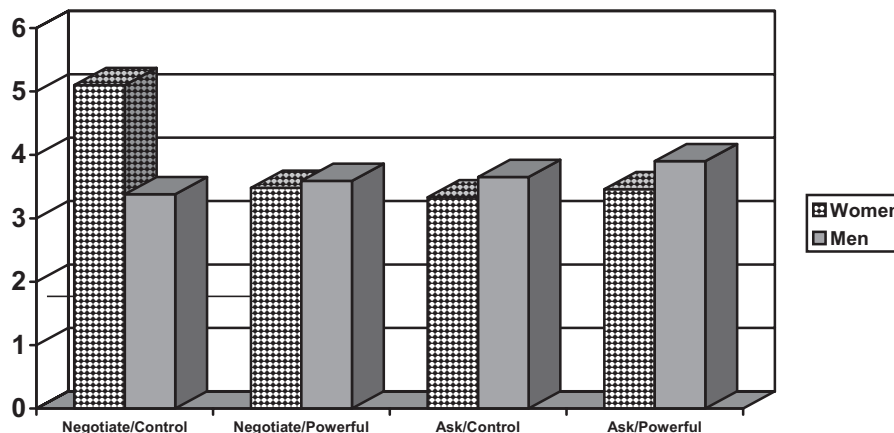


Figure 4. Average intimidation by condition in Study 5. Scales ranged from 1 to 7.

attributed to the vital role of power in thoughts and feelings related to negotiating.

### General Discussion

In this article, we developed a new paradigm to study gender and the initiation of negotiations and through five studies programmatically illustrated how gender and frames differentially affect the initiation of negotiations. Study 1 illustrated that there were gender differences in the initiation of negotiation despite a lack of gender differences in actual or perceived performance in the game. Study 2 illustrated that cuing participants about the negotiability of compensation also had an effect on initiation of negotiations. We found a main effect of gender (women initiated less than men) and a main effect of cuing to negotiate but no interaction between gender and the cue to negotiate. Cuing women to negotiate increased their rates of initiating a negotiation, but the gender gap remained significant. In Study 3, we explored why women might not be as responsive to cues for negotiation by examining the notion that women would find asking to be less intimidating than negotiating. As predicted, women had a much more negative view of negotiating for things than of asking for things, whereas men did not differentially respond to the two frames. Thus, we reasoned that the prospect of negotiating may inhibit women from initiating negotiation more so than the differently framed prospect of asking. We tested the behavioral implications of these differences on initiating behavior in Study 4, using the method of Studies 1 and 2. Here, we varied the description of negotiability in the cues by telling some participants that they may negotiate for a higher payment and others that they may ask. As predicted, we found that the effect of gender interacts with cues—gender effects are present when cued to negotiate but disappear when cued to ask. Finally, Study 5 examined the psychological mechanism that helps to explain differential reactions to negotiating versus asking. As predicted, intimidating reactions to negotiating as compared with reactions to asking were diminished among women when power was primed.

### *Theoretical and Practical Implications*

This research makes a number of contributions to the literature. First, we broadened negotiation theory and research from an examination of what happens at the negotiation table to who gets to the table in the first place. This research begins to build theory regarding a neglected area of negotiation research and at the same time helps to bridge the gap between the practical reality of everyday negotiations and how they are studied in the laboratory. To be sure, our paradigm is only one way to examine the propensity to initiate negotiations. Future research should now develop new methodologies that use different tasks to complement this task that can further develop this as an area of scientific inquiry. As Gigerenzer (1991) has reminded us, often it is with the development of scientific tools—such as new negotiation tasks in this context—that we start to build new theories regarding psychological phenomena. In this spirit, our method offers an alternative tool to begin looking at different questions.

Second, this article also makes a contribution to the psychology of gender in negotiation. By testing who initiates a negotiation and when, we address a notable gap in the negotiation literature. We

contend that the initiation of negotiation warrants consideration because bargaining fails to transpire if opportunities go unrecognized and if individuals do not initiate negotiations. This is critical, given that in today's workplace, idiosyncratic deals—or deals that arise spontaneously between employers and employees—are becoming much more common (Rousseau, 2005). If women are disproportionately unlikely to initiate negotiations, then this could be one possible cause of gender inequities.

Third, this research also contributes to the gender and negotiation literature by advancing a more contextual perspective on gender and negotiation. Although we found main effects of gender on propensity to negotiate, we also explored a more fine-grained contextual analysis of gender and negotiation by examining how subtle framing can affect gender differences in negotiation. We expanded on research in cognitive psychology (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1984) and research in the cognitive tradition in negotiation (e.g., Neale & Bazerman, 1991) by showing that framing affects initiating negotiations and, furthermore, that framing effects vary by gender. We illustrated that women associated the framing of negotiation with much more negative connotative meaning than the framing of asking (Study 3). As a result, we found that framing the situation in terms of asking eliminated gender differences in initiation negotiations.

More generally, this research clearly illustrates that gender effects in negotiation are not static (see also Bowles et al., 2005; Gelfand et al., 2006; Kray & Babcock, 2006; Kray & Thompson, 2005; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999; Walters et al., 1998) but rather are highly malleable depending on cues in the situational context. This article builds on the new wave of research that takes a social-cognitive and contextual perspective on gender differences in negotiation. From a methodological point of view, our results illustrate that the term *negotiation* is not gender neutral. Given that much of the negotiation research in the laboratory is framed with this term, it will be important to now explore gender and bargaining behavior when given different frames.

The current research also adds to the literature by integrating research on the psychology of power with research on gender and negotiation. Scholars have previously argued that gender effects may be, in part, due to differences in power (e.g., Watson, 1994). However, these arguments have received scant empirical attention, and moreover, research has yet to link the psychology of power to gender differences in negotiation. We expanded the growing literature on power (Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003) and theorized that the prospect of negotiating may be implicitly associated with situations in which one has power and thus the authority to try to change the status quo, whereas the prospect of asking is associated with being in a submissive position vis-à-vis a decision maker. Given that women generally have less power than men in society (Henley & LaFrance, 1984), we reasoned that the prospect of negotiation—and thus being in a high-power role—would feel particularly intimidating to women but the prospect of asking would not. We therefore suspected that if we equalized power among men and women, then frames for negotiation would elicit less negative reactions among women, a notion that was supported in Study 5. Put differently, the results illustrate that placing women on the same playing field psychologically changes the way that they perceive negotiations.

From a practical point of view, our results are also instructive. First, the results suggest that there are multiple roads to increasing

asking among women. The results suggest that interventions that help women to relabel negotiation situations as opportunities to ask may help to increase women's propensity to ask to a level equal to that of men. Framing situations as negotiations—which is clearly the language used in negotiation training—might be less effective. The results also point to an additional intervention that would be useful for women, namely a focus on empowerment. When women are primed to think about situations in which they have had power, they are less intimidated by the prospect of negotiating. Thus, we would argue that it is critical for negotiation training for women to incorporate issues of power, lest the very training that is designed to produce effective negotiators proves to produce intimidation.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

These studies are not without limitations. As with other laboratory research, caution must be taken in generalizing the findings to other samples and settings. At the same time, our method was developed to reflect real-world elements of ambiguous negotiation situations, and our results are consistent with our theory and previous field-based results. However, because we focused on the initiation of negotiation, our paradigm did not allow us to examine the social outcomes of initiating a negotiation for men and women. Although it can generally be argued that negotiating leads to better outcomes than does not negotiating, there can also be costs associated with negotiation (e.g., damaging a relationship), and under certain circumstances, those costs could outweigh the benefits.

Furthermore, these costs may be more severe for women than for men. Women who behave in a stereotypically masculine way (e.g., authoritative, dominating) encounter social resistance (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Rudman, 1998). Women are often punished for the same behaviors that are rewarded when performed by men. Initiating a negotiation is one behavior that could engender this sort of double standard. Bowles, Babcock, and Lai (2007) found that evaluators penalized female job candidates for initiating negotiations more so than they did male job candidates. On the basis of this evidence of a backlash toward women who initiate negotiations, it would be remiss to encourage women to behave more like men, given the social environment in which they live.

Another potential limitation of the current work is that the Boggle task was somehow not gender neutral. Our extensive pilot testing, however, showed that men and women found Boggle to be equally enjoyable, interesting, and motivating. Thus, it seems unlikely that results were specific to the task. However, future research should use additional tasks to triangulate on these findings.

This research also only looked at effects of the gender of the participants on initiating negotiations. Our research was not designed to test for interactions between, for example, the gender of participants and the gender of the targets, which would require multiple experimenters for each gender. Future research should examine how gender of the target and evaluators possibly interact to predict asking. Other target characteristics, such as targets' personality dispositions, might factor into individuals' decisions to initiate a negotiation. For example, people might be more willing to initiate negotiations with people whom they perceive to be highly agreeable, warm, or extraverted versus people whom they

perceive to be contentious, cold, or introverted. Likewise, the attractiveness of targets would be an interesting variable to explore vis-à-vis asking behavior. In an ultimatum context, Solnick and Schweitzer (1999) found that participants demanded more of attractive people, suggesting that people may find attractive people more approachable in our Boggle paradigm. Future research should examine interactions among target characteristics (e.g., gender and attractiveness), given that these factors often interact in complex ways in other contexts (e.g., Frieze, Olson, & Russell, 1991).

Future research could also extend the exploration of framing negotiations beyond simply the negotiate and ask frames. There are clearly other frames that might produce similar effects reported in this research. Conceptually, we would expect that, to the extent that frames reflect differential social power, they will produce similar gender effects as found here. For example, low status has been linked to communal characteristics (as opposed to agentic ones), such as communality (Fragale, 2006) and interpersonal warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). We would expect, therefore, that frames that reflect communality, such as cooperation or collaboration, would show similar effects. Further, we have also shown that priming with social power reduces gender effects of frames. Situational factors that empower women, such as having power based on position or expertise, should also produce similar effects. For example, in situations in which women are in positions with legitimate authority, we would expect gender differences in propensity to initiate negotiation to diminish.

Another aspect of this article that could be further developed in future research is the role of power, which we only introduced here in our final study. We found that endowing participants with power mitigated women's intimidation about initiating negotiation when it was framed as a negotiation, thereby eliminating the gender gap under the negotiate frame. A future hypothesis to test is whether inducing a feeling of powerlessness has the opposite effect on men, that is, increasing their intimidation toward to the prospect of negotiating. Furthermore, future tests involving power as a manipulation should test this in the Boggle paradigm to examine its influence on real behavior.

Finally, future research should examine gender and the propensity to ask in organizational contexts and should particularly focus on organizational context variables that might affect this phenomenon. For example, in job contexts in which negotiating is legitimized as part of the job description (e.g., law), we might find that there are fewer differences among men and women than when there is ambiguity regarding legitimacy. Likewise, in organizational cultures and climates in which idiosyncratic deals are perceived to be commonplace and acceptable, there should be fewer differences in gender and the initiation of negotiation, given that initiating negotiations may be a normal part of organizational life. Social networks might moderate the effects found here. To the extent that women are centrally located in social networks, they are more likely to hear about opportunities for resources that exist, as well as feel more empowered to initiate negotiations on their own behalf. Although these research questions go beyond the scope of the current article, we are now conducting research on these variables to broaden the theory and capture the phenomenon of initiating negotiations in its situational complexity.

In conclusion, this article broadens existing negotiation theory and research by moving beyond what happens when people are at

the negotiating table by focusing on an important necessary condition: that individuals have gotten to the table in the first place. Our results advance a social-cognitive perspective on gender and negotiation by showing that gender interacts with framing to predict initiation of negotiation and that such processes are based within differential power that is cultivated among men and women. Illuminating contextual fluidity of gender effects and their linkages to power opens up a new way of studying gender in negotiation.

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