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Negotiation in All Its Phases: Theory and Data on Behavior Before, During, and After Bargaining.

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Abstract

Negotiation consists of a sequence of activities that occur before, during, and after the bargaining process of exchanging offers and counteroffers (Geertz, 1978; Williams, 1985; Zartman & Berman, 1983). It is a central process in many social contexts, especially those that involve exchange of goods or resources or redefining patterns of interdependence, such as when making sales, or business acquisitions. Because of its importance in social life, expert practitioners and social scientists have been attempting to investigate and understand this process for a very long time. The resulting prescriptive theories of negotiation serve to guide the thoughts and actions of negotiators who follow the advice contained within.

The first aim of this dissertation is to examine those prescriptive theories, in particular the prescriptive theories generated using social science methods. Such theories are used in the training of students in business schools, and so are influential in shaping the thoughts and actions of business professionals. But such theories may be incomplete, as some critics have noted that research focuses around the bargaining aspect of negotiations (Barley, 1991; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Although those comments were based on narrative reviews of the literature, they pose important reflexive and practical questions. Was the organizational research on negotiation focused too narrowly on measuring only one aspect of negotiations?

To address this question, I conduct two studies in Chapter 1. In Study 1, I aim to systematically examine empirical research on negotiations, to formally test Barley and Pruitt and Carnevale's hypothesis. In Study 2, I compare prescriptive theories generated from social scientific research to prescriptive theories generated by experts in different domains of practice, in order to test whether prescriptions generated using social science focus on bargaining aspects as compared to prescriptions generated by experts in a variety of social contexts, such as mergers and acquisitions, sales, and law enforcement. Preliminary evidence in these studies provide support for the hypotheses; results for Study 1 suggest social scientific research on negotiations overwhelmingly measures behavior in the bargaining aspect of negotiation, and results in Study 2 suggest a significant concentration of advice in the bargaining phase of negotiation in books authored by social scientists as compared to expert practitioners.

Although much has been learned by studying the bargaining process, many consequential negotiation behaviors that occur before and after the bargaining process have been left largely unexamined. For example, diplomats report spending 75% of their time in preparation for negotiations (Zartman, 2006). Poor performance following mergers and acquisitions have inspired books that solely target the post-merger

integration process (e.g., After the Merger: Managing the Shockwaves; Pritchett, 2014). Few methods exist to measure behavior in pre- and post- bargaining phases. Progress in describing and theorizing about these aspects, will require the development of theory that can be used to motivate future inquiry, and methodological tools researchers can deploy to study those aspects.

Studies in Chapter 2 outline efforts to develop theory and measurement tools that address the extended negotiation process. Study 3 utilizes a novel approach to generating theory about the individual differences antecedents to effective negotiation behaviors. To sample insights from field research, I sample prescriptions about effective negotiation behaviors from a wide range of expert sources. To utilize elements of formal theory, I recruited individual differences experts to provide ratings of the extent of correlation that should exist between the Big Five personality factors and effective behaviors. Results showed a clear role for conscientiousness across phases of negotiation.

Study 4 outlines the development of the Negotiation Behavior Inventory (NBI) a theory based measure of negotiation that samples effective behaviors from prescriptive theories of expert practitioners in a variety of social contexts, as well as from psychological research. This tool may facilitate measurement of behaviors in negotiation phases underemphasized in scientific studies. Studies that detail its development, and validation are outlined, as is a study of individual differences on negotiation behaviors. The NBI has the potential to contribute to the development of scientific theory on pre- and post- negotiation processes. It also has potential to influence organizational outcomes, namely in enhancing the capability to select and train people for effective negotiation.

Study 5 demonstrates the role of individual differences in creating and claiming value in negotiation. In the context of a complex simulation, the study demonstrated that higher levels of conscientiousness were related to larger value claimed (i.e., individual gain), while high levels of conscientiousness and reasoning ability combined were related to greater joint value generated by a dyad.

Overall, this work yields important insights about the study of negotiation, and addresses important gaps in the understanding of negotiation processes. Chapter 1 compares and contrasts organizational researchers insights about negotiation to other domains of negotiation study to reveal significant gaps in understanding preparation and implementation phases of negotiation. Chapter 2 generates theory and tools that can be used to study those aspects, and reveals conscientiousness and reasoning ability to predict effectiveness.

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English (en)

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