

**Disposition or discrimination:  
What drives gender differences in negotiation outcomes?**

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**Abstract**

Prior research finds that male negotiators on average walk away with more value than female negotiators when parties advocate for themselves in a fixed pie (distributive negotiation) context. Two possible explanations for this phenomenon have been suggested. On the one hand, women may behave differently (e.g., less assertively) in negotiations and thus obtain inferior outcomes. On the other hand, negotiators may behave differently (e.g., more assertively) *towards* women, leading to inferior outcomes for them. Using a virtual reality setting where negotiators meet as avatars, we randomly allocate avatar gender to experimental participants who are unaware of the random assignment. Our resulting 2x2 (true gender x displayed gender) design aims to disentangle processes and outcomes stemming from true gender versus gender as perceived by the negotiation counterpart. Our results indicate a significant effect of true gender on negotiation outcomes, whereby women obtain significantly inferior outcomes. In contrast, we find no evidence for discrimination in terms of an effect for displayed avatar gender.