

**The Psychology of Leadership**  

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**New Perspectives and Research**

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2005

LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS  
Mahwah, New Jersey

London

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# 9

## Claiming Authority: Negotiating Challenges for Women Leaders

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Style isn't women's problem. The most recent research on gender in leadership indicates that while women tend to adopt different leadership styles than men, they are rated to be just as—if not more—effective on important leadership dimensions. Meta-analytic research shows that women tend to be relatively more democratic (as opposed to autocratic) leaders than are their male peers (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). These statistical effects are enlivened by the testimonies of accomplished women who celebrate the development of what they claim is a distinctive voice for women leaders (Rosener, 1990). In a style that fits comfortably for them, women leaders have donned agilely the traditionally male leadership mantle. The popular press cheers that “women rule” as leaders (Sharpe, 2000), and the most recent meta-analytic research on gender and leadership supports their claim (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2002, p. 36).

So, why—if both men and women have what it takes to be effective leaders—are women lagging so far behind men in the race to the top? We propose that the gender gap in leadership is not about leading per se, but

rather about claiming positions of authority. Where the most significant gender differences in relation to leadership occur is in the claiming of authority—men claim and hold a greater number of leadership positions than do women—not in what men and women do once they achieve that authority.

In this chapter, we explore four dominant explanations for the gender gap in claiming authority: gender bias, lack of experience, lack of motivation, and familial responsibility. There is validity to each of these explanations, but there are limitations as well. Each explanation suggests both barriers and opportunities. We argue that each potential barrier is surmountable through capitalizing on opportunities for negotiation. Drawing on recent developments in research on gender in negotiation, we propose an explanation for why the types of negotiations involved in claiming positions of authority are precisely those types of negotiations in which gender differences favoring males tend to emerge. We suggest future research to further explore the barriers and opportunities encountered by women negotiating to claim authority.

### DOMINANT EXPLANATIONS FOR THE GENDER GAP IN LEADERSHIP

Four explanations for why women are underrepresented in positions of leadership emerge out of the gender and work literature. Each suggests barriers and opportunities for women attempting to claim authority. One leading explanation is that gender bias in the workplace poses active constraints on women advancing to higher levels of authority (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kolb & Williams, 2000). Another explanation is that women lack the specific types of experience and skills to be serious contenders for the top job (Catalyst, 1998; Wirth, 2001). In spite of the fact that nearly half of all managers are women, only a small minority of senior women managers carry the types of profit-and-loss or revenue-generating responsibilities that lead to the very top (Wirth, 2001, p. 39). A third explanation is that women do not seem as interested as men in gaining the necessary experience and taking the initiative to lead (Wellington & Giscombe, 2001). Finally, and related to the question of whether women really want to lead, is the issue of women assuming primary responsibility for household and family and being less able or willing than men to balance personal life demands with the demands of top leadership positions.

## GENDER BIAS

### Barriers to Claiming Authority

Occupational positions dominated by one sex tend to be imbued with gender-consistent attributes for success (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Eagly & Steffen, 2000), and the overwhelming majority of top leadership positions in American society are held by men. In 2002, less than 16% of the corporate officers in America's 500 largest companies were women. While 60 of the largest 500 companies had filled at least 25% of their corporate officers ranks with women, 71 of the 500 did not have one woman corporate officer (Catalyst, 2002). Looking to the public sector, there were only six U.S. states with women governors in 2003, and half of the states had no women representatives in the 108th U.S. Congress (Center for American Women and Politics, 2002). We are accustomed to seeing, and therefore tend to expect to see, men in charge.

Women's prospects for leadership may be obstructed by sex-typed images of leadership (Schein, 2001; Valian, 1999). We anticipate that men will assume leadership in mixed-sex groups, and tend to work together and interact socially in ways that reinforce those gender-based social roles (Dovidio, Ellyson, Keating, & Heltman, 1988; Wood & Karten, 1986). As the ratio of women to men decreases—as is generally the case as one rises through organizational ranks—resistance to women's claiming of authority increases (M. Heilman, 1980, 1995; Kanter, 1977b). Women who defy the social rules of the situation and attempt to assert their authority in the absence of external validation are likely to meet with social disapproval from their counterparts (Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Valian, 1999).

Once women manage to establish themselves in positions of authority, gender-based social roles inform how others—and the women themselves—think they should behave (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Gender differences (favoring males) in the evaluation of leaders are most significant when leaders take on stereotypically masculine roles (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Women who adopt stereotypically masculine behaviors violate the norms of female niceness, and are negatively socially sanctioned for it (Branson, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 1999). It is no wonder, perhaps, that men and women have tended to adopt distinct leadership styles (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

### Opportunities for Claiming Authority

Even if gender biases create constraints in the style of leadership women adopt, many studies provide evidence that women's leadership styles are just as, if not more, effective than those of their male peers. In Burns' (1978) theory of "transformational" and "transactional" leaders, transactional leaders motivate followers by appealing to their existing preferences by coercion or reward, including contingent rewards based on performance. Transformational leaders, in contrast, "engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Recent meta-analytic research has established a significant positive correlation between leadership effectiveness and indicators of transformational leadership and the contingent reward dimensions of transactional leadership (Eagly et al., 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

In her most recent meta-analytic study of gender and leadership, Alice Eagly and her colleagues tested whether gender differences in leadership style would map onto measures of transformational and transactional leadership styles. They proposed that women might rely more heavily than men on "transformational" leadership styles and positive reward aspects of "transactional" leadership, because these behaviors would pose less of a gender role conflict than would other more control-oriented or coercive leadership styles. In a meta-analysis of 45 studies, Eagly and colleagues found that women were rated significantly higher than men on nearly all of the indicators of transformational leadership, as well as the contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership (Eagly et al., 2002). There were no significant gender differences observed in leaders' ability to inspire pride and respect. Furthermore, other research by Eagly and colleagues has demonstrated that gender roles are malleable, bending—albeit slowly—with changes in social conventions and the division of labor within society (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000; Wood & Eagly, 2002). By taking on and succeeding in leadership roles in ever-greater numbers, women have the ability to erode stereotype-based assumptions that leadership is a man's job.

## LACK OF EXPERIENCE

### Barriers to Claiming Authority

One of the oft-cited barriers to women's advancement into senior management positions is a lack of critical management experiences. Although

women in the United States hold 47% of executive and managerial positions, they tend to be concentrated in the "velvet ghetto" of human resource management, education and accounting (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002; Wirth, 2001; Woodall, Edwards, & Welchman, 1995). The route to the highest echelons of corporate America tends to not to flow through these "non-strategic" departments but rather through line management positions that carry relatively more revenue-generating responsibilities and higher profile influence within the corporation. In 1999, women in the United States held just over 6% of the corporate line jobs and, correspondingly, about 5% of the highest ranking corporate positions (e.g., chairperson, CEO, president, etc.; Wirth, 2001, p. 39).

### **Opportunities for Claiming Authority**

When Catalyst asked CEOs what they thought would be the most effective corporate strategies for advancing women to senior management positions, 74% responded "giving women high visibility assignments" (Catalyst, 1996, p. 32). Many CEOs underscore the importance of women taking the initiative in letting their managers know they are interested in career-enhancing opportunities and point out that the organizational pipeline is stacked with women poised to rise to the highest ranks (Wellington & Giscombe, 2001). With broad-based recognition of the types of management experience that women need to obtain and a deep pool of prospective women competitors for those slots, the time should be ripe for women to fill those higher visibility, strategic management positions in ever greater numbers.

## **LACK OF MOTIVATION**

### **Barriers to Claiming Authority**

Another broadly espoused explanation for why there are not more women in leadership positions is that women are not hungry for leadership positions; opportunities abound, but women do not aggressively pursue them. Research supports the notion that many women shy away from promoting themselves for leadership positions. Qualitative studies suggest that women often take on informal as opposed to official leadership roles, tending to team cohesion and group conflict behind the scenes (Fletcher, 2001; Kolb, 1992; Neubert, 1999). Other research suggests that women may



actually avoid the term "leader," in favor of less self-serving titles such as "facilitator," "organizer," or "coordinator" (Andrews, 1992). Consistent with the propositions of the qualitative researchers, meta-analytic research from lab and field studies on the emergence of leaders in initially leaderless groups has shown men to be significantly more likely than women to emerge as work group leaders, while women are more likely than men to be recognized as social facilitators (Eagly & Karau, 1991).

As discussed in the sections on gender biases, social incentives motivate women to downplay rather than explicitly promote their desires for and competence in positions of authority. Work by Laura Rudman on the dilemmas of self-promotion shows that if a man and a woman self-promote in a job situation, both communicate their professional competence successfully but the woman comes off as socially incompetent and undesirable for the position (Rudman, 1998). Even if a woman desires to run the show, she may be inhibited from asserting her authority by her own socialization and the expectations of others (Ridgeway, 2001).

### **Opportunities for Claiming Authority**

However pervasive the effects of gender-based social roles and expectations may be on the motivation to claim authority, these effects are moderated by situational factors. Research by Eagly and colleagues, for instance, shows that women are more likely to emerge as leaders the longer the group interacts together and the more complex the level of social interaction becomes (Eagly & Karau, 1991). Numerous studies have shown that the gender distribution within occupations also moderates the extent to which gender influences workplace behavior, expectations and opportunities (Cohen, Broschak, & Haveman, 1998; Ely, 1994, 1995; Heilman, 1995; Heilman, 1980; Kanter, 1977a; Lee, 2001). Gender is more likely to influence leadership emergence if there is a highly asymmetric sex distribution in leadership positions; in most large organizational settings, this is a structural condition likely to favor male over female leadership candidates.

An intuitive and/or experience-based awareness of these situational constraints may explain why so many ambitious women are leaving large organizations to start their own ventures (Wirth, 2001). From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the number of women-owned businesses increased by 78%, with survival rates exceeding the national average. Although the largest share (estimated 52%) of women-owned businesses have been in the service sector, the top growth industries for women-owned businesses

from 1987–1996 were in traditionally male sectors such as construction, wholesale trade, transportation, agribusiness and manufacturing. From 1987–1996, women-owned business with 100 or more workers increased employment by 158%, which was more than double the rate for all U.S. firms of similar size. Employment growth in women-owned businesses beat the national average in nearly every major industry and U.S. region (Small Business Administration, 2001). It is hard to argue that women do not have the drive to lead. Women entrepreneurs have gone out and shaped organizations in ways that allow them to flourish and lead effectively. What we need now is research investigating and collecting the accumulated learning from the entrepreneurs leading women-owned businesses, to help instruct “intrapreneurs” to follow their lead by claiming higher positions of authority in traditional organizations.

## FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Barriers to Claiming Authority

Many argue that the most obvious and difficult barrier to women achieving leadership positions is that they bear a disproportionate share of childrearing and household management responsibilities (Mahoney, 1996). Working moms tend to feel they have primary responsibility for child care and household duties and experience significantly more guilt than male partners over family–work conflicts. For example, in a study of 139 married couples with young children and relatively equal-status careers in business or academia, researchers observed “considerable, traditional inequity in the distribution of child-care tasks and chore responsibility” (Biernat & Wortman, 1991, p. 844). In spite of carrying a disproportionate share of the at-home workload, the women in the study reported being generally satisfied with their husbands’ contribution to the domestic labor and relatively critical of their own household performance (Biernat & Wortman, 1991).

Role conflicts and time constraints created by simultaneous responsibilities at work and at home carry substantial implications for women’s life choices and career trajectories. Some women cope by eliminating traditional roles, not marrying or choosing not to have children (Hall, 1972; Hewlett, 2002; Nieva & Gutek, 1981). A 2001 survey found that, among “ultra high-achieving women” in corporate America (i.e., with annual earnings of \$100,000 or higher) 49% had no children by the age of 40.

This figure compares to 19% for "ultra-high achieving men" (i.e., with annual earnings of \$200,000 or higher; Hewlett, 2002)—and to approximately 20% for the general population of American women age 40 (Bachu & O'Connell, 2001). A 2001 study of Harvard Business School graduates from the classes of 1981, 1986, and 1991 found that only 38% of the female graduates were working full time. The majority of the women from the HBS graduating classes had substantially or completely disengaged from the work force to spend more time with their children and spouses (Blagg & Young, 2002).

One strategy that working mothers adopt is the "superwoman" approach: "coping through reactive role behavior . . . whose aim is to meet all of the role demands experienced" (Hall, 1972, p. 479). For many women, this is an impossible standard to which to hold themselves and one that places the entire overload problem on women's shoulders (Nieva & Gutek, 1981, p. 49). Beyond wearing women down, "double-duty" (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Hochschild, 1990) places constraints on women's social lives. Without time to spare, "superwomen" have few opportunities to deepen and broaden their informal networks and thereby accumulate the social capital needed to leverage themselves into high-profile positions (Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Wellington & Giscombe, 2001).

An alternative to becoming "superwoman" is to cope with work-home role and time conflicts by reducing work-force attachment and choosing an intermittent or part-time work style. Women who choose this alternative tend to readjust their career aspirations (Hall, 1972; Nieva & Gutek, 1981). When they reenter the work force, it tends to be at lower level positions than they departed from earlier in their careers (Nieva & Gutek, 1981) and to be at lower levels of pay as compared to women who had continued working (Waldfoegel, 1998). This is in part because reentry women find their training or skills to be outdated, but also because they have a diminished self-concept with regard to their workplace skills, abilities and leadership potential (Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Padula, 1994).

### Opportunities for Claiming Authority

A potentially more productive response to work-family barriers than reactive role management (e.g., playing superwoman) or personal role redefinition (e.g., choosing between home/family or career) is "structural role redefinition" (Hall, 1972, p. 477). Structural role redefinition involves engaging with family and work partners to renegotiate role-based expectations and resources (Hall, 1972, p. 477). At home, this means negotiating

a workable distribution of household labor between spouses, partnering with friends and extended family, and hiring additional support to fill in where there are not the resources within the family to cover all responsibilities.

Again the example of women entrepreneurs suggests numerous potential models for how to restructure workplaces to better enable women to pursue their ideals at home and at work. High-achieving self-employed women are significantly less likely to be childless than high-achieving corporate women (22% v. 42%; Hewlett, 2002). The percentage of women entrepreneurs with children (78%) is very close to the national average for all women of age 40 (80%; Bachu & O'Connell, 2001).

Even within larger organizations, there is increasing evidence that family-friendly institutional reforms can carry significant benefits for women's work-force participation after childbirth. The study of organizations with and without job-protected maternity leave in the United States and the United Kingdom shows that women who had leave coverage and returned to work after childbirth received a wage premium that offset the commonly observed "family gap" favoring women without children (Waldfogel, 1998). By instituting work arrangements that take into account that work and family demands have to be managed in concert, organizations are more likely to retain working mothers on leadership tracks. With the benefit of higher levels of work experience, job tenure, and pay, we are likely to see more working mothers competing for top slots.

### **TAKING STOCK: NEGOTIATING TO CLAIM AUTHORITY**

Although there is certainly some validity to each of these four dominant explanations, none of them poses an insurmountable barrier to women claiming greater levels of authority. An analysis of each of the four explanations points to clearly negotiable opportunities for change. Although gender-based social roles and stereotypes are dense and constraining, they are not intractable. Norms, beliefs, and behavior are part of a negotiated order, and, as eloquently stated by Constance Buchanan, founding director of the Harvard Divinity School's Women's Studies in Religion program: "Women especially possess the will to take the initiative in this social reorganization. . . . Pressed to rearrange the meaning and structure of their own lives, they can more easily notice and question the institutional and work norms to which most men have become habituated" (Hartman, 1999,

p. 19). If it takes particular types of work experience and/or high-profile work opportunities to make it to the top, women can negotiate for those positions. If women want to be leaders, they can find ways to make their preferences known and to ask for others' support in achieving their aims. If the complexity of work and family life creates constraints, women can renegotiate their own and others' role expectations and claim the necessary resources and assistance.

But, if these opportunities to renegotiate gendered assumptions, work experiences, leadership opportunities, and role constraints are so clear, why haven't women seized them already? We propose that recent developments in the study of gender in negotiation may shed light on the gender gap in the claiming of authority.

## GENDER IN NEGOTIATION

Recent developments in the study of gender in negotiation have shown that the effects of gender on negotiation outcomes are contingent on situational factors (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2003; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998). More specifically, this research suggests that sex differences are more likely to emerge when there is ambiguity about the bargaining range and the appropriate standards for negotiated agreement, and when gender is relevant and salient to behavior or performance expectations (Bowles et al., 2003). We propose that insights from these recent developments in the study of gender in negotiation may help to illuminate why women are finding it so difficult to negotiate their way past the barriers we have described.

## MODERATORS OF GENDER EFFECTS IN NEGOTIATION: AMBIGUITY AND GENDER TRIGGERS

### Ambiguity

Ambiguity about the bargaining range and the appropriate standards for agreement opens the door for gender-based norms and preconceptions to influence negotiation expectations and outcomes (Bowles et al., 2003). We rely on past experience and preconceptions to fill in the blanks when there are no clear external standards to use to judge or interpret a situation. For

instance, there is extensive evidence from field and laboratory studies that sex biases in performance evaluations and hiring decisions are positively associated with the amount of subjective inference required by the evaluator; the more job-relevant information that is available, the less likely it is that the worker's sex will inform the evaluator's judgment (Chang, 2000; Foddy & Smithson, 1999; Heilman, 1984, 1995; Heilman, Martell, & Simon, 1988; Lenney, Mitchell, & Browning, 1983; Pfeffer, 1977; Pheterson, Kiesler, & Goldberg, 1971; Tosi & Einbender, 1985). Ambiguity has also been shown to play a role in men and women's own expectations for themselves. Research on the entitlement effect, for instance, shows that women (as compared to men) will expect less pay for equal labor and work longer and with fewer errors for equal pay, but only in the absence of clear pay comparison information (Callahan-Levy & Messe, 1979; Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984). When comparison standards for compensation are made clear, there is no significant gender difference in what men and women believe they should be paid (Major & Forcey, 1985). This effect is partially explained by evidence that, when compensation standards are unclear, men and women will tend to compare themselves to similar (*viz.*, same-gender) others for information on how to compensate themselves. In a society where men tend to be granted more compensation and other material resources than women, and members of both groups compare their own resources with those held by others of the same gender group, it is reasonable for men and women anchor on different reference points when setting their compensation expectations in ambiguous situations (Crosby, 1982; Major & Forcey, 1985).

### Gender Triggers

"Gender trigger" encapsulates the notion that there are circumstances in which gender becomes relevant and salient to behavior or performance expectations. Gender triggers reflect sex-based stereotypes and social roles that are embedded in our social fabric (Kolb & Williams, 2000). Because of this embeddedness, they do not need to be embraced or consciously considered in order to shape expectations or behavior (Eagly, 1987; Steele, 1997). Gender triggers influence negotiation by prescribing distinct behavioral scripts and outcome expectations for male and female negotiators (Bowles et al., 2003; Kolb & Williams, 2000). Negotiation research has identified three examples of potential gender triggers in bargaining: competitive versus integrative negotiation, negotiating for the self versus others, and the activation of implicit stereotypes.

***Competitive Versus Integrative Negotiation.*** Competitive negotiations are consistent with norms for appropriate masculine behavior (e.g., being agentic, self-promoting) and they contradict the norms for appropriate feminine behavior (e.g., maintaining a communal- as opposed to self-orientation; Bakan, 1966). Integrative negotiations, in contrast, call for a mix of value-creating and value-claiming behavior (Lax & Sebenius, 1986), which does not clearly contradict or conform to either gender stereotype. Because competitive bargaining is a relatively masculine domain, male negotiators are likely to have more confidence and higher performance expectations in competitive negotiations than are female negotiators (Beyer, 1990; Beyer & Bowden, 1997; Lenney, 1981). Consistently, much of the evidence that gender has the potential to influence negotiation expectations and performance is based on studies of competitive negotiations, such as the ultimatum game (Solnick, 2001), sale price (Ayles, 1991; Kray et al., 2001), and salary negotiations (Bowles et al., 2003; Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993).

***Negotiating for Self Versus Other.*** Western norms for feminine behavior prescribe that women behave in other-oriented as opposed self-interested ways. Because of this, women are likely to be particularly inhibited by competitive negotiations for the self as opposed to those for others. One recent experimental study showed that women's negotiating intentions were moderated by whether the negotiation concerned the negotiator's own wage or the wage to be received by an anonymous other. When negotiating for someone else, female negotiators reported that they would ask for 22% more on average than they would when they were negotiating for themselves. Negotiating for self or other had no influence on males' negotiating intentions (Bowles et al., 2003).

***Activation of Implicit Stereotypes.*** Motivated by Claude Steele's work on stereotype threat, negotiation researchers have shown that the implicit priming of gender-based stereotypes can lead negotiators to fulfill stereotype-based expectations (Kray et al., 2001). For example, Steele and colleagues administered a math test to mathematically inclined young women and men. When the researchers' introduction to the exam mentioned that there tended to be gender differences in test performance, women performed significantly worse than men. When the researchers mentioned that the tests tended not to produce gender differences, there was no significant difference in performance by sex (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). Applied to negotiation, Kray and her colleagues showed that

the threat of negative stereotype confirmation could undermine women's negotiating performance. Stating that negotiation outcomes are evaluative of "true" negotiating ability (vs. non-evaluative) or presenting the negotiation task in gendered (vs. neutral) language negatively affected women's negotiating performance relative to men's (Kray et al., 2001).

These recent developments in the research on gender in negotiation shed new light on the gender gap in leadership positions: the race to claim authority calls for just those types of negotiations in which gender differences tend to emerge. In negotiations to claim greater authority, exactly what is up for negotiation can be *highly ambiguous*, and women are called to negotiate *competitively for themselves* in domains that are rife with *negative gender-based stereotypes*. To compete more effectively for leadership positions, women need to be successful in precisely the types of negotiations that are likely to be relatively inhibiting and challenging for women.

### CONCLUSION

Psychological researchers may gain new insights into the study of gender in leadership by building on recent developments in the study of gender in negotiation. It seems unlikely that the relatively small gender differences—sometimes favoring males, sometimes favoring females or neither—observed in leadership style and effectiveness can account for the relatively dramatic gender gap in leadership positions. In order to understand the gender gap in leadership, we propose that psychological researchers refocus their attention away from what men and women tend to do or how well they perform once they reach those positions, and toward how women can negotiate to achieve the experience and resources that lie on the path to leadership positions.

This new research direction we propose is consistent with and complementary to the most recent developments in the psychological study of gender and leadership. Following more than a decade of research on gender and leadership, Alice Eagly has proposed the pursuit of new research on prejudice as a barrier to women's advancement into leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Eagly and Karau propose that perceived incongruity between female gender roles and leadership roles leads women to be undervalued as potential leadership candidates. We embrace the notion that gender-based social roles and sex-stereotypes have the potential to



color both prospective leaders' aspirations and observers' judgments of leadership candidates. We propose to focus on the influence of these "gender triggers" in negotiations to claim authority, because we believe that negotiations over the resources and opportunities to gain positions of authority make up a particularly influential set of social interactions in determining who becomes a leader.

The study of negotiations to claim authority will benefit from further research in both the laboratory and the field. Laboratory researchers could test whether manipulation of ambiguity and "gender triggers" (e.g., perceived gender role incongruity) moderates gender differences in expectations and outcomes in negotiations over leadership-relevant resources (e.g., work opportunities, votes or funds for task completion). Field research could test when and how gender differences emerge in prospective leaders' negotiation expectations over leadership-relevant resources. Research within organizations could also explore gender differences in the frequency of negotiations over leadership-relevant resources and also whether men and women have qualitatively different information and/or opportunities for these negotiations. Finally, ethnographic work could explore inductively the work arrangements of women entrepreneurs to see if they suggest negotiable alternatives for enhancing the leadership potential of women in larger organizational settings.

The gender gap in leadership positions can be reduced through negotiation. The study of gender in negotiation carries the potential to generate useful prescriptive suggestions for individuals who aspire to leadership positions. Such micro-level prescriptions provide individuals with options for changing situations to their own advantage in the short term rather than waiting for macro-level developments, such as the reduction of prejudice and/or the feminization of leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Although women face legitimate barriers in their negotiations to claim authority, the playing field is ripe with opportunities for women to enhance their negotiating power and to reshape negotiating situations in their own favor—and ultimately to claim the authority they seek.

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