

**Infuriating Impasses:**

**Angry Expressions Promote Exiting Behavior in Negotiations**

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**Abstract**

Prior research has focused on the influence of emotional expressions on the value of negotiated outcomes. Across three studies, we demonstrate that people interacting with angry counterparts become more likely to walk away from a negotiation, resulting in an impasse. In Study 1, participants who encountered counterparts expressing anger were more likely to choose an impasse, relative to those with neutral counterparts. In Study 2, building on the emotion-as-social-information (EASI) model, we found that inferences of selfishness mediate the effect of angry expressions on impasses. In Study 3, we found that timing moderates the relationship between angry expressions and impasses. Furthermore, we demonstrated that perceptions of inappropriateness mediate the interactive effect of timing and angry expressions on impasses. Taken together, our work reveals that expressing anger is risky in negotiations because people infer that angry counterparts are selfish, and become more likely to exit negotiations.

Negotiations are social exchanges characterized by competition and cooperation (Galinsky & Schweitzer, 2015; Halevy & Phillips, 2015; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Many competitive social exchanges, including negotiations, elicit anger (Allred, 1999; Glomb, 2002). Angry expressions have a profound influence over interpersonal responses and negotiating behavior (see Van Kleef, 2016 for a review).

A substantial literature has focused on how angry expressions can influence negotiated agreements of more or less value (e.g., Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004a). Interestingly, in these studies, reaching an impasse was not an option. This omission is striking because anger is commonly displayed in negotiations (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010) and impasses frequently occur in negotiations (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Schweinsberg, Ku, Wang, & Pillutla, 2012; Shalvi et al., 2013). In this investigation, we examine whether angry expressions promote impasses in negotiations.

### **Angry Expressions in Negotiations**

To explore the interpersonal effects of anger on impasses, we draw on the emotions-as-social-information (EASI) model (Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef, Homan, & Cheshin, 2012). According to the EASI model, emotional expressions communicate information about intentions (Fridlund, 1994), expectations (Averill, 1982), traits (Knutson, 1996), and likely future behaviors (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). When people perceive emotional expressions, they often make strategic inferences about their counterpart, and these inferences influence bargaining behavior (Van Kleef, 2009).

Several studies have identified the beneficial effects of expressing anger in negotiations. Angry expressions are associated with greater value-claiming in negotiations (Sinaceur &

Tiedens, 2006; Steinel, Van Kleef, & Harinck, 2008; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007; Van Kleef et al., 2004a). When negotiators interact with angry counterparts, they strategically infer that their counterparts are tough, assertive, and have stringent limits (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2004a). As a result, negotiators respond to angry counterparts by making concessions and exhibiting compliance and cooperative behaviors (Adam & Shirako, 2013; Van Kleef et al., 2004a).

Expressing anger in negotiations, though, has the potential to backfire. Angry expressions can trigger a desire to retaliate (Adam, Shirako, & Maddux, 2010; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007; Van Kleef, 2009). For example, angry expressions escalate conflict (Wubben, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2009). However, when negotiators have less power than their angry counterparts, they are more likely to covertly retaliate against them (Wang, Northcraft, & Van Kleef, 2012). Similarly, in ultimatum bargaining, negotiators respond to angry allocators by providing misleading information and by rejecting offers when the consequences are not severe (Van Dijk, Van Kleef, Steinel, & Van Beest, 2008).

According to the EASI framework, the cooperative or competitive nature of the interaction and the extent to which individuals perceive emotional displays as appropriate influence negotiating behavior (Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010). Depending on the structural characteristics and perceptions of the social interaction, expressing anger can facilitate particular behavioral responses such as “moving away” (i.e. exiting), “moving toward” (i.e. conceding), or “moving against” (i.e. retaliating) (Horney, 1945; Van Kleef et al., 2010).

In cooperative interactions, individuals react to expressions of anger by “moving away” and forming coalitions with other individuals (Van Beest, Van Kleef, & Van Dijk, 2008).

However, in competitive interactions, previous research has focused on “moving toward” and “moving against” behavioral responses to angry expressions. For instance, when there is no opportunity to undermine an aggressor, individuals respond to angry expressions by making concessions, thereby “moving toward” their opponents (e.g., Steinel et al., 2008; Van Kleef et al., 2004a). By contrast, when there is an opportunity for retribution, angry expressions have been linked to retaliation and “moving against” opponents (e.g., Adam & Brett, 2015; Wang et al., 2012).

The existing literature has overlooked the “moving away” behavioral response to angry expressions in competitive interactions. Yet, there is some indirect evidence supporting a tendency to “move away” from negotiators who express anger because individuals report a lower desire for future interactions with angry expressers (Kopelman, Rosette, & Thompson, 2006; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004b).

In this work, we investigate whether expressing anger carries the negative consequence of destroying joint value in negotiations by activating a tendency to “move away”. Previous research suggests that when negotiators have better alternatives than making concessions, they are more likely to capitalize on these alternatives to pursue their self-interest during interactions with angry counterparts (see Van Kleef et al., 2010 for a review). We postulate that negotiators who have an option to exit are more likely to leave a negotiation when interacting with angry counterparts than neutral counterparts.

### **Negotiation Impasses**

Impasses are pervasive in negotiations (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Dana, Cain, & Dawes, 2006; Shalvi et al., 2013; Tripp & Sondak, 1992). For example, teacher unions go on

strike with the government, franchise owners enact lockouts with professional athletes, and customers hang up on sales agents. However, prior research has largely focused on negotiated agreements, excluded impasses from analyses, and neglected to incorporate “move away” options in study designs (Babcock & Loewenstein, 1997; Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001; Tuncel, Mislin, Kesebir, & Pinkley, 2016). Van Kleef et al. (2010) wrote, “When the natural tendency to move away cannot be realized simply because that option is not made available, we may erroneously conclude that people tend to cooperate” (p.86).

An emerging literature has begun to highlight the importance of interpersonal factors that influence impasses. For example, extreme first offers (Schweinsberg et al., 2012), perspective-taking (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008), and offers presented in the form of ranges (Ames & Mason, 2015) influence impasses. One interpersonal factor that may be particularly important to the impasse decision process is emotional expressions. When choosing to exit negotiations, negotiators evaluate not only their counterparts’ offers, but also the counterparts’ motives. In reaction to angry expressions, negotiators may interpret offers and perceive their counterparts more negatively compared to when counterparts express neutral emotion.

### **Angry Expressions Promote Negotiation Impasses**

We postulate that when counterparts express anger, negotiators are more likely to exit the negotiation, resulting in an impasse. The EASI model suggests that the perceived appropriateness of angry expressions can influence behavioral responses in negotiations (Van Kleef, 2009). Prior research has revealed that angry expressions can be judged as inappropriate when anger is directed at the negotiator (Steinel et al., 2008) or when anger violates normative expectations and

display rules (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). If anger is considered inappropriate, negotiators can respond punitively and competitively (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007; Van Kleef et al., 2012).

Building on this prior work, we reason that angry expressions at the outset of a negotiation may violate social norms that govern deal-making in negotiations. Although angry expressions may be consistent with social norms in disputes and deemed appropriate, angry expressions, especially early in negotiations, are likely to trigger an expectancy violation and be viewed as inappropriate (Geddes & Callister, 2007). We predict that, if negotiators have the opportunity to exit, they are more likely to exploit the option to exit with angry counterparts than neutral counterparts.

According to the EASI model, individuals often make strategic inferences about their counterparts based on their emotional expressions (Pruitt, 1981; Uleman, Newman, & Moskowitz, 1996; Van Kleef, 2009). Not only do people make inferences about toughness when witnessing angry expressions (Van Kleef et al., 2004a), but they also make inferences that the angry expresser is more dominant (Knutson, 1996), more competent (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008), and less warm (Tiedens, 2001). We extend the understanding of inferences of angry expressions by examining whether individuals infer angry expressers as being particularly selfish. Although the link between *feeling* angry and selfish behavior has been documented, we know relatively little about angry expressions as an interpersonal signal of selfish motives.

Prior studies have found that when people feel angry, they become more likely to pursue self-interested rewards (Aarts et al., 2010) and engage in selfish deception (Yip & Schweitzer, 2016). When people experience emotions, they cognitively appraise events and interactions differently (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Displays of emotion provide insight into these appraisals

and motives associated with the appraisals (Ames & Johar, 2009). We propose that individuals become particularly likely to infer that angry counterparts are selfish. We predict that inferences of selfishness mediate the relationship between angry expressions and impasses.

Finally, we identify a boundary condition of the effect of expressing anger on impasses: the timing of angry expressions. Building on the EASI theory (Van Kleef, 2016), we propose that the timing of angry expressions influences their perceived appropriateness. We expect that in early rounds of a negotiation, expressing anger is more likely to lead to impasses than expressing neutral emotion. Early angry expressions violate normative expectations in competitive deal-making situations, and are likely to be perceived as inappropriate. Inappropriate emotional expressions have been linked with self-interested behaviors (Van Kleef, 2009) and avoidant intentions (Szczurek, Monin, & Gross, 2012).

However, in later rounds of a negotiation, we expect that the relationship between angry expressions and impasses is attenuated. Compared to early expressions, later angry expressions are less likely to be viewed as an expectancy violation and less likely to be perceived as inappropriate, because later angry expressions can be attributed to the lack of progress in a negotiation or a pattern of unfavorable offers. Later expressions of anger are justifiable in deal-making situations and may be considered as the correct response for providing unfavorable offers (Shields, 2005). When individuals make appropriate displays of anger, targets become more likely to comply (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007).

Taken together, we predict that angry expressions promote impasses more strongly when anger is expressed earlier than later in negotiations, because early angry expressions are more likely to be deemed inappropriate than later angry expressions.



Across three studies, we explore the relationship between angry expressions and impasses, and we identify a critical cost to displaying anger in negotiations.

### Study 1

In Study 1, we test our hypothesis that negotiators are more likely to exit a negotiation with an angry counterpart than a neutral counterpart.

#### Method

**Participants.** We recruited 351 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk who were in the United States and had a requester approval rating of 97% or greater. We randomly assigned half of the participants to the expressed anger condition and the other half to the neutral condition. Of the 351 participants, 15 dropped out before answering the comprehension question, 33 failed the comprehension question, and 1 dropped out just after the comprehension question. The final sample was 302 participants ( $M_{age} = 33.24$  years,  $SD_{age} = 10.52$  years; 41.5% female).

**Procedure.** At the beginning of the study, we told participants that they would be assigned to the role of either Renter or Landlord. In practice, we assigned all participants to the role of Landlord. We simulated another participant in the role of Renter by using a computer program. As Landlords, participants negotiated the rental fee for a studio apartment in Chicago. We provided information about the zone of possible agreement by indicating that the rental fee should be within the range of \$1,000 to \$1,600. Participants had to pass a comprehension check, which asked participants to identify the upper bound and lower bound of the zone of possible agreement. Participants who failed the comprehension check were not permitted to continue the study and, therefore, did not complete the study. After successfully completing the comprehension check, the participant Landlords had the opportunity to select one of ten

simulated Renters with whom to negotiate (e.g., “Renter 1”, Renter 2”, “Renter 3”, etc.). We used this step to enhance the believability that other participants had logged onto the system and were participating in this study.

We instructed participants that, in addition to the standard participation fee of \$1.00, they could earn a total bonus of \$0.25 (\$0.10 bonus if any agreement is reached + \$0.15 bonus for the three participants with the best deals).

The Landlords decided to send an initial offer of either \$1,500 (which was the recommended option) or \$1,200. We found that 97% of the participants made the recommended initial offer. We constrained the initial offer because it provides a more conservative and direct test of angry expressions on impasses. If participants were permitted to choose lower initial offers, which are more generous, we expect the effect of angry expressions on impasses to be stronger.

We randomly assigned the Landlords to one of two conditions: Angry Expression or Neutral. In both conditions, the simulated Renter indicated a counteroffer of \$1,000 in rent. In the Angry Expression condition, the simulated Renter sent the following message “your offer really pisses me off...it’s too high. this is an annoying way to start”. In the Neutral condition, the simulated Renter sent the following message: “your offer is too high.” We adapted these messages from Van Kleef et al. (2004a), which have been shown to successfully manipulate emotional expressions.

As Landlords, the participants chose one of the following options: (1) make a counteroffer, (2) exit the negotiation, or (3) accept the offer. Participants completed a

manipulation check and answered demographic questions before we debriefed and paid participants.

### **Measures.**

***Angry expression manipulation check.*** After responding to the Renters' counteroffer, participants rated the extent to which their counterpart expressed anger and annoyance on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) ( $M=4.53$ ,  $SD=2.27$ ;  $\alpha=.95$ ).

***Choosing to exit the negotiation.*** We recorded whether participants chose to make a counteroffer/accept their counterpart's offer (scored as 0) or chose to exit the negotiation (scored as 1). Only 3% of the participants chose to accept the first offer, and the pattern of results was similar when we include or exclude the data from these participants in our analyses.

### **Results and Discussion**

Our manipulation of expressed anger during the negotiation was successful. Participants in the Angry Expression condition indicated that their partner expressed higher levels of anger ( $M=6.42$ ,  $SD=.74$ ) than participants in the Neutral condition ( $M=2.65$ ,  $SD=1.62$ ),  $t(299)=-26.04$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $d=-2.99$ .

We conducted a binary logistic regression to test our hypothesis. Participants who received an angry message were more likely to exit the negotiation (11%) than were participants who received a neutral message (3%),  $b=1.24$ ,  $SE=.53$ ,  $\text{Wald}(1)=5.57$ ,  $p=.02$ ,  $\text{OR}=3.46$  (see Figure 1).

In Study 1, we established a link between angry expressions and negotiation impasses. Relative to counterparts expressing neutral emotion, when counterparts express anger about the initial offers, negotiators were more likely to exit the negotiation.

## Study 2

In Study 2, we build on the EASI model, and examine the specific type of inference that is made based on angry expressions. We hypothesize that negotiators infer that angry counterparts are more selfish than neutral counterparts, and we examine whether inferences of selfishness mediate the relationship between angry expressions and impasses. In this study, we also replicate the effect of expressed anger on impasses using a different negotiation context - negotiating a job offer.

## Method

**Participants.** We recruited 219 students from a large North American university to participate in this study. There were 32 participants who failed the comprehension questions and, therefore, were not permitted to complete the study. The final sample size of participants was 187 ( $M_{\text{age}}=21.05$  years,  $SD_{\text{age}}=3.67$  years; 67% female).

**Procedure.** In this study, participants negotiated the salary of an internship job. We told participants that they would be assigned to the role of either Recruiter or Candidate. In practice, we assigned all participants to the role of Recruiter. We simulated another participant in the role of Candidate by using a computer program. As Recruiters, we informed participants that they were seeking to fill an internship position, and that the monthly salary for the intern should be in the range of \$1,500 to \$2,400. Every participant had to pass a comprehension check. If participants failed the comprehension check, they were not allowed to proceed with the study.

Participants received a standard show-up fee for this study. We instructed participants that they would earn a \$0.25 bonus if they reached any type of agreement. Furthermore, we indicated that participants who reached the three best deals in the session would receive an additional \$0.25 bonus.

The Recruiters made an initial offer of either \$1,700 (which was the recommended option) or \$2,100. As in Study 1, we constrained the initial offer because it affords a conservative and direct test of emotional expressions on impasses such that more generous initial offers may magnify the effect of angry expressions on impasses.

We randomly assigned the participant Recruiters to one of two conditions: Angry Expression or Neutral. In both conditions, the simulated Candidate indicated a counteroffer of \$2,400. In the Angry Expression condition, the simulated Candidate also sent the following message “your first offer really pisses me off...it’s too low. this is annoying way to negotiate”. In the Neutral condition, the simulated Candidate sent the following message: “your offer is too low”. We adapted these messages from Van Kleef et al. (2004a).

Similar to Study 1, the participants chose one of the following options: (1) make a counteroffer, (2) exit the negotiation, or (3) accept the offer. Participants then completed items about inferences of selfishness, a manipulation check, and then answered demographic questions. Finally, we debriefed and paid participants.

### **Measures.**

***Angry expression manipulation check.*** Participants rated the extent to which their counterpart expressed anger and annoyance on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) ( $M=4.95$ ,  $SD=1.88$ ;  $\alpha=.91$ ).

***Inferences of selfishness.*** Participants rated the extent to which their counterpart was selfish, unreasonable, and inconsiderate on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) ( $M=4.86$ ,  $SD=1.74$ ;  $\alpha=.89$ ). We adapted three items from Barasch, Levine, Berman, and Small (2014).

***Choosing to exit the negotiation.*** We recorded whether participants chose to negotiate by making a counteroffer or accepting their counterpart's offer (scored as 0), or chose to exit the negotiation (scored as 1).

## Results and Discussion

We successfully manipulated expressed anger in this study. Participants in the Angry Expression condition reported that their counterpart expressed higher levels of anger ( $M=6.10$ ,  $SD=1.26$ ) than did participants in the Neutral condition ( $M=3.69$ ,  $SD=1.62$ ),  $t(185)=-11.45$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $d=-1.66$ . As predicted, participants in the Angry Expression condition were more likely to exit a negotiation (14%) than were those in the Neutral condition (2%),  $b=1.98$ ,  $SE=.77$ ,  $Wald(1)=6.60$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $OR=7.25$ .

As expected, participants in the Angry Expression condition reported that angry counterparts were more selfish ( $M=5.51$ ,  $SD=1.47$ ) than participants in the Neutral condition ( $M=4.14$ ,  $SD=1.73$ ),  $t(185)=-5.84$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $d=-.85$ . We examined whether inferences of selfishness mediate the relationship between angry expressions and impasses. Using the indirect bootstrapping technique (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), our analysis revealed that angry expressions had an indirect effect on impasses through inferences of selfishness ( $b=.45$ , 95% confidence interval  $[CI]=.32, 1.31$ ). Because the bias-corrected 95% confidence interval did not include zero, we concluded that perceived selfishness mediates the effect of expressed anger on impasses.

In Study 2, we found that when interacting with angry counterparts, negotiators were more likely to infer that their counterparts are selfish than when interacting with neutral counterparts, and we found that these inferences of selfishness mediate the relationship between angry expressions and impasses.

### Study 3

In Study 3, we examine whether the effect of angry expressions on impasses is moderated by the timing at which negotiators express their emotions. Prior research has suggested that timing influences negotiators' perceptions about their counterparts' behavior (Pruitt, 1981; Sinaceur & Neale, 2005).

We hypothesize that when counterparts express anger *early in a negotiation*, negotiators become more likely to choose an impasse than when counterparts express neutral emotion. However, when anger is expressed *late in a negotiation*, we hypothesize that the effect of expressing anger on impasses to be attenuated, because early expressions of anger are more likely to be perceived as inappropriate than later expressions of anger.

Early angry expressions violate normative expectations of appropriate displays of emotion in negotiating deals, whereas later angry expressions may be attributed to unfavorable offers and deemed appropriate. Prior research has demonstrated that negotiators respond more punitively when they perceive angry expressions to be inappropriate (Harinck & Van Kleef, 2012; Steinel et al., 2008; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007).

### Method

**Participants.** We recruited 1,204 students from Amazon Mechanical Turk in the United States. Of the 1,204 participants, 1 participant gave no consent, 74 participants dropped out

before answering the comprehension questions, 124 failed the comprehension questions, 2 dropped out just after the comprehension question. The final sample consisted of 1,003 participants ( $M_{age}=36$  years,  $SD_{age}=12$  years; 48% male).

**Procedure.** In this study, participants negotiated the price of a backpack. Participants could earn a \$0.25 bonus for obtaining the best deals based on their role. All participants were assigned to the role of Buyer and computer-simulated counterparts were assigned to the role of Seller. We randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions in a 2 (Emotional Expression: Anger vs. Neutral) x 2 (Timing of Emotion Expression: Round 1 vs. Round 5) between-subjects design. We adapted Van Kleef and colleagues' (2004a) messages and manipulated whether participants received an Angry Expression message ("your offer really pisses me off...it's too low. this is an annoying way to negotiate") or a Neutral Expression message ("your offer is too low"). We manipulated timing by presenting these emotional expression messages in either Round 1 or Round 5 of the negotiation.

In all conditions, participant Buyers were told the price for the backpack should be in the range of \$50 to \$150, and then participant Buyers made an initial offer of either \$60 (recommended offer) or \$90. As in our previous studies, the majority of participants (97%) chose to make the initial recommended offer of \$60. In the Round 1 condition, after making the initial offer, participants received a counteroffer and a message that either expressed anger or neutral emotion from simulated Sellers. Participant Buyers then made a decision in Round 1 to make a counteroffer, accept the offer, or exit the negotiation.

In the Round 5 condition, following the initial offer, participant Buyers made counteroffers from Round 1 to Round 4, and had no option to exit. The simulated Sellers'



counteroffers were generated by an algorithm that dynamically adapted to the participant Buyers' counteroffers. To calculate the Sellers' counteroffers in each round, we subtracted the participant Buyers' previous offer from the Sellers' previous offer, and then multiplied the difference by 80%. In Round 5, participant Buyers received an offer and a message that either expressed anger or neutral emotion from simulated Sellers. Then, participant Buyers decided to make a counteroffer, accept the offer, or exit the negotiation.

Finally, in all conditions, participants completed demographic questions, and were debriefed and paid.

### **Measures.**

***Choosing to exit the negotiation.*** As in our previous studies, we recorded whether participants chose to negotiate by making a counteroffer or accepting their counterpart's offer (scored as 0), or chose to exit the negotiation (scored as 1).

***Perceived inappropriateness.*** Participants rated the extent to which they viewed how their counterpart communicated inappropriately/in a tasteless manner/ in a suitable manner/appropriately on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) ( $M=4.27$ ,  $SD=2.30$ ;  $\alpha=.96$ ).

### **Results and Discussion**

To test our hypothesis, we conducted a binary logistic regression by regressing impasses on emotional expression, timing, and the interaction between them. The results revealed a significant main effect for emotion expression,  $b=1.26$ ,  $SE=.19$ ,  $Wald(1)=43.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $OR=3.51$ , a marginally significant main effect for timing,  $b=-.39$ ,  $SE=.21$ ,  $Wald(1)=3.59$ ,

$p=.058$ ,  $OR=.68$ , and the interaction was significant,  $b=-.56$ ,  $SE=.27$ ,  $Wald(1)=4.14$ ,  $p=.042$ ,  $OR=.57$ .

We decomposed the interaction by contrasting the influence of emotional expressions on impasses in Round 1 with Round 5. As predicted, in Round 1, participants in the Angry Expression condition were more likely to exit the negotiation (61%) than were those in the Neutral condition (31%),  $b= 1.26$ ,  $SE=.19$ ,  $Wald(1)=43.49$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $OR=3.51$  (see Figure 2). However, in Round 5, the effect of angry expressions on impasses was significantly attenuated. Participants in the Angry Expression condition were more likely to exit the negotiation (38%) than those in the Neutral condition (23%),  $b=.70$ ,  $SE=.20$ ,  $Wald(1)=12.47$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $OR=2.01$ . We demonstrated that the influence of angry expressions on impasses is diminished by timing.

We also examined whether perceived inappropriateness mediates the interactive effect of angry expressions and timing on negotiation impasses. To test moderated mediation, we performed 5,000 bootstrap re-samples using Model 7 of the Hayes' (2013) SPSS PROCESS macro. We examined the indirect effects of angry expressions on impasses through perceived inappropriateness by timing condition. In Round 1, perceived inappropriateness mediated the effect of angry expressions on impasses,  $b=1.52$ ,  $SE=.24$ , 95%  $CI=1.08, 2.00$ . In Round 5, we also found that the effect of angry expressions on impasses was mediated by perceived inappropriateness,  $b=1.38$ ,  $SE=.22$ , 95%  $CI=.99, 1.84$ . Most importantly, we found that the conditional indirect effect of angry expressions on impasses through perceived inappropriateness is significantly weaker in Round 5 than it is in Round 1,  $b=-.14$ ,  $SE=.06$ , 95%  $CI= -.27, -.03$ . The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for the index of moderated mediation did not include zero, supporting our hypothesis. Therefore, we conclude that perceived inappropriateness

mediates the moderating role of timing on the relationship between angry expressions and impasses.

We found that the influence of angry expressions on impasses is stronger in early rounds than later rounds of negotiations. Furthermore, we found that relative to later angry expressions, early angry expressions are perceived to be more inappropriate, and these perceptions lead to a higher rate of impasses.

### **General Discussion**

Angry expressions promote negotiation impasses. Across three studies, we found that individuals who are targets of angry expressions are more likely to exit the negotiation than those who were targets of neutral expressions. We demonstrated that inferences of selfishness mediate the relationship between angry expressions and impasses. When counterparts express anger, individuals infer that their counterparts are more selfish than those who express neutral emotion, which in turn motivates impasses.

We also found that timing moderates the influence of angry expressions on exiting behavior. That is, negotiators are more likely to choose impasses when anger is expressed early in a negotiation than when anger is expressed later in a negotiation, because early angry expressions are perceived to be more inappropriate than later angry expressions.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Our findings significantly extend our theoretical understanding of emotional expressions and negotiations in three important ways. First, we identify a behavioral consequence of angry expressions that has been neglected in the literature. Van Kleef et al. (2010) wrote, “When it comes to anger and frustration, however, the presence of a moving away possibility may have

substantial behavioral repercussions. Here lies an important issue for future research.” (p. 71). In this work, we answer this call by establishing a link between angry expressions and negotiation impasses. While prior research has found that angry expressions can escalate existing disputes (Friedman et al., 2004), our work showed how angry expressions can derail negotiations that are not initially characterized by conflict.

Second, our investigation expands the types of inferences made about angry expressions. Prior research investigating the EASI model has shown that people often infer information based on angry expressions such as toughness, competence, and dominance (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Knutson, 1996; Van Kleef, 2009). We extend our understanding about the kind of information that is extracted from angry expressions by demonstrating that negotiators perceive angry counterparts as particularly selfish.

Third, our findings highlight how timing can alter the perceived appropriateness of angry expressions. We found that the timing of angry expressions can influence exiting behavior such that early angry expressions were more likely to trigger exiting behavior than later angry expressions. This effect occurs in negotiations because early angry expressions are more likely to violate expectations about emotional expressions and are deemed as more inappropriate than later angry expressions.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Our research has limitations that inform directions for future work. In our studies, we experimentally manipulated emotion by sending angry messages or neutral emotion messages. Many empirical studies rely on a computer-mediated procedure for greater experimental control (e.g., Cheshin, Rafaeli, & Bos, 2011; Sinaceur, Van Kleef, Neale, Adam, & Haag, 2011; Van

Dijk et al., 2008; Van Kleef et al., 2004a). This approach strengthens the internal validity of our results, but research could explore the link between angry expressions and impasses in field settings. Field settings often have higher incentives to reach agreements, and incentives may reflect an important boundary condition of our effect.

Second, our work makes a theoretical contribution by showing that expressing anger triggers cognitive inferences of selfishness. However, the EASI model also specifies that the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions can influence negotiation behavior via affective reactions (Van Kleef et al., 2010). Future research could explore whether the influence of angry expressions on impasses may also occur through affective reactions such as reciprocal anger and a desire to retaliate.

## **Conclusion**

Competition is a key aspect of negotiations, and competing for scarce resources often elicits angry expressions. Our work demonstrated that angry expressions promote impasses. We found that negotiators infer that angry counterparts are perceived to be particularly selfish, which increases exiting behavior. Our findings also revealed that the timing of angry expressions influences the likelihood of impasses because early angry expressions are perceived to be more inappropriate than later angry expressions. We urge negotiators to recognize the risk associated with displaying anger because angry negotiators may find themselves alone at the bargaining table.

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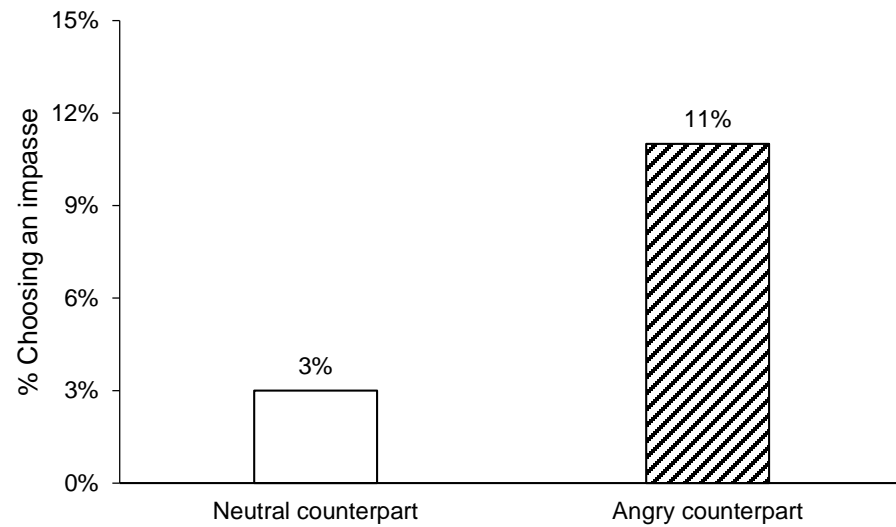


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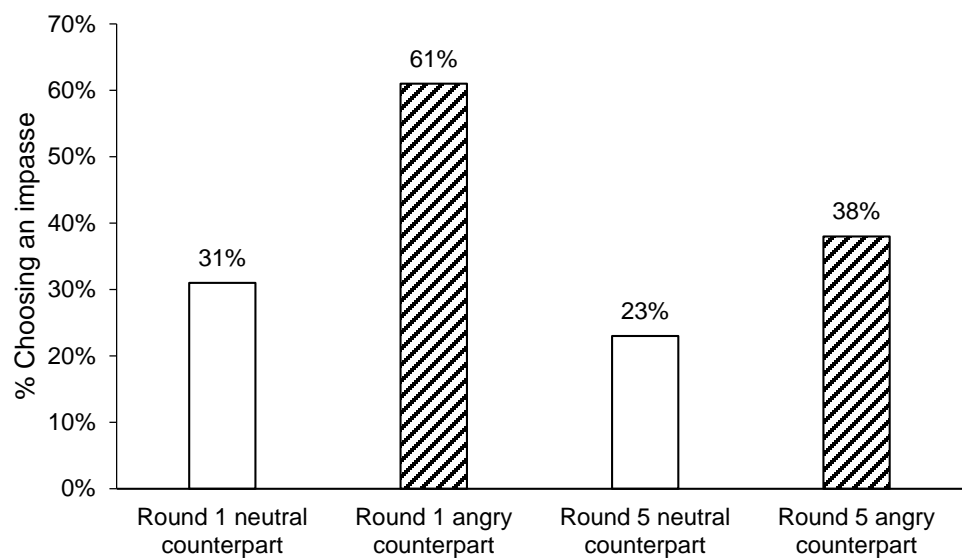
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*Figure 1.* Study 1 demonstrated that participants who encountered an angry counterpart were more likely to choose an impasse than participants who encountered a neutral counterpart.



*Figure 2.* Study 3 demonstrated that when emotions are expressed early in a negotiation, angry expressions promote impasses. When emotions are expressed later in a negotiation, we found that the effect of angry expressions on impasses is attenuated.