
Research Report

Ten Ways that Culture Affects Negotiating Style: Some Survey Results

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A survey of 310 persons of different nationalities and occupations asked respondents to rate their negotiating styles with respect to ten factors involved in the negotiation process. These factors included a preference for: a written contract in contrast to relationship-building as a negotiating goal; an integrative (win-win) as opposed to a distributive (win-lose) bargaining approach; and high rather than low tolerance for risk-taking. Reporting on the responses of persons from 12 countries and eight different occupations, this study finds that, in many instances, persons from the same cultures and occupations tended to respond to these negotiating elements in a similar fashion. Survey responses were also examined with respect to the respondents' gender. The study would appear to support the proposition that culture, occupational background, and gender can influence negotiating style.

The impact of culture on the negotiating process intrigues both scholars and practitioners (see, e.g., Weiss 1994a and 1994b; Faure and Sjöstedt 1993; Binnendijk 1987; Fisher 1980; Graham et. al. 1988; Campbell et al. 1988). Their research and observations indicate fairly clearly that negotiation practices differ from culture to culture, and that culture can influence “negotiating style” — the way persons from different cultures conduct themselves in negotiating sessions.

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Definitions of culture are as numerous and often as vague as definitions of negotiation itself (see, e.g., Moran and Stripp 1991: 43-56; Zartman 1993: 19). Some scholars would confine the concept of culture to the realm of ideas, feelings, and thoughts. For example, one working definition offered by two experts is that "Culture is a set of shared and enduring meanings, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, and other groups and orient their behavior" (Faure and Sjöstedt 1993: 3). Others would have culture also encompass behavior patterns and institutions common to a given group or community. E. Adamson Hoebel, a noted anthropologist, defined culture as "the integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance" (Hoebel 1972: 7).

For purposes of this article, culture is defined as the socially transmitted behavior patterns, norms, beliefs and values of a given community. Persons from that community use the elements of their culture to interpret their surroundings and guide their interactions with other persons. So, when an executive from a corporation in Dallas, Texas, sits down to negotiate a business deal with a manager from a Houston company, the two negotiators rely on their common culture to interpret each other's statements and actions. But when persons from two different cultures — for example an executive from Texas and a manager from Japan — meet for the first time, they usually do not share a common pool of information and assumptions to interpret each other's statements, actions, and intentions.

Culture can therefore be seen as a language, a "silent language" which the parties need in addition to the language they are speaking if they are truly to communicate and arrive at a genuine understanding (Hall 1959). Culture also serves as a kind of glue — a social adhesive — that binds a group of people together and gives them a distinct identity as a community. It may also give them a sense that they are a community different and separate from other communities.

Studies of cultural negotiating styles tend to divide into two basic groups. The first describe and analyze the negotiating style of a particular culture. Fascination with individual cultural negotiating practices has spawned a distinct literary genre: the "Negotiating With. . ." literature. Numerous books and articles bearing such titles as "Negotiating with the Japanese," "Negotiating with the Arabs," and "Negotiating with the Chinese," seek to lead the novice through the intricacies of negotiating in specific countries. (For a bibliography of such literature, see Salacuse 1991: 174-183.)

A second approach is cross-cultural and comparative. It seeks to identify certain basic elements in negotiating style and to determine how they are reflected in various cultures. The great diversity of the world's cultures makes it impossible for any negotiator, no matter how skilled and experienced, to understand fully all the cultures that he or she may encounter.

How then should an executive prepare to cope with culture in making deals in Singapore this week and Seoul the next?

One approach is to identify important areas where cultural differences may arise during the negotiation process. A knowledge of those factors may help a negotiator to understand a counterpart from another culture and to anticipate possible sources of friction and misunderstandings. Toward this end, scholars have developed a variety of frameworks and checklists that may be applied cross-culturally (e.g., see Weiss 1994a and 1994b; Moran and Stripp 1991; Salacuse 1991).

Based on a review of the literature as well as interviews with practitioners, the author, in an earlier work (Salacuse 1991) identified ten factors in the negotiation process that seem to be influenced by a person's culture. Cultural responses to each of these negotiation factors appear to vary between two polar extremes. The ten negotiating factors and the range of possible cultural responses to each are illustrated in Figure 1. These factors (with their polar extremes) are:

1. negotiating goals (contract or relationship?);
2. attitudes to the negotiating process (win/win or win/lose?);
3. personal styles (formal or informal?);
4. styles of communication (direct or indirect?);
5. time sensitivity (high or low?);
6. emotionalism (high or low?);
7. agreement form (specific or general?);
8. agreement building process (bottom up or top down?);

Figure 1
The Impact of Culture on Negotiation

Negotiation Factors	Range of Cultural Responses
Goal	Contract \longleftrightarrow Relationship
Attitudes	Win/Lose \longleftrightarrow Win/Win
Personal Styles	Informal \longleftrightarrow Formal
Communications	Direct \longleftrightarrow Indirect
Time Sensitivity	High \longleftrightarrow Low
Emotionalism	High \longleftrightarrow Low
Agreement Form	Specific \longleftrightarrow General
Agreement Building	Bottom Up \longleftrightarrow Top Down
Team Organization	One Leader \longleftrightarrow Consensus
Risk Taking	High \longleftrightarrow Low

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9. negotiating team organization (one leader or consensus?); and
 10. risk taking (high or low?).

The purpose of the matrix in Figure 1 is to identify specific negotiation factors affected by culture and to show the possible variations that each factor may take. With this knowledge, an international negotiator may be better able to understand the negotiating styles and approaches of his or her counterparts from other cultures. Equally important, the matrix may help negotiators determine how their own styles appear to those same counterparts on the other side of the bargaining table.

In order to test this approach to understanding negotiating style, the author translated the matrix into a survey questionnaire and administered it to over 370 business executives, lawyers, and graduate students (many of whom had substantial work experience) from all continents at various sites in North America, Latin America, and Europe over a period of four years. After receiving an explanation of the matrix and questionnaire, the respondents (who were attending graduate programs or advanced executive training programs in which the author was teaching) were asked to rate their own attitudes anonymously toward each of the ten negotiating traits on a five-point scale. The questionnaire also asked respondents to indicate their nationality, professional or occupational background, and gender. In the case of dual nationals, respondents were to select the nationality to which they felt the strongest cultural ties. (A copy of the survey instrument appears as Appendix One of this article.)

In all, 310 fully completed questionnaire responses were included in this study. In tabulating nationality data from the survey, it was decided to eliminate responses by persons from those nationality groups which were not numerically large enough in the survey to permit valid inferences to be made. Ultimately, the survey study considered responses of persons from twelve countries. The nationalities and number of respondents in each group were as follows: the United States (41); the United Kingdom (17); France (10); Germany (11); Spain (19); Mexico (12); Argentina (26); Brazil (9); Nigeria (15); India (9); China (11); and Japan (11).

Since professional or occupational background also constitutes a type of subculture that may influence negotiating style, the survey data also examined correlations between professional background and responses with regard to the ten negotiation factors. Here the study examined the completed questionnaires of all respondents except for nine which were either illegible or blank with respect to occupation. Thus 301 responses were examined with respect to occupation, and they were organized into eight occupational groupings. The groupings and the number of persons in each were as follows: law (103); management and marketing (59); engineering (31); the military (5); accounting and finance (21); diplomacy and public ser-

vice [on the assumption that government employees share a common public sector culture] (14); teaching (21); and students (47). Responses were also tabulated with respect to gender.

In general, the survey revealed significant correlations between the respondents' assessment of certain traits of their negotiating styles on the one hand and their national cultures and professional backgrounds on the other. However, one should read the survey results with several caveats. First, the answers that the respondents gave reflected only how they saw themselves (or would like others to see them) rather than their negotiating styles and behavior in actual negotiations. One can only interpret the survey results as indicating a limited predisposition of individuals from particular cultures toward certain factors affecting the negotiation process.

Second, style in a given negotiation may be influenced by numerous factors besides culture, including personality, bureaucracy, business experience, and the nature of the transactions under negotiation. For example, an executive who is predisposed to approach a business negotiation as a problem-solving, integrative process may behave in a distributive, confrontational way when faced with a hostile counterpart at the negotiating table.

Third, all the respondents spoke English, completed the survey in English, had substantial international experience, and were participating in graduate university education or advanced executive seminars, also conducted in the English language. As a result, they may not be representative of most persons from their respective cultures. On the other hand, they are fairly representative of executives and officials who conduct international negotiations on behalf of organizations.

Fourth, the meaning of key terms in the survey — such as direct, indirect, risk, general, and specific — were not strictly defined but instead were interpreted by each respondent according to his or her own subjective view, a factor obviously influenced by culture.

Fifth, the size of the respondent group was limited; consequently, one should be cautious about drawing inferences from the survey that apply to whole cultures. Finally, although nationality and culture are not the same thing and several different cultures may sometimes be found in a single country, the questionnaire, which only asked the respondents to indicate their nationality, did not take account of this phenomenon.

Negotiating Goal: Contract or Relationship?

Different cultures may view the very purpose of a business negotiation differently. For many American executives, the goal of a negotiation, first and foremost, is to arrive at a signed contract between the parties. Americans consider a signed contract as a definitive set of rights and duties that strictly binds the two sides and determines their interaction thereafter.

Japanese, Chinese, and other cultural groups in Asia, it is said, often consider that the goal of a negotiation is not a signed contract, but the creation of a relationship between the two sides (e.g., see Pye 1982). Although the written contract describes the relationship, the essence of the deal is the relationship itself.

As a group, the respondents in this survey were fairly evenly divided on this question, with 54 percent viewing contract as a negotiating goal and 46 percent indicating that pursuing relationship was the goal. Similarly, while males had a slight preference for contract (57.3 percent) and females for relationship (52.5 percent), the difference was not significant, and certainly not as significant as the literature on gender might lead one to believe.

On the other hand, the survey results revealed significant differences both among cultures and professions on this question. Thus, with respect to national cultures, only 26 percent of the Spanish respondents claimed that their primary goal in a negotiation was a relationship compared to 66 percent of the Indians. On the other hand, the preference for a relationship was not as pronounced among the Chinese (54.5 percent) as one might have expected from the literature, and the Japanese appeared almost evenly divided on the question as did the Americans. Table 1 summarizes the survey results on this issue.

Table 1
Negotiating Goal: Contract or Relationship?

	Spain	France	Brazil	Japan	USA	Germany	U.K.	Nigeria	Argentina	China	Mexico	India
Contract (%)	74	70	67	55	54	54	47	47	46	45	42	33

An analysis of responses on the basis of occupational background also revealed significant variations. For example, while 71 percent of the lawyers favored contract as a negotiating goal, 61 percent of those with management or marketing experience preferred relationships. Table 2 summarizes the results.

Table 2
Occupations and Negotiating Goal: Contract or Relationship?

	Law	Military	Engineering	Diplomacy/ Public Sector	Student	Accounting/ Finance	Teacher	Management/ Marketing
Contract (%)	71	60	52	50	49	43	43	39

Although for the group as a whole, the responses by males and females did not reveal significant differences, one did find substantial variations between genders within certain cultures. Thus, whereas 66.7 percent of U.S. male respondents chose contract as a negotiating goal, 71.4 percent of the U.S. female respondents opted for relationship — a finding supported by American studies on the impact of gender on negotiation (e.g., see Kolb and Coolidge 1991). On the other hand, 75 percent of French females and 66.7 percent of Spanish women chose contract — data suggesting that gender roles in negotiation may be more influenced by culture than biology.

Negotiating Attitude: Win-Lose or Win-Win?

Because of differences in culture or personality, or both, persons appear to approach deal making with one of two basic attitudes: that a negotiation is either a process in which both can gain (win-win) or a struggle in which, of necessity, one side wins and the other side loses (win-lose). Win-win negotiators see deal making as a collaborative and problem-solving process; win-lose negotiators see it as confrontational. In a reflection of this dichotomy, negotiation scholars (e.g., see Hoppman 1995; Lewicki et al. 1993) have concluded that these approaches represent the two paradigms of the negotiation process: distributive bargaining (i.e., win-lose) and integrative bargaining or problem-solving (i.e., win-win). In the former situation, the parties see their goals as incompatible, while in the latter they consider themselves to have compatible goals.

Among all respondents in the survey, approximately one-third claimed to see negotiations as win-lose, while two thirds saw it as win-win. Gender appeared to have no influence on responses, for the distribution among men and among women was essentially the same — one-third of the male respondents and one-third of the female respondents considered negotiation to be a win-lose process.

On the other hand, the survey revealed wide differences among the cultures represented in the survey on this question. Whereas 100 percent of the Japanese viewed negotiation as a win-win process, only 36.8 percent of the Spanish were so inclined. The Chinese and Indians, the other two Asian cultures represented in the survey, also claimed that negotiation for them was win-win, and the French, alone among Europeans, took a similarly pronounced position on the question. Table 3 summarizes the results.

Table 3
Negotiating Attitude: Win-Win or Win-Lose?

Win-Win (%)	Japan	China	Argentina	France	India	USA	U.K.	Mexico	Germany	Nigeria	Brazil	Spain
	100	82	81	80	78	71	59	50	55	47	44	37

An analysis of the responses by profession also found significant variations. Whereas only 14 percent of diplomats/public service personnel and 18 percent of management and marketing persons considered negotiations to be a win-lose process, 42 percent of the lawyers, 43 percent of the students, and 40 percent of the military held this view. Table 4 summarizes the results with respect to occupational background.

Table 4
Occupations and Negotiating Attitude: Win-Win or Win-Lose?

Win-Win (%)	Diplomacy/ Public Sector	Management/ Marketing	Accounting/ Finance	Teacher	Engineering	Student	Law	Military
	86	81	76	71	71	43	42	40

Although the responses of males and females as a whole tended to be similar, the survey revealed significant differences according to gender within specific cultures. Thus while only 20 percent of U.S. female respondents saw negotiation as a win-lose process, 50 percent of Spanish female respondents took this view.

Personal Style: Informal or Formal?

Personal style concerns the forms a negotiator uses to interact with counterparts at the table. Culture strongly influences the personal style of negotiators. It has been observed, for example, that Germans have a more formal style than Americans (Hall and Hall 1990: 48). A negotiator with a formal style insists on addressing counterparts by their titles, avoids personal anecdotes, and refrains from questions touching on the private or family life of members of the other negotiating team. An negotiator with an informal style, on the other hand, may try to start the discussion on a first-name basis, quickly seek to develop a personal, friendly relationship with the other team, and (if male) may take off his jacket and roll up his sleeves when deal

making begins in earnest. Each culture has its own formalities, and they have special meaning within that culture.

Among all respondents, two-thirds claimed an informal style, while only one-third a formal style. Gender seemed to have no significance, for the distribution among males and females was almost exactly the same as that among the respondents as a whole — 66 percent of women and 69 percent of men believed they had informal negotiating styles.

The responses according to culture demonstrated greater variation. Except for the Nigerians, a majority of the respondents within each of the twelve groups surveyed claimed to have an informal negotiating style; however, the strength of this view varied considerably. While nearly 83 percent of the Americans considered themselves to have an informal negotiating style, only 54 percent of the Chinese, 52 percent of the Spanish, and 58 percent of the Mexicans were similarly inclined. Among the four European national cultures surveyed, the French were the strongest in claiming an informal style.

Although both Germans and Japanese have a reputation for formality, only slightly more than one quarter of the respondents in these two groups believed they had a formal negotiating style. Differences in cultures with respect to the meaning of the terms “formal” and “informal” may have influenced this result. The survey’s findings on this negotiating trait are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Personal Style: Formal or Informal?

	Nigeria	Spain	China	Mexico	U.K.	Argentina	Germany	Japan	India	Brazil	France	USA
Formal (%)	53	47	46	42	35	35	27	27	22	22	20	17

Variations were also to be found among occupational groups, as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6
Occupation and Personal Style: Formal or Informal

	Student	Law	Accounting/ Finance	Teacher	Diplomacy/ Public Sector	Military	Management/ Marketing	Engineering
Formal (%)	42	40	38	29	21	20	19	16

Communication: Direct or Indirect?

Methods of communication vary among cultures. Some groups place emphasis on direct and simple methods of communication; others rely heavily on indirect and complex methods. It has been observed, for example, that whereas Germans and Americans are direct, the French and the Japanese are indirect (Hall and Hall 1990: 102). Persons with an indirect style of communication often make assumptions about the level of knowledge possessed by their counterparts; to a significant extent, they communicate with oblique references, circumlocutions, vague allusions, figurative forms of speech, facial expressions, gestures, and other kinds of body language. In a culture that values directness (such as the American or the Israeli), one can expect to receive a clear and definite response to proposals and questions. In cultures that rely on indirect communication, such as the Japanese, reaction to proposals may be gained by interpreting seemingly indefinite comments, gestures, and other signs.

In the survey, respondents in all cultural groups by a high margin claimed to have a direct form of communication. Here too the organizational culture of the participants and their international experience may have strongly influenced their responses to the questionnaire. It is worth noting, however, that the two cultural groups with the largest percentage of persons claiming an indirect style were the Japanese and the French. Table 7 summarizes the results on this issue.

Table 7
Communication Style: Direct or Indirect?

	Japan	France	China	U.K.	Brazil	India	Germany	USA	Argentina	Spain	Mexico	Nigeria
Indirect (%)	27	20	18	12	11	11	9	5	4	0	0	0

Males and females responded to this question identically: 90 percent claimed an direct style of communication while only 10 percent claimed an indirect style, precisely the distribution of responses for the respondent group as a whole. Among occupational groups, 50 percent of those with public service or diplomatic backgrounds claimed to have a formal style, while in all other occupational groups this response was limited to no more than 20 percent.

Sensitivity to Time: High or Low?

Discussions of national negotiating styles invariably treat a particular culture's attitude toward time. So it is said that Germans are always punctual,

Latins are habitually late, Japanese negotiate slowly, and Americans are quick to make a deal.

Among respondents as a whole, 80 percent asserted a high time sensitivity and 20 percent claimed a low time sensitivity. This same distribution was found among men, women, and the various occupational grouping represented in the survey.

However, a different pattern emerged among certain cultural groups. A majority of the respondents from all cultural groups surveyed claimed to have a high sensitivity to time; however the strength of the minority view on this question varied considerably among the groups. The Indians, French, and Germans included a substantial percentage of respondents asserting a low sensitivity to time. Table 8 summarizes the results.

Table 8
Time Sensitivity: High or Low?

	India	France	Germany	Mexico	Spain	Argentina	USA	Japan	China	Nigeria	U.K.	Brazil
Low (%)	44	40	36	33	21	15	15	9	9	7	6	0

The survey data on this question could have been affected by the organizational cultures of the respondents, as well as by variations in the way that respondents interpreted the term "time sensitivity." Cultural discussions about time in negotiations often refer to two elements: promptness in meeting deadlines and the amount of time devoted to a negotiation. Germans, it has been observed, are highly time-sensitive with regard to promptness but less so with respect to their willingness to devote large amounts of time to a negotiation (Hall and Hall 1990: 37). Thus they are punctual (high time sensitivity) but slow to negotiate and make decisions (low time sensitivity).

Emotionalism: High or Low?

Accounts of negotiating behavior in other cultures almost always point to a particular group's tendency or lack thereof to display emotions. According to the stereotype, Latin Americans show their emotions at the negotiating table, while Japanese and many other Asians hide their feelings. Obviously, individual personality plays a role here. There are passive Latins and hot-headed Japanese. Nonetheless, various cultures have different rules as to the appropriateness and form of displaying emotions, and these rules are brought to the negotiating table as well.

Among all respondents, 65 percent claimed to tend toward high emotionalism while 35 percent indicated a tendency to low emotionalism. Roughly, the same distribution was to be found among male and female respondents. Profes-

sional groups revealed a similar distribution, except for teachers, 90 percent of whom saw themselves tending toward high emotionalism.

The various cultures surveyed indicated greater variations. The Latin Americans and the Spanish were the cultural groups that ranked themselves highest with respect to emotionalism in a clearly statistically significant fashion. Among Europeans, the Germans and English ranked as least emotional, while among Asians the Japanese held that position, but to a lesser degree than the two European groups. Table 9 summarizes the results with regard to emotionalism.

Table 9
Emotionalism: High or Low?

	Brazil	Argentina	Mexico	Spain	China	USA	Nigeria	France	India	Japan	U.K.	Germany
High (%)	89	85	83	79	73	74	60	60	56	55	47	36

Form of Agreement: General or Specific?

Cultural factors may also influence the form of the written agreement that parties try to make. Generally, Americans prefer detailed contracts that attempt to anticipate all possible circumstances and eventualities, no matter how unlikely. Why? Because the “deal” is the contract itself, and one must refer to the contract to handle new situations that may arise in the future. Other cultural groups, such as the Chinese, prefer a contract in the form of general principles rather than detailed rules. Why? Because, it is claimed, the essence of the deal is the relationship between the parties. If unexpected circumstances arise, the parties should look to their relationship, not the details of the contract, to solve the problem.

Among all respondents in the survey, 78 percent preferred specific agreements while only 22 percent preferred general agreements. Male and female participants responded in approximately the same proportions. The survey found that a majority of respondents in each cultural group preferred specific agreements over general agreements. This result may be attributable in part to the relatively large number of lawyers among the respondents, as well as to the fact that multinational corporate practice favors specific agreements and many of the respondents, regardless of nationality, had experience with such firms. The survey responses on this point may have been a case where professional or organizational culture dominated over national cultural traits.

On the other hand, the degree of intensity of responses on the question varied considerably among cultural groups. While only 11 percent of the

British favored general agreements, 45.5 percent of the Japanese and of the Germans claimed to do so. Table 10 sets out the survey results with respect to agreement form.

Table 10
Agreement Form: General or Specific?

	Japan	Germany	India	France	China	Argentina	Brazil	USA	Nigeria	Mexico	Spain	U.K.
General (%)	46	45	44	30	27	27	22	22	20	17	16	11

Occupational groups demonstrated wider variations, a factor which supports the notion that professional culture may dominate national culture on this question. For example, while 100 percent of the respondents with military backgrounds preferred specific agreements, only 64 percent of management and marketing persons and of diplomats and civil servants had a similar inclination. Table 11 summarizes the data with respect to occupations on this question.

Table 11
Occupations and Agreement Form: General or Specific?

	Military	Student	Accounting/ Finance	Law	Engineering	Teacher	Diplomacy/ Public Sector	Management/ Marketing
Specific (%)	100	92	86	84	74	71	64	64

Building An Agreement: Bottom Up or Top Down?

Related to the form of the agreement is the question of whether negotiating a business deal is an *inductive* or a *deductive* process. Does it start from agreement on general principles and proceed to specific items, or does it begin with agreement on specifics, such as price, delivery date, and product quality, the sum total of which becomes the contract?

Different cultures tend to emphasize one approach over the other. Some observers believe that the French prefer to begin with agreement on general principles, while Americans tend to seek agreement first on specifics. For Americans, negotiating a deal is basically making a series of compromises and trade-offs on a long list of particulars. For the French, the essence is to agree on basic principles that will guide and indeed determine

the negotiation process afterward. The agreed-upon general principles become the framework, the skeleton, upon which the contract is built.

The respondents as a group divided fairly evenly on this question, with 47 percent viewing the deal-making process as bottom up while 53 percent saw it as top down. The responses among men and women followed this same distribution closely. The survey did not reveal significant cultural trends on this issue among Americans, Germans, and Nigerians, since the respondents from these three groups were relatively evenly divided on the question. On the other hand, the French, Argentineans, and Indians tended to view deal making as a top-down (deductive) process while Japanese, Mexicans and Brazilians tended to see it as a bottom-up (inductive) process. Table 12 summarizes the results on the question.

Table 12
Style of Building Agreement: Top-Down or Bottom-Up

Top-Down (%)	India	Argentina	France	U.K.	China	Germany	USA	Nigeria	Spain	Japan	Brazil	Mexico
	74	70	67	54	54	54	47	47	46	45	42	33

Responses among professional groups showed marked variation, with 71.4 percent of the diplomats and civil servants viewing the process as bottom-up while only 38 percent of accounting and financial respondents taking a similar position. The following table summarizes the responses by occupation.

Table 13
Occupations and Style of Building Agreement: Top-Down or Bottom-Up?

Bottom-Up (%)	Diplomacy/ Public Sector	Military	Law	Students	Teachers	Management/ Marketing	Engineering	Accounting/ Finance
	71	60	52	49	48	41	39	38

Team Organization: One Leader or Group Consensus?

In any international negotiation, it is important to know how the other side is organized and makes decisions. Culture is one important factor that affects the way groups are organized and the way organizations function. Some cul-

tures emphasize the individual while others stress the group. These values may influence the organization of negotiating teams.

One extreme is the negotiating team with a supreme leader who has complete authority to decide all matters. Many American teams tend to follow this approach, which has been labeled the “John Wayne-style of negotiations” (Graham and Herberger 1983: 160) Other cultures stress team negotiation and decision making by consensus.

Among all respondents in the survey, 59 percent tended to prefer one leader while 41 percent preferred a more consensual form of organization. Male and female respondents tended to follow this same distribution. On the other hand, the various cultural groups showed a wide variety of preferences on the question of team organization. The cultural group with the strongest preference for consensus organization was the French. Many studies have noted French individualism (e.g., Hall and Hall 1990), and perhaps a consensus arrangement in a French person’s eyes is the best way to protect that individualism. Despite the Japanese reputation for consensus arrangements, only 45 percent of the Japanese respondents claimed to prefer a negotiating team based on consensus. The Brazilians, Chinese, and Mexicans, to a far greater degree than any other groups, preferred one-person leadership, a reflection perhaps of the political traditions in those countries. The results of the survey on this point are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14
Team Organization: One Leader or Consensus?

One Leader (%)	Brazil	China	Mexico	U.K.	USA	Spain	Argentina	Germany	Japan	India	Nigeria	France
	100	91	91	65	63	58	58	55	55	44	40	40

The survey also revealed significant differences among occupational groups. For example, while 100 percent of the military respondents preferred a single leader for a negotiating team, only 43 percent of persons in finance expressed a similar view. Table 15 summarizes the survey results by occupational background.

Table 15
Occupations and Team Organization: One Leader or Consensus?

One Leader (%)	Military	Engineering	Teacher	Student	Management/ Marketing	Law	Diplomacy/ Public Sector	Accounting/ Finance
	100	68	62	62	61	56	50	43

Within cultures, male and female responses to this question demonstrated significant differences. Thus 78 percent of U.S. male respondents preferred a one-leader team organization but only 35 percent of U.S. female respondents expressed a similar preference. On the other hand, among Nigerians, 80 percent of the men preferred consensus arrangements while 80 percent of the women opted for one leader. In addition, a majority of Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, Argentine, and Brazilian women all preferred a one-leader approach to team organization.

Risk Taking: High or Low?

Research indicates that certain cultures are more risk averse than others (Hofstede 1980). In deal making, the culture of the negotiators can affect the willingness of one side to take “risks” in a negotiation — to divulge information, try new approaches, or tolerate uncertainties in a proposed course of action.

Among all respondents, approximately 70 percent claimed a tendency toward risk taking while only 30 percent characterized themselves as low risk takers. Here too, the distribution among men and women was similar and tended to follow that of all respondents as a group. However, among cultures, the responses to this question showed significant variations. The Japanese are said to be highly risk-averse in negotiations, and this tendency was affirmed by the survey which found Japanese respondents to be the most risk-averse of the twelve cultures. Americans in the survey, by comparison, considered themselves to be risk takers, but an even higher percentage of French, British, and Indians claimed to be risk takers. Table 16 summarizes the survey results with respect to risk.

Table 16
Risk Taking: High or Low?

High (%)	France	India	U.K.	China	USA	Nigeria	Argentina	Germany	Brazil	Mexico	Spain	Japan
	90	89	88	82	78	73	73	72	56	50	47	18

The survey also found significant differences among professional groups. For example, whereas 100 percent of the military respondents considered themselves to be high risk takers in negotiations, only 36 percent of the diplomats and civil servants characterized themselves similarly. Table 17 summarizes survey responses on the question of risk taking.

Table 17
Occupations and Risk Taking: High or Low?

High (%)	Military	Accounting/ Finance	Engineering	Management/ Marketing	Student	Teacher	Law	Diplomacy/ Public Sector
	100	81	77	75	72	67	66	36

Generally, males by a large majority within each cultural group considered themselves high risk takers, with the exception of the Japanese (12.5 percent), Spanish (39 percent) and Mexicans (44 percent). Female respondents who registered higher percentages of risk taking than males from the same culture were U.S. women (86 percent), Spanish women (67 percent) and Mexican women (67 percent).

Conclusion

The limited survey reported here confirms what numerous other studies, relying principally on a methodology based on observations and interviews, have also found: that culture can influence the way in which persons perceive and approach certain key elements in the negotiating process. A knowledge of these cultural differences may help negotiators to better understand and interpret their counterpart's negotiating behavior and to find ways to bridge gaps created by cultural differences (Salacuse 1993).

Equally important, the survey suggests that professional and occupational culture may be as important as national culture in shaping a person's negotiating style and attitudes toward the negotiation process. If true, this finding has at least two important implications. First, both scholars and practitioners need to take into account professional culture, as well as national culture, in their studies and analysis of the impact of culture on negotiating behavior. Second, when faced with a cultural difference at the negotiating table, negotiators from different cultures but similar occupational or professional backgrounds might seek to rely on the elements of their professional culture in trying to bridge the cultural gap between them.

Appendix One
Assessing Your Negotiating Style

Instructions: Listed below are ten important traits of a person's negotiating style and approach. Each trait demonstrates a wide range of variations, which can be organized along a continuum, as has been done below. With respect to each trait, indicate with an X where your own negotiating style and approach in business negotiation falls along each continuum.

Trait

1. Goal	Contract 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Relationship
2. Attitudes	Win/Lose 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Win/Win
3. Personal Styles	Informal 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Formal
4. Communications	Direct 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Indirect
5. Time Sensitivity	High 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Low
6. Emotionalism	High 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Low
7. Agreement Form	Specific 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	General
8. Agreement Building	Bottom Up 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Top Down
9. Team Organization	One Leader 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Consensus
10. Risk Taking	High 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5	Low

NOTES

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