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For A Better Understanding of Opposing Negotiator Behavior

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Abstract

This paper has two objectives. We start by trying to identify the intercultural factors that can influence international business negotiation. Second, we work to improve how organizations, both public and private, perceive their behavior. In order to do this, a qualitative exploratory study employing the individual interview method was conducted on a sample of Tunisian and French negotiators. "Nvivo 7" software, which is known to improve data analysis when a considerable corpus of information needs to be coded and classified into thematic categories, was used to process the collected data.

Keywords: trade negotiation, intercultural, cross-cultural variables, behavior negotiation, trading results.

Introduction

Internationalization of companies leads to complex relationships with new customers, suppliers, employees and interlocutors from different cultures. Several studies agree that the intercultural dimension tends to explain the role of understanding "negotiator behavior" and "negotiation results". This explains the interest in identifying the cross-cultural variables that interfere in international negotiations.

With an increasing economic globalization, understanding cultural differences in international negotiations is one of the factors that may determine corporate success. Intercultural business negotiations are instances of intensive cultural differences. Accordingly, negotiations take an intercultural twist when the involved parties come from different cultures. They do not share the same ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.

In addition, Brett and Gelfand (2004) argue that an understanding of the influence of culture on negotiations not only helps to reach a business agreement, but also allows the negotiator to broaden his / her negotiation strategies.

Also Gonzalez, (2021) argues that firms need to understand the cultures that their organizations interact with in order to better train employees, build global relationships, and to have greater success in their negotiations.

For many decades and to this day, the intercultural dimension has remained on the research agenda, as its importance continues to grow with the increasing volume of international trade (Wilbaut, 2010)

Despite this importance, the literature on the intercultural dimension remains unclear and normative (Debabi, 2010). Against such scarcity, we set to conceptualize the set of intercultural variables that frequently intervene in the conduct and outcome of international business negotiations. By the end of this study, we aim at identifying the intercultural variables that bear on international business negotiations.

1. Interaction between Business Negotiation And Culture

The controversy around the term "intercultural" continues to fuel debates in marketing literature. Therefore, determining its role in business negotiations seems very relevant. Through a brief review, we found that the influence of culture, on the one hand, on negotiator's behavior and, on the other hand, on negotiation results is increasingly studied in the literature on business negotiations.

Given the variety of reasons to negotiate, this concept has become ubiquitous in the business world. Business negotiations belong to the wide field of negotiations. Several authors set themselves to describe business negotiator profile and the relevant negotiation strategies, while defining the concept "business negotiation". Then, it can be defined as "iterative exchanges of information flows between parties, in order to exchange a product-service flow against a financial flow". (Barth and Bobot, 2010). All types of business discussions, like joint ventures, alliances, mergers and acquisitions, bank and project negotiations, are business negotiations.

In addition, the culture of the involved parties is conditioned by the negotiation context, conduct and results (Debabi, 2010). Most negotiations have common features (Jolibert and Velázquez, 1989) like a conflict of interest between negotiators; absence of pre-established procedures for resolving conflicts and resorting to discussion in order to reach agreements and optimal results. Using their descriptive negotiation model, Jolibert and Velázquez (1989) found that the culture of the involved parties is one of the main factors that affect business negotiations. "Culture has many implications for negotiations. This is how it affects the negotiation process".

Similarly, the famous model of Sawyer and Guetzkow (1965) shows that culture as a fundamental factor has a causal influence on the negotiation process and its outcome.

Because the diverse effect of culture on for example work behavior, ethics, conflict, it is all to normal that the same effect is expected on business negotiations. Therefore, several researchers were inspired and pointed to its implications on marketing (Usinnier, 1993)

However, culture is a set of beliefs, ways of thinking and values shared and passed from one generation to another. Culture is not static; it is dynamic and evolves over time by integrating new values, rejecting others and altering hierarchy and priorities (Faure, 2004).

Despite several definitions given to culture in the literature, some researchers still believe that the concept is not well defined (Zartman, 1993), insisting that culture is "tautological, vague and epiphenomenal". In the same line of thinking, Moran and Stripp (1991), Usinnier (2003) and Weiss (1994) also insisted that culture is neither coherent nor well defined.

Of the authors who have mentioned the significance culture in international and intercultural negotiations, both theoretically and practically, we chronological introduce them as follows: Faure & Rubin (1983)), Brinnemdjik (1987), Fosher (1992), Weiss (1994), Fisher, Schneider Bargwardt and Ganson (1997), Salacuse (1998 and 1999), Gelfand & Dyer (2000), Brett (2001), Cohen (2004) and Debabi (2010).

Culture affects both the different dimensions of negotiations and negotiator behavior. It is reelected in negotiation structure, strategies, process and also results (Faure, 2004). Culture plays a marginal and a decisive role in the success and failure of a negotiation (Yves, 2013).

Culture affects the interactional structure of negotiators and the way they perceive each other in terms of stereotypes, where Rodchenko-Daillard, (2010) defines a stereotype as "a judgment that characterizes a group but also a way of distinguishing one group from another". Thus, positive stereotypes can be seen as a facilitating factor of the negotiation process as trust, empathy and respect between the involved parties are developed. Negative stereotypes, on the other hand, are seen to impede the negotiation process. On the other hand, the ethics is introduced by the interacting actors as a value since each culture sets barriers that sanction unethical and illegitimate behavior. In the same way, culture is expressed by the negotiation's structural components, which are essentially social and cultural in nature.

Culture affects any strategy implemented by the negotiator whose goal is to achieve a result. Therefore, its intervention is so overwhelming that negotiators' strategic decisions - which represent all the tactics and general guidelines-, are dictated by values.

The negotiation process is conditioned by culture; like conception of time; communication; implemented tactics; hierarchical distance, and space.

Moreover, culture conditions the outcome of negotiations at several levels, like the possible areas of agreement, the form of the outcome, the meaning given to the contract, and the sense of equity (Faure, 2004).

From the above, it can be concluded that culture touches on the aspects of negotiations in an invisible way (Brett and Gefland, 2004), until another foreign culture comes into play. This leads us to the concept of intercultural.

2. Interculture in Business Negotiations

The concept of interculturalism emerged in the 1960s, when the volunteers of the Peace Corps were sent to other countries to complete their missions (Cohen-Emiric, 2013). In the early 1980s, UNESCO used this concept as an adjective or substantive (Bazin, 1980) and in 1983 it was used by the European Council (Dehalu, 2006). It refers to a dynamic process of meetings, communication more or less successful, whatever the field in which it takes place. The term intercultural has been introduced a little later in the scientific literature. It was further elaborated epistemologically by the work of Abdallah-Preteceille in 1986.

This term refers to "a particular mode of interaction and interrelations that occur when different cultures come into contact, as well as all the changes and transformations that result" (Clanet, 1993). The word "intercultural" indicates relationships established between individuals or groups belonging to geographically distinct cultural areas. In 1986, according to the European Council "the use of the word intercultural necessarily implies, if we assign the 'inter' prefix its full meaning, interaction, exchange, elimination of barriers, reciprocity, and true solidarity. If we admit the full value of the term culture, which implies recognition of values, lifestyles and symbolic representations to which human beings, both individuals and societies, refer in their relationships with others and in their conception of the world" (Decarlo, 1998). Consequently, Clanet (1993) states that interculturalism is understood as "the set of processes (physical, relational, group, institutional) generated by interactions of cultures, in a relationship of reciprocal exchanges and in a perspective of safeguarding a relative cultural identity of the partners in relation".

When the involved parties come from different cultures and interact, then, we can talk about interculturalism. In this regard, interculturalism can be defined as "the set of interactions and interrelations, at a negotiated equality status, that occur between groups or between individuals with different cultural systems in order to transform, to transcend belonging to create new identities, new cultures" (Henriquez, 2000).

Debabi (2010) shows that the intercultural "in short, it is a set of behaviors, attitudes, methods of analyzing and understanding problems arising in a pluralistic context. The intercultural, so defined, is the explanation of differences in meanings and behaviors due to the diversities of cultural systems".

At this level, our reasoning rests on the assumption of the "coherence character of a system of cultural norms" (Debabi, 2008). However, this principle is not always assessed when modern societies, in particular, show considerable cultural differences between various sectors and social fractions, horizontal differences (between the Northern and Southern regions of a country), and vertical differences (differences between subcultures). These differences may be larger than those between cultures (Nicklas, 1995).

Such differences are incumbent to the fact that the intercultural approach has been less productive in analyzing the influence of cultural variables on the various aspects of corporate life, particularly its relationship with its market. (Debabi, 2010).

However, research is scarce as to approach the concept of intercultural in management and marketing, because it is difficult to fathom and is presented as a tautological or caricature concept. To overcome these difficulties, it is necessary to examine the intercultural dimension of international negotiations in a reflexive and scientific way, as long as "the concepts of the intercultural perspective are gradually refined and represent very important issues for the future" (Debabi, 2010).

International business negotiations are specific because of their intercultural dimension. The issue of cultural differences operates as each party disposes of specific values and behavioral styles. These differences can lead to misunderstandings or even conflicts between the involved parties (Bartel and Meier, 2006).

Business relationships between companies from different cultures are known by different values and behaviors. Culture then becomes an analytical tool, through which we look and judge the other. Because the natural tendency of every individual is to apprehend the other in relation to his/her own culture.

As noted above, intercultural implies an interaction. Then, intercultural negotiations are instances of interaction that link two or more people from different cultures who do not share the same "codes of thought, emotions and behaviors" (Casse and Deol, 1987) and get a seat in the negotiation.

Similarly, Faure (1999) argues that negotiation is "an interaction, i.e. an interception point of two movements expressed through a strategic and a tactical approach. This approach is deployed under a legal, organizational and an institutional system, but also under cultural constraints. Facing another foreign culture, the negotiator should take into account the regularities, discontinuities and distinctive features of this culture. In this regard, Posses (1987) argues that it is necessary to begin the negotiation by orienting oneself towards the foreign culture, to know the foreign negotiator and to put oneself in the other's "character".

The complex and uncertain nature of cross-cultural negotiations mandates well-experienced teams with multiple and complementary skills (lawyers, economists, financiers, salespeople, etc.) to lead the negotiation through a long, non-linear process. In intercultural negotiations, the concepts that are of value are the situation and the context. (Debabi, 2010).

In recent years, as economic exchanges increasingly started to belong to a framework (regional, international, etc.) wider than the local market framework, integrating the intercultural into the concerns of researchers in management is a must. Facing an increasingly open international environment and increased competition, taking into account cultural differences and interaction between cultures is becoming an essential issue, both to satisfy the diversity of demand and to integrate a multicultural dimension in the work space (Meier, 2013)

Many companies that regularly negotiate abroad rely on specialists in international negotiation. These third parties may be consultants, negotiators, businessmen, etc. (Reynolds et al, 2003). Thus, as mentioned above; international negotiation is conditioned by cultural factors. Of the differences between agents, there is the cultural dimension that needs to be harmonized in order to reach the desired outcomes. In addition, negotiators will have to overcome additional difficulties to accurately anticipate the mental and emotional reactions of interlocutors and adapt their strategies and tactics accordingly (Jolibert and Velazquez, 1989).

The international presence of companies led us to re-examine the issue of culture and management methods. Such an approach supposes a clarification of the notion of culture and its different variables. Cultural variables, presented as having an impact, can be identified, at multiple levels, in a negotiation situation.

Debabi (1997) indicates that the four cultural dimensions conditioning negotiations are: the context of negotiation (time, space, etc.), its conduct (slowness, rigidity, patience, rhythm, flexibility, etc.), its process (multiplication of consequences, variation of compromises according to the phases pursued, feedback, etc.), and its results (compromised, sincere or scorned, oral contract accepted, mutual agreement translated by a written contract, etc.).

Several researchers have shown the importance of the effect of culture on negotiators' behavior. They claim that culture conditions negotiators thoughts and actions all along the negotiation process.

Culture, a central element in social life and in human actions, is a complex, multifaceted and elusive concept (Faure, 2004). Negotiation too is a human activity. For this reason, we saw it fit to determine the relationship between these two main concepts; negotiation and culture.

Despite the rich literature on the factors that affect the conduct and / or outcome of international negotiations, researchers stood mixed on the role of these factors, on the one hand, and the degree of their influence on international negotiations on the other.

3. Intercultural variables influencing international business negotiation

Globally, negotiations are often carried out across cultural boundaries (Gelfand and Brett, 2004). Several models determining the cultural factors that may interfere in international business negotiations are developed. Of such models, we mention Hall's cultural variables (1959-1981); Hofstede's (1980) variables, Weinshall (1977) and Roberts' (1970) variables, and Salacuse' variables (1991). In what follows, we present these models in the order they appear above.

3.1 The cultural variables of Hofstede

Today, the model of G. Hofstede represents one of the most significant comparative models. The author establishes a typology of cultures classified according to hierarchical distance, uncertainty control, individualism and masculinity, or the opposite and short or long term objectives. They highlight the most obvious and striking facts about cultural relativity. (Insight's, 2021)

Hofstede sees culture as a, "hierarchical mental software" that represents the distinctive and permanent element of a cultural group.

Hofstede distinguished five main variables in order to classify each group. In order to observe and define what differentiates men from each other, the author analyzed human behavior in similar situations. "We will implicitly admit that everyone

has some mental programming that we know is stable over time. In identical situations, the same individual will probably react in the same way" (Bollinger, Hofstede, 1987).

Hofstede believes that the central element of mental programming is that of collective values that are programmed in a hierarchical way. According to him, there are two types of values: desired values, i.e. the values that one really desires, and desirable values, i.e. the values that one thinks one should desire. Defining culture, Hofstede admits it is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes men of one category from another.

Hofstede conducted questionnaire-based surveys of 1,300 individuals to compare, on the one hand, cultures and to study local cultures, on the other. The sample, consisting of world-wide personnel of subsidiaries of a large multinational American company, is limited. The company is IBM, located in 64 countries operating with the same structure, the same products and the same corporate culture. However, the surveyed personnel carry different values as they come from different countries.

Hofstede proposed the above-mentioned dimensions. Hofstede's five factors of cultural differentiation can be helpful in understanding negotiator's behavior. (Faure, 2004)

Worth noting is that Hofstede, a psychologist, was inspired by culturalism: an anthropology school of thought that argued for the effect of culture on people's personality.

3.1.1 Hierarchical distance

Hierarchical distance is measured by the degree subordinates perceive their managers because their mental representation of authority of their superiors will determine their behavior. To determine whether inequality is an inevitable outcome, Hofstede asked the following question: "According to your experience, how often the following problem appears: employees fear to explain their disagreement with their superiors?"

The dimension of hierarchical distance shows the degree of inequality expected and accepted by individuals. It is about understanding the hierarchical relationship between subordinates and their superiors. What differs from society to society is the degree and manner in which society tolerates an unequal distribution of power in organizations and institutions. Accordingly, Hofstede identified the four types of managers: the autocrat, the paternalist, the advisory and the democrat.

Hofstede's survey found two main trends: cultures with high hierarchical distance like Latin European countries (France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain), South American countries, Arab countries and black African countries, on the one hand, and cultures

with low hierarchical distance like the Germanic, Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries. Indeed, low hierarchical distance countries are known by a limited dependence of subordinates to their superiors, less inequalities and less power granted to superiors. While high hierarchical distance countries are known by a considerable dependence of subordinates to their superiors, since the latter often expect to be guided by their managers.

Then, hierarchical distance can be said to denote the degree of cultural acceptance of inequalities and power by individuals. This dimension raises the degree of respect shown by people to their hierarchy and authority.

3.1.2 Uncertainty Control

Hofstede's survey included questions about whether degree of freedom of individuals in relation to their future differs from one culture to another. Questions of this rubric are:

- "How often do you feel nervous or tense at work?"
- "Is there any intention among employees to stay in their company for a long career?"

In order to answer these questions, Hofstede proposes to examine the way in which communities perceive their future, since the future procures a great deal of uncertainty that may cast deep anxiety in some people.

This dimension measures the degree of tolerance that one can accept facing anxiety provoked by future events; if tolerance is low, control is strong and vice versa. It refers accounts for feelings of unease due to uncertainty in a society. It measures degree of tolerance of an unpredictable anxiety caused by future events.

Every culture faces uncertainty in its own way. Some use forecasts and devices to deal with future events, others show concern and anxiety about uncertainty and risk taking.

For a society to be optimal and to avoid risk, Hofstede offers three ways: technology use, laws and religion.

On this, the author distinguished two types of cultures: cultures with a strong control of uncertainty and cultures with little control of uncertainty. Countries with a strong control of uncertainty are Latin European countries (France, Belgium, Italy, Spain) and America (Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Chile, Argentina), Mediterranean countries, Japan and Korea. These countries are known by security, risk avoidance, control, forecasting and the use of life-organizing rules and regulations

(planning of rituals, insistence on the importance of respecting time). Conversely, cultures with low uncertainty control are known by the natural tendency of their members to feel relatively safe, less tired at work, less stressful, need to trust the circumstances, and always be ready to face them. Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries, Southeastern Asian countries, developing countries like India and African countries have low control of uncertainty which reflects a relative tolerance for behavior and different opinions.

3.1.3 Individualism / collectivism

Degree of belonging to a community differs from one society to another. Therefore, the way of living together, at the level of family or within a society, is no longer the same. Some societies promote community life. This means that individuals prefer to belong to groups to feel safe. Each individual shows a strong respect to the group, they seek to be integrated into groups from birth where the sense of community is well developed and where one cares for others throughout their lives. Group life is privileged at home. Individuals are strongly integrated in society; they look after the interests of their group. Their opinions and beliefs are predetermined by the group. Harmony should always be maintained between the members of the group and direct conflicts are avoided.

Hofstede shows that poor countries such as West Africa, Pakistan and Guatemala are still strongly "imbued" with a community spirit, while rich countries such as Anglo-Saxon countries, Australia, Great Britain, are the most individualistic. This may explain the strong correlation between individualism and the wealth of a country. Wealth is a determining factor of the degree of individualism of a country.

"An individualistic way of existence" promotes independence of individuals from society, freedom in their work and decision-making. In societies that encourage individualism, people prefer to act as an individual rather than as a member of a group. Each individual strives to achieve their own goals without regard to others. Their own interests condition their integration into the group, each person should only take care of themselves and their close family. The study has shown that the individualism / collectivism dimension measures an individual's degree of independence from and freedom in a group and their compliance with the social norms of a society.

3.1.4 Masculinity / Femininity

Gender-based division of roles between women and men differs from one society to another. Primitive and modern societies tend to distinction between the role of women and men. In primitive societies, the role of women is mainly to take care of children and domestic work while men are in charge of economic activities.

Conversely, in modern societies, Hofstede considers that "the more the roles are differentiated the more society will show traits that can be called masculine. The more the roles are interchangeable, the more society will show feminine traits". (Bollinger, Hofstede, 1987). In masculine societies, the roles are differentiated and the dominant values are success, materialism, possession, progress, taste, assertiveness, self-assurance, hard work and performance. Indeed, man is essential and woman ensures life quality. In feminine societies, however, roles are interchangeable and the dominant values are quality of life, cooperation, continuity, modesty, personal enrichment, and interpersonal relationships. Indeed, men and women share the same roles.

Classifying societies into male culture and female cultures, Hofstede shows that the masculinity index is higher in Japan, Germanic countries, Italy, Hungary, Ireland, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, the United States and Canada. Anglo-Saxon and Asian countries rank in the middle.

The femininity index is stronger in Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, black African countries, Latin countries like Peru and Chile, France, Spain, Portugal, Costa Rica and Russia.

Certainly, the masculinity or femininity index may vary according to social class.

Hofstede classifies the consequences of the masculinity index in accompany into two categories: work harmonizing and task limitation consequences. To Harmonize work in masculine societies, work is a way to self-achievement, it is the fruit of a personal ambition, it is synonymous with career. On the other hand, in feminine societies, work is an opportunity to promote cooperation and courtesy with others. To limit tasks under a conflict management perspective, masculine societies engage into hard and open conflicts while feminine societies prefer discussion and consensus to preserve group harmony.

3.1.5 Short / long-term objectives

This fifth dimension was added by Hofstede in 2001. It is also known as "Confucian dynamism". It denotes a company's attitude towards the future. Hofstede's study shows that there are companies that favor a positive attitude towards the future while others that choose the short term.

The long-term orientation index of a company favors perseverance, sense of economy and savings to ensure a good future, classification of achievements by status, respect for that order and the ability to feel ashamed.

As for the values supported by short-term oriented cultures, they are rigor, personal stability, protection of one's image, respect for the traditions and reciprocity of rewards, favors and gifts. These cultural dimensions established by Hofstede represent a general framework which emphasizes the most apparent and striking facts of cultural relativity, although they are not exhaustive.

3.2 The Cultural Variables of Hall (1959-1983)

The anthropologist of contemporary societies Hall has examined the "hidden dimension" of culture by referring to the context of communication, time and space. Hall conducted a comparative study of French, German and English cultures as well as Japanese and Arab cultures. IN this study, the author defined culture as a set of complex activities linked together in different ways. It has many aspects, but mainly, it is a system of creation, transmission, retention and processing of information. Indeed, culture is essentially communication exchanged in a given context.

3.2.1 Rich context and poor context

In his study, Hall pointed to the importance of interculturalism in business negotiations. To negotiate is to communicate. As culture is essentially communication, then to understand the culture of negotiator, it is essential to go through communication. Still, the way of communication differs according to the culture of a negotiator. As a result, the manner of broadcasting and transmitting messages obviously falls within the context of communication. Communication is not necessary in its context, as Simons (2002) suggests. Without context, the message is incomplete because words or oral communication do not by themselves convey the values of the message. Silence, gestures, voice are also considered as "signs" to interpret and to better understand the context of communication, what Hall calls "the context of the act of communication".

3.2.2 Monochronic time and polychronic time

Of the fundamental components of culture identified by Hall, there is time. Time is defined by Hall as an "aggregate of concepts, phenomena and rhythms covering a very broad reality". (Hall, 1970). The notion of context and the notion of time are strongly related. Indeed, time is considered as a language that structures and organizes all activities. Moreover, Hall has identified two forms of time; monochronic time and polychronic time. "Polychronic" systems consist in doing several things at a time, while "Monochronic" systems consist in doing only one thing at a time. In polychronic countries, people are involved in many things at once, trying to accomplish multiple tasks simultaneously. In "a Polychronic System", individuals are engaged in several

events, situations or relationships at once. For them, appointments are often overlooked or canceled. They are not punctual.

In monochronic countries, time is perceived as a tangible reality and used in a linear way "comparable to the road, which extends from the past to the future". "monochrones" do only one thing at a time, they use the terms "won", "lost", "saved", "wasted" to describe time and they treat time as if it were "money". They respect programs, dates, deadlines, commitments and appointments. They show great respect for private property. Monochrones are Anglo-Saxon countries, Germanic, Northern European countries and Japan.

Polychronic countries include Southern European countries, France, Latin America, and India. People's monochronic/polychronic attitude towards time is examined by several researchers like Schramm-Nielsen (2000) who found correlation between this dimension and cultural bases of decision-making. (Bobot and Duberga, 2009).

3.2.3 The Notion of Space

E. Hall (1991) developed the dimension of space. The three dimensions of Hall; context, time and space are inseparable and represent the hidden dimension of culture. "The term proximity is a neologism ... to refer to all accounts and theories on man's use of space as a specific cultural product". (Hall, 1971). Hall is the pioneer of cultural or intercultural proximity. He conducted the study of "social distances in interpersonal relationships".

"*Proxema*" denotes physical distance separating individuals in an interaction and known by their use of their senses, thus each individual has a different perception of distance from a sensorial point of view: visual, kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory and auditory. Each individual has an invisible bubble of space around them that extends and molded according to the culture of each.

Four dimensions of space are mentioned: intimate, personal, social and public.

- Intimate distance: a distance of 15 and 45 cm is necessary for the relationship. People who are allowed to be such close are the very close one (spouses, children, parents);

- Private distance (personal): a distance of 45 cm to 1.2 m is necessary for people to discuss personal topics;

- Social distance: a distance of 1.2 m to 3.5 m is adopted by people working together;

- Public distance: beyond 3.5, is a distance beyond which people cannot address an audience or a group.

In addition to these, there are the two modes of near and far which structure the space for the human being.

3.3 The cultural variables of Salacuse (1991)

Simintiras & Thomas (1998) shows that each culture has its own negotiation style. Negotiation style denotes the behavioral aspects of negotiation as conceived from cultural differences (Faure, 2004).

Salacuse (1991) defines negotiation style as the way in which people from different cultures behave in negotiations. Salacuse (1991), identified ten factors characterizing a negotiation style, each factor is located on a bipolar scale:

Goals (contract or relationship), general attitude (win-win or win-lose), personal style (formal or informal), communication mode (direct or indirect), importance given to time (high or low), the form of the agreement (specific or general), the process of implementing the agreement (inductive or deductive), the structure of the negotiation team (a true leader or the permanent search for consensus), the ability to take risk (high or low).

Table 1. Negotiation styles

Negotiation factors	Response range
Objectives	Contract- relationship
Attitudes	Win /Lose- Win/Win
Personal style	Informal/formal
Communication	Direct/indirect
Sensitivity to time	High /low
Affect	High/low
Agreement implementation	Inductive/ Deductive
Team structure	Leader/ Consensus
Risk-taking	High/low
Agreement	Specific/General

Source: Salacuse (1998), negotiation styles. P. 233.

Salacuse (1991) argues that culture shapes people's thoughts, communication, and behavior, and then statement about its effect on negotiations can be made.

These last ten factors have an impact on the negotiation process and are influenced by the person's culture.

3.4 Cultural Variables of Weinshall (1977) and Roberts (1970)

In 1977, Weinshall proposed a list of eleven cultural variables that may play a major role in the conduct and outcome of international negotiations, while Roberts (1970) proposed almost the same list. These variables are:

- Values and beliefs;
- Language and communication;
- Mood and character;
- Attitudes in general and in particular vis-à-vis the change;
- Motivations and need for accomplishment;
- National stereotypes;
- Practices relating to work and functioning of the economy
- Social structures and practices;
- Authority mode;
- Conflict resolution methods;
- Technological change.

As limited and heterogeneous as it may be, this list is a starting point to show the range of factors that may contribute to forming the cultural image of the opposing negotiator (Dupont C.): by a simple successive addition, one can thus establish the profile of such a person or a group, with the necessary caution about generalizations. (Debabi, 2008).

During inter-country business negotiations, the intercultural variable is considered an essential component and cultural similarity can induce trust between negotiators and therefore leads to more personal interactions (Simintiras and Thomas, 1998). Cultural similarity can induce trust between negotiators and facilitate communication (Debabi, 2011).

Differences in national cultures can then be a major obstacle to building trust, especially in the context of relational exchange if misunderstandings arise about defining the context (timing, number of parties, expectations of relationships) or some processes (personal relationships, contractual solidarity, cooperation, planning, measurement and specifications, manipulation of power, distribution of benefits and burdens (Bobot, 2007).

Pure intercultural studies focused on the effective interaction between partners of different cultures during international business negotiations. Their focus was the style of intercultural negotiation between different cultures. All the specific contexts of international business interaction in terms of the various types of international

agreements can serve as a basis for observation: joint venture agreements, agency agreements, management agreements, major international projects (McCall & Warrington, 1984).

We have indeed been able to identify the intercultural variables that are relevant to international business negotiation. There are several cultural factors in a business negotiation when the involved two parties come from different countries. The aim is to know and highlight these variables for a better analysis of the negotiation situation and thus to succeed and achieve its objectives.

After identifying the intercultural variables, we propose to empirically test them and check their validity.

4. Design and context of study

Our study is exploratory in nature. We aim to understand a phenomenon in the context of its use. As a research method, we use the qualitative approach according to which data is to be collected during semi-structured interviews.

The aim of our qualitative study is twofold:

- An exploratory objective: as the study looks to explore and highlight the different intercultural variables intervening in an international business negotiation, and
- A confirmatory objective: as we validate our theoretical choices while identifying the set of cross-cultural variables that affect international business negotiations.

4.1 The Sample

We undertook a qualitative study of a number of negotiators who are used to negotiating with foreigners from different cultures. Note that this approach is as imperative as it is complex and very difficult. Respondents were selected in a way as to ensure a diversity of points of view about the topic under study. The surveyed population is heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and socio-professional categories. The sampling method is that of convenient sampling.

To specify the appropriate sample size consistent with the objectives of such a study, several authors (notably Glaser and Strauss, 1967) recommend interviewing as many people as possible until they reach a theoretical saturation, i.e. until the study of an additional case no longer enriches our knowledge of the studied phenomenon. The basic principle for sample size determination is saturation (Royer and Zarlovski, 2003). That is, the data collection process should stop when the analysis of the last observed

unit provides no useful information (Yin, 1994). Using this approach, we interviewed 16 professional negotiators (10 Tunisians and 6 French).

Our target is two cultures; the Tunisian culture and the French culture. The rationale for choosing the sample is that France is Tunisia's largest trading partner, and its largest supplier (with a market share of 20.1%) and its largest customer (29.3% of Tunisian exports are intended for the French market)².

4.2 Coding and Data Analysis

All of our interviews were retranscribed. This retranscription was analyzed using the Nvivo 7 software, which gives priority to computerized qualitative analysis.

Data analysis consisted first of identifying all the themes and codes, then of coding the data. Indeed, our interview consists of ten different themes (perception of space, perception of time, hierarchical distance, uncertainty control, individualism and collectivism, masculinity and femininity), communication, type of relationship sought, negotiation style and relationship with environment). We introduced them one by one according to their tree structure as parent nodes. Once these nodes created with the name of themes identified, we introduced their corresponding sub-themes. Once these steps were completed, we proceeded to coding. At this level, this amounts to reading each of the interviews and each time there was a unity of meaning, i.e. word, sentence or paragraph that seems to refer to a node, we select it and assign it to the corresponding node. Moreover, according to Duhaine and Landry (1995) "the interpretation of qualitative data generally consists of a flexible and rather inductive analysis by which one seeks to understand phenomena by giving them a meaning and this, in a context where there is a small number of topics or cases that are studied in depth".

4.3 Analysis and Discussion of the Results

The cross-cultural variables interfering in the studied international business negotiation will be tested in this section, using the qualitative exploratory approach. Let us associate first the contribution of qualitative analysis with an understanding of complex social and human phenomena. (Mukamurera, Lacourse, Coutrier, 2006). Note that we use "the Nvivo 7" computer program of qualitative data analysis, which facilitates analysis, especially when coding a large body of data, ranking data, and assigning themes to categories. In total, all the variables in the literature are mentioned by our respondents. The variables are presented according to the priority given to it by respondents:

² Interview of Alain Juppé by Mouldi Kefi, Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 10 may 2011

1. Time

The most important variable is time, which is mentioned by most respondents.

1.1. Importance of the time factor

Hofstede (1980), studying perception of time in societies, distinguished two types; those that show a positivist attitude towards the future and those that are short-term oriented. *"This factor determines the organization. Time management is an internal necessity"* (Ms Zarrad).

Examining the responses, we noticed that most respondents have a positive attitude towards the future, but imperatively considered the past as "a source of knowledge" (Mr. Boucolon). Then, it is recommended to "always look back to emails history, telephone conversations and meetings to know about the requirements of the other party from the outset of the negotiation", said Mr Khir. Similarly, Mr Fourati pointed out that "one must be critical that future choices will be better ... the past is synonymous to experience".

Time is, therefore, one of the most important factors in negotiations, which can be either a weakness or an asset.

1.2. Polychronism / Monochronism

The second intercultural sub-variable is polychronism versus monochronism. Hall (1959-1981) distinguished two categories of time. Responses to the question "Describe how you plan and organize your work? The intention is determined whether respondents belong to a polychronic or a monochronic time culture.

We noticed that ten respondents prefer monochronic time (4 French and 7 Tunisians). They focus on one thing and do it all at once; they give importance to collected information and follow programs and commitments. They respect dates, deadlines and appointments. "I respect appointments; delivery times and payment ... focus on one thing ... Always choose the step by step approach". Mr Fourati indicates.

The same opinion is expressed by Maâch "I plan my work according to the order of priority of things and according to the time I have, one by one". Everything must be organized and planned, not to waste time; "I usually plan my work a day in advance. I make a schedule of what I plan to do not to forget some details. I classify tasks by priority and urgency; sometimes, I classify the tasks starting with the one that takes the least amount of time and that depends on my state of mind ". Ms. Russo confirms.

For the remaining respondents: five respondents are polychronic (2 French and 3 Tunisians). They engage in many events, situations or relationships at once. "Doing several things at the same time ... you have to be versatile, creative, and have the art of dealing with unexpected situations." Mr Kraiem makes it clear.

A good negotiator is one who has better management of unforeseen situations and the art of being versatile, "I am forced to process several files at the same time, but for each of them I give maximum attention". Ms. Magnien clarifies.

2. Hierarchical Distance

The second variable considered important by respondents is hierarchical distance with its two sub-variables:

2.1. The relationship between superiors – employees

All interviewees answered the following question: "How do you see the relationship between superiors and their employees?"

According to the interviewees, the relationship between superiors and employees shows a limited dependence, "The relationship between superiors and their employees is a coordinating relationship. My superior is like a reference as well as he is my tutor and trainer, and especially when it comes to technical terms in the field of construction or law", one of the interviewees indicated (a subordinate Ms. Mejri). On this dimension, the manager Ms. Mattoussi said that it is "a collaboration that aims at the well-being of the company with hierarchical control".

Therefore, whatever the position and hierarchy, all agree on having equal rights, as clearly put by Ms. Hamdi: "Being an example of discipline and experience is more important, and sometimes being a friend and tolerant is actually an asset for success." According to two French respondents, today, equality of roles and equality between the top and the bottom of the hierarchy determine the relationship between superiors and subordinates: "We do not speak of authority at work in the true sense of the word ... you have to trust the employee's abilities, encourage them to be an active and motivated member", Ms. Alfons confirms. In the same line of thinking, Ms. Magnien added: "Today, we no longer speak of superior and inferior hierarchy because everyone has an important role in the company. The term employed is replaced by the term collaborator; they belong to the company and actively participate in their evolution".

Therefore, we found that hierarchical distance is reduced where employees become real collaborators within the company, their role is as important as that of superiors.

2.2. Status and social position

In some cultures, status is essential for power, and therefore the weak depends on the strong. This variable is also important, which respondents take into account during negotiations. The relevant question respondents answered is: "How important do you value status and social position?"

Most respondents seem to value the importance of status and social position. On this, Mr Fourati indicates: "The one with the most important status is the one who automatically has more power". According to many interviewees, status and social position are determining factors of the negotiator profile (this opinion is shared by Mr Kraiem, Mr Khir, Mrs Maâch, Mrs Mejri, Mrs Mattoussi, Mr Boucolon, Mrs Magnien, Mrs vrignaud).

It is important to value status variable, because unconsciously it can distinguish people. For example, Ms. Vrignaud indicates: "there is a big difference between negotiating with a manager of a company and a salesperson, that's quite normal". Similarly, Mrs Magnien added: "The status of the general manager obviously carries a degree of power". For Mr Russo: "social position is important because it ensures respect for people, our self-esteem"

3. Communication

3.1. Communication style

According to Hall (1959-1981), understanding the other's negotiating culture is made possible through communication. Then, communication is founded on culture. According to Cogan (2003), the French negotiator speaks first, speaks longer to find the best solution, using reason. Our French respondents confirm this assumption when they insist on the contribution of communication to the success of a business negotiation³, as indicated by Ms. Alfons: "Dialogue helps to clarify any situation in order to reach an agreement".

Dialogue is one of the tools used in communication. On the other hand, communication is a very vast field where it is vital to "update the communication components: you are communicating What? In other words, your ideas; Who is this message for? i.e., your interlocutor; How do you communicate? That is, what are the means and techniques used? Why? To convince, inform, persuade ...", Ms. Magnien clarifies. Moreover, nonverbal communication is fundamental, as put by Ms. Alfons: "Understanding the unsaid and gestures ... learning the art of nonverbal

³ Bobot L. (2007), Les négociations commerciales multiculturelles, *Négocia*, CR-N° 27.

communication". Similarly, Mr. Boucolon adds: "gesture means a lot to me because in some cases gestures and looks are more expressive than words".

The use of arguments is a major asset to communication. According to Fisher (1980), the French consider negotiations as a useless art of Cartesian logic, where there is a heavy focus on schools of thought, the use of the right formula, conventions, arguments a priori, and abstraction of reality. Negotiation is conceived more like a debate, where controversies and arguments are necessary, as put by Mrs. Vrignaud: "I use a lot of arguments and examples".

With similar concerns, Ms. Rizk clarifies: "I hate long, unnecessary discussions. I would like to focus on the most interesting points in order not to waste time. My goal is to sign contracts as a guarantee".

A French respondent pointed to the need to know about the context to better understand the transmitted messages. This is indicated by Mrs. Alfons: "I am interested in everything that happens in the negotiation room even the way people are dressed ... everything can be useful to understand the other".

The communication variable is as important for the Tunisian culture as for the French culture. Mr. Fourati agreed that: "the best reputation comes from the best communication". According to Tunisian respondents, one should be showing understanding of others, listening, methodical and clear to ensure better communication. "A diplomatic, civilized communication and above all a communication with self-confidence which is based on solid and convincing arguments", Ms. Mattoussi indicates.

3.2. Showing emotions

This variable was mentioned by Salacuse (1991). Some emotions can serve or harm the outcome of the negotiation. To test this, all of the interviewees answered the following question: "Do you show your emotions during a negotiation?". Respondents seem to agree that emotions should be controlled, as pointed out by Mr Khir: "The good negotiator is the one who can handle his feelings, who can overcome moments of nervousness, stress and / or moments of joy".

Depending on the objectives, the negotiator can show his emotions. On this, Ms. Mattoussi said: "if it can strengthen my position, yes why not, but if it can be perceived as a weakness, you should never do it". In the same vein, Ms. Magnien Adds: "when we show our emotions, we risk diverting attention from the essential issues and gradually limit our ability to think and act reasonably".

There are positive and negative emotions that can hinder or serve the negotiation. Ms. Rizk indicates: "I show positive feelings to reduce mistrust and increase the possibility of reaching a satisfactory agreement for both".

4. Masculinity and femininity

In the literature, this variable was mentioned by Hofstede (1980). The author classified companies into two categories: masculine companies and feminine companies.

To examine this variable, all interviewees answered our question. Mr Fourati confirms that "women negotiate better than men. They are very attentive and they have a great ability to capture what words seem to hide". Most of the remaining answers agree that the roles are interchangeable and the two are equal. For example, Ms. Hamdi indicates that "Man or woman, there is no difference in roles and decision-making choices; each has their own qualities and certainly their flaws. What is different is how to behave and interpret the facts". In addition, a researcher in our sample of interviewees specialized in negotiations, in particular gender differences in negotiation indicates that "women tend more to collaborate, more to accommodate, they are kind of cooperative negotiators who favor more equity whereas men are highly competitive, win-lose negotiators, and perform better than women".

All French interviewees think that there is no difference between the two in negotiation, as put by Ms. Russo: "women are equal to man because God has endowed women with mental capacities equal to those of men. So, both must help each other, complete each other".

5. Uncertainty Control

Hofstede (1980) shows that the degree of tolerating the unpredictable caused by future events is different from one society to another. All interviewees answered our relevant question clearly. Most respondents show tolerance for uncertainty. This is echoed by Mr Fourati and Mrs Mattoussi: "Those who do not take risks come up with nothing".

Mr Fourati illustrates the above as follows: "the best example is known as 'overbooking', it is a purely technical tourist word which means selling more rooms than the hotel allows decreasing what is called the "No Show" or the "voids".

Five Tunisian respondents think that it is tolerable to take risks. However, the five remaining respondents think the opposite: "it is intolerable to take risks under any pretext to succeed the negotiation, it is always necessary to follow the standard work procedure", as Ms. Mejri indicates.

As for the French interviewees, four interviewees tolerate risk-taking, as illustrated by Mr Boucolon: "courageous acts, in my opinion, that saved us a lot of time and they were exclusively the outcome of risky decisions, which most people wouldn't tolerate". On the other hand, the other two remaining interviewees believe that "when

the personality is risk averse, then the degree of risk is often minimal", as Ms. Russo indicated.

6. Negotiation style

All respondents believe that the best outcomes come from a win-win type of negotiation, except that Ms. Mattoussi thinks that: "the other party unveils their proposal, and then I try to challenge it by convincing arguments". On the other hand, "negotiation is a compromise reached between two or more parties for decision-making as the common decision is to share profits and gains in a fair way", Ms. Alfons believes. What is clear in these outputs is that each of the interviewees tends to favor their own negotiation style. This is illustrated by Miss Zarrad: "Methodical, cooperative, open-minded, trustworthy, careful, organized, etc ...". Similarly, Ms. Mejri indicates: "I take into account the comments and opinions of my interlocutor to work for an agreement". According to the interviewees, the prevailing negotiation approach is more of a win-win type, because it frequently allows them to gain recognition and developing their identity by thinking and acting through collaboration and mutual consent.

7. The type of relationship sought

This variable consists of two sub-variables on which all interviewees gave their opinions.

7.1. Perception of others

Debabi (2011) argues that cultural similarity can introduce trust between negotiators, which facilitates communication. However, cultural differences can be an obstacle to building trust (Simintiras and Thomas 1998, Bobot 2007). Trust is important for Tunisian interviewees as well as for French interviewees, which is explicitly said by some of them. For instance, Ms. Rizk said: "each of us has his own way of treating others. When it comes to trust, it is essential for lasting and close relationships with others and developing business activity". Furthermore, Mrs. Alfons added: "we never work alone, it is imperative to work as teams therefore trust is needed". Similarly, Tunisian interviewees showed interest in the trust variable. They consider it a main component in perceiving the others. Ms. Hamdi shares this opinion: "I trust others and have a sense of empathy towards them". The other respondent shared similar opinions, as illustrated by Miss Houda when she refers to them as "collaborators with whom I work". Trust is an element when perceiving others essential to "create relationships", as put by Mr Khir.

7.2. The importance of relational

To examine this variable, all respondents answered the following question: "How important are relationships to you?"

All respondents think that relationships are essential for them. They occupy a decisive place in both negotiations and life in general. Mr Fourati echoes this: "The real advantage is to build strong relationships with customers, suppliers and even competitors ... so without relationships we are nothing". The goal of building relationships is observable in Mr Mejri's output: "never underestimate a contact and always think about its usefulness in the future".

Similarly, Miss Zarrad indicates: "preserve the relationship to promote a relational dynamic adjustment for a permanent dialogue to develop". The same opinion is shared by French interviewees. For example, Ms. Alfons believes: "building lasting relationships with customers, suppliers ... and the various elements of the company's environment helps us to create an important network to face competition". This is explained by the fact that "the human being is sociable by nature, then relationships are very important in life", as noted by Ms. Russo.

All the interviewees attach a greater importance to the relationship variable because, as put by Mr. Boucolon, "everyone speaks about relational communication, relationship marketing and relational intelligence, which automatically invite us to attach a greater importance to relationships in our lives".

8. Individualism and collectivism

This dimension measures the degree of independence and freedom of an individual in relation to a group and in relation to the social norms of a society. (Hofstede, 1980). There are some respondents who are "attached to community values" like Miss Zarrad. However, there are others who favor individualism, like Ms. Rizk: "Personally, I take responsibility for my decisions" Similarly, for Ms. Magnien, "my decisions are individual. There is no collective decisions but consulting". Some prefer to belong to groups to feel safe and it is ideal for them. Mr Khir voices this opinion: "the ideal is that the decisions are collective which allows, on the one hand, to involve everyone in the decision-making process, and on the other hand, to guarantee a minimum of errors and failures". Then, collective decisions result from work, which will be the responsibility of the entire team.

9. Space

The dimension of space was developed by Hall (1991). The author showed that this dimension is unconscious trait. To determine the role of the space variable in the culture of the interviewees, we asked the following question: "How do you perceive space in a negotiation?"

By space, we mean the physical distance between negotiators in a negotiation situation. The answers are multiple and each of the respondents understood distance in their own way. Accordingly, we found a "Free Node" which includes five interviewees (3 Tunisians and 2 French) who provided us with different meanings. For instance, Ms. Mattoussi indicates: "control the space of the negotiation, so that it is in my favor, I must choose the right place, the right moment to be in a strong position". Thus, space allows for a powerful position the opposing negotiator: "As a real estate agent, I find that negotiation can only be effective in my territory, meaning, back to my office with the client after each visit (from the client's point of view, this is an act of professionalism) gives me the opportunity to control and regulate my interaction with the buyer as well as it allows me to develop the role and strategy of the negotiation". Clearly, the real estate agent highlights the link between the negotiation space and obtaining the desired results.

For others, like Mr Kraiem, "all the details can positively or negatively play a role in a negotiation. For example the interior design, the layout of the meeting room, the lighting ... etc are all determining factors of the negotiation space". Then, space is not only the measure of physical proximity between negotiators, but also the whole of the environment or the two dimensions put in interaction. In similar lines, Mrs. Russo indicates that "it would have to be a large space, calm and bright, airy and not full of people so that my negotiators are comfortable". Then, according to this latter opinion, there should be preliminary conditions for the negotiators to feel comfortable. She believes that the presence of several people during the negotiation may cause discomfort.

Moreover, For Ms. Alfons, "distance sometimes allows you to take your time to better analyze the situation". Thus, there is a relationship between distance and time of situation analysis and decision making.

For other respondents, choosing an intimate, social, private, public distance depends on the negotiator's goal. "The distance is 1 m to 2 or 3 m maximum ... to get to the heart of the matter" Mr Fourati indicates. Mr. Boucolon indicates: "I cannot negotiate with any of the parties without being able to notice and correctly grasp their behavior and this is of course when I am ready to meet them". Thus, the lower the distance between negotiators is reduced, the higher understanding and knowing the opposing parties increase.

10. The relationship with the environment

The response rate to the question "Do you have to submit to your environment or control it? is 100%.Mr Fourati indicates: "There are several types of environments that directly or indirectly affect our business and that we cannot ignore ... then, we must take into account all these elements to make the right decisions ... if it is possible to control our environment it will be better".

All respondents, without exception, believe that environmental control is a major challenge for all negotiators. For instance, Ms Mejri indicates that "Under no circumstances should you submit to my environment, but you have to control it and be a good interlocutor to gain more information about your client and their expectations, so as to save time and work directly towards the objectives without letting any details escape, while always being the controller of the situation".

In total, all the variables studied in the literature are mentioned by respondents. Variables are presented by the priority given by respondents.

Conclusion

Our study subscribes itself within the field of international business negotiations. Our aim was to identify all the intercultural variables that are likely to influence negotiations. Several studies have focused on the issue of intercultural negotiation. However, none could fully address all the intercultural variables involved in international business negotiations. Studying these different variables, we noticed that culture influences the conduct and outcome of a negotiation and that intercultural variables have been found to have a relationship at several levels in a negotiation.

The main limitations of this study relate, first, to the reliability of the collected data, as our sample is small in size. Such a size cannot allow for statistically representative results, making their generalization difficult. Second, in some situations, we felt that the respondent may "beautify an answer", the purpose of which is to provide what he considers to be the interviewer's desired response. This is clear when the respondent wants to know the opinion of other respondents on the same subject. Then, respondents may want to edit or hide information or may communicate invalid or incomplete information. Third, the subjectivity of a qualitative analysis, like ours, puts into question the validity of the researcher's results, their credibility, objectivity and reliability.

To overcome these weaknesses, we interviewed several people of different ages, gender, and with different positions. We also administered the same interview to all respondents to ensure that the principle of internal validity is met.

From a management point of view, this study will enable negotiators to determine the different intercultural variables and in particular, to see how an intercultural business negotiation is conducted. The interviewed negotiators agreed on the role of these intercultural variables, but what remains ambiguous is the degree of their influence on international negotiations. A perspective could be considered to pursue this line of research, which consists in conducting a quantitative study to measure the degree of influence of each intercultural variable on the conduct and / or outcome of an international business negotiation.

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