

# Cross-cultural Negotiations: A Role Evaluation of Four Cultural Dimensions & Two Cultural Components

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## Introduction

Cross-border negotiations have become the norm with the onset of a pervasive global economy. Countries have long depended on trade with other nations to secure the needs of their people with respect to agriculture, technology, textiles, and other products and services. Countries must trade because of the limitations inherent in, among other things, their geographic location, terrain, available natural resources, available technology, and know-how. Negotiations therefore take place between countries and corporations to procure contracts for the import and export of goods.

This article focuses on negotiations between corporations. Successful negotiations are critical to achieving each party's goals with respect to overall financial performance, growth, and reputation. Successful negotiations are generally a result of being aware of one's own negotiating style and that of one's counterpart. It is therefore crucial to prepare before entering into an international negotiation and to be aware of your counterpart's negotiation style as dictated by culture, your counterpart's perception of your negotiation style, and potential stereotypes that may be applied to you.

This article evaluates the four following cultural dimensions according to Hofstede's framework. (Hofstede is an influential Dutch writer on the interactions between national cultures and organizational cultures. He is the author of several books including *Culture's Consequences* and *Culture and Organizations, Software of the Mind*.) They are:

- (1) Individualism/collectivism
- (2) Power distance
- (3) Masculinity/femininity, and
- (4) Uncertainty avoidance

After providing overviews of these different cultural dimensions, this article applies each of them to the United States, Japan,

China, and Chile to provide a basic guide for U.S. negotiators entering into, or considering entering into, negotiations with parties from these three countries.

Finally, this article will discuss two cultural components, time orientation and space orientation. This final segment is included to demonstrate the differences that exist between the U.S. and other countries with respect to these two components, which, if not properly accounted for, could potentially make or break a deal.

## Definition of Culture & Its Various Dimensions

### *Culture Defined*

Culture is generally defined as the unique characteristic of a social group based on the values and norms shared by its members that set it apart from other social groups. The characteristics defining a culture include economic, political, social, religious, educational, and linguistic components. It is the "collective programming of the mind."<sup>1</sup> "Culture also relates to a shared system of beliefs, attitudes, possessions, attributes, customs, and values that define group behavior."<sup>2</sup> These dimensions influence the dynamics of cross-border negotiations.

### *Cultural Dimension No. 1:*

#### *Individualism/Collectivism*

The first dimension as identified by Hofstede is individualism versus collectivism. Individualism and/or collectivism describe the extent to which society emphasizes the individual or the group. Individualistic cultures look to personal achievement, innovation, and autonomy, and individuals have tendencies to look out for themselves. Collectivist cultures, on the other hand, emphasize group responsibility, harmony, social order, relationships, and loyalty.<sup>3</sup> Negotiators from individualistic cultures are

likely to be somewhat short-sighted, meaning that they focus on short-term goals, make extreme offers, and tend to be more competitive overall.<sup>4</sup> Negotiators from collectivist cultures, however, are likely to be long-term and goal oriented in lengthy negotiations. They will make realistic offers and have a more cooperative desire to procure solid business relations with the other side.

#### *Cultural Dimension No. 2: Power Distance*

Power distance is the second cultural dimension of which a negotiator should be aware. This concept refers to the distribution of power and respect for a society's hierarchy. High power distance results in little consultation between superiors and their subordinates and emphasizes formal hierarchy, resulting in an increased level of respect for each level. Low power distance cultures tend to view the hierarchy prevalent in any corporation as less important than high power cultures, with CEOs, managers, and subordinates consulting with each other from the bottom-up and top-down. This results in a sharing of decision-making authority between superiors and their subordinates.<sup>5</sup> This dichotomy can result in negotiators from low, power-distance countries becoming frustrated by the need of negotiators from high, power-distance cultures to seek approvals from their supervisors.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Cultural Dimension No. 3: Masculinity/Femininity*

The third dimension is masculinity versus femininity. Masculine cultures tend to value decisiveness, assertiveness, competitiveness, and other characteristics generally associated with leadership roles.<sup>7</sup> Usually, masculine cultures place an emphasis on money and material things. Feminine cultures, on the other hand, are more concerned with building and maintaining relationships. Negotiators in masculine cultures may be more likely to focus on the specifics of agreements as opposed to its overall impact on the other party, while feminine cultures are more concerned with long-range efforts and feel that details can be worked out later.<sup>8</sup> Thus, as Hofstede indicates, a negotiator from a masculine culture may tend to focus on precise quality standards, evaluations, and processes, while the feminine-cultured negotiator may emphasize good reputation and reliability.

#### *Cultural Dimension No. 4:*

##### *Uncertainty Avoidance*

The final cultural dimension discussed in this article is uncertainty (risk) avoidance. This dimension pertains to a society's comfort level with structured versus unstructured situations. A high-uncertainty avoidance culture tends to "prefer stability, structure, and precise managerial direction."<sup>9</sup> Conversely, low-uncertainty avoidance cultures are comfortable with the unknown, ambiguity, unstructured situations, and broad managerial guidance. Negotiators from high-risk avoidance countries are likely to have policies, procedures, and rules to stipulate what actions will take place under certain conditions; they are likely to seek specific commitments in terms of volume, timing, and requirements.<sup>10</sup> On the other side of the coin, negotiators from low-risk avoidance countries will be comfortable with rough estimates of volume, timing, and constantly changing requirements.<sup>11</sup> These four cultural dimensions demonstrate the opposite ends of the spectrum for each country. It is important to know your counterpart and to take into consideration where he or she may lie with respect to each dimension. While the other person's goal may be consistent with yours, to ultimately procure a deal, the roads and turns taken to getting there may be quite different in each case.

### **Application of Cultural Dimensions to Negotiators from the U.S., Japan, China, & Chile**

#### *The United States' Typical Breed of Negotiator*

##### *(1) Individualism*

It is obvious to any resident of the U.S. that individualism is highly prized and guarded. It is what U.S. residents feel separates them from the rest of the world, and because of their ability to differentiate themselves and excel, U.S. residents are able to advance up the corporate ladder. As individuals, U.S. negotiators tend to take independent initiative and treat negotiations as an opportunity to "win" through effective arguing and bargaining. In addition, individualistic cultures value specificity and clarity of communication, relying heavily on what is said and viewing silence as a negative reaction on behalf of the their counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

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### **(2) Low Power Distance**

The United States is considered to be a culture with less emphasis on power distance than many other cultures. Although the hierarchical system does exist in corporate America, "higher managers normally will be more willing to share their authorities to subordinates in decision making, and leave certain latitude for disagreement."<sup>13</sup> Thus, there is a higher level of comfort in commercial settings for U.S. negotiators to assume equality within their team.<sup>14</sup> This facilitates the exchange of ideas among and between team members allowing for the term "two heads are better than one" to come into play.

### **(3) Masculinity**

Applying the explanation above of a masculine versus feminine culture to the U.S. suggests that it is a masculine culture. U.S. negotiators are, therefore, usually concerned with money, specific timing, individual contract terms, and adherence to every detail contained within the contract agreement. They will, for example, be more likely "to stress adherence to shipment delivery dates..."<sup>15</sup> Further, failure to make good on one's commitments is more likely than in some other cultures to lead to litigation.

### **(4) Low Uncertainty (Risk) Avoidance**

As a low-risk averse country, U.S. negotiators will have a tendency to value risk-taking and are more comfortable with ambiguity.<sup>16</sup> At first glance, this would seem to run contrary to the masculine nature of U.S. negotiators. However, even though American negotiators may prefer everything to be done according to plan, in the event that the plans go astray, they may also have a calming ability to deal with situations in which any number of uncertainties arise. For example, when Americans are faced with unexpected delays in production resulting in delayed delivery, instead of panicking, American negotiators will view it as an opportunity to creatively improvise a solution. This again demonstrates the individualistic nature of U.S. negotiators to differentiate themselves by finding a solution in the face of unexpected complications.

### **(5) A Japanese Negotiator's Perception of U.S. Negotiators**

Although the discussion above relating to U.S. negotiators is valuable in evaluating our own styles, it is important to know how we come across to those on the other side of the

table. By knowing how we tend to act in a negotiation setting, we will be able to better adjust our attitudes and tendencies when dealing in cross-cultural negotiations in order to accommodate our counterpart's negotiation style. A Japanese negotiator who wrote "Negotiating with Americans" discloses the Japanese perception of the U.S. style noting the following tendencies, which provides some valuable insight:

- (a) American negotiators tend to be competitive in their approach to negotiations, including coming to the table with a fall-back position but beginning with an unrealistic offer;
- (b) American negotiators tend to be energetic, confident, and persistent; they enjoy arguing their positions, and see things universally (i.e. they like to talk about broad applications of ideas);
- (c) American negotiators tend to concentrate on one problem at a time (a monochromic approach to negotiating deals);
- (d) American negotiators tend to focus on areas of disagreement, not areas of commonality or agreement; and
- (e) American negotiators like closure and certainty rather than open-endedness or fuzziness.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Japanese Negotiator**

#### **(1) Collectivism**

Japan has been characterized as a collectivistic culture.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, Japanese negotiators tend to focus on group goals and interdependence with a focus on establishing long-term relationships. As a result, the Japanese are concerned with "face" and tend to avoid confrontation as it may cause embarrassment resulting in deals going bad.<sup>19</sup> In addition, a successful negotiation will usually reflect the efforts of the entire team and will not focus on what each individual brought to the table.<sup>20</sup>

#### **(2) High Power Distance**

The Japanese are also a high-power distance culture, placing an emphasis the hierarchical structure.<sup>21</sup> As a result, the Japanese usually come to the negotiating table with each team member knowing what part of the negotiations is his or her responsibility and knowing not to interrupt or comment on what another team member is saying.<sup>22</sup> Intuitively, this is

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done because contradicting a team member while at the negotiating table would cause embarrassment and effectively cause that team member to lose face.

### (3) *Masculinity*

Like Americans, the Japanese are a masculine culture. This includes a view of achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success.<sup>23</sup> While seemingly running averse to the Japanese tendency to foster relationships, it in fact compliments their tendency towards controlling relationships.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore important to note that it may be difficult for U.S. negotiators to understand and deal with the Japanese because even though they value long-term relationships, the way the negotiations may play out could lead the Americans to believe there is no common solution due to the perceived level of control the Japanese may passively assert.

### (4) *High Uncertainty (Risk) Avoidance*

Unlike U.S. negotiators, the Japanese are a high-risk averse culture.<sup>25</sup> They are therefore concerned with obtaining as much information about their counterparts and their counterparts' competitors to make a highly-informed decision. Conversely, however, because saving face is of great importance to the Japanese, while they require information from their counterparts, they "are deliberately vague on specific issues in the early stages of a negotiation so that any later reversal will not result in a loss of face."<sup>26</sup> Confrontational negotiation techniques are viewed as impolite and disrespectful causing the Japanese to distrust their counterparts.<sup>27</sup>

### (5) *Putting Japanese Negotiation Tactics into Perspective*

The Japanese view the negotiation process "as a fluid rational process, calling for diligent preparation." In addition, the Japanese view "a business negotiation as a time to develop a business relationship with the goal of long-term mutual benefit. The economic issues are the context, not the content, of the talks. Once the relationship is established, other details can quickly be settled. In Japan, personal relationships are always subsumed within the context of the business relationship – friendship first, business second."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, U.S. negotiators should attempt to adopt this overall view of negotiations from the Japanese perspective in order to be able to prepare effectively and not become frus-

trated with the amount of time spent at the table. Establishing relationships, as common sense dictates, takes time.

### *The Chinese at the Negotiating table*

#### (1) *Collectivism*

Similar to the Japanese, the Chinese are a collectivistic culture oriented towards family, organizations, and community.<sup>29</sup> As a result, when "negotiating with foreigners, they feel more comfortable and confident to work in a group than to work alone."<sup>30</sup> Emphasis is, again, placed on the team as a whole as opposed to the individual with individual considerations falling second to those of the group. In addition, as a result of the Chinese Confucian dynamism, Chinese negotiators tend to respect values, be polite and honest, and work toward building a long-term business relationship, much like the Japanese.<sup>31</sup> Chinese Confucianism is an ethical and philosophical system originally developed from the teachings of the early Chinese sage Confucius. It is a complex system of moral, social, political, philosophical, and religious thought, which has had tremendous influence on the culture and history of East Asia up to the 21st century.<sup>32</sup>

#### (2) *High Power Distance*

The Chinese, again like the Japanese, are a high power distance culture. The differences in wealth and power limit interaction between social classes and restrict movement from one class to another.<sup>33</sup> It is therefore important for U.S. negotiators to bring a team of individuals that match the ranks of those that comprise the Chinese negotiation team.<sup>34</sup> Bringing individuals of a lower rank than those of the Chinese may reflect poorly on the U.S. negotiator and be considered an insult by the Chinese.

#### (3) *Masculinity*

The Chinese have also been deemed a masculine culture because of the historic role that men play in society. While the roles of women are changing, the effects of the long-standing tradition of men in power roles gives the Chinese a tendency to be assertive, aggressive, and exhibit competitive behaviors.<sup>35</sup> As a result, they are concerned about performance and justice as opposed to trust and compassion.<sup>36</sup>

Chinese negotiators tend to respect values, be polite and honest, and work toward building a long-term business relationship, much like the Japanese.

#### (4) *High Uncertainty (Risk) Avoidance*

Again, like the Japanese, the Chinese are high-risk avoiders and are uncomfortable with uncertainty, risk, and unconventional behavior. As a result, they tend to “have policies, procedures, and rules to stipulate what actions will take place under such conditions.”<sup>37</sup> This is an attempt to limit risk and uncertainty that comes with the terrain of negotiating with new foreign companies. It may, therefore, take a great deal of time to establish a relationship and to come to an agreement.

#### (5) *Eight Important Elements of the Chinese Negotiation Style*

In addition to the cultural norms of the Chinese, it is important to note eight elements identified in an article in the *Harvard Business Review*. These provide insight for the U.S. negotiator on tactics and Chinese cultural norms that should be observed in order to reach success.

(a) *Guanxi* (Personal Connections): While Americans put a premium on networking, information, and institutions, the Chinese place a premium on individuals’ social capital within their group of friends, relatives, and close associates. To add to this, “the Chinese are often very eager to be of service, if they have it in their power to assist. This is true for two reasons. First, doing a favor for a friend is inherently face-enhancing; it shows you are a person of some means or ability. And second, every favor you do builds your “credit” column on the balance sheet that governs your relationship with the requestor.”<sup>38</sup>

(b) *Zhongjian Ren* (The Intermediary): Business deals for Americans in China do not have a chance without the intermediary. In the United States, we tend to trust others until or unless we are given reason not to. In China, suspicion and distrust characterize all meetings with strangers.

(c) *Shehui Denji* (Social Status): American-style, “just call me Mary” casualness does not play well in a country where the Confucian values of obedience and deference to one’s superiors remain strong. The formality goes much deeper, however-unfathomably so, to many Westerners.

(d) *Renji Hexi* (Interpersonal Harmony): The Chinese sayings, “A man without a smile should not open a shop,” and “Sweet temper and friendliness produce money,” speak volumes about the importance of harmonious relations between business partners.

(e) *Zhengti Guannian* (Holistic Thinking): The Chinese think in terms of whole while Americans think sequentially and individualistically, breaking up complex negotiation tasks into a series of smaller issues: price, quantity, warranty, delivery, and so forth. Chinese negotiators tend to talk about those issues all at once, skipping among them, and, from the Americans’ point of view, seemingly never settling anything.

(f) *Jiejian* (Thrift): China’s long history of economic and political instability has taught its people to save their money, a practice known as *jiejian*. The focus on savings results, in business negotiations, in a lot of bargaining over price – usually through haggling. Chinese negotiators will pad their offers with more room to maneuver than most Americans are used to, and they will make concessions on price with great reluctance and only after lengthy discussions.

(g) *Mianzi* (“Face” or Social Capital): In Chinese business culture, a person’s reputation and social standing rest on saving face. If Westerners cause the Chinese embarrassment or loss of composure, even unintentionally, it can be disastrous for business negotiations.

(h) *Chiku Nailao* (Endurance, Relentlessness, or Eating Bitterness and Enduring Labor): The Chinese are famous for their work ethic. But they take diligence one step further – to endurance. Where Americans place high value on talent as a key to success, the Chinese see *chiku nailao* as much more important and honorable.<sup>39</sup>

These eight factors should provide the American negotiator with a practical application of the way the four cultural dimensions play into the negotiation process.

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## *The Chilean Negotiator*

### *(1) Collectivism*

The Chileans, as collectivists by nature, view themselves as interdependent. Therefore, group goals and interests take precedence over those of the individual, much like in both Japan and China. In addition, Chileans have a tendency to pay attention to how something is said rather than what is actually stated, valuing silence in certain circumstances. The Chileans approach negotiations interested in the other party's objective. Also, they tend to control their emotions at the negotiating table while valuing an apology in the face of conflict as opposed to finally reaching an agreement.<sup>40</sup>

### *(2) High Power Distance*

As a high power distance country, the Chileans are disciplined during negotiations. A subordinate will never contradict his superior at the negotiating table. The hierarchal structure is thus preserved at all times, causing the counterpart to have one "interlocutor" to look to for decisive authority.<sup>41</sup> This is different from U.S. negotiation teams, as mentioned above, because U.S. team members treat each other as equals and are accepting of ideas from others, no matter what title they hold.

### *(3) Femininity*

Much like other Latin American countries, Chile is a low-to-moderate masculine culture, otherwise referred to as feminine. This suggests a special concern for building and maintaining relationships. Chilean negotiators will use established networks to initiate business negotiations, "expending considerable time up-front in learning about the other party and his/her organization, exchanging gifts and other tokens of friendship and appreciation, accommodate schedules for friends and associates, and trusting negotiations to verbal rather than detailed written agreements."<sup>42</sup> It is therefore important for U.S. negotiators to seek and gain the trust of their Chilean counterparts.

### *(4) High Uncertainty (Risk) Avoidance*

The Chilean tendency to be high-risk avoiders encourages Chilean negotiators to find suitable business partners based on the counterpart's ability to effectively communicate. This is because Chilean negotiators are uncomfortable with ambiguous and uncer-

tain situations. The manner in which the counterpart communicates is highly valued, and Chileans tend to appreciate explanations with respect to areas they may not be familiar with in order to be able to make an informed, non-risky decision.<sup>43</sup>

### *(5) Practicalities U.S. Negotiators Should Adhere to in Negotiations with Chileans*

U.S. negotiators need to be aware of how the Chilean cultural dimensions can have a positive influence on the dynamics of negotiations. The influence of national culture on the relationship between the ability to build a strong relationship and future dealings is prevalent with respect to Chilean corporations. Thus, it would behoove a U.S. corporation not to stress and seek a solid relationship with their Chilean counterparts, as a repurchase is likely and easier to secure as opposed to the difficulty that corporations face in securing repetitive business with a U.S. company; U.S. company repurchase decisions are harder to influence based on previous dealings.<sup>44</sup>

## **Two Cultural Components to Consider in Cross-Border/Cultural Negotiations**

### *Time Orientations*

Time orientation refers to how different cultures approach time. As discussed below, this affects negotiations in several ways because some cultures view time as linear, a limited commodity that, if not utilized, will run out. Other cultures, on the other hand, value the time spent at the negotiating table.

### *(1) Monochromic*

The monochromic approach to time is linear, sequential, and involves focusing on one thing at a time. U.S. negotiators view time as if it were a commodity that is limited in supply; "just like a good, it can be saved, wasted, controlled, or organized."<sup>45</sup> With respect to the countries discussed in this article, the U.S. is the only player that views time in a monochromic way. Therefore, it would be astute for any U.S. negotiator to be aware that time in other countries does not flow in the same way as he or she would ideally like it to. U.S. negotiators will need to abandon the idea of time as a line, the ordering of time as efficient, and let go of punctuality as a prime value when negotiating with the Japanese,

Chileans have a tendency to pay attention to how something is said rather than what is actually stated...

Chinese, or Chileans. Summarily, negotiators from monochromic cultures tend to:

- (a) prefer prompt beginnings and endings;
- (b) schedule breaks;
- (c) deal with one agenda item at a time;
- (d) rely on specific, detailed, and explicit communication;
- (e) prefer to talk in sequence; and
- (f) view lateness as devaluing or evidence of a lack of respect.<sup>46</sup>

Being aware of this view of time will prevent U.S. negotiators from losing their temper and becoming frustrated with the vast amount of time it may take to reach an agreement with the Japanese, Chinese, and Chileans.

### (2) Polychromic

Polychromic perception of time is one where events are not sharply or sequentially distinguished. On the other hand, it is perceived that multiple events can happen and occur simultaneously. Here, time involves “the management of multiple activities and interchangeable sequences, and punctuality competes with other cultural values, such as relationships, obligations, and hierarchy.”<sup>47</sup> It would thus follow that collectivistic countries tend to be polychromic, much like Japan, China, and Chile. As a result, these countries’ negotiators may negatively view behaviors related to timekeeping, prioritizing, task completion, and punctuality. Conversely, U.S. negotiators should not feel slighted if, when negotiating with Latin American countries, the Latin American negotiators stroll into a meeting a half hour late with others trickling in even later. “It’s the time itself, rather than the timing, which is of value.”<sup>48</sup> Summarily, negotiators from polychromic cultures tend to:

- (a) start and end meetings at flexible times;
- (b) take breaks when it seems appropriate;
- (c) be comfortable with a high flow of information;
- (d) expect to read each others’ thoughts and minds;
- (e) sometimes overlap talk; and
- (f) view start times as flexible and not take lateness personally.<sup>49</sup>

### Space Orientations

#### (1) Personal Space

Americans have the notion of territory, a comfortable personal distance, and lack of comfort with physical touch and contact. This is what we call “personal space.”<sup>50</sup> However, although it may be uncomfortable for Americans to have their personal space invaded, U.S. negotiators need to be aware that Latin American countries are more tactile and allow more touching.

#### (2) Eye Contact

Eye contact is also an aspect of space orientations. While U.S. negotiators value eye contact as a sign of attentiveness, reliability, and trustworthiness, other countries do not share the same sentiment. In Japan, looking down is usually interpreted as a sign of respect, while in Chile, moving one’s eyes to the side may indicate embarrassment or disagreement.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, as a U.S. negotiator, it is very important to be consciously aware of what you are doing with your eyes during discussions both in and outside the international negotiation setting.

### Conclusion

There are many things to consider when entering into a cross-border negotiation with an unfamiliar counterpart. The differences that exist with respect to Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions—individualism versus collectivism, high power distance versus low power distance, masculinity versus femininity, and high uncertainty (risk) avoidance versus low uncertainty (risk) avoidance—can, if properly evaluated and prepared for, affect the level of success experienced by U.S. and foreign negotiators alike. Each party needs to prepare and be aware of how the other party’s negotiation styles are influenced by their culture, thereby curbing any surprises and preventing adverse reactions to the other party’s tactics. Each country’s negotiators will value and recognize their counterpart’s efforts to assimilate to their cultural negotiation standards. Doing so can only help the negotiating teams reach a mutually acceptable and beneficial agreement while building a long-term relationship that will make future dealings easier. The following are seven key cultural considerations for international business negotiations as defined by an article in the *British Journal of Administrative Management*:

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Each party needs to prepare and be aware of how the other party’s negotiation styles are influenced by their culture.

(1) *Individual or Group Orientation*: In the USA, for example, the individual's chief responsibility is widely seen as towards himself. In Japan, the expectation is that the individual will prioritize the group's interest above his own.

(2) *Flat or Vertical Hierarchies*: Some countries, such as Scandinavia, Australia, Germany and Switzerland, have fairly flat hierarchies, where bosses are likely to consult widely. In other countries, such as in France, Spain, Latin America, India, and China, bosses tend to hold, rather than share, power.

(3) *Acquired or Given Status*: Countries differ on the extent to which they put a premium upon status achieved through merit or through seniority or family connections.

(4) *Functional or Personal Business Relationships*: Countries and cultures differ according to how soon people want to 'get down to business,' rather than making small talk. This often reflects whether or not people see meetings as two people forming a relationship, or of two job junctions meeting to join forces.

(5) *Physical Proximity*: Cultures differ in their willingness to be physically close when negotiating, or to keep more of a physical distance. Walking around his HQ hand in hand with your Arab counterpart might seem unusual and uncomfortable for you, but refuse the hand and you are sending a rather hostile signal to him.

(6) *Communication*: We all agree that business communication can be delicate, and that it needs to be handled carefully. But different cultures deal with this in rather different ways. Some, Americans and Germans, for example, elect to cope with this by being clear, explicit and direct. Others, like the Japanese or the British, prefer to cope with the delicate nature of business communication by being implicit, diplomatic and indirect. When two cultures with such opposing preferences meet, it is often a recipe for communicative disaster.

(7) *Time*: Is time your slave or your master? Do you prefer to worry about getting the timing of an event right, or is your priority to make sure it runs 'on time'? These questions affect the pace of a negotiation. Set the wrong pace, whether too fast or too slow for your counterparts, and you will destabilize them.<sup>52</sup>

These seven key factors are nothing new with respect to the earlier discussions of this article; they are meant to provide the reader with practical considerations that should be observed and researched prior to entering into cross-border negotiations with Japan, China, Chile, or any other country. Those who are prepared are more likely to succeed, so if you are going to enter into international negotiations, bring your "A" game. Ignorance, in international negotiations, is not bliss.

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