

The Negotiation Dance: Time, Culture, and Behavioral Sequences in Negotiation

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We propose a normative model of transactional negotiation in which cooperative and competitive behaviors wax and wane across four stages: relational positioning, identifying the problem, generating solutions, and reaching agreement. Based on a classic proposition of communicative flexibility in high-context cultures, we propose culture-specific dyadic movements within and across these stages. Our sample included 102 high-context dyads from Russia, Japan, Hong Kong, and Thailand; 89 low-context dyads from Germany, Israel, Sweden, and the United States; and 45 United States–Hong Kong and United States–Japan mixed-context dyads. Dyads negotiated a complex, 90-minute transaction with integrative potential. We audiotaped, transcribed, and coded their negotiations for sequences of information and influence behaviors. The unit of analysis was the action-response sequence. Results confirmed that the pattern of sequences varied across the four stages and the frequency of particular sequences varied with culture. We suggest that negotiators can use this model to manage the evolution and strategic focus of their negotiation, especially during the first two stages, when the use of influence-information sequences and reciprocal-information sequences generate the groundwork for joint gains.

Key words: negotiation; culture; time; behavioral sequences

Unfolding before my very eyes was a perpetual ballet. Each culture, of course, was choreographed in its own way with its own beat, tempo, and rhythm. Beyond this there were individual performances, pairs dancing out their own dramas... (Hall 1983, p. 155).

Hall was standing in a Mexican marketplace, watching people from three different cultural backgrounds interacting with one another. Although he does not refer explicitly to bargaining, it seems likely that the “perpetual ballet” that he observed involved bargaining. And although all pairs were haggling over goods in the marketplace, the particulars of their negotiations—or, in Hall’s words, the choreography of the dance—varied depending on the cultural backgrounds of the actors. We take up where Hall left off by explicitly using the metaphor of dance to illustrate how negotiation is a universal (etic) phenomenon, yet the rhythms and movements involved are specific to the culture of the bargainers (emic).

Consider two pairs of skilled ballroom dancers, one American, the other Cuban. Both pairs enact beautifully synchronized patterns of steps that move their dance through stages until it reaches a dramatic climax; yet the two dances are likely to look very different. Latin ballroom dance is built on rapid, staircase movements, whereas American ballroom dance, like the waltz and foxtrot, is based on smooth gliding movements (Allen 1998). Now imagine the pairs switching partners to form intercultural pairs. Each pair has a similar holistic view

of its task: They hear the same music and understand the general progression and adjustments their movements must make as the music changes. However, because each dancer is accustomed to distinct steps, the pairs may have difficulty synchronizing their movements. Although with adjustments they may be able to complete the dance, it is likely to lack the polish of the same culture dancing.

We predict that like dancers from different cultures, negotiators from different cultures will share a holistic view of the negotiation process that will lead them through similar cooperative and competitive stages. Like dancers from different cultures, we also expect negotiators from different cultures to enact different behavioral sequences at the bargaining table, leading to difficulty in synchronization and inefficient deals. Our research tests these ideas in four ways. First, we develop a four-stage model of negotiation that captures the progression of competitive and cooperative elements over time in mixed-motive negotiation. Second, we consider that the particular behaviors that negotiators enact in each of the stages are shaped, in part, by negotiators’ cultural backgrounds. Third, we predict the particular stages and behavioral sequences that should generate efficient deals. Finally, we test the universalizability of our hypotheses with a culturally diverse sample of negotiating dyads representing high-context and low-context cultures, which have very different styles of communication.

With the remarkable growth in cross-border ventures and the effects of increased global trade, researchers are building a systematic knowledge base devoted to understanding cultural differences and their effects on organizations and management (e.g., Tsui et al. 2004). What has received far less attention in the literature are the microprocesses, like negotiations, that give rise to these ventures. To date, much of the research on cross-border negotiations has focused on identifying the differences in behaviors that stem from negotiators' cultural backgrounds. In this paper we move beyond that emphasis to present a general model of the progression of negotiators' behaviors over time, which we examine by studying the transcripts of negotiating dyads from four high-context cultures (Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, and Thailand), four low-context cultures (the United States, Germany, Israel, and Sweden), and two mixed cultures (United States–Hong Kong and United States–Japan). These data provide unprecedented scope for testing hypotheses about culture, time, and negotiator behavior. Moreover, because such a design inevitably generates within-group variance, it provides a very conservative test of our hypotheses.

On the practical side, our findings will help managers understand how to prepare for and execute successful global business transactions. An understanding of the etic negotiation dance coupled with an understanding of the emic behavioral sequences of the dance in different types of cultures will allow cross-cultural negotiators to advance a negotiation strategically from one stage to another and ultimately to an optimal conclusion.

Time, Behavioral Sequences, and a Four-Stage Negotiation Model

Transactional negotiation is mixed-motive: On the cooperative or integrative side, parties are interdependent and must work together to discover a mutually acceptable solution; on the competitive or distributive side, parties represent distinct entities and want to get a good deal for themselves (Walton and McKersie 1965). Several lines of negotiation research attempt to understand the complex and dynamic interplay between cooperation and competition at the negotiation table. We propose that two of these research streams, negotiation evolution and negotiation process, offer evidence suggesting that transactional negotiations typically pass through four key stages: relational positioning, identifying the problem, generating solutions, and reaching agreement. Below, we review and integrate prior work in these areas to propose and support a four-stage negotiation model.

Early theorists hypothesized that most negotiations begin with a focus on power, with one negotiator trying to sway the other party (Stevens 1963). Empirical studies, however, showed that successful negotiators eventually move away from power and focus their efforts

on coordination and cooperation (Pruitt 1971, 1981). In a simple two-stage model, the first half of negotiation seemed to be more competitive, characterized by high demands and posturing, and the second half was more cooperative, characterized by lower demands and quicker concessions. In recent years, more complex, multi-issue negotiation situations and more precise behavioral measurement tools have prompted researchers to expand upon the two-stage competition-cooperation model. Advocates of a three-stage model describe periods of spirited conflict, tactical maneuvers, and reducing alternatives to final agreement (Putnam and Jones 1982b, Morley and Stephenson 1977). Empirical investigations of these models indicate a gradual progression from a more competitive to a more cooperative focus.

However, widely accepted theory that negotiation is mixed-motive (Walton and McKersie 1965, Lax and Sebenius 1986) suggests that negotiators do not just become more cooperative over time. Even after getting information on the table, negotiators engaged in problem solving will continue to use competitive influence tactics as they try to claim value for themselves (Lytle et al. 1999). Recent empirical work suggests that negotiators do in fact move back and forth from a more competitive to a more cooperative focus throughout the negotiation (Olekalns et al. 1996, 2004), which argues in favor of further expanding the three-stage model.

We propose a four-stage model that portrays a more nuanced account of transactional negotiations than these previous models. It allows a more finely grained analysis of the evolution of negotiations as well as the identification of cultural differences in negotiators' behaviors at different time periods.

The model we propose is a sequential-stage model, a prototype representing the evolutionary progression of complex, integrative transactional negotiations. In a sequential-stage model, change occurs when actors move between stages and is evident in behavioral frequency changes (Arrow et al. 2004). To study the content of stages and the transition between stages, researchers have used both *event-driven* and *interval-driven* aggregation strategies to determine breakpoints between stages (Zaheer et al. 1999). Because each approach has benefits and liabilities, the research question is the best guide to choosing the most appropriate approach.

Researchers using an event-driven approach identify clusters of similar behaviors within a dyad and mark a transition when one cluster ends and another begins (Holmes 1992, Putnam and Jones 1982b) or look at group decision paths and subsequent group processes (Poole and Roth 1989a, b; Olekalns et al. 2004). The strength of the event-driven approach is that it captures both similarities and differences between groups. The three-stage negotiation model of problem initiation, problem solving, and problem resolution was developed using an event-driven approach. One limitation of the

event-driven approach is the inability to test general models. The event approach divides the negotiation into many phases based on content, and phases can repeat themselves. Thus, each negotiation has its own unique progression of phases. The only way a general model can be built is if content phases evolve similarly across many different negotiations. Yet the very nature of the event-driven approach, which inextricably links phase and content, makes it difficult to identify general phases across negotiations or to test for differences in between-group processes.

In contrast, researchers using the interval approach rely on theory to identify the number of stages and transition points a priori and then test whether the content of these intervals fits their theory. This approach typically uses time or number of speaking turns as the unit to divide into equal stages. The interval approach, therefore, separates stage and content, such that any stage may be defined by any content. The approach takes into account negotiations of different length; first quarters of interactions are first quarters regardless of the how long the interactions take. The interval approach is also powerful in testing between-group differences because it allows comparison within and across comparable stages. Since our research question asks whether we can characterize negotiations with a four-stage model and then identify culture-specific patterns within those stages, the interval-driven approach is most appropriate for this study.

We propose that negotiators have normative models of the negotiation process that both influence how they begin a negotiation and serve as a benchmark for monitoring their progress. Specifically, we expect that negotiators will have a more competitive focus both in the initial stage, when they define relationships and power, and again in the third stage, when they make task-oriented arguments to support their offers and claim value. Negotiators will have a more cooperative focus both when they are bringing information about preferences, needs, and priorities to light and when they are in the process of exchanging offers to close a deal. Thus, we propose a four-stage model of complex transactional negotiations in which behaviors representing relational positioning, identifying the problem, generating solutions, and reaching agreement will peak in this sequential order. In the next sections, we build on prior empirical findings of negotiation processes over time to argue that these stages are defined by distinct behavioral sequences, and follow an evolutionary norm.

Prior research has identified three types of behavioral sequences that capture whether negotiators are moving in sync: reciprocal sequences, complementary sequences, and structural sequences (Donohue 1981, Olekalns and Smith 2000, Putnam and Jones 1982a, Weingart et al. 1990). As the name suggests, reciprocal sequences occur when a negotiator responds to a cooperative

or competitive behavior with a very similar behavior. For example, one negotiator asks for sympathy (a competitive-influence behavior) and the other responds with his or her own plea for sympathy. Reciprocity of competitive behavior indicates a more distributive focus, and reciprocity of cooperative behavior indicates a more integrative focus (Weingart et al. 1999, Putnam 1990). Sequences are defined as complementary when a negotiator responds to a cooperative or competitive behavior with a different but functionally similar behavior. For example, one negotiator provides some information about a priority (a cooperative-information behavior) and the other responds by using that information in a proposal (also an information behavior). Complementary sequences indicate similar strategic focus, particularly in international negotiations when parties enact similar intentions with different normative kinds of behavior (Adair et al. 2001). Structural sequences occur when negotiators use behaviors from different strategic groups. For example, one negotiator makes a threat (a competitive-influence behavior) and the other responds with an offer (a cooperative-information behavior). Structural sequences often indicate one negotiator's attempt to refocus the other. For example, it is not unusual for negotiators to use an interest-based cooperative response to a power-based competitive behavior to redirect a distributive-minded negotiator (Brett et al. 1998, Putnam and Jones 1982a). We use reciprocal, structural, and complementary sequences to define four distinct stages that we propose characterize the evolution of transactional negotiations.

First Stage: Relational Positioning

Empirical studies document the presence of both competitive posturing (Simons 1993, Lytle et al. 1999) and relationship building (McGinn and Keros 2002, Moore et al. 1999) in the first quarter of a negotiation interaction. At the outset, most negotiators know what they want and assume the other party wants the opposite (the fixed-pie bias) (Thompson and Hastie 1990). Therefore, it is not surprising that negotiators begin negotiations by testing whether the other party is going to be competitive or cooperative before they begin revealing information about positions and interests that should move them toward agreement but could make them vulnerable if the other is competitive. There are two general approaches to determining relationship in negotiations: Parties can disclose a little sensitive information about their preferences and priorities to signal cooperation and the willingness to develop trust. Alternatively, parties can exert influence and establish position to signal a competitive negotiation.

All of the two- and three-stage negotiation models cited above (Morley and Stephenson 1977, Pruitt 1981, Putnam and Jones 1982b) concur that most negotiations begin with competitive, spirited posturing that should

be characterized more by influence than by information exchange. Efforts to establish a powerful negotiation position should be evident in persuasion and influence communications. Because negotiators do not yet have an understanding of the other side's positions, needs, and interests, it would be difficult at this stage to make persuasive arguments that draw on rational argument about the issues. Thus, at this early stage, negotiators should focus on influence with respect to status and power. Affective persuasion is an influence appeal based on status, relationships, and normative or other contextual factors (Adair and Brett 2004, Glenn et al. 1977). This kind of influence is particularly characteristic of posturing at the start of transactional negotiations when negotiators lack detailed information that can be used in rational argument.

Reciprocal sequences of affective persuasion are indicative of posturing and positioning when negotiators are trying to establish power. Even if most negotiations begin this way, if negotiations are to progress, the emphasis on power and position must wane over time. To continue to engage in reciprocal persuasion risks taking the negotiation into a no-win conflict spiral (Brett et al. 1998). As the futility of reciprocating affective persuasion inevitably becomes clearer, negotiators should abandon reciprocity and turn to structural sequences linking persuasion to search for information about each other's preferences and priorities. We expect this transition to structural sequences to begin in the first stage of the negotiation. A structural sequence that sends a strong signal—"I am not willing to cooperate. This is a competitive game for me."—would be when one party discloses a little sensitive information about his or her preferences among the issues and the other party responds with a persuasive argument. A structural sequence signaling cooperation would be when one party refers to status and the other responds by divulging private information. The message that is conveyed is, "I am willing to risk sharing information to initiate some cooperation here." We expect these structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information to occur most frequently in the first stage of negotiation, when negotiators try to transition from a determination of the cooperative versus competitive nature of their negotiation relationship and who is more powerful to a focus on the substance of their negotiation.

HYPOTHESIS 1. *Reciprocal sequences of affective persuasion will be more common in the first stage of a negotiation than in the other three stages.*

HYPOTHESIS 2. *Structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information will be more common in the first stage of a negotiation than in the other three stages.*

Second Stage: Identifying the Problem

As noted above, the first negotiation stage is characterized primarily by relational posturing. Yet, when negotiators inevitably sense that they are not making progress, they should shift gears and turn their attention to the issues at hand. Thus, the second stage is marked by a detailed discussion of the issues. Exchanging information about issues and interests is an integral part of integrative negotiation. In fact, prior research has found an early focus on information exchange (Donohue 1989) and interests in disputing dyads (Lytle et al. 1999) is an essential precursor to agreement. Frustration with the posturing and lack of progress that is characteristic of the first stage should move negotiators into the second stage.

We expect the second stage of negotiation, identifying the problem, to be characterized by reciprocal exchange of priority information as negotiators focus on the negotiation issues, options, and underlying interests; build trust; and begin a serious search for an agreement. Reciprocal sequences of priority information should decrease after the second stage, because once information about interests and priorities is available, negotiators can turn to structuring a deal and claiming value (Olekalns and Smith 2000).

HYPOTHESIS 3. *Reciprocal sequences of priority information will be more common in the second stage than the other three stages of the negotiation.*

Third Stage: Generating Solutions

Again, we expect the evolution of the negotiation itself to trigger a transition to the third stage. By now negotiators should have some understanding of the other side's preferences and priorities and a good sense of whether agreement is possible. At this point we expect negotiators to begin to make offers. However, we do not expect that negotiations will remain purely cooperative until agreement is reached, as suggested by the two- and three-stage negotiation models. If they did, the majority of negotiations would result with something close to the pareto-optimal solution, which we know is not typically the case (Thompson 1990, 1991). Negotiators are concerned with both value creation and value claiming (Lax and Sebenius 1986). And they must balance the interplay between cooperative and competitive tactics throughout the negotiation (Olekalns et al. 1996). Therefore, we expect that after priorities and interests have been revealed in Stage 2, negotiators will turn again to more competitive-influence strategies, positioning themselves to claim more of the ultimate agreement (Olekalns and Smith 2000, Wilson and Putnam 1990).

We propose that the third stage of negotiation will be a distinct, energetic, even passionate stage, with parties shifting between a focus on integrating information and influencing the outcome. Our characterization of Stage 3

is supported by empirical findings that positional strategies peak two-thirds of the way through a negotiation (Olekalns et al. 1996). At this stage of the negotiation, parties begin crafting offers based on their own interests and priorities and the information they gathered about the other party's interests and priorities in Stage 2. Faced with an offer from the other party, negotiators' attention turns back to their power and position. They compare the offer on the table with their goal, their limit, and their alternatives, deciding whether to accept or reject the offer, and—if the latter—how to persuade the other party to improve the offer. We expect persuasion in Stage 3 will rely on rational influence that appeals to facts or alternatives (Adair and Brett 2004, Glenn et al. 1977). The reason is that by this stage negotiators have sufficient information about the other party's interests and priorities to use in rational persuasion. For example, a seller might say, "Your offer is too low—our financial reports and market rankings for the past three years show the company is worth much more." Thus, we expect the "spirited conflict" (Putnam and Jones 1982b) of the third negotiation stage to be characterized by structural sequences of offers and rational influence.

Structural sequences can send different signals. A structural sequence of an offer followed by rational influence may signal negotiators' attempts to continue searching or to delay settlement (Olekalns and Smith 2000). However, a rational argument followed by an offer may signal the opposite: "Let's stop arguing and get this thing settled. Here is my offer." To use these sequences, negotiators must have enough information to make reasonable offers, but not so much information that all rational arguments have been stated. Therefore, these rational influence-offer sequences should follow the second stage of priority information exchange but precede the final negotiation stage, when negotiators hammer out a deal through the exchange of offers and counter-offers.

HYPOTHESIS 4. Structural sequences of rational influence and offers will be more common in the third quarter of a negotiation than in the other three quarters.

Fourth Stage: Reaching Agreement

By the time negotiators reach the fourth stage, the end—whether agreement or no agreement—is in sight. At this point, parties work to reduce alternatives and move toward a final decision (Morley and Stephenson 1977, Putnam and Jones 1982b). They have exhausted rational persuasive arguments for why they should get more value, but they are still focused on getting a good deal. Thus, as deadlines loom, negotiators make more offers and more concessions (Olekalns et al. 1996, Lim and Murnighan 1994, Moore 2004). In this stage negotiators reject the other party's offer by making a counter-offer rather than engaging in persuasion. The exchange of single and multi-issue offers in reciprocal sequence in the

fourth and final stage of negotiation serves two purposes. By this time negotiators should have sufficient information to construct offers and to be reasonably confident that an agreement is possible. So offers in the fourth stage serve both to reach an agreement and to try to get as much out of that agreement for oneself as possible.

HYPOTHESIS 5. Reciprocal sequences of offers will be more common in the fourth stage of a negotiation than in the other three stages.

Culture and the Negotiation Dance

Culture is a socially shared meaning system (Geertz 1973, Triandis 1972). Culture is complex; it consists of a group's subjective characteristics, for example, values and norms, and objective characteristics, for example, artifacts and institutions (Brett 2001, Lytle et al. 1995). The many sides of culture are evident in implicit theories about negotiation that guide what strategies and avenues are available to negotiators (Brett and Okumura 1998, Gelfand and McCusker 2001, Morris and Gelfand 2004). For example, both cultural values and norms are evident in a negotiator's implicit theory that distinguishes the relative priority of individual versus organizational goals or the appropriateness of asking the other party for sympathy. Therefore, although the functional stages of a normative negotiation model may be universal (or etic), we expect some of the behavioral content of stages to be culture-specific (or emic). To predict the culture-specific aspects of the negotiation model, we turn to Hall's (1976) theory of low/high-context communication and especially communicative flexibility in high context cultures.

Communication norms in Western cultures emphasize direct communication and are thus, considered low context. In contrast, communication norms in Eastern cultures are indirect and high context (Hall 1976, Gibson 1998). Low-context communication is more explicit, with meaning clearly contained in the words or the surface of a message. High-context communication is more implicit, with subtle meaning embedded behind and around the spoken or written words. Extracting meaning from high-context communication requires second-level inferential skills. For example, if I make a multi-issue proposal, a low-context negotiation partner will hear my explicit words and extract direct information about what I want. In contrast, a high-context negotiation partner may use information in my multi-issue proposal along with information in my previous proposals and my reactions to her proposals to extract indirect information about what my relative priorities are. Social interaction in high-context cultures hones these second-level inferential skills to a degree unnecessary in a low-context culture, when people may be willing to ask and answer questions directly. It takes no special inferential skills to understand meaning in low-context cultures.

In addition to having different preferences for direct and indirect communication, low- and high-context cultures differ in the ease with which they can switch from one form of communication to the other (Hall 1976). We expect that negotiators from high-context cultures will be facile with both high- and low-context communication, whereas negotiators from low-context cultures will be comfortable with low-context, but not high-context communication. We propose that this variance in communication flexibility will be evident in complementary sequences of strategically similar behaviors that vary in level of directness. For example, a complementary-influence sequence might include affective persuasion, which is indirect and refers to contextual factors, and rational influence, which is more direct, referring to facts and information.

Complementary sequences define a culture-specific rhythm of the four-stage negotiation dance. If the first negotiation stage is characterized by positional arguments, high-context negotiators are more likely than low-context negotiators to combine both direct, rational influence and indirect, affective influence in their positional sequences. If the second negotiation stage is characterized by getting information on the table, high-context negotiators are more likely to combine both direct priority statements and indirect information through offers in information sequences than low-context negotiators are. In fact, we expect complementary sequences to be a signature rhythm of the high-context negotiation dance. High-context dyads should use complementary information and influence sequences more frequently than low-context dyads throughout the negotiation. In mixed-context dyads, both negotiators are comfortable with low-context communication, but the low-context negotiator is not accustomed to using or interpreting high-context communication. Thus, we expect that high-context negotiators should refrain from using indirect, high-context communication and should rely on direct, low-context communication, the dyad's common denominator. Consequently, high-context dyads should also use more complementary information and influence sequences than mixed-context dyads.

HYPOTHESIS 6. *Negotiators in high-context dyads will use more complementary information sequences than negotiators in low-context or mixed-context dyads.*

HYPOTHESIS 7. *Negotiators in high-context dyads will use more complementary influence sequences than negotiators in low-context or mixed-context dyads.*

Concluding the Negotiation

One way to measure success in transactional negotiation is to tally the net value of the deal for the buyer and seller to calculate joint gains (Tripp and Sondak 1992). Joint gains are a measure of the entire pool of resources negotiators created, not just how well one party did.

Prior research suggests two etic steps in the negotiation dance that may help generate joint gains: reciprocal priority information sharing and structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information. We go further to propose two emic elements that are likely to facilitate joint gains in high-context cultures: reciprocal offers and complementary information sequences.

Researchers have found that joint gains go hand in hand with reciprocal information sharing about preferences and priorities (Olekalns and Smith 2000, Weingart et al. 1999). We refine this hypothesis based on our theorizing about the way the negotiation process evolves over time. We believe that reciprocity of preferences and priorities is particularly important in the second stage of negotiations. Recall that during the second stage, parties disclose the information that will eventually allow them to create joint gains. Postponing reciprocal information sharing to later in the negotiation may mean that negotiators spend too much time positioning to develop trust and that even when information is shared reciprocally, it is less complete or less well understood. Further, reciprocal priority information sharing should generate joint gains regardless of a dyad's cultural composition, because both low- and high-context negotiators can understand and use information contained in direct priority statements.

HYPOTHESIS 8. *Joint gains will be higher among dyads that engage in more reciprocal information sharing in the second quarter of the negotiation than among dyads that engage in less reciprocal information sharing in the second quarter.*

Another behavioral sequence that should contribute to the creation of joint gains is the structural sequence of affective persuasion and priority information. This proposition is supported by prior research showing that successful negotiators are able to turn negotiations from power to interests (Brett et al. 1998). If our hypothesizing about the emphasis on influence in the first stage is correct, then negotiators who refocus their negotiation from influence to priorities in the first stage will be the most likely to create joint gains. Again, we argue for an etic effect: Structural sequences of influence and priority information early in the negotiation should be positively related to joint gains regardless of a dyad's cultural composition, because both low- and high-context negotiators need to move away from influence and share information to reach an optimal solution.

HYPOTHESIS 9. *Joint gains will be higher among dyads that use more structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information during the first quarter than among dyads that use these sequences less frequently in the first quarter.*

A third behavioral sequence that should contribute to the creation of joint gains involves sequences using

offers as information in high-context cultures. Research indicates that U.S. and Japanese negotiators generate equivalent joint gains, but that the Japanese make offers more frequently than the U.S. negotiators (Adair et al. 2001, Brett and Okumura 1998). This research suggests that high-context negotiators who reciprocate offers or use offers in conjunction with priority information can gain an understanding of each others' preferences and priorities. As with direct, priority information, we argue that using reciprocal offers or complementary offer-priority information sequences to generate information must occur early in the negotiation, moving negotiators away from the Stage 1 positional bargaining that could jeopardize trust and cooperation. Therefore, we hypothesize that high-context negotiators who engage in reciprocal offers or complementary offer and priority information in the second stage of the negotiation are more likely to create joint gains.

HYPOTHESIS 10. *Joint gains will be higher for high-context dyads that exchange more reciprocal offers in the second quarter of the negotiation than high-context dyads that exchange fewer reciprocal offers in the second quarter.*

HYPOTHESIS 11. *Joint gains will be higher for high-context dyads that use more complementary priority information-offer sequences in the second quarter of the negotiation than for high-context dyads that use fewer complementary priority information-offer sequences in the second quarter.*

Methods

Recall that we are interested in testing both the etic and emic aspects of a four-stage evolutionary negotiation model. To do this, we parsed each dyad's negotiation into four equal-length stages, where the length of a stage was determined by the number of interactions divided by four. The dyad was the level of analysis. To measure negotiator focus within each negotiation stage, we used the frequency of different types of interacts (A's behavior–B's response) as the unit of analysis.

Interacts, contingent response patterns, are the fundamental unit of social behavior (Weick 1969). In negotiations, one party acts and the other party reacts, and the reaction serves as the stimulus action for the first party's subsequent reaction, and so on (Weick 1969). Theoretically, interacts are a more appropriate unit of analysis than behaviors because they reflect patterns of negotiation behavior between members of the dyad (Brett et al. 2004, Donohue 1981, Putnam and Jones 1982a).¹

Sample and Data Collection

Tables 1 and 2 describe the three samples used in the study. The low-context sample consists of dyads from four cultures that have been classified theoretically and empirically as low context: Germany ($N = 20$ dyads), Israel ($N = 18$ dyads), Sweden ($N = 24$ dyads), and the

United States ($N = 27$ dyads). The high-context sample consists of dyads from four cultures that have been classified theoretically and empirically as high context: Hong Kong Chinese ($N = 18$ dyads), Japan ($N = 24$ dyads), Russia ($N = 36$ dyads), and Thailand ($N = 24$ dyads). The mixed-context sample consists of dyads from one low-context and two high-context cultures (United States–Japan ($N = 24$ dyads), U.S.–Hong Kong Chinese ($N = 21$ dyads)).

We collected data as part of the first exercise in a negotiation training program. The negotiation simulation, *Cartoon*, is a deal-making exercise with integrative potential. It is a multi cultural version of the Moms.com exercise (Tenbrunsel and Bazerman 1995) about the sale of syndication (rerun) rights for 100 episodes of a children's cartoon, *Ultra Rangers*. The syndication of cartoons across national borders is common, because cartoon characters transcend ethnic identity and speech is easily dubbed. There were three necessary components to a deal: price of each episode, financing terms, and runs (the number of times each episode may be shown during the fixed five-year contract). Price was a distributive issue. Financing and runs were issues to trade off (the seller wants payment up front and the buyer wants more runs). In addition, there were two hidden creative issues: (a) a second cartoon, *Strums*, was a compatible issue offering value to both parties; and (b) different rating expectations offered an opportunity for a bet or contingent contract (full details on the parties' positions, limits, and alternatives are available in Adair et al. 2001).

We assigned participants to roles and gave them 90 minutes to prepare with someone from their own culture playing the same role. We then assigned participants to one-on-one dyads, and they had up to 90 minutes to negotiate. Participants audio recorded their discussion. Some dyads reached agreement prior to the 90-minute deadline. After the negotiation, participants reported their results and we debriefed the exercise in conjunction with a lecture on negotiation strategy.

Coding and Analyses

As negotiation tapes were transcribed, they were organized by speaking turn (all of one person's speech until the next person began speaking). Foreign language tapes (Russian and Japanese) were translated and transcribed by one person, and a person fluent in the pertinent language monitored this process. Four coders trained together, then calibrated and recalibrated themselves as they coded the data over a two-year time period. Coders unitized the data by coding up to five unique thought units (subject-verb phrase) in each speaking turn but did not assign more than one code per thought unit (Weingart et al. 1993). Differences in the number of thought units coded within a speaking turn were reconciled in training and were accounted for in reliability testing.

Table 1 Sample Characteristics

Culture type	<i>N</i> dyads	Program	Program language	Classification source	Classification notes
Low context					
Germany	20	EMBA	English	Hall 1976, Gibson 1998, Cushman and King 1985, Ting-Toomey et al. 1991, Tinsley 1998	Direct, rational, explicit
Israel	18	Executive	English	Morrison et al. 1994, Erez and Earley 1993, Brett 2001, Erez and Somech 1996, Fauvre and Rubin 1993,	Direct, assertive, decisive
Sweden	24	Executive	English	Hall 1976, Gibson 1998	Direct, rational
U.S.	27	EMBA	English	Hall 1976, Gibson 1998, Ting-Toomey 1985, Cushman and King 1985, Ting-Toomey et al. 1991, Tinsley 1998, Chua and Gudykunst 1987, Moran 1985, Drake 1995	Direct, analytic, logical, explicit
High context					
Hong Kong (HK)	18	Undergrad, EMBA ¹	English	Hall 1976, Gibson 1998, Cushman and King 1985, Ting-Toomey et al. 1991, Tinsley and Pillutla 1998	Indirect, holistic, implicit
Japan (J)	24	Executive	Japanese ²	Hall 1976, Gibson 1998, Ting-Toomey 1985, Cushman and King 1985, Ting-Toomey et al. 1991, Tinsley 1998, Goldman 1994, Graham and Sano 1989	Indirect, polite, ambiguous, implicit
Russia	36	MBA	Russian ²	Gibson 1998, Berdiaev 1990, Rajan and Graham 1991	Indirect, holistic
Thailand	24	MBA	English	Gibson 1998, Morrison et al. 1994	Indirect, holistic associative
Mixed context					
U.S.–J	24	Executive	English		
U.S.–HK	21	EMBA	English		

¹ Analyses indicated no significant differences between negotiation behaviors used by undergraduates and EMBA students in this sample.

² Case materials were translated and back translated; transcripts were transcribed and translated into English and checked by an independent reader.

From the theoretical perspective we were studying a mixed-motive, deal-making negotiation task with both distributive and integrative elements (McGrath 1984). Because we were interested in how negotiators exchange information (relevant to the integrative element of the task) and exert influence (relevant to the distributive element of the task), we coded transcripts for information and influence behaviors. We used the code that Adair and colleagues (2001) developed from prior transactional negotiation coding schemes (e.g. Weingart et al. 1990) to capture high- and low-context communication in mixed-motive transactional negotiation. For the present study, we were interested in four strategic groups of behaviors: priority information, offers, affective persuasion, and rational influence. To operationalize these four strategies we selected behavioral codes that fit with

our theoretical conceptualization of these four strategies (see the appendix).² The average inter-rater reliability across the codes used to operationalize this study's four strategic categories was $\kappa = 0.71$, which is in the "good" range according to Bakeman and Gottman (1997).

Priority information is defined as information that reveals negotiators' preferences for an issue or priorities among issues. We operationalized priority information with three indicators. Direct statements about preferences and priorities explicitly convey priority information to the other party. "Yes" and "no" reactions to the other parties' offers also provide information on one's priorities, especially if these reactions are tracked over time. Noting common interests or areas where parties have different objectives is a third means of conveying

Table 2 Sample Descriptive Statistics

Sample	Average age (S.D.)	Minimum age	Maximum age	% Male	% Female
German–German	34.75 (3.95)	28	45	89.6	10.4
Hong Kong–Hong Kong	25.53 (7.39)	20	45	52.0	48.0
Israel–Israel	40.16 (9.33)	26	63	86.5	13.5
Japan–Japan	30.38 (7.46)	24	54	100.0	0
Russia–Russia	26.79 (5.89)	19	47	44.4	55.6
Sweden–Sweden	37.67 (6.08)	28	57	81.4	18.6
Thailand–Thailand	26.27 (2.50)	23	34	39.2	60.8
U.S.–U.S.	38.13 (4.88)	28	50	77.4	22.6
U.S.–Hong Kong	37.84 (5.79)	29	58	77.1	22.9
U.S.–Japan	36.72 (6.19)	26	52	98.1	1.9

information on preferences and priorities to the other party.

Offers are defined as a proposal to the other party and were operationalized with two indicators. Single-issue offers included any proposal representing only one of the five possible issues in the negotiation simulation. Multi-issue offers included any proposal representing two or more of the five possible issues.

Affective persuasion is defined as contextual (i.e., referring to social norms or information from the external environment, as opposed to facts about the task) or emotional appeals. We operationalized affective persuasion with three codes. First, asking for sympathy is an appeal to the other party’s emotions or norms for fairness. Second, referring to the status or prestige of oneself or one’s company appeals to social norms to defer to those with high power or status. Third, referring to the status of one’s competitors is also a relational power argument relying on contextual rather than task-related factors.

Rational persuasion is defined as appeals based on task-relevant factors, for example, market data supporting the strength of one’s position. We operationalized rational persuasion with three indicators. References to limits with respect to negotiation issues conveys one’s inability to make more concessions, and references to the presence of alternatives (i.e., other potential buyers or sellers) conveys one’s power to walk away from the table. Argument included informational persuasion about why one party needed something. Substantiation included informational persuasion about why the other party needed something.

The dependent variables were the hypothesized strategic sequences, or pairs of actions and responses. Details on methods for constructing and measuring

reciprocal sequences are reported in Adair (2003). We used the same method to code reciprocal priority information, reciprocal offers, reciprocal affective persuasion, complementary information, complementary persuasion, structural priority information— affective persuasion— and structural offers—rational influence. In constructing these sequences, we did not distinguish which behavior was the action and which the response, since our hypotheses focus on patterns and are not directional. There were relatively few speaking turns with multiple thought units (6.8%). However, because a speaking turn could have up to five thought units, two speaking turns were occasionally coded as more than one type of sequence (0.66%). For example, a speaking turn that contained both rational persuasion and an offer, followed by a speaking turn that contained an offer, was coded as both reciprocal offer and structural offer—rational persuasion.

We aggregated the time series sequence data for each dyad into four quarters based on the total number of speaking turns in each dyad’s negotiation. This approach dealt with the fact that some dyads took much more time to reach agreement than others. It also relied on the number of interactions rather than communication content to divide the negotiation into stages. In the resulting data file, the dyad was the level of analysis, and for each dyad we had the total count of each type of reciprocal, complementary, and structural sequence in each of four time periods. For example, the total number of reciprocal priority information sequences was calculated for each dyad in the first, second, third, and fourth quarters of their own negotiation. We transformed frequency counts into proportions by dividing the total number of each type of sequence in each time period by the total number

Table 3 Results: Manovas Testing Hypotheses 1–7

DV	Hypothesis	Time	Culture type	Time multiplied by type	Main effect contrasts	Figure
Reciprocal affective persuasion	1	$F(3,231) = 13.36^{**}$		$F(6,464) = 2.29^*$	Quadratic $F = 9.06^{**}$	1
Structural affective persuasion priority information	2	$F(3,231) = 11.07^{**}$		$F(6,464) = 2.75^{**}$	Linear $F = 32.70^{**}$	2
Reciprocal priority information	3	$F(3,231) = 5.33^{**}$	$F(2,232) = 40.72^{**}$		Cubic $F = 10.51^{**}$ Low-high context** Mixed-high context**	3
Structural rational persuasion-offers	4	$F(3,231) = 14.75^{**}$	$F(2,232) = 9.48^{**}$		Linear $F = 36.85^{**}$ Low-high context** Mixed-high context**	4
Reciprocal offers	5	$F(3,231) = 46.63^{**}$	$F(2,232) = 20.35^{**}$		Linear $F = 113.45^{**}$ Low-high context** Mixed-high context** Low-mixed context**	5
Complementary priority information-offers	6	$F(3,231) = 30.63^{**}$	$F(2,232) = 14.30^{**}$	$F(6,464) = 3.14^{**}$	Linear $F = 82.63^{**}$ Low-high context** Mixed-high context**	6
Complementary influence	7	$F(3,231) = 2.78^{**}$	$F(2,232) = 1.06$		Quadratic $F = 5.48^{**}$	7

* = $p \leq 0.05$; ** = $p \leq 0.01$.

of speaking turns in that time period minus one (i.e., the total number of possible behavioral sequences). Because some sequences occurred with very low frequency, we log transformed the proportions to stretch the tails of the distribution (Tukey 1977).

We used repeated-measures multivariate analysis of variance to test Hypotheses 1–7. Time was the repeated measure or within-subjects (dyads) factor, and Culture (high context, low context, mixed context) was the between-subjects (dyads) factor. Hypotheses 8–11 were tested with hierarchical regression analysis. The dependent variable was joint gains. In Model 1, we entered the hypothesized main effect behavioral sequence frequency for the hypothesized time period. In Model 2, we entered dummy variables for low-context and high-context Culture (mixed-context was the reference category). In Model 3, we entered the Culture multiplied by sequence frequency interaction.

Results

A summary of the statistical results for Hypotheses 1–7 is in Table 3. Figures 1–7 illustrate the findings. Because the dependent variables were logged proportions, for visual clarity we added a constant of four before presenting the data in the figures.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that reciprocal sequences of affective persuasion would decrease linearly over the four stages of the negotiation. Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. There was a significant main effect for Time on reciprocal affective persuasion ($F(3,231) = 13.36, p \leq 0.01$). The results are illustrated in Figure 1. The contrast, however, revealed that the pattern was quadratic, not linear, as expected. Figure 1 shows that as predicted, reciprocal affective persuasion started high in the first quarter, dropped off during the second, and

then remained relatively constant for the rest of the negotiation. There were no differences between cultural samples, but there was a significant Time multiplied by Culture interaction ($F(6,464) = 2.29, p \leq 0.05$) capturing the higher levels of reciprocal affective persuasion by low-context dyads in the first quarter.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information would be most common in the first stage of a negotiation. Hypothesis 2 was supported for negotiators from low-context dyads and mixed-context dyads (see Figure 2). There was a significant main effect for Time on structural sequences between affective persuasion and priority information ($F(3,231) = 11.07, p \leq 0.01$). The contrast tests confirmed a linear relationship. There were relatively high levels of these structural sequences in the first quarter, decreasing levels over time until the third quarter, and then fairly constant levels in the fourth quarter for negotiators from low-context and mixed-context dyads. Rates were relatively constant and significantly

Figure 1 Reciprocal Affective Persuasion Over Time

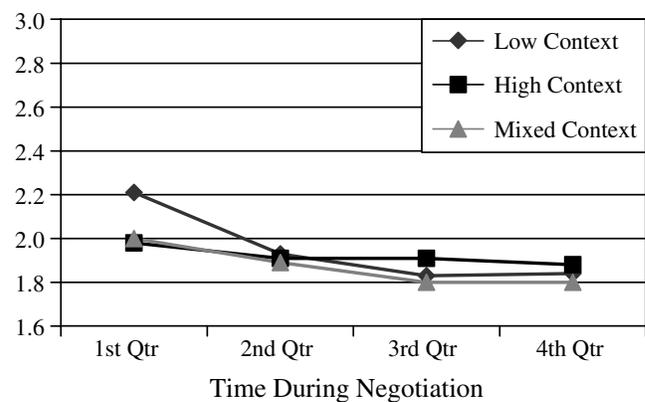
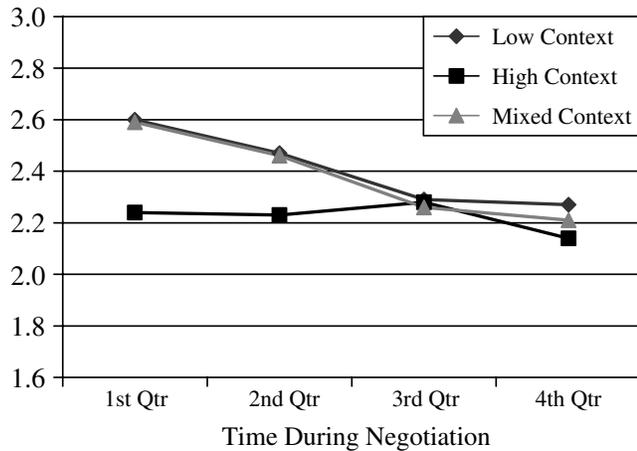


Figure 2 Structural Affective Persuasion and Priority Information Over Time



lower for negotiators from high-context dyads (Time multiplied by Culture $F(6,464) = 2.75, p \leq 0.05$).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that reciprocal patterns of priority information would be most common in the second stage of the negotiation. The main effect for Time on reciprocal priority information was significant ($F(3,231) = 5.33, p \leq 0.01$). The contrast tests revealed a significant cubic relationship, with reciprocal priority information peaking during the second quarter of negotiations for all dyads. The Culture main effect was significant, indicating overall higher levels of reciprocal priority information in low-context and mixed-context dyads than in high-context dyads ($F(2,232) = 40.72, p \leq 0.01$). The Time multiplied by Culture interaction was not significant.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that structural sequences of rational influence and offers would be more common in the third stage of a negotiation. There was a significant main effect for Time on structural sequences of rational

Figure 3 Reciprocal Priority Information Over Time

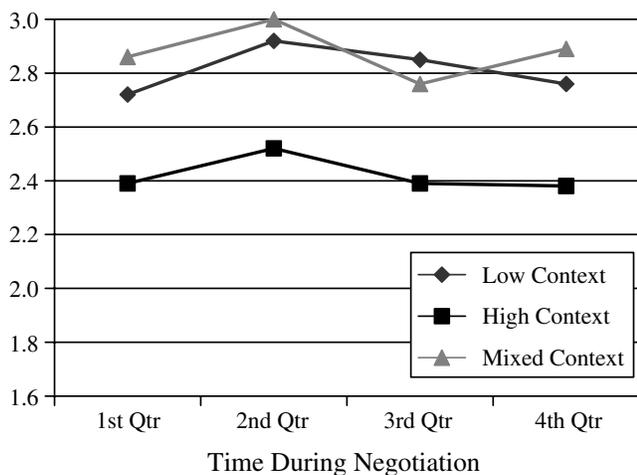
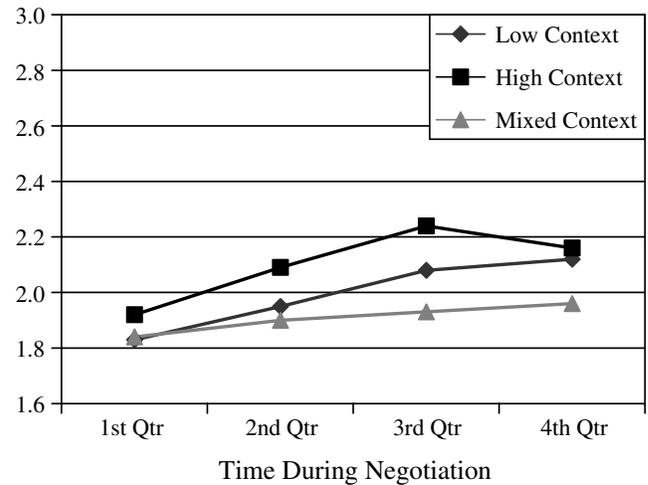


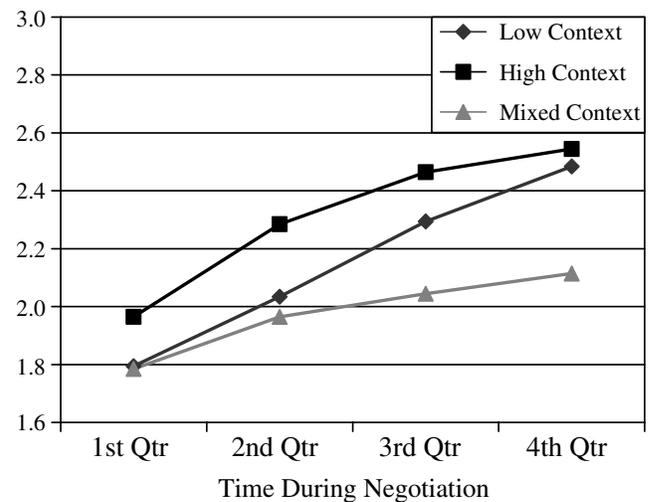
Figure 4 Structural Rational Influence and Offers Over Time



influence and offers ($F(3,231) = 14.75, p \leq 0.01$). Figure 4 shows that the overall relationship was linear, with structural sequences increasing over time for all culture groups. As with Hypothesis 3, the Time multiplied by Culture interaction was not significant, but the Culture main effect was significant, indicating overall greater use of structural sequences of rational influence and offers in high-context dyads than in low-context or mixed-context dyads ($F(2, 232) = 9.48, p \leq 0.01$).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that reciprocal sequences of offers would be most common in the last stage of negotiations. Hypothesis 5 was supported. Figure 5 illustrates the significant main effect for Time on reciprocal offers ($F(3,231) = 46.63, p \leq 0.01$). The contrast tests revealed a significant linear relationship, with reciprocal offers peaking during the fourth quarter of negotiations for all culture groups. There was also a main effect for Culture: Overall reciprocal offers were used

Figure 5 Reciprocal Offers Over Time



more frequently in high-context dyads than low-context or mixed-context dyads and more frequently in low-context dyads than in mixed-context dyads ($F(2,232) = 20.35, p \leq 0.01$).

Hypothesis 6 predicted that complementary information sequences would be more common for negotiators in high-context dyads than low-context or mixed-context dyads. Results confirm a main effect for Culture ($F(2,232) = 14.30, p \leq 0.01$). The post hoc Bonferroni contrasts revealed that negotiators from high-context dyads used more complementary information-offer sequences than either low-context or mixed-context dyads (see Figure 6). There was also a main effect of Time ($F(3,231) = 30.63, p \leq 0.01$) and a significant Time multiplied by Culture interaction ($F(6,464) = 3.64, p \leq 0.01$). The use of complementary information sequences increased over time, and high-context dyads used more complementary sequences than low-context or mixed-context dyads in the first, second, and fourth stages of the negotiation.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that complementary influence sequences would be more common for negotiators in high-context dyads than in low-context or mixed-context dyads. The hypothesis was not supported ($F(2,232) = 1.06$). However, there was a main effect of Time ($F(3,231) = 2.78, p \leq 0.05$) that contrast effects revealed was quadratic. In general, complementary influence sequences increased from Stage 1 to 2 and then decreased over time (Figure 7).

Hypothesis 8 predicted that dyads that reciprocated priority information in the second stage would create greater joint gains than those that did not. We tested this hypothesis with hierarchical regression analysis, adding first main effects for reciprocal priority information in Stage 2, low-context dyad composition, and high-context dyad composition (mixed-context was the reference category). Then we added the reciprocity multiplied by

Figure 6 Complementary Information Over Time

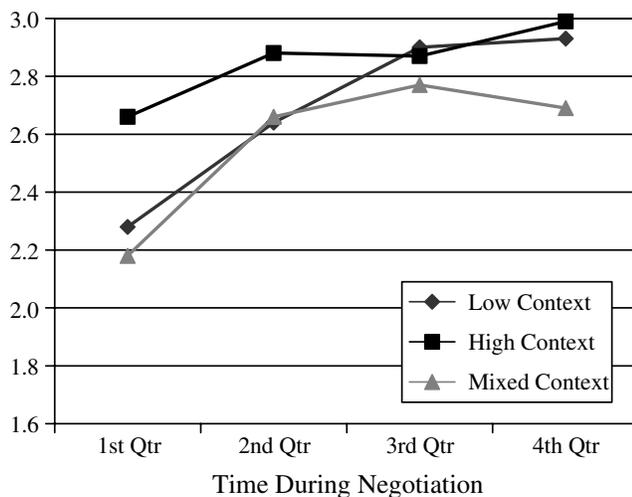
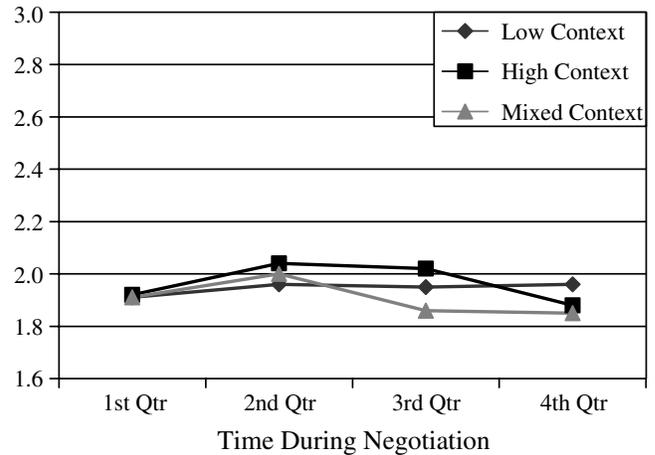


Figure 7 Complementary Influence Over Time



Culture interactions. The hypothesized main effect for reciprocal priority information in Stage 2 was significant ($B = 0.14; p \leq 0.05$). There were no significant Culture or interaction effects. Also, exploratory analyses revealed that reciprocal priority information in the other three quarters was not related to joint gains.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that dyads that turned the negotiation from affective persuasion to priority information sharing in the first stage would create greater joint gains than those that did not. We used the same analysis as for Hypothesis 8. The hypothesized main effect for structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information in Stage 1 was significant ($B = 0.17; p \leq 0.01$). There were no significant Culture or interaction effects. Also, exploratory analyses revealed that structural sequences of affective persuasion and priority information in the other three quarters were not related to joint gains.

Hypotheses 10 and 11 predicted that high-context dyads that reciprocated more offers or used more complementary sequences of offers and priority information in the second stage would create greater joint gains than high-context dyads that used these sequences less frequently. We used regression analyses, as we did testing Hypotheses 8 and 9, adding first the hypothesized sequence frequencies, then the Culture dummy variables, and finally the sequence multiplied by Culture interaction. Results indicated no significant main effect or interactions of reciprocal offers or complementary offer-priority information sequences on joint gains. Therefore, Hypotheses 10 and 11 were not confirmed.

Discussion

We proposed a normative four-stage model for transactional negotiations: relational positioning; identifying the problem; generating solutions; and reaching agreement. Results suggest that several aspects of these four

sequential stages are common across cultures (etic). What is more, structural affective influence-information sequences in the first stage and reciprocal priority information sequences in the second stage predicted joint gains across cultures. Further, as proposed, we identified several culture-specific (emic) elements in how low- and high-context negotiators enact the four negotiation stages.

These findings contribute to negotiation research as well as to emerging research on culture and communication in the context of interpersonal interaction. The results extend theory on the evolution of negotiation by supporting a four-stage model that captures the complex interplay of cooperative and competitive behavioral sequences that characterize mixed-motive negotiation and by demonstrating linkages between behavioral sequences in the first two stages of the model and negotiation performance (i.e., joint gains). The results also extend the theory of culture and communication in the context of negotiation by providing empirical confirmation of predictions based on Hall's (1976) theory about the flexibility of high-context communication. Below, we discuss these contributions and show how our results support Hall's (1976) observation that negotiation, like dance, has a universal flow that is enacted with culture-specific behavioral sequences.

Contribution to the Theory of Negotiation Stages

By dividing negotiations into four quarters and using functional sequences as the unit of analysis, we were able to identify four distinct negotiation stages. The focus of the first stage was more competitive than later stages as negotiators contended for power and influence using relatively more sequences involving affective persuasion than in other stages. The focus of the second stage was more cooperative than the first, as negotiators turned to the issues and reciprocated priority information about what issues were more and less important to them. The focus of the third stage returned to competition, as negotiators engaged in a dance of offering solutions and supporting or rejecting them using rational arguments. The focus of the fourth stage was similar to that of the third stage but decidedly more intense, as negotiators worked toward agreement by building on each other's offers. Negotiators increased their use of reciprocal offers and structural sequences of offers and rational influence in the fourth quarter.

Our data generally support the four-stage model we proposed but also suggest some strategic and cultural complexities that we did and did not anticipate.

Results that did not fully support the four-stage model we predicted related primarily to the fourth stage. For example, we predicted that structural sequences of rational persuasion and offers would increase in a more competitive third quarter and drop off in a more cooperative fourth quarter. The third-quarter prediction was supported, but contrary to expectations, structural sequences

of rational persuasion and offers continued to increase along with reciprocal offer sequences in the fourth quarter. Thus, both the third and fourth quarters were characterized by structural sequences involving rational persuasion and reciprocal offers; the difference was that these sequences occurred with greater frequency, i.e., represented a greater portion of the overall interactions in the fourth quarter than the third quarter. It appears that the distinction between the third and fourth quarters is less in terms of content of communication than in terms of the intensity of communications.

We also found some cultural differences that suggest emic or culture-specific aspects of our four-stage negotiation model. For example, the increasing frequency of structural sequences of rational persuasion-offers across Stages 3 and 4 was primarily evident in low-context and mixed-context dyads; in high-context dyads levels of these structural sequences decreased in the fourth stage (supporting our original prediction). Also, the frequency of reciprocal priority information that peaked in the second quarter for all dyads increased again in the fourth quarter for low-context dyads. Thus, the etic characteristics of the fourth stage are an increase in reciprocal offers; the emic aspects are a decrease in structural rational persuasion-offers in high-context dyads and an increase in reciprocal priority information in low-context dyads. These more culture specific, or emic, enactments of our four-stage negotiation model support prior research suggesting that some types of interaction are more appropriate for high-context interactions and others are more appropriate for low-context interactions (Adair 2003).

It should also be noted that the strategies we coded did not clearly distinguish a first stage for high-context dyads. There was not one type of interaction that was significantly more common in Stage 1 than in subsequent stages for high-context dyads. We offer two possible explanations for this empirical finding: In Stage 1, high-context dyads may have engaged in a lot of different behaviors without a particular strategic focus or sequencing pattern, or they may have focused on a strategy that was not captured by our code. In other words, we may need different, culture-specific codes to capture the indirect and relational interaction patterns we expect from high-context dyads at the onset of negotiation. For example, the first stage of negotiations for high-context dyads may be characterized more by relational trust building than by affective persuasion. Such "getting-to-know-you" rhetoric would not be captured with the code we used and should be considered in future research.

Although our results indicate some qualifications and areas for future research, they also generally support our sequential four-stage negotiation model. Negotiators moved through these four stages regardless of how much time they spent negotiating, supporting our argument

for a normative, functional stage model of negotiations. Although negotiators had a deadline of 90 minutes, some dyads completed the negotiation in 60 minutes. Because negotiations progressed from Stage 3 to Stage 4 regardless of whether the dyad was close to the temporal deadline, the shift should not have been driven by a deadline effect, i.e., attention to time running out. In contrast to a shift in focus at a temporal midpoint driven by attention to task deadlines (Gersick 1988, 1989) or an increase in offers as the negotiation deadline approaches (deadline-concession effect, Lim and Murnighan 1994), our data suggest a sequential model driven by functional stages rather than time. Our findings suggest that the prototype we identified should apply to complex, mixed-motive negotiations, regardless of how long the negotiations last.

Our results show that, as predicted, the frequency of certain behavior sequences waxes and wanes over time. For example, reciprocal sequences of affective persuasion occurred most often in the first negotiation stage. That is not to say that negotiators relied exclusively on these sequences. Nor do we claim that the first stage is dominated by these sequences. In fact, overall negotiators spend more time exchanging information than engaging in attempts to influence the other side. Nevertheless, the data reveal that negotiators' focus shifts throughout the negotiation. Rather than a gradual shift from competition to cooperation as predicted in previous models (e.g., Putnam and Jones 1982b, Morley and Stevenson 1977), we documented that the use of cooperative and competitive strategies shifts throughout the negotiation. In this way, the four-stage model we proposed captures the struggle that negotiators experience as they balance their desire to reach agreement with getting a good deal for themselves.

We suggest that this fundamental four-stage negotiation model is a norm or a prototype that guides negotiators through an evolutionary process, just as music and choreography guide dancers through stages to a climax. Dance often follows an ABA or ABAB format that represents movement between contrasting themes. Negotiations too have distinct stages that lead to a climax (Holmes 1992), and negotiators visit contrasting themes as they move between the four negotiation stages. Empirical support of a four-stage negotiation model bolsters our understanding of the dynamic interplay between competition and cooperation in mixed-motive negotiation.

Culture in the Negotiation Dance

Based on Hall's (1976) account that high-context communicators are skilled in both direct and indirect forms of communication, we hypothesized and found that high-context negotiators used more flexible, complementary information sequences than low-context negotiators. Thus, the distinction between low- and high-context

communication in negotiation is not just in the frequency of what is said (Adair et al. 2001), but also in the scope and flexibility of *how* negotiators communicate. By glean information on the other party's interests both directly from priority information statements and indirectly from offers over time, high-context negotiators have more choices in how they enact the cooperative stages of the negotiation dance. This suggests that they may be more able than low-context negotiators to gather information without signaling pure cooperation to the other party through reciprocal priority information statements.

In addition to our findings with respect to complementary information sequences, we found that high-context negotiators reciprocated offers, a culturally normative behavior (Adair et al. 2001), more and priority information less than low-context negotiators throughout all four stages of the negotiation. Last, high-context negotiators used fewer structural affective persuasion-priority information sequences than low-context negotiators. These findings support our prediction that indirect, high-context negotiators are less likely than direct, low-context negotiators to engage in priority information sharing.

Our results revealing culturally emic elements of the evolution of negotiations across four stages and cultural differences in how negotiators glean information in negotiations suggest that negotiators, like dancers, move in sequences of steps that are associated with a cultural milieu. "A student of East Indian dance would not dream of trying to learn the intricate steps, the complex hand gestures, the myriad rhythms of Bharata Natyam... without knowing something about the Hindu religion, some words in Sanskrit and Hindi, and how to wear a sari" (Terry 1982). Because some negotiation processes are also culture specific, negotiating with someone from another culture requires understanding the other party's communication and interaction norms. Negotiators in high-context cultures use more diverse and fluid strategic sequences than negotiators in low-context cultures. Just as it will take time for a Cuban, who is accustomed to the rapid, staircase movements of Latin social dancing, and an American—accustomed to smooth walking dances like the waltz—to get in sync, it will take time for cross-cultural negotiators to synchronize their movements. In fact, our data show that mixed-context dyads took longer than same-context dyads to develop patterned behaviors.

Another question for dancers and negotiators from different cultures is who will adapt to whom. Our results showed that mixed-context dyads' sequential patterns looked more like the patterns of low- than high-context dyads, which we attributed to the less-flexible low-context negotiators. Their lack of familiarity with the sequences that are normative in high-context negotiations means that their repertoires may not contain

these patterns. Thus, when confronted with normative high-context behavior, they responded in unpatterned ways. We suggest that negotiators' repertoires of strategic sequences in negotiation are like implicit theories, and in a mixed-culture setting, both individual flexibility and dyadic similarity will likely influence how negotiators enact and/or adjust their behaviors (Resnick et al. 1991).

Negotiation Outcome

What negotiators do in the first half of the negotiation has a significant impact on their ability to generate integrative solutions with high joint gains. These findings contribute to our knowledge of processes leading to successful negotiation outcomes in two ways. First, we have identified a particular type of structural sequence that produces high-quality outcomes, namely affective persuasion and priority information. Second, we have pinpointed *when* these structural sequences and reciprocal priority information sequences should occur to generate the desired outcome effect. That negotiators must pass through these stages and enact these behaviors early in the negotiation is an important and novel finding. If negotiators do not get to priority information sharing by the negotiation midpoint, joint gains may be elusive. A four-stage negotiation model therefore offers important predictors of joint gains within distinct stages of the first half of a negotiation interaction.

The results also demonstrate that across cultures, direct priority information sharing is superior to indirect information sharing via offers for generating joint gains. Across all four negotiation stages, even high-context dyads did not glean enough information from reciprocal offers or complementary offer-priority information sequences to maximize their joint gains.

Study Strengths and Limitations and Opportunities for Further Research

The design choices for this study, including how we operationalized time, culture, and strategic sequences, provided a conservative test of the hypotheses. We divided the total number of interactions into quarters based on the objective standard of the length of the negotiation, rather than on the content of negotiators' discussion. This allowed us to test hypotheses about changing patterns in the content of strategic sequences. Because we did not use events to mark transition shifts and some dyads probably moved through the stages at slightly different paces, our interval approach offers a conservative test of the sequential four-stage model. We placed negotiators from different national cultures into high- and low-context categories based on others' research and theorizing. This undoubtedly generated substantial within-group variance. Nevertheless, the data show clear differences between the frequency of use of sequential strategies that are consistent with the theorizing and hypotheses. We used theory, not empiricism, to group negotiator behaviors into

four strategic functional categories. This choice also no doubt generated within-category variance. The conceptually meaningful results demonstrate the utility of the functional sequences we employed.

There are several other ways of measuring group processes and conceptualizing time (see McGrath and Rotchford 1983, Arrow et al. 2004) that we believe could support and expand our sequential four-stage model. Here we mention three: an event-based aggregation approach, individual conceptualization of time, and holistic views of time. Negotiators with a longstanding relationship may move through the first stage or relational positioning more quickly than negotiators meeting for the first time. An event-based aggregation approach (e.g., Poole and Roth 1989a, b) could be used to test factors such as prior relationship that cause dyads to move through these four sequences with different paces and/or rhythms. There are also differences in how individuals view time; for example, monochronic cultures have a more short-term and linear view of time than polychronic cultures (Hall 1983). Particularly in cross-cultural negotiations, how people conceptualize time may affect the organization and flow of stages in group processes (Waller et al. 2001). Also, because stage models of time assume that change is a function of people's internal clocks, they do not account for external forces that may affect processes and transitions. For example, in models of entrainment, individuals and groups respond to organizational and environment cycles (Ancona and Chong 1996). Some of these more holistic views of time might help account for variation in the four-stage model in different organizational contexts. Also, we hope that future research will empirically demonstrate whether a four-stage model describes the same negotiation process better than a three- or two-stage model—analyses that went beyond the scope of this research.

Although we concluded that our mixed-context dyads did a low-context dance because the high-context negotiators were more flexible communicators than low-context negotiators, we cannot rule out the facts that these negotiations occurred in a low-context environment and in the English language. These factors could have contributed to cuing low-context communication patterns. It would certainly be appropriate to take a look at the mixed-context negotiation dance embedded in a high-context environment and/or in a high-context language. We would look particularly at the reciprocation of offers over time for evidence that in a high-context culture, mixed-context negotiators appear to negotiate like high-context negotiators. Future research might also investigate universal and culture-specific patterns of individual negotiators' sequence initiation and response in mixed-context dyads.

Implications for Negotiators

Conceptualizing negotiation as dance is a powerful tool to help negotiators understand the interdependent and temporal nature of the negotiation process. Negotiators who understand the choreography of the negotiation dance should be able to use it as a standard to judge the quality and progress of the negotiation. Just as negotiators use their best alternative to a negotiated agreement to judge the quality of a settlement proposal, they should be able to judge, or even manipulate, the progress of the negotiation by evaluating the type of response their strategic behaviors are eliciting. For example, a negotiator offering priority information that is answered by affective persuasion will know that the other party is not yet ready to move to Stage 2. A negotiator making a settlement offer that is answered by rational influence will know that the other party is not yet ready to move to Stage 4. On the other hand, a negotiator may be able to move the negotiation to Stage 4 by reciprocating an offer with a counter offer rather than responding with rational influence.

It may be challenging for a single person to negotiate and monitor the progress of the negotiation simultaneously. Yet a designated negotiation strategist, like in hostage negotiations (Misino and Contu 2002), could monitor the communication and convey to the primary negotiator the types of sequences being used: reciprocal, complementary, or structural; the strategies underlying those sequences: information or influence; and how much time has elapsed using those sequences and strategies.

Negotiators who understand the choreography may use it to identify when a negotiation is headed in the wrong direction so they can take measures to redirect the conversation. Negotiators may also rely on the choreography to tell them if they are spending too much time in a particular stage.

We think that negotiators from low-context cultures will be disadvantaged in the global marketplace by their inability to communicate in or understand high-context communication. The question is whether we can teach low-context negotiators to master the steps and sequences of a high-context negotiation dance. Can a negotiator who has been acculturated to low-context communication learn to infer information from the progression of offers? Certainly awareness and practice with high-context communication is called for, but will learning and flexibility ensue? Although the literature on training negotiators to overcome their cognitive biases does not provide a basis for optimism (Thompson et al. 2000), unless low-context negotiators learn how to draw inferences from high-context communications, they will be at a disadvantage in the global marketplace.

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Appendix. Code Categories

Category	Example
Priority information	
Preferences and priorities	Runs are more important to us than financing.
Direct positive and negative reactions to offers	We can't possibly accept that offer.
Noting converging or diverging interests	We need a new show in our line-up and you need to close this contract.
Offers	
Single-issue offer	We're offering to pay 40% up front.
Multi-issue offer	Would you consider eight runs and \$50,000 per title?
Rational influence	
Reference to BATNA or limits	I can't go that low. I have a better offer from someone else.
Substantiation	This is a great opportunity for your company to get into the market
Argument	If we don't make money on the show, we can't continue to purchase from you in the future.
Affective persuasion	
Reference to status of oneself or one's company	Everyone knows our company makes the finest cartoons, and we will continue to release new ones.
Reference to competitors	WXYZ (a potential competitor) just doesn't have the same market share or visibility as we do.
Negotiator's personal stake, sympathy	This deal is very important to me. I'm up for a promotion and our budget is really tight.

Endnotes

¹Larger patterned units of behavior may also be defined. A double interact (Weick 1969) would consist of three units of behavior: A's behavior, B's response, and A's response to B's behavior. However, as the length of the sequence increases, so does the number of different sequences possible, and with a comprehensive behavioral code the number of possible sequence combinations increases exponentially and the frequency of occurrence of any one type of sequence goes down. Therefore, the unit of analysis for studying the evolutionary development of a negotiation is a trade-off against the frequency with which a unit can possibly occur and the length of the pattern captured by that unit and the number of different behaviors coded. Using the interact as a unit of analysis is standard convention in negotiation process research, and even methods exploring longer chains of behavior have found the interact the most powerful and parsimonious method of measuring dyadic behavior (Weingart et al. 1999).

²There are, of course, other options for operationalizing variables from available data. We chose this theoretically grounded approach because our strategic categories were theoretically grounded in the distinction between high- and low-context communication. A theoretical approach is at the same time a direct and conservative test of theory, since categorization does not take advantage of empirical similarity in the frequency of use.

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