A Traveler to Distant Places Should Make No Enemies: Toward Understanding Nigerian Negotiating Style

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The literature on international business negotiations, particularly that focusing on cultural negotiating styles, largely ignores Africa. In Africa, Nigeria is poised to escape poverty, achieve sustained growth, and make rapid gains in living standards. As worldwide economic interdependence continues to grow, collaborative agreements between companies in Nigeria and the U.S. will likely increase. A necessary precondition to the development of such agreements is the successful cross-cultural negotiation of the terms for their establishment. Drawing on a framework of African values and beliefs, we answer the question: What is the predominant Nigerian international business negotiator's profile?

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, despite its history of poor attention to human development, low wages, uneven distribution of wealth, sporadic violence, political instability, and corruption (Timamy, 2005) is poised to increasingly benefit from, and take part in, globalization (Mahajan, 2009; Ndulu, 2007). As globalization and economic interdependence continues to grow, collaborative agreements between companies in Nigeria and those in the U.S. will likely proliferate (Ndulu, 2007; Nwankwo, 2000; Rudd & Lawson, 2007). As indicated by Graham, Mintu, & Rogers (1994), negotiating tendencies differ by culture. Unfortunately, cross-cultural differences can complicate, extend, and even frustrate international business negotiations (Brett, 2000; Cohen, 1997; Sawyer & Guetzkow, 1965). Indeed, failing to account for cultural differences may adversely affect the outcome of the negotiation (Tung, 1988). Thus, the cross-cultural negotiator should learn the negotiating style of the counterpart's culture (Brett, 2000).

Although there is a plethora of research on U.S. international business negotiating style (e.g., Weiss, 2004), Nigeria is seriously underrepresented in international comparative value research (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007). Indeed, Western-made instruments used in much of the existing research may be biased and consequently may not fully reflect important aspects of African cultures (Munro, 1985; Weiss, 2004). An inquiry into the relevant literature shows that the Nigerian negotiator profile is not well specified (Acuff, 1997; Gelfand & Dyer, 2000; Metcalf, Bird, & Dewar, 2008; Salacuse, 1998, and Weiss

& Stripp, 1998). This is surprising since context is critical and negotiation strategy must depend on the specific situation (Eliasberg, Lilien, & Kim, 1995). Hence, there is a need for more research on the culture and business negotiating style of firms based in Nigeria, the most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Previous research has viewed negotiating style as "a family of possibilities rather than a rigid and invariant preselection" (Cohen, 1997, p.16). However, we think that it is productive to depart from this approach in order to identify the predominant Nigerian business negotiating style that U.S. negotiators would likely encounter (Sawyer & Guetzkow, 1965). The purpose of our article is to identify the Nigerian style of negotiation. Our thesis is that there are unique cultural elements that influence and guide Nigerian negotiating tendencies (Acuff, 1997; Sawyer & Guetzkow, 1965). Specifically, we: (1) describe the predominant Nigerian international business negotiating style, (2) propose a more accurate framework for identifying the Nigerian negotiator's profile, and (3) develop propositions for future research. Thus, a new perspective on negotiating with the Nigerians is proposed, stated here as a question: What is the Nigerian negotiator's profile?

We address this question by adapting Weiss & Stripp's (1985, 1998) model of culture's effect on negotiating style (Table 1). We chose this analytic framework because the resulting profile can be considered a realistic approach to negotiation and it covers factors likely to affect negotiation outcomes (Brett, 2000; Weiss & Stripp, 1998). The framework is a good starting point because it sensitizes "researchers and practitioners to possible culturally based differences in negotiation attitudes, behaviors, and contexts" (Metcalf et al., 2008, p.27). Unlike other research in this area (cf. Salacuse, 1998), our theoretical underpinning treats the cultural dimensions as separate constructs as opposed to the opposite ends of a bipolar continuum which research has shown does not work in this context (Weiss, 2004). Furthermore, we take an emic (i.e., from within the cultural system) approach toward understanding the Nigerian business negotiating style. A benefit of the emic approach is that it enables foreign negotiators, who wish to form business partnerships in Nigeria, to be aware of cultural elements of bargaining and to avoid unintended misunderstandings (Cellich & Jain, 2004). This new awareness can foster successful business negotiations by recognizing culturally sensitive behaviors.

TABLE 1
MODEL OF CULTURE'S EFFECT ON NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

Dimension	Negotiator's Profile
Basic Concept of Negotiations	Distributive or Integrative
Most Significant Type of Issue	Task or Relationship
Selection of Negotiators	Abilities or Status
Influence of Individual Aspirations	Individualist or Collectivist
Internal Decision-Making Process	Independent or Majority Rule
Orientation Toward Time	Monochronic or Polychronic
Risk-Taking Propensity	Risk-Averse or Risk-Tolerant
Speed of Trust	Fast Trust or Slow Trust
Concern with Protocol	Formal or Informal
Style of Communication	Low-Context or High-Context
Nature of Persuasion	Factual-Inductive or Affective
Type of Satisfactory Agreement	Simple or Complex

Based on Weiss and Stripp (1985, 1998) and Metcalf et al. (2008).

Our article is organized as follows. We begin with our definition of culture and a discussion of ten African value orientations. These value orientations provide a useful footing for our efforts to clarify and disentangle issues relative to Nigerian international business negotiating style. Next, we provide an

overview of the extensive literature on international business negotiations and position our research in the micro-behavioral (cross-cultural) paradigm stream (Weiss, 2004). Following that, we briefly describe Nigeria's ethnic groups and attempt to justify our focus on the Igbo tribe. Finally, we draw on extant research to support our adaptation of the Weiss & Stripp (1985, 1998) twelve cultural dimensions framework (as modified by Metcalf et al., 2008) in order to characterize the Nigerian negotiator's profile.

BACKGROUND

Culture and Ten African Value Orientations

Like Salacuse (1993), we approach culture from a shared values perspective which "involves one or more controlling concepts, values or an ideology assumed embedded in the culture and derives from that observation a series of predictions about how a participant in that culture will behave in negotiation" (Janosik, 1987, p.387). We adopt this "culture as shared value" approach because it allows a high degree of predictability concerning the negotiating behavior of Nigerians (Janosik, 1987). One problem with this approach is that it could lead to negotiating etiquette (Janosik, 1987) and "professional stereotyping" (Osland, Bird, Delano, & Jacob, 2000; Salacuse, 1993; Weiss, 2004). To avoid this, we rely on research that suggests that there may be a thought and value system that is common to black Africans, that is, a "cultural relatedness" (Munene, Schwartz, & Smith, 2000). While Africans do not share a singular cultural life, they do comprise a meaningful cultural group who share a number of important values and practices, while allowing for variations in individual and group preferences (Munene et al., 2000). Drawing on Onwuejeogwu (1995), Munene et al. (2000) offered a useful list of values and beliefs (Table 2) that motivate Africans and enable them to evaluate their activities. The list provides insight into "the functioning of kinship and extended family systems, age-grade institutions and relations of respect for authority and old age" (Munene et al., 2000, p.342). A logical extension of this thinking is that these core values and beliefs affect negotiating style as well.

TABLE 2
TEN AFRICAN VALUES AND BELIEFS

Value	Beliefs
1	View the world as an integrated whole in which all events are traceable to one source.
2	Ground practical/common-sense thinking in proverbs.
3	Root theoretical thinking in mysticism.
4	View truth as depending on one's relationship with or the status of its source.
5	Fully trust relatives but not strangers.
6	Maintain order in life by avoiding unnecessary risks.
7	View wisdom as thought and behavior in harmony with one's ancestors.
8	Define wisdom as making the best of available opportunities.
9	See success as dependent on help or hindrance by powerful others.
10	See advancement as dependent on allegiance to powerful groups or individuals.

As adapted from Onwuejeogwu (1995).

Munene et al. (2000) examined data collected by Schwartz (1999) and found support for several important themes including: (1) *high embeddedness* (Table 2, values 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10), where meaning in life is achieved largely through social relationships, (2) *high hierarchy values*, which implies that there is a hierarchical system of assigned roles and values that support and legitimize unequal distribution of power, roles and resources, (3) *high mastery* or seeking to assert control and exploit it to further individual or group interests, (4) *low egalitarianism* (Table 2, values 4, 5, 9, and 10), which means Africans do not view individuals as moral equals having basic interests in common, and (5) *low intellectual autonomy* that centers on the rights of individuals to follow their own intellectual directions.

In the sections that follow, we draw on this research to expand our understanding of Nigerian culture and the manner in which it supports the Nigerian negotiator's profile. But first, we review the relevant literature on international business negotiations and Nigerian negotiating style.

International Business Negotiations

Relying on Weiss (2004), we can divide research on international business negotiations into the macrostrategic (bargaining school) stream which focuses on MNE-host government business negotiations attempting to correlate antecedent background factors with resulting outcomes (e.g., Gross & Aramburu, 1990) and the comparative, microbehavioral stream that focuses on bargaining between individuals in different cultures (Cellich & Jain, 2004; Sawyer & Guetzkow, 1965). In the language of the seminal social-psychological model by Sawyer & Guetzkow (1965), microbehavioral researchers examine the negotiation process, outcomes, and background factors such as culture. Within this stream there are three major bodies of research: (1) Adler, Swartz Gehrke, & Graham (1987), for example, examined bargainer characteristics and situational constraints on process-related factors and negotiation outcomes such as individual profit levels; (2) surveys that examine negotiator behavior and process during actual intercultural negotiation experiences (e.g., Tung, 1982), and (3) cultural values researchers who conduct experiments to examine relationships between values and negotiation behavior and outcomes (Brett, 2000; Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1999).

Within the comparative, microbehavioral paradigm, there are analytic frameworks for: cultural comparisons (Moran & Stripp, 1991; Salacuse, 1991; Weiss & Stripp, 1985, 1998), interorganizational negotiations (e.g., Graham, Mintu, & Rodgers, 1994), and intercultural negotiations (Brett, 2000). Additionally, there are broad conceptual frameworks that combine these perspectives (Tung, 1988), as well as stage models (cf. Salacuse, 1991). We position our research on cultural negotiating style within the micobehavioral stream and describe the negotiating style of the Nigerian culture.

To use the Weiss & Stripp (1985, 1998) framework, (as modified by Metcalf et al., 2008) to capture Nigerian negotiating tendencies, it was necessary that we replace the "basis of trust" dimension with "speed of trust." We also redefined one dimension, "type of satisfactory agreement," so as to refer to simple vs. complex agreements rather than explicit/implicit agreements (Table 1). Support for these ideas is developed in subsequent paragraphs. Because of Nigeria's diversity (Weiss & Stripp, 1998), we go beyond most international business research and consider ethnic culture (i.e., tribal affiliation) as well as national culture (Acuff, 1997; Rudd & Lawson, 2007).

Nigeria's Ethnic Groups

Nigeria is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups that divide the country both linguistically and territorially. The most populous and politically influential are the: Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, and Tiv 2.5% (CIA World Factbook, 2009). Each of the three major tribes: the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, have their own distinct culture (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). It follows, then, that each tribe would have its own unique business negotiating profile as well (Salacuse, 1998). Politically, the most influential group is the Hausa-Fulani based on their population. They are mostly Muslim, traditional and tend to have less Western education than the other Nigerian ethnic groups. The Yoruba and the Igbo are more Western-oriented, probably because of their early contact with Westerners. The Igbo are mostly of the Christian faith and the Yoruba are made up of Christians as well as Muslims. The Yoruba and the Igbo are more likely to engage in mercantile activities. However, the Igbo are regarded as the dominant entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Since the Igbo have a greater tendency to be entrepreneurial, opportunistic, thrifty, and risk-takers, we focus on the Igbo ethnic group (hereafter, referred to simply as Nigerians). In the next section, we draw on prior research to support our proposed variants on the constructs put forth by Weiss & Stripp (1985, 1998) and later modified by Metcalf et al. (2008).

NIGERIAN CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND INFLUENCE ON NEGOTIATIONS

Basic Concept of the Negotiating Process

This variable describes how each party to the negotiation thinks of the negotiation process, i.e., whether the culture is primarily distributive or integrative. Distributive negotiators: (1) believe that in order for them to win, the other side must lose (Metcalf et al., 2008), (2) see the parties' interests as directly in conflict (Bazerman & Neale, 1992), and (3) seek to maximize their own goals and interests (Metcalf et al., 2008). Negotiators with an integrative profile: (1) seek mutually beneficial solutions (Metcalf et al., 2008), (2) desire to find ways to "expand the pie," and (3) identify the relative importance of issues in order to more effectively make tradeoffs (Bazerman & Neale, 1992). The prevailing view in extant research is that Nigerians tend to be distributive (Salacuse, 1998; Weiss & Stripp, 1998). This makes sense because, as noted earlier, Sub-Saharan Africans, in general, are high in mastery (Munene et al., 2000). From the perspective of this discussion, winning may be a type of mastery. This cultural adaptation likely affects the Nigerian *basic concept of negotiation* to the extent that Nigerians seek to maximize the goals and interests of the tribe (ethnic group) or extended family (i.e., the so called 'economics of affection') (Munene et al., 2000). Thus, parallel with the literature, we conceptualize the basic concept of negotiation as being distributive (win/lose). Hence:

P_1: Nigerian negotiators tend to follow a *distributive*, rather than an *integrative* negotiating concept.

Most Significant Type of Issue

Considering the work of Weiss & Stripp (1998), we interpret this value dimension to apply to the importance of relationships or tasks such as pinning down price and quality. Similarly, Metcalf et al. (2008) conceptualized this tendency as issues negotiators spend the most time discussing. Researchers have found that the relationship is very important to Nigerians (Acuff, 1997; Salacuse, 1998), particularly to the elders, who have the "ofor" or the stick of authority (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). Because Nigerians link both success and advancement to the relationship, we argue that the relationship can more accurately be viewed as: (1) providing a foundation for task-related issues (Table 2, values 4, 9, and 10) and (2) a necessary precursor to Nigerians being open to, and possibly adopting, a more integrative approach to the negotiating process (Table 2, values 5, 9, and 10). In agreement with the literature, we conceptualize the Nigerian negotiator's profile to be characterized by a relational *most significant type of issue* (Moran & Stripp, 1991). We therefore expect that:

P_2: Nigerian business negotiators tend to place more importance on *relational* rather than *task-related* issues.

Selection of Negotiators

The two major criteria by which cultures evaluate and choose a negotiator are personal attributes and status (Trompenaars, 1993). Status centers on one's standing in the tribe, family, or community but demographics such as age and gender may influence choice as well (Trompenaars, 1993). Prior research has shown that Nigerians largely select by status (Salacuse, 1998; Weiss & Stripp, 1998). This is likely because mentor relationships and tribal ties are very important to Nigerians (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). Additionally, in high-hierarchy cultures, such as Nigeria (Schwartz, 1999), there exists a hierarchical system of assigned roles and resources. This would support a person of status being selected to negotiate over one with obviously superior ability. In situations where family is involved, for example the selling of land that has been in the family for generations, the oldest or his designee, will likely be selected to negotiate. Among Nigerians, the elder is greatly respected and age is linked to wisdom and knowledge (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). In line with the literature, we conceptualize the selection of negotiators to be by status. The preceding discussion suggests that:

P_3: Lead Nigerian negotiators will tend to have group status and be *older*, rather than the *younger* members of their negotiating teams.

Influence of Individuals' Aspirations

This cultural dimension captures the strength and importance of achieving individual goals and the need for personal recognition (Metcalf et al., 2008). Negotiators with an individualist profile seek outcomes that are in their own best interests (Trompenaars, 1993). In contrast, those with a collectivist orientation strive to achieve organizational gains with little or no expectation for personal recognition (Trompenaars, 1993). The predominant view in the literature is that Nigerians tend to be collectivist (Brett, 2000; Salacuse, 1998; Weiss & Stripp, 1998) despite sometimes being referred to as the "Jews of Africa" and "get rich quick men" (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). This suggests a dialectic or tension among Nigerian values. It appears that these two seemingly contradictory ideals are embedded in the culture and both are "valid cultural traits" depending on the circumstances (Janosik, 1987). Although individual drive to succeed at business is strong, we, like the extant research, conceptualize the dominant effect to be collectivism (Nnadozie, 1998). The implication is that:

P_4: Nigerian negotiators will tend to seek *collectivist*, rather than *individualist* solutions.

Decision-Making in Groups

Research has shown that decision-making can range from one leader to agreement by at least a group majority (Brett, 2000). Unfortunately, the research on Nigerian decision-making is both contradictory and ambiguous. For example, Salacuse (1998) finds that 60 percent of Nigerians prefer group (perhaps tribal) consensus. Salacuse's findings contrast with those of other researchers who found Nigerian decision-making to be highly centralized (Moran & Stripp 1991; Weiss & Stripp, 1998). We note parenthetically, that some aspects of decision-making may have changed in the last decade in Nigeria. For example, Weiss & Stripp (1998) find that in Nigeria, "any business venture of significance must involve government officials" (p.99). With the exception of oil-related transactions, we think it productive to depart from such thinking as Nigeria is increasingly becoming market-driven and entrepreneurship is growing (Mahajan, 2009). As we indicated earlier, in high-hierarchy cultures, a hierarchical system of assigned roles exists where there is an emphasis on the legitimacy of unequal distribution of power. Thus, those who are higher up must be consulted. Recall, that Nigerians link success and advancement to allegiance to powerful groups and individuals (see Table 2, values 9 and 10). Consequently, people from Nigeria will likely insist that all factions be represented in the negotiating team and that all decisions receive the "nod" of all represented (Brett, 2000), i.e., the Nigerian decision-making style is by consensus. Therefore we propose that:

P_5: Nigerian negotiators will tend to prefer a *consensus-building* rather than a *centralized* decision making process.

Orientation Toward Time

Time orientation (i.e., chronemics) is either primarily monochronic or polychronic (Metcalf et al., 2008). Monochronic cultures believe that negotiation issues should be resolved during the scheduled time period. In contrast, negotiators with a polychronic profile are considered to be more flexible. Most researchers have portrayed Nigerians as having low sensitivity to time (Moran & Stripp, 1991; Salacuse, 1998; Weiss & Stripp, 1998). We are concerned that this may no longer be true, if it ever was. Indeed, our interpretation of this dimension does not address the importance of punctuality because the Nigerians can be quite punctual if there is clearly something to be gained (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). Although we agree that Nigerians consider time as being flexible (Weiss & Stripp, 1998), the flexibility more likely stems from a priority being placed on building the relationship and an outsized concern with bureaucracy (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). We note that Nigerians likely believe that wisdom involves making the best of available opportunities (Table 2, value 8). Hence, it is more precise to say that Nigerians have a relaxed attitude toward time, that is, they are polychronic. More formally:

P_6: Nigerian negotiators will tend toward a *polychronic*, rather than a *monochronic* time orientation.

Risk-Taking Propensity

Risk-taking propensity describes negotiators' tolerance for taking risks (Hofstede, 1980). Those who are risk-averse may be reluctant to approve proposals whose success is linked to unknowns and contingencies (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). Unlike, Metcalf et al. (2008), we interpret this as a reluctance to enter a risky deal rather than as a fear of failing to reach an agreement (Table 2, value 6). This is because Nigerians are patient and willing to build a relationship before beginning negotiations in earnest. Weiss & Stripp (1998) report that Nigerians do not seem to be risk-adverse, arguing that they are willing to take huge risks for large short-term gains (e.g., engage in corruption). This finding is supported by Salacuse (1998), who found that 73% of Nigerians rated themselves as high in risk-taking. Perhaps, the Nigerian tendency to take chances is linked to the level of optimism embedded in the culture (Onwuejeogwu, 1995). Indeed, Matthew Barwell, marketing director of the Africa region for Diageo, puts it this way, "the greatest export out of places like Nigeria is optimism" (as cited in Mahajan, 2009, p.26). Young entrepreneurs, in particular, may see themselves as having one shot in life and this creates a sense of urgency to make it count (Mahajan, 2009). Thus, consistent with the literature, we conceptualize the Nigerian orientation to be risk-tolerant. We therefore expect that:

P_7: Nigerian negotiators will tend to be *risk-tolerant* rather than *risk-averse*.

Speed of Trust

Drawing on Morgan & Hunt (1994), we define trust as existing when one party has confidence in the other party's benevolence, reliability, and integrity. Metcalf et al. (2008) focus on cultural differences that speak to: (1) where trust resides and (2) the way in which trust is formed. From this perspective, some cultures "trust" the other side because they have a signed contract. Hence, their trust is in the enforceability of the contract (not the other party) and is *external* to both parties. For other cultures, trust is *internal* to the relationship. We find support for trust being internal to the relationship in the literature. Indeed, trust is central to relational exchange (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and necessary to reach cooperative problem-solving and constructive communications (Schurr & Ozanne, 1985). However, given our definition of trust, it is unlikely that a contract will make a Nigerian negotiator confident that the other party is benevolent, reliable, and possessing integrity (Metcalf et al., 2008). For Nigerians, it may be that the contract is a necessary but insufficient condition for the formation of trust (Salacuse, 1998).

Thus, it is more likely that, for Nigerians, the contract is: (1) a symbol of the relationship (Onwuejeogwu, 1995), and (2) a record of the "understanding" and a possible means of recourse should something go wrong (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). Thus, knowing whether trust is internal or external to the parties may be of limited use in negotiations with the Nigerians. The bases for trust used in the literature (Metcalf et al., 2008; Weiss & Stripp, 1998) may not inform our understanding of the Nigerian negotiator's profile as much as the pace at which trust is likely to develop (Brett, 2000). Relying on Brett (2000), we conceptualize the pace of trust development to be either "fast" or "slow." The general conclusion of the authors is that Nigerians do not trust anyone when it comes to their money. Perhaps as a result of many years of British colonization, the Nigerians, even when there is a relationship, develop trust very slowly, if at all (Table 2, values 4 and 5). Thus, more may be gained by: (1) discussing ways to negotiate with a partner who is reluctant to trust and (2) focusing on developing long-term relationships with a party who has been "burned" repeatedly. This touches on, but is not limited to, issues of perceived fairness, interpretation of outcomes, and finding ways to make sure both parties respect contract provisions. In summary, we offer a new dimension, speed of trust, and conceptualize the Nigerian orientation as being characterized by slow trust. Hence:

P_8: Nigerian negotiators will tend to exhibit a slower *speed of trust*.

Concern with Protocol

This tendency centers on the extent to which the rules of self-presentation and social behavior matter. Formal cultures are highly concerned with negotiation etiquette, i.e., the rules regarding personal and professional conduct. In contrast, informal negotiators have little or no concern with negotiation etiquette in social settings (Metcalf et al., 2008). Most researchers agree that Nigerians tend to be formal (Salacuse,

1998; Weiss & Stripp, 1998). To Nigerians, certain rules and expectations are very important. This includes familiarity with the extent to which they value hierarchy, ways of speaking, dress, use of titles, rituals, ceremonies, and so forth (Adler, 2002; Metcalf et al., 2006). For example, it is important to inquire about family and health before even thinking about raising conversations about business (Nnadozie, 1998). Also, calling someone by his or her first name (instead of a title or degree, e.g., "Dr.") in Nigeria may be received as an insult (Adler, 2002). Furthermore, hierarchy and age are to be respected when conducting negotiations with the Nigerians. For example, it is important to treat elders and those of higher rank (e.g., Tribal Chief) with more respect. Indeed, some youth greet an elder by lying prone on the floor and refrain, entirely, from initiating a handshake. At a broad level of abstraction, the elder-youth sociocultural bond we describe is captured by Nigerian admonition adages and proverbs (Table 2, value 2). For example, "what the young cannot see even if they climbed the tallest of palm trees, the elderly can see clearly without even standing up" (Gudykunst et al., 1996, p.213). Again, high-hierarchy cultures accept social power and authority, which is consistent with following certain rules and expectations regarding social behavior (Munene et al., 2000). Parallel with the literature, we conceptualize the Nigerian orientation as formal. That is:

P_9: Nigerian negotiators will tend to exhibit a higher *concern for formal protocol*.

Style of Communication

Brett (2000) relates this variable to information sharing. Similarly, Weiss & Stripp (1998) link it to the context of communication style. Cultures characterized by low-context communication prefer explicit and direct communication. In these instances, verbal communication is specific, literal, and unlikely to be ambiguous (Gudykunst et al., 1996). While low-context negotiators have a tendency to be action-oriented and solution-minded (Brett, 2000), they also are more likely to be confrontational compared to high-context communication negotiators. High-context cultures provide relatively little information in the message itself relying instead on the context to stimulate pre-existing knowledge in the receiver. This includes indirect and implicit messages, nonverbal cues (e.g., haptics or touching), and situational factors as well as shared understandings.

Unfortunately, the literature on the communication style of English-speaking Nigerians is split. For example, Salacuse (1998) found that Nigerians utilize direct communication (low-context). In contrast, Weiss & Stripp (1998) report that "In Nigeria, however, words apparently do not mean much. Meanings are subtle and internalized and there is more over a high tolerance for ambiguity" which is descriptive of high-context communications (p.100). Although more research is needed, we suspect that Nigerians may have a high-context communication style because of a preference for "saving face," or "Ifele" as Nigerians might describe it. Furthermore, high-context negotiators are more likely to be tactful in order to develop and maintain the relationship (Metcalf et al., 2008). Therefore, we posit, like Weiss & Stripp (1998), that the Nigerian style of communication is high-context. We therefore expect that:

P_{10}: Nigerian negotiators will tend to exhibit a *high-context,* rather that a *low-context* style of communication.

The Nature of Persuasion

This dimension is intended to capture the type of evidence used to persuade others (Metcalf et al., 2008). Negotiators who use factual-induction, draw on empirical facts and if-then logic to convince the other side to see things their way. On the other hand, affective negotiators draw on their feelings and beliefs to support persuasive arguments. This includes abstract theory, beliefs, and ideals as well as references to status and relationships (Metcalf et al., 2008). Interestingly, Weiss & Stripp (1998) characterize Nigerian persuasiveness as relying more on emotion, experience, and intuition than empirical reason. Similarly, Salacuse (1998) found that 60% of Nigerians sampled, rated themselves as being high in emotionalism. Consistent with the literature, we find that Nigerians are inclined to be emotional with both what is said and how it is said. For example, in situations where a losing proposition is eminent, members of the Nigerian negotiating team may react to the foreigners' negotiating position emotionally (Nnadozie, 1998).

Like Weiss & Stripp (1998) and Salacuse (1998), we conceptualize the Nigerians as having a tendency to get emotional during negotiations but we see this as primarily a tactic for gaining (or regaining) advantage (Aquilar & Galluccio, 2008). This may be because Nigerians, early on, are taught to haggle (Salacuse 1998). Cellich & Jain (2004) characterize haggling as a means of persuasion involving: (1) a give-and-take game, (2) partial exchanges of information, (3) manipulation, and (4) a series of quick back-and-forth concessions that often fail to identify the underlying needs of the other party. Thus, haggling is inherently an emotional activity. Additionally, Nigerians are likely to persuade others by drawing on their faith (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Weiss & Stripp, 1998) (Table 2, values 1, 3, and 7). Those that are of the African Traditionalist religion may even consult "herbalists" (Table 2, value 3). Summarizing, we provide additional insights that suggest that the Nigerian nature of persuasion is affective rather than factual-inductive. The preceding discussion suggests that:

P_{11}: Nigerian negotiators will tend to exhibit an *affective*, rather than a *factual-inductive,* nature of persuasion.

Type of Satisfactory Agreement

Unlike previous research (Metcalf et al., 2008; Moran & Stripp, 1991; Weiss & Stripp, 1998), we interpret this dimension to refer to the *nature and scope* of desired outcomes as opposed to characterizing the contract as being either explicit or implicit. The *nature and scope of the agreement* is likely to be more useful when preparing for negotiations with the Nigerians. We propose that Nigerians, like other cultures, regard contracts as de rigueur, particularly for large deals. However, Nigerians more likely consider the relationship as primary while viewing the contract as flexible to allow for "wiggle room," in case it is needed at a later point in the relationship (Nnadozie, 1998). Thus, the international negotiator must perform due diligence to protect their investment. The proposed conceptualization portrays "simple agreements" as those in which the other party agrees to being compensated, for example, in cash and/or stock. While "complex agreements" require that the other party make needed improvements to the socio-economic conditions of Nigeria. This may include that they be willing to organize the market and construct infrastructure in addition to cash and/or stock (Mahajan, 2009). This is referred to as "BYOI" (Bring Your Own Infrastructure, see *The Economist*, 2000). Simply put, the Nigerians will likely seek complex as opposed to simple agreements. The implication is that:

P_{12}: Nigerian business negotiators will tend to prefer *complex* rather than *simple* agreements.

We have summarized the Nigerian negotiator's profile and provided implications for American negotiators in Table 3.

TABLE 3
THE NIGERIAN NEGOTIATOR'S PROFILE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICANS

Dimension	Proposed Nigerian Negotiator Behavior	Implications for Preparation and Negotiator Behavior
1. Basic Concept of Negotiations Distributive	High in mastery, likely to assert control to further group ambitions.	Emphasize potential Nigerian gains.
2. Most Significant Type of Issue Relationship	Business and personal relationships are not separate.	Establish relationship through friend or family member.
3. Selection of Negotiators Status	Elder greatly respected as age is linked to wisdom and knowledge.	Recognize that elders may also have relevant skills and expertise.

4. Influence of Individual Aspirations Collectivist	Strong embeddedness tendency.	Be aware of the tension between what is good for the individual and what is good for the group.
5. Internal Decision-Making Process Majority Rule	Employees may work more for their boss than for the company.	One must ensure that they are negotiating with the right person.
6. Orientation Toward Time Polychronic	Time is considered flexible.	Negotiators should plan to stay in Nigeria until the deal is favorable. Avoid "pushiness" and strong task-orientation.
7. Risk-Taking Propensity Risk-Tolerant	Nigerians are optimistic and willing to take chances.	Clearly communicate all benefits (and risks) of the deal. Include contract contingencies commensurate with the current level of uncertainty.
8. Speed of Trust Slow Trust	Nigerians tend to develop trust very slowly.	Trust can be developed with greater speed if a relationship is developed first.
9. Concern with Protocol Formal	Titles and rituals are very important. Nigerians value hierarchy.	Assume that informality equates to a disregard for rules governing appropriate behavior in a negotiation context.
10. Style of Communication High-Context	Have strong preference for saving face. Engage in high levels of touching and "closeness."	Expect Nigerians to use indirect and implicit messages, nonverbal cues, situational factors as well as shared understandings.
11. Nature of Persuasion Affective	Nigerians are likely to persuade others by drawing on their faith. Tend to use haggling as a means of persuasion. May use emotion as a tactic.	Explore tenets of Christian, Muslim, and African Traditionalist religion. Study Nigerian/African proverbs and adages.
12. Type of Satisfactory Agreement Complex	Likely to insist on "complex" agreements.	Expect to bring your own infrastructure, hire and train locals. Frame incentives as shares of value added.

CONCLUSION

The original impetus for this research came from mounting evidence that U.S.-Nigerian company-company negotiations will likely increase. Drawing on both theory and practice, we updated Weiss & Stripp's (1985, 1998) framework, as modified by Metcalf et al. (2008) and provided a more emic, fine-grained, description of the Nigerian (more specifically, Igbo) negotiator's profile. We also made literature-based predictions regarding the Nigerian culture and the manner in which it supports the Nigerian negotiator's profile. This paper better informs our understanding of the Nigerian negotiating style, a necessary first step before meaningful cross-cultural comparisons can be made. Perhaps most importantly, we assist in the selection of a culturally responsive negotiation strategy by helping the practitioner to learn and adapt to (Brett, 2000) the Nigerian negotiation script (Weiss, 1994b).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

We added value to existing knowledge about international business negotiations in at least four significant ways. First, we contributed to the "negotiating with" literature by proposing a more accurate and updated Nigerian negotiator's profile. Second, we made further improvements, refinements, and modifications to the Weiss & Stripp (1985, 1998) framework as modified by Metcalf et al. (2008). More specifically, we suggested a new dimension, the *speed of trust,* which may be useful in the Nigerian context and redefined *type of agreement* as being either simple or complex. Third, we identified, and attempted to resolve, apparent contradictions in the literature. Fourth, we focused on both national and ethnic culture and conceptualized the cultural dimensions as 24 separate constructs rather than as endpoints of a bipolar continuum (Metcalf et al., 2008; Weiss, 2004).

We find that practitioners should see the relationship as the doorway to handling task-related issues. To initiate this, negotiators will need a competent "middleman," who has the trust and respect of both parties, to establish and lay a relational foundation. It is wise to avoid "pushiness" and strong task-orientation (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). Additionally, it is very important to high-hierarchy Nigerians that elders, tribal chiefs, and other ranking authorities be respected and consulted. From the perspective of our orientation toward time discussion, a foreign negotiator should not rush the negotiation process. Nigerians can be very patient, a natural result of having to wait for so many things. Generally speaking, cultures with low time sensitivity can use the Americans' time sensitivity to their advantage because they know that they are impatient, will want to close the deal quickly, and oftentimes give huge concessions near their targeted negotiation deadline, just to walk away with a contract (Adler, 2002). Thus, when doing business in Nigeria, one may want to patiently stay until the deal is favorable (Adler, 2002). One way to expedite negotiations is to make the benefits of the deal clear to all concerned because Nigerians believe in making the best of available opportunities.

When one is conducting negotiations in Nigeria, it is recommended to begin by assuming a more formal position and then later adjusting oneself to a less formal position if one's international counterparts happen to be less formal (Adler, 2002). It is also important to be sensitive to the level of formality and learn the boundaries between informal social activities and formal task-specific negotiations (Metcalf et al., 2006). Although most aspects of dealing with Nigerians are very formal, they will want to be informal on a personal basis and establish friendship. Friendship will carry the two parties through any difficulties down the road or during implementation of the contract. Thus, it would be very beneficial to go to any informal or familial gatherings, if invited.

One implication of slow trust is that Americans, and other non-African negotiators, must earn the trust of Nigerians (Brett, 2000). This should not be underestimated as Nigerians tend to trust relatives but not strangers. Foreign negotiators will want to establish and build trust despite the tendency of Nigerians to trust slowly, if at all. Although more research is needed, we suggest that having shared values (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) is a good starting point. For example, a negotiator should share values that address concerns for the safety, security, and dignity of workers, family and tribal members. Furthermore, in order to build trust and enable more mutually attractive tradeoffs, Western negotiators should be sensitive to the guiding principles of Nigerian social and economic development. This may go beyond simple job creation to include investing a percentage of profits back into local communities.

Considering Nigerian's high-context communication style, one implication is that negotiators should be careful of public expressed meanings (e.g., we'll study it) vs. communal intended meanings ("no way") (Munene et al., 2000). Similarly, it would be wise to receive cultural mentoring on nonverbal variables including claiming space, touch, eye contact, and amount of silence to expect as well (Gudykunst et al., 1996). Beyond being mentored, one should gather information about the capabilities of the desired business partner and be prepared to know how much output to expect. This is important because Nigerians sometimes will agree to things that may not be possible for them to do just to "save face." A U.S. negotiator may think he/she has struck a good deal with an individual or company in Nigeria, when in reality, the Nigerians may be saving face in a manner similar to the Chinese (Trofimov, 2007). Therefore, the foreigner needs to have a backup plan in place in case the Nigerian company does

not meet the expectations that they agreed to. Furthermore, it is important to make sure that the obligations of the parties are clearly defined and matched with respective rewards because this affects time flexibility as well as the enforceability of the agreement (Weiss & Stripp, 1998). In the next section, we briefly discuss limitations and make recommendations for future research.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Our research is limited in that we, like much of the literature, at times presume a one-to-one link between culture and behavior. This is problematic in that multiple values likely determine a particular behavior, and multiple behaviors could result from one value. Furthermore, we did not address important issues related to gender in male-dominated Nigeria. It is likely that gender plays a significant role in the selection of negotiators and Nigerian decision-making. Another limitation is that we focused on a single ethnic group, the Igbo, despite their being other major tribes. We argue that this is a reasonable manner by which to update the literature on Nigerian negotiating style given Nigeria's ethnic diversity and the likelihood that the Igbo will be at the forefront of U.S.-Nigerian company-company deals. As a final limitation, we make literature-based predictions regarding Nigerian international business negotiating style without actually observing it in situ. We plan to address some of these issues in future research.

Researchers may find it useful to describe the "Nigerian condition" much the way Ghauri and Fang (2001) used eight variables including politics, economic planning, legal framework, technology, geographic size, "backwardness," speed of change, and bureaucracy to describe the "China condition." We join Metcalf et al. (2008) in calling for more research that examines the cultural dimensions as 24 separate constructs, which may have multiple sub-dimensions. This would include generating items that capture each construct in the framework we have proposed (see Table 1). We also call for a focus on other ethnic groups including the Yoruba and Hausa. We suggest the Yoruba as a next step because they tend to be more Western-oriented. From a broader perspective, it would be useful to know which dimensions most influence negotiation outcomes. Clearly, research is needed to explore the compatibility of Nigerian and U.S. negotiating orientations (Weiss & Stripp, 1998) and develop strategy prescriptions.

Our conceptual paper constitutes an important step toward understanding the Nigerian style of negotiation. Studies that validate and extend our research are called for. As collaborative agreements between companies in Nigeria and those in the U.S. continue to grow, such research should be of increasing value.

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