

Role of Trust in Integrative Negotiations

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Abstract: This paper discusses trust as a foundation for integrative negotiations, where strategy and information sharing play a critical role. In the increasingly global and interconnected economy, negotiation processes became a vital part in the political, social, economic and particularly business spheres, and have evolved over time. Building integrative negotiations relies on trust among the parties, affecting the process of information and knowledge sharing during the negotiation meetings. By presenting empirical findings, the purpose of the paper is to provide theoretical views and insights for further research, and practical implications for negotiators and professionals in general. Trust has emerged as an increasingly important intangible and intellectual relational asset in and between organizations, developed and sustained in interaction between people. Trust forms a foundation for collaboration and co-operation in and between organizations. The research questions are: i) what role does trust/distrust play in integrative negotiations; ii) how trust/distrust manifest during the negotiation meetings; iii) how trust and negotiation strategy affect information sharing in integrative negotiations. Empirical findings are presented based on qualitative data from two cross-cultural case studies related to negotiation processes in different contexts - international trade at the governmental level, and contract negotiation within a private enterprise – implying four countries in Latin America, Asia and Europe.

Keywords: culture, information sharing, integrative negotiation, knowledge, negotiation meeting, mutually beneficial agreement, psychological capital, strategy, trust.

1. Introduction

Global economy laid to an intensification of worldwide relations (Giddens, 1990); a complex set of interconnectivities and interdependencies (Robertson, 1992) with an increasing number of actors vying to influence the outcome of these relationships (Saner and Yiu, n.d.). Globalization has transformed the international relationships, affecting the economic, social and political spheres. In the economic field it has meant a growing approach, not only between governments to eliminate obstacles to international trade and investment, but also within and between organizations and economic agents involved in business relations. In this increasingly global and interconnected economy, negotiation processes became a vital part in the political, social, economic, and particularly business spheres, and they have evolved over time (López-Fresno, Miranda and Savolainen, 2017). In this context, trust has emerged as an increasingly important intangible and intellectual relational asset in and between organizations. It is developed and sustained in interaction between people, and plays an important role in negotiations.

A negotiation is a process of communication between two or more parties that promotes mutual interests and reduces differences, whose goal is to reach an agreement based on different needs and approaches (Llamazares, 2011, p.7). Parties engage in a negotiation because they have each decided that they are dependent on the other to provide something that will improve their current situation and enable them to negotiate successfully (Lewicki and Polin, 2013). During the process, explicit proposals are put forward ostensibly for the purpose of reaching agreement on an exchange, or on the realization of, a common interest where conflicting interests are present (Iklé, 1964). Furthermore, it is also a process in which divergent values are combined into an agreed decision, and it is based on the idea that there are appropriate stages, sequences, behaviours and tactics that can be identified and used to improve the conduct of negotiations and to increase the chances of success (Zartman and Berman, 1982). A negotiation takes place through proposals and counterproposals, whose objective is to reach an agreement. The focus of integrative negotiations is that the agreement has to be fair and positive for both parties, in a way that both are satisfied because the set objectives have been achieved. In addition, they create a climate of trust that opens the door to future relationships.

International trade negotiations are meant to boost trade and economic activity by reducing, or even removing, barriers to trade across international borders. Free Trade Agreements (FTA), either bilateral, multilateral or regional are reciprocal agreements between two or more partners, a key fixture in international trade relations. The number of them increased significantly in the last years. Considering only the Regional FTA, they increased significantly from 50 enforced agreements (less than 100 in force and inactive) in 1990 to 445 (659 in force and inactive) reported by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in June 2017 (WTO, 2017). An indicator that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

International trade negotiations between governments for bilateral, regional and multilateral FTA involve complex and long processes, that include a range of players and parties, being trade ministries or departments within national governments the primary actors (Crump, 2013). These negotiations can take at least one year, where the negotiation teams prepare, plan and study their own and counterpart's needs, interests and goals, to reach an agreement. Each negotiation team designs a trade negotiation framework, that responds to a general strategy that will lead to a specific type of negotiation, being more distributive (lose-win) or integrative (win-win). A well-constructed strategy is necessary to advance and achieve good results, and it will be later deployed and put in place during the negotiation meetings. Each of the areas to be negotiated - customs, market access and rules of origin, among others - will be represented by a technical negotiation group. The length of the negotiation process, the type of the strategy and even how the negotiation team is constituted and leaded, depend on the national culture of the countries taking part of the negotiation.

Preparing for an international negotiation requires good understanding of cultural, political, economic and linguistic differences that could influence the process (Mahoney and Chi, 2001). Diversity, in its broadest and integrative sense, needs to be considered and properly managed, in order to succeed. Sensitivity to, and information and knowledge about this diversity constitute crucial abilities and competences to be considered, for good understanding. An aspect that is directly related to the psychological capital of the negotiators, constituted by four elements: self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Çavus and Gökçen, 2014).

Language and culture become very important factors that determine effective communication and a fluent exchange of information for positive results. Ignorance or prejudices are two mistakes that negotiators should avoid. Stereotypes condition the attitude, form, style and results of a negotiation. Current theory and research in cultural psychology distinguish three different types of culture: dignity, face and honour (Aslani et al., 2013, 2016), as opposed to the dichotomy of independent/interdependent or West/East. They complement the perspective of low context and high context cultures in terms of communication (Hall, 1976), and provide a strong basis for reorganizing the general thinking about culture, negotiation strategy and joint gains.

Successful negotiations in any sphere are integrative, characterized by bringing together objectives and goals in a collaborative manner. Three elements constitute the pillars of integrative negotiations: strategy, technical knowledge on the areas to be negotiated, and psychological capital of the negotiators. These three elements will lead to higher or lower grade of trust, an ingredient needed for a successful negotiation under an integrative point of view.

2. Theoretical discussion

2.1 Trust

Trust describes the positive expectations of a person in relation to another's behaving respectfully also in situations of risk, which is at the core in negotiations. Rousseau et al. (1998) depict that in definition of trust there is a cross-disciplinary agreement around the notions of "confident expectations and a willingness to be vulnerable". The latter includes cognitive, affective and behavioral components of trust (Lewicki and Saunders, 1998). Making oneself vulnerable entails taking a risk and implies that there is something of importance to be lost (Mayer et al., 1995). There are different types of trust: deterrence-based trust, calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust and identification-based trust which may have influence on integrative negotiations in the sense that the 'highest' type may be difficult to reach (Lewicki and Polin, 2013).

The trust concept refers to its nature as something intangible and a fragile resource and asset that implies human and relational aspects of trust (Savolainen and López-Fresno, 2013; Savolainen et al., 2017). To understand the role and nature of trust in negotiations, risk taking is an essential element in trust formation due to interdependence, perceived uncertainty, situational complexity and dynamics of trust development

(Ferrin et al., 2011; Savolainen et al., 2017). Power relations make trust formation more complex and fragile, and even more so when cultural differences are involved (Savolainen and Ikonen, 2015). Thus, trust is dynamic and complex, involving cultural and other contextual issues, such as language and politics.

Trust building comprises frequent communication and information sharing (Burke et al., 2007). Intra-organizational relationships such as culture and leadership form an essential, even crucial part, of the negotiation process, extending beyond organization boundaries to external partnerships. Accordingly, that has reciprocal impact on the functioning external and internal relationships between negotiators and within their organizations (Savolainen, 2010).

2.2 Trust and negotiations

Trust plays an important role in negotiations. It is recognized as essential element for negotiation success by both academia and practitioners (Ferrin et al., 2011; Kong et al., 2014; Lewicki and Polin, 2013). Trust and its development in integrative negotiations can be seen as a cross- or multi-level dynamic inter-personal and inter-organizational process between parties, based on interaction between individuals, groups, and organizations. In managing multiple negotiation relationships, trust is a concern of both intra- and inter-organizational issues, as it forms an essential part of external and internal organizational social systems. Trust drives or may hinder collaborative, trustful interactions within and between individuals and groups in negotiations. When parties operate in the actual relational and cooperation situations, trust relates keenly to individuals and inter-personal relationships between parties. Both intra- and inter-organizational levels relationships play their part (Savolainen, 2010).

In contractual relations, trust has raised more attention lately when complex business relationships and networks develop and are managed more extensively technology-mediated. In contract practices, and especially when suspicions (distrust) arise, there is also space and freedom for the parties to decide how to negotiate and draft contracts. Trust building forms a useful skill to advance *flexible contracting* in integrative negotiations, advocating a balance between control vs. freedom and flexibility. These may decrease tensions emerging between a “controlling” role of contracts, and a flexible, relation-based “balancing” role of trust (Savolainen and Ikonen, 2015).

On one hand, trust is a foundation for and facilitates collaboration (De Dreu et al., 2006) leading negotiators to avoid impasses and reach more integrative agreements (Bazerman and Neale, 1992; Ferrin et al., 2011; Kong et al., 2014; Thompson, Wang and Gunia, 2010). On the other hand, interpersonal trust is fragile and, hence, difficult to build and maintain (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010; Williams and Belkin, 2016), and challenging to restore after violation (Ikonen et al., 2015, Savolainen et al., 2017). Trust development is especially complex and risky in the zero-acquaintance, initial trust contexts (cf. Belkin and Rothman, 2017). Negotiating parties are interdependent but humanly and naturally thinking, not fully predictable or controllable (cf. Mayer et al., 1995).

As negotiations are interdependent in nature, trust or distrust may exist, as in any interdependent relationship. Mistrust may develop in negotiations, which is unbeneficial for the outcomes (Gunia et al., 2014; Lewicki and Polin, 2013). When there is no prior history in interpersonal interactions, and information available about the other party is limited, negotiators are often forced to rely on available cues to determine whether someone is trustworthy or not, which means risk taking (Borkenau and Liebler, 1992; Fehr and Geachter, 2000; Fiske et al., 2002; Sinaceur et al., 2013). Emotions may then also come into scene. Emotional expressions significantly influence on the perceptions of partners’ sociability, morality and competence, being important predictors of trust and partner trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995; Belkin and Rothman, 2017).

Culture is currently drawing more attention moderating the trust level parties enter into a negotiation process. Culture is highly relevant in building inter-organizational trust. The growing negotiation activity due to globalization and networking has stimulated studies of cultural impact on trust in collaborative contexts. Researchers have generally found that inter-organizational trust differs in quality and quantity across cultures (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). Westerners, for example, tend to presume that the other will be trustworthy, while other cultures (e.g. East and South Asian) tend to initially trust less (Lewicki and Polin, 2013) or may have initial suspicions. Naturally, cross-cultural differences and a lack of trust inhibit effective collaboration between local and international organizations and networks (Fang, 2011). When parties trust each other in negotiations, the exchange of information tends to be more open and fluent, timely, and with correct amount of

information shared. The backbone of interaction is that a possible concession is granted in a given time in order to receive a concession back.

A key cultural element that influence trust or distrust in a negotiation process is language. When there is no common language between the parties of a negotiation, besides difficulties of understanding, other situations could affect the negotiation outcomes, causing social implications. The command of the counterpart's language in many cultures signifies understanding and immediate acceptance, developing trust. However, the use of a language or dialect that can be associated to specific region or social group might cause the opposite effect (Llamazares and Nieto, 2017).

2.3 Integrative negotiations

Since Walton and McKersie (1965) proposed to distinguish between distributive and integrative negotiations, many of those who study and teach negotiations, and who observe and advise negotiators, have been strongly influenced by the limitations and opportunities offered by each of the two types (Kersten, 2001). However, other theorists have mentioned that what is customary in a negotiation process is to adopting not one, but different type of negotiation, depending on the strategy and the evolution of the process. Thus ranging from integrative to distributive negotiations (Llamazares and Nieto, 2017).

Conventional wisdom cumulated over the years suggest that integrative negotiations allow for better and win-win solutions under a sustainable perspective (Pruitt et al., 1983; Sebenius, 1992; Lewicki and Saunders, 1999). In order to carry out an integrative process, the two parties must be motivated to think more as contributors than as competitors. However, many negotiations are more in line with a winner-loser approach, a bargaining stand of demands and concessions. That is, in a game of zero sum, in which everything that wins one part is lost by the other. This focus creates a climate of confrontation and distrust that eventually will become into a loser-loser relationship (Llamazares, 2011).

The goal of an integrative negotiation is to reach the best possible results for all the parties involved. In other words, to reach the best possible outcome or solution to a problem. Problem solving is employed to find a solution to the negotiation that is acceptable to all negotiation parties, and it involves identifying mutual interests and strategies for creating joint value (Koning and van Dijk, 2013).

To implement an integrative negotiation there must be a clear strategy focused in a winning-winning result and exchange of information between the parties, as a basis. This exchange of information, being in writing or in the negotiation meetings, will depend on the climate and level of trust between the parties (Lopez-Fresno and Savolainen, 2014). If this is difficult to achieve in local negotiations, it is much more so in international ones, in which the other parties may also have very different social and business practices, including different expectations or objectives and negotiation techniques. Also, international negotiations are affected by the concept of personal trust (eg. in some countries oral engagement is not considered relevant, while in others the basis of the agreement is oral and constitutes a personal commitment). If this is compounded by greater difficulties in obtaining reliable information, the existence, at least in the early negotiations, of a climate of mistrust is not easily overcome. Overcoming this obstacle is the challenge that international negotiators applying a win-win approach need to face.

Furthermore, when the negotiation teams sit at the negotiation table, an "arena" of global common understanding and trust should be already achieved, and the process and time to get it will depend on the country's culture. The "encounter" is the time that, in the first meeting or in successive meetings, the parties use to know each other before starting to negotiate, since trust is an inherent part of the negotiation context. Trust is generated through the various stages of negotiation - contact, preparation, encounter, proposal, discussion and closure - although the "encounter" is a critical and determining stage of success or failure of the later stages.

3. Empirical study

3.1 Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was applied as the most appropriate method for the purpose of the study to gain a deeper understanding (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Marshall and Rossman, 2015) of the role of trust and trust development during the negotiation process. The research questions were: what role does

trust/distrust play in integrative negotiations; how trust manifests during the negotiation meetings, and how trust and strategy affect information sharing in integrative negotiations.

3.2 Data and analysis

The empirical research consisted of two complementary case studies: Case study 1 and Case study 2, following a multi case-study design (Yin, 2003) that involved four countries in Latin America, Asia and Europe (named A, B, C, D). The first Case study is related to international negotiations at the government level (negotiation of a FTA) and involved countries A and B. The second Case is related to negotiations at the organization level, private enterprise, and involved countries C and D. The objective of the research design was to cover public and private sector and several countries in different continents. In order to protect confidentiality and sensitiveness of information, the cases are numbered (1, 2) and the countries are named as A, B, C and D.

The qualitative data were gathered by auto-ethnographic and interview methods (Patton, 2015; Marshall and Rossman, 2015). Auto-ethnography was applied in both cases, and in Case 2 data was complemented through two interviews to the persons involved in the negotiation process representing the hiring enterprise.

Data were analyzed following an inductive process of analysis that considered the core strategies of qualitative inquiry indicated by Patton (2015, p.47): unique case orientation, inductive analysis and creative synthesis, holistic perspective, context sensitivity and reflexivity. Verbatim are used in Case 2 to illustrate analysis and results.

The aim of the Case study 1 was to increase understanding of cultural differences in international negotiations, and how strategy may affect trust and information sharing in integrative negotiations. The aim of the Case study 2 was to increase understanding of the role of trust and communication in negotiation processes.

3.2.1 Case study 1: Negotiation of an international trade agreement

Case study 1 is focused on a negotiation of a FTA between two countries, at the governmental level. Country A belongs to Latin America. Over the last 20 years it has experienced important economic transformations, where the negotiation of FTA has become a very important part of its foreign trade policy. Country B is an emerging economic superpower in Asia that since its accession to the WTO started negotiating FTA with different partners around the world.

Country A has wide experience in negotiating FTA with Latin America, North America and European countries, but none with Asian countries. Its negotiation team was formed by both senior and junior negotiators that spoke English. Country B has experience negotiating with South American, European and Asian countries and its negotiation team was composed of senior negotiators with acceptable command of English. Neither negotiation team had a wide knowledge of the others cultural and social characteristics.

In 2007, Country A established diplomatic relations with Country B, and both governments agreed to start the negotiation of an FTA. Therefore, each party started their own preparation process. In Country A, its first step was to select its negotiation team, and to prepare the negotiation strategy. First, Country A identified and analyzed main culture differences of Country B and their business conduct. Despite knowing that the negotiation team from Country B spoke English, the Country A Chief Negotiator considered that language could become an obstacle, and having a negotiation team that could understand the other's language could be well received, since Asian countries highly value those who understand and have a good command of their language. Therefore, he took the decision to include at the table an Asian origin negotiator that spoke a similar dialect, as an asset for the team. An advantage not only strategically speaking –language wise-, but also to ease up the relationship with the counterpart, as well as to facilitate the flow of information, making the counterpart feel more comfortable and to generate a trustful climate.

However, the outcomes of the first encounter were not as successful as expected. By having an Asian looking person in the room, that seemed to understand the counterpart's language, made them suspicious and distrusting. Country B negotiators were more preoccupied for finding out about this Asian looking person and not saying much among them, fearing their strategy to be revealed, than getting into the negotiation process itself or trying to understand the Country A position or needs. Thus, information sharing was not taking place and the negotiation was not advancing.

After two rounds of negotiations, and once the Country B team discovered that the Asian person on the other side of the table spoke a different dialect, negotiators felt more comfortable, since this person did not represent a menace to their strategy. On the other hand, Country A was able to learn that dialects within a language could cause doubt and misunderstanding. Therefore, an early identification of the problem provided the opportunity to correct mistakes. Necessary information started to flow more easily, they became more open to interact, and they were more concentrated in the process.

Building rapport with Asian negotiators takes time and trusting each other does not mean that all information would be shared. A negotiation strategy establishes what to tell and when; specific pieces of information along the process are expected to serve a purpose. But when distrust emerges that process can be blocked.

3.2.2 Case study 2: contract negotiation

Case study 2 is focused on a contract negotiation in the context of an international project. Three main actors were involved: i) contracting authority, at the project level; ii) hiring organization (consultancy firm that won the public tender for the project, private enterprise) from Country D, and iii) a professional to be hired, from Country C. Country C is a Mediterranean European Country; Country D is a Northern European Country.

After the resignation of the project team leader, a process was open for hiring a new team leader. The contracting authority requested the consultancy firm to assess if there was human capital internally in the project to be appointed as team leader, as the project was going through the most critical stage of implementation, and to hire an external person would imply risks and time. Five candidates were presented, and the evaluation committee (independent professionals, coordinated by the contracting authority, at the project level) chose a consultant who had been working for the project for two years, from Country C.

Since the beginning of the process, the candidate could perceive that the consultancy firm had no interest in him. During the whole process no any meeting was kept, no any personal phone call was made. In summary, there had not been a good "encounter" between the parties involved. He just received an email asking for his CV and some later emails with the contractual conditions, with no margin of negotiation, being a fully asymmetric negotiation.

When the contracting authority made the decision to appoint the candidate from Country C as the new team leader, the decision was communicated by the consultancy firm to the candidate in an email addressed to the whole team. An action that was interpreted by the candidate as a lack of respect towards him. At that moment not any contract proposal had been sent to him before, and contractual conditions were still pending, as those imposed by the hiring organization as a "non-negotiable contractual pack" had not been accepted by the candidate.

The situation led to a total break off in communication between the hiring organization and the candidate, now appointed team leader by the contracting authority. Trust breach (distrust) followed towards the hiring organization, not only by the appointed team leader still to be hired, but also by the internal and external stakeholders involved in the project. *"It is not just a matter of salary, it is a matter of dignity; you are not respecting me"*, the team leader to be hired told the representative of the hiring organization. That lack of communication and respect led to both parties to obstinate in their positions, based on stereotypes of "we know that people from country x" behave like that.

In that context, the contracting authority forced the main actors to find a quick solution. One of the top directors of the consultancy firm got in contact with the candidate through phone call. It was the first telephone call he received in months. *"Let me tell you that the way you managed the situation was awful. Along this time I couldn't find a single signal of respect towards me, and the only thing you did was to request me extra work even before the contract will be signed. Sorry to say you this, and with all my respects, but I fully distrust you"*, the team leader to the hiring organization.

After that phone call, communication improved a bit, and two months later a manager from the consultancy firm visited the project. Personal face-to-face communication offered the possibility of speaking clearly, so to clarify some misunderstandings, and it laid the foundations to slowly restore relationships. *"Communication failed since the beginning. Too many actors implied with partial information in all sides... that derived in assumptions by all actors... When you do not have communication everything is potentially misunderstood"*,

the manager from the consultancy firm said to the appointed team leader, in first meeting, as an answer to why they had arrived to that situation. *"I lost any sign of trust on your organization, in the personal and professional sides. We need transparency and agreed objectives to build up trust, but it will take a time, a long time..."*, the team leader to the person of the consultancy firm, during the first meeting.

That face-to-face meeting was critical to turn the situation around. In a single meeting trust cannot be regained, but the team leader felt better, his dignity recovered, as it became clear that there had been misunderstandings and entrenched positions. When communication improved, trust repair could begin, but it took a long time. After 3 years of close collaboration trust was recovered and even reinforced. However, cultural differences are important, especially those related to communication, having Country C a high context culture and Country D a low context culture, where attitudes and circumstances are very important as an element for good understanding.

3.2.3 Findings

Below are summarized and analyzed the main findings, following the research questions.

1. *What role does trust/distrust play in integrative negotiations.* In Case 1, a failed strategy generated distrust, and it did not facilitate the process. The mistake was corrected along the way and trust was regained, what led to a successful negotiation. The expected outcomes could be achieved and the FTA was signed. In Case 2, the negotiation was focused by the party with power (hiring organization) as asymmetric and distributive, leading to distrust and total break off in communication, that blocked the negotiation process. In both cases distrust affected the process of negotiation Trust turned out to be an essential element, as trust recovering became critical for the success of the negotiations.
2. *How trust/distrust manifest during the negotiation meetings.* In Case 1, distrust affected the process blocking information sharing during the negotiation process. In Case 2, distrust led to a total break off in communication and blocked the whole negotiation process. It was not restarted till a personal phone call between both parties in the negotiation process was made, and a face-to-face meeting followed.
3. *How trust and negotiation strategy affect information sharing in integrative negotiations.* In Case study 1, the strategy of Country A to include an Asian looking person in the negotiation team made the counterpart suspicious and distrusting. Negotiators were more preoccupied for finding out about that Asian looking person and not saying much among them, fearing their strategy to be revealed, than getting into the negotiation process itself or trying to understand the Country A position or needs. Thus, information sharing was not taking place and the negotiation was not advancing. In Case study 2, the negotiation strategy used by the counterpart from country D was fully asymmetric, based on his power, and the process was worsened by low communication and interaction skills, lack of sensitivity and ignorance of cultural differences and ridding in stereotypes. That led to a break of communication and the negotiation process was blocked till third parties had an intervention to recover it.

Based on the findings from the cases, the process of trust development in interpersonal interaction between individuals seems dynamic, occurring in several episodes and phases. The communication perceptions and experiences of the individuals influence on the intensity (pace and depth) and direction (forward or backward) of trust development process (cv. Savolainen and Ikonen, 2016). Trust and distrust may coexist without inevitably damaging the relation or the outcomes. Yet, the objective should be to avoid as many episodes of mistrust and trust breach as possible, since trust restoration takes time and energy (Ikonen et al., 2016). Development of the climate of trust is necessary from the beginning (encounter), even though confidence and trust are actively built or reinforced along the process, and the negotiation strategy plays a critical role in it.

4. Summary, conclusions and implications

This paper has discussed and studied the role of trust in integrative negotiations based on the qualitative data from two cross-cultural case studies pertaining to two different contexts - public sector, at the government level, and private sector – and four countries in different continents. The findings show that trust is an indispensable element for integrative negotiations. Trust manifests during the negotiation meetings in different ways, for example limiting or reducing information sharing (Case study 1) or breaking the whole

negotiation process (Case study 2), in both cases affecting time, intensity and direction of the overall negotiation process (efficiency and effectiveness).

Cultural differences emerged and were essential in international negotiations, shown in both case studies. Deep knowledge and understanding of cultural, political, economic and linguistic differences turned out to influence the process. In both cases, a non-native language between the parties limited the communication process. Cognitive, affective and behavioral components in the process led in an active way to trust or developing distrust in interactive, virtual or in face-to-face, negotiation meetings. Thus, trust building is a purposive activity, not a relatively passive process where the parties/actors behave in a characteristically trustworthy manner. Power relations make trust more complex and fragile, and even more so when cultural differences are involved. If, or when, trust is broken, trust recovering or restoration takes time. When negotiations take over short periods of time, the coexistence of trust and distrust might be more difficult to manage since there is no time to regain confidence. Therefore, in these types of negotiations special attention should be paid to trust building. Open, fluent, honest and face-to-face communication play a key role in trust-building and restoring.

The important implication for negotiators and other professionals in the field is to consider and focus on trust as the outcome of a purposive activity, that is a foundation for integrative agreements. Moreover, strategy, technical knowledge, communication and relational competences and skills mediate trust building. A well-planned negotiation strategy can contribute to fostering trust and reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. Skills and competences of negotiators should include sensitiveness and knowledge on cultural diversity, communication, social interaction and negotiation skills. An international negotiator has to be fully aware of particular cultural characteristics that could affect trust, and consequently a positive outcome of the process for the parts implied in the negotiation. When there is no common language between negotiators, besides difficulties of understanding, other situations that could affect the negotiation process arise, such as social implications.

As culture seems relevant for inter-organizational trust in the growing international networking, further research is needed especially on the emic perspective and of local practices which seem limitedly studied (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). Further empirical research in inter-cultural studies in different contexts (cross-national, cross-sectorial) would enrich the knowledge on trust development and the role it plays in integrative negotiations. Finally, relations between trust, power and gender in negotiations would deserve more consideration in future research. For example, research on triage power in negotiations is limited.

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