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CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EXPATRIATES AND LOCAL MANAGERS – RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM POLAND

Summary. Today's global marketplace requires organizations to relocate staff to foreign locations in order to establish business activity abroad. In recent years, the number of international interactions in which Polish managers are engaged has increased significantly. Since negotiations are an integral part of them, the purpose of this article is to present how the Polish managers' negotiation style is perceived by Western expatriate managers operating in Poland. This article presents the unique results of 39 in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of 7 countries, such as the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland and Sweden. This paper also contributes to the ongoing debates on negotiation between expatriates and local managers. While there is a lot of research that compares national negotiations styles, Poland's presence in them is rather scarce. Since Poland is rapidly becoming an important place where a lot of expatriate managers perform their daily operations there is a strong need for that type of research.

Keywords: cross-cultural interactions, cross-cultural negotiation, expatriates, Polish negotiation style

NEGOCJACJE MIĘDZYKULTUROWE MIĘDZY MENEDŻERAMI EKSPATRIANTAMI A LOKALNYMI MENEDŻERAMI – WYNIKI BADAŃ

Streszczenie. Globalny rynek wymaga dziś od organizacji częstych relokacji pracowników. Zwiększa to ilość interakcji międzynarodowych, w których uczestniczą polscy menedżerowie. Negocjacje są integralną ich częścią. Celem tego artykułu jest przedstawienie, jak polska kultura negocjacji postrzegana jest przez zachodnich menedżerów działających w Polsce. W artykule przedstawiono wyniki 39 unikalnych wywiadów z przedstawicielami 7 krajów, takich jak: Stany Zjednoczone, Niemcy, Wielka Brytania, Hiszpania, Holandia, Irlandia i Szwecja. Artykuł ten stanowi również wkład w toczące się debaty na temat negocjacji między emigrantami a lokalnymi menedżerami. Chociaż istnieje wiele badań porównujących kultury negocjacyjne, obecność Polski w nich jest raczej rzadkością. Ponieważ Polska szybko staje się ważnym miejscem, gdzie wielu zagranicznych menadżerów wykonuje swoje codzienne operacje, istnieje coraz większe zapotrzebowanie na tego typu badania.

Słowa kluczowe: interakcje międzykulturowe, negocjacje międzykulturowe, emigranci, polski styl negocjacji

1. Introduction

The internationalization of business, without a shadow of a doubt, has led to a growing importance of international human resource management (IHRM) (Desatnick and Bennet 1977, Evans et al. 2002). International assignments in multinational corporations (MNCs) have immensely increased over the last few decades. Consequently, expatriation has become a significant IHRM issue for MNCs as well as other organizations with an international scope, (Osman-Gani & Tan, 2005) including governments.

There is strong support in the expatriate literature for the fundamental assumption that expatriates have to adjust to a new cultural environment by modifying and adapting their behavior to fit into the host country's cultural values, norms and paradigms (see e.g. Shin et al., 2007). Moreover, meta-analyses provide similar support to the hypothesis that an expatriate adjustment is the key predictor of his/her performance (Hechanova et al., 2003; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). The literature also claims that expatriates are today the key players in the global economy, acting as the "human link in international trade" (Ward et al. 2001, p.168) and cross-cultural negotiations are a vital element of their daily reality in MNCs. Furthermore, such a negotiation has a significant influence on MNCs' outcomes. Thus, the negotiation process and its results are crucial for reaching an agreement in the business world today.

Globalization of trade along with the increase in connections among organizations all over the world have inspired researchers to scrutinize the impact of culture on negotiations (Requejo & Graham, 2008). As a result, many studies have documented cultural differences in negotiations (see e.g. Adair & Brett, 2005; Adair et al., 2007; Fang, 1999). It can be posited that those differences as well as an ability of expatriates to negotiate across cultures may directly affect the success of expatriate assignment.

The vast majority of the literature on negotiations across cultures consists of studies on negotiations in or negotiations from individual cultures, often with the aim to provide recommendations regarding how to conduct negotiations in particular cultures as well as to point difficulties in negotiations relating to a given culture. Another stream of research focuses on comparing negotiations and negotiation styles among different cultures. Yet, many other studies analyze interactions among negotiators from two or more cultures, while another stream in the research looks at the cross-cultural negotiations as such (See H. Agdnal, 2007). However, regardless of the type of the research that is carried out, a strong focus on several countries, mainly the U.S. and East Asian economies, is apparent in the studies. The research on the Polish negotiation style, especially in the expat-local manager context, is rather scarce. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to present how Polish managers' negotiation style is perceived by Western expatriate managers operating in Poland. This paper contributes to the ongoing debates on negotiations between expatriates and the local managers.

The paper is composed as follows: the literature review section describes Poland as a destination for expatriate managers. Then, the authors analyze the major reasons for failures in international assignments. Subsequently, a phenomenon of cross-cultural negotiations is portrayed. Finally, the paper presents and discusses the unique results of the research concerning the Polish negotiation style.

2. Literature review

2.1. Why Poland?

As identified by international managers, Poland was most often considered the location for a new foreign direct investment (FDI) in Europe (Gounelle and Lhermitte, 2008) as well as one of the most trusted countries for FDI (AT Kearney, 2010). Moreover, according to the annual ranking prepared by the World Bank, namely *Doing Business*, the position of Poland has improved significantly over the years. The above mentioned facts should be combined with the value of FDI in Poland in 2003-2012 (see Figure 1) and the investment position of Poland when compared with the other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (see Figure 2).

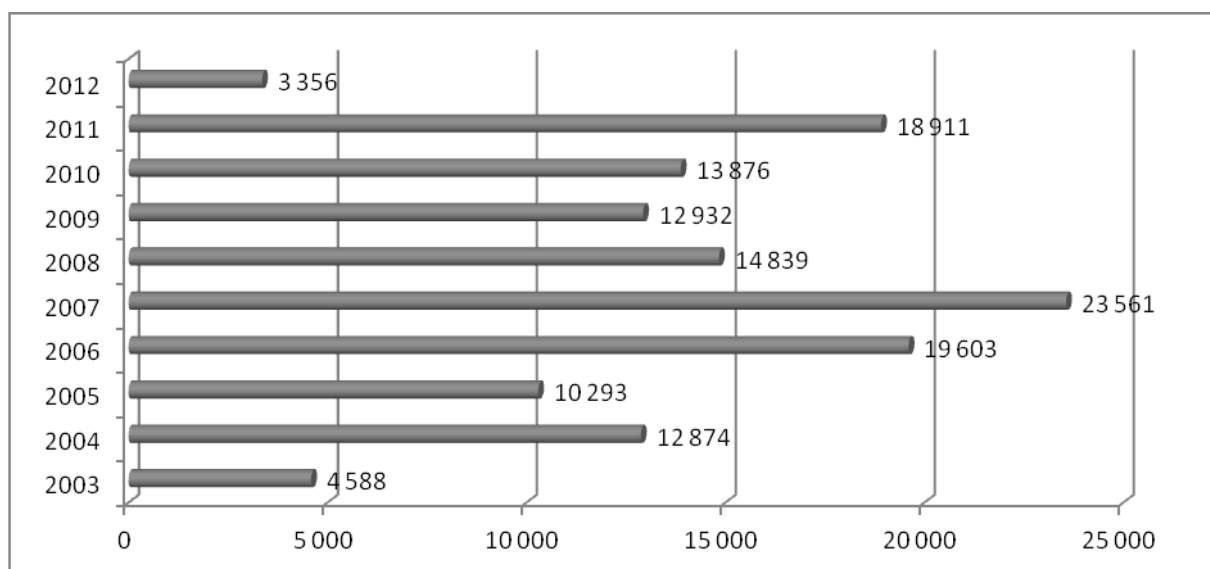


Fig. 1. Value of FDI in Poland (in millions of USD)

Rys. 1. Wartość bezpośrednich inwestycji zagranicznych w Polsce (w mln USD)

Source: UNCTAD 2013, p. 209, (accessed 10.03.2014).

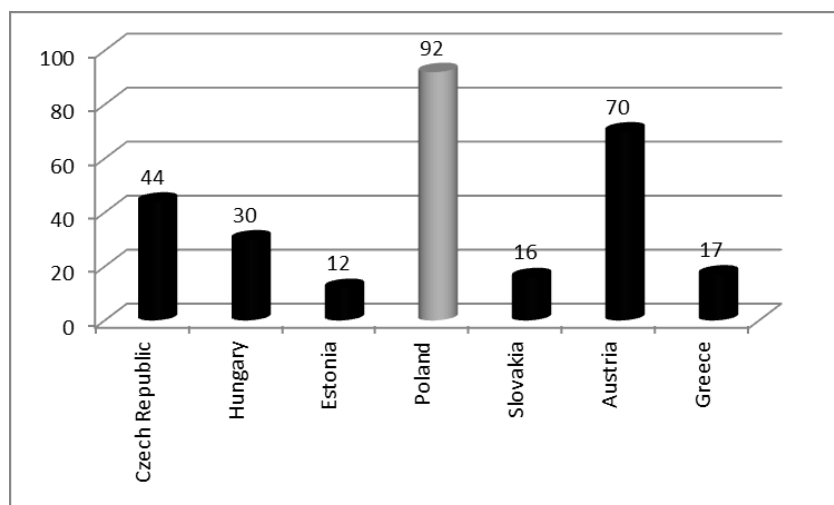


Fig. 2. Value of FDI in 2005-2012 in selected European countries (in billions of USD)

Rys. 2. Wartość BIZ w latach 2005-2012 w wybranych krajach europejskich (w mld USD)

Source: UNCTAD 2012 (accessed 2.07.2012).

The aforementioned figures confirm that Poland is an attractive country for foreign investors and, in comparison with the other countries in the region, Poland has grown as the leader in attracting FDI. The current economic indicators are good and the prospects for doing business in Poland for the future sounds promising as well. In addition, the investment

climate attracts not only investors from the neighboring countries, but also from the U.S. and Asian countries.

2.2. Expatriates in Poland

Due to its relatively sound economy, Poland offers perspectives for investors from Western Europe, the U.S., and Asian countries. Each year, foreign corporations set up about 300 greenfield investments in Poland (Karaszewski, 2010, p. 6), which results in the presence of expatriates in the country. Nevertheless, Poland was perceived as a difficult destination for foreign managers and investors (in: Brookfield Global Relocation Trends Report, 2010, p. 9).

Karaszewski et al. (2010, p. 6) identified several factors that increase the demand for expatriates in Poland such as the early stage of internationalisation of the Polish economy, a gradual overcoming of psychological barriers and the lack of international knowledge and experience of Polish managers. The empirical findings of Eisenberg et al. (2009, p. 4) on the expatriate managers' leadership style in Poland convince that expatriates who come from Western countries were positively perceived by Polish subordinates. They were rated as more relationship-adept and better in the interpersonal dimensions, while Polish local managers were seen as more competent in several task-oriented dimensions. Moreover, the Western expatriates were perceived as sensitive, tolerant, open-minded and friendly, although according to 65% of the Polish employees, the Western managers' fluency in Polish would make them much more accepted by Polish subordinates.

2.3. Failures in international assignments

Although foreign assignments are perceived as the key element in the internationalization strategy of MNCs, many of them are unsuccessful (Rahim, 1983; Baumgarten, 1995; Bhagat & Prien, 1996; Bennet et al., 2000). There are several reasons for being classified in this manner (Bennet et al., 2000):

- delayed productivity and start-up time,
- disruption of the relationship between an expatriate and host nationals,
- damage to the organization's image,
- lost opportunities.

Furthermore, foreign assignments appear to fail because an expatriate may not possess the required skills for cross-cultural interactions, present the lack of technical abilities and insufficient motivation for working overseas (Bhagat & Prien, 1996). The other causes lay in an expatriate's inability to communicate well with the local employees, transfer managerial practices to the host country, or adjust to the overall characteristics of the host culture (Bhagat & Prien, 1996; Caligiuri et al., 2001; Selmer, 2005). Not only expatriate managers

themselves may be unable to adapt to the physical and cultural differences of a new environment. Similarly, their families can also encounter difficulties in the adaptation process.

As reported in various studies, most of the executives and managers sent to manage foreign operations are usually selected due to their skills and accomplishments within their native country (Jassawalla et al., 2004; Black & Stewart, 1991; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, et al., 2005; Littrell, 2006). Yet, the issue of “cultural fit” is very often neglected, which may result in conflicts with their co-workers in the host countries caused by cultural differences. Nonetheless, such a difference occurs quite frequently and contributes to the high level of stress and discomfort of an expat leading to his/her failure. In contrast, managers whose values, beliefs and behavior are congruent with those existing within a host country are likely to be a good cultural fit for the organizations operating there (Bhagat & Prien, 1996; Caligiuri et al., 2001).

2.4. Negotiations in a cross-cultural setting

Maximizing the chances of a manager’s success in a foreign location is a critical business priority. If an executive or a manager is sent abroad and fails to either settle into the new culture or work effectively with his/her colleagues, the whole venture will be a waste of valuable time and money. Thus, there is a necessity to prevent an expatriate’s failure, e.g. by effective conflict solving. However, cross-cultural differences account for or impact on many areas of conflict resolutions, including negotiations.

Many scholars date back the rigorous research in the field of negotiation to von Neumann and Morgenstern’s (1947) seminal work on games and economic behavior. Since then many various definitions and approaches have been coined. For instance, negotiating can be viewed as coordination in an environment of diverse interests and conflicts (Ahdrich, 2006). It can be also portrayed as a management process of interrelationship among interests, rights and power between or among parties. Thus, the notion of negotiations refers to a process which individuals work in together to formulate agreements about issues in a dispute. This process assumes that parties are willing to communicate as well as to generate offers and counter-offers. Then, an agreement occurs if, and only if, the offers made are accepted by all the parties involved. Nevertheless, regardless of the specific definition, negotiations involve several key components, including two or more parties, their interests, their alternatives, the process and the negotiated outcomes (Chmielecki, 2013).

It can be also posited that negotiations are an inherent element of all the forms of social interactions (Bülow, 2011). They can be indeed seen as an interaction. Specifically, in negotiations among the representatives of various countries there is a necessity to analyze “the dynamics of interaction among the members of different national cultural groups”

(Bülow, 2011, p. 350). Thus, negotiations in a multicultural context may be interpreted as a peculiar type of cross-cultural interactions (Rozkwitalska, *in press*).

Cross-cultural interactions “imply how members of various cultures affect one another, behave in a particular situation” (Rozkwitalska, 2013, p. 101). In such an interaction, individuals representing diverse patterns of behaviors and unique cognitive blueprints, that help them to read and understand the surroundings (Webb and Wright, 1996), influence one another. Hence, cross-cultural interactions exhibit behaviors of representatives of various cultures and how they affect one another in a particular situational context (Rozkwitalska, *in press*). Regarding the specific context of MNCs, cross-cultural interactions can be referred to as all the types of relationships among individuals, in every unit of MNCs, such as e.g. within or among their foreign subsidiaries involving contacts between the local staff and expatriates. Taking into account overlapping cultures existing in MNCs, which all affect interpersonal relationships, establishing effective cross-cultural interactions, i.e. “interactions that result in a mutual cooperation aimed at goals achievement” (Rozkwitalska, 2013, p. 101), faces a serious challenge. It increases the necessity of being involved in negotiations to solve potential conflicts within a diverse group of stakeholders. In a multicultural environment of MNCs, negotiations may also encounter cultural barriers such as colliding styles of negotiations manifested by the parties involved in the process (see e.g. Menger, 1999; Bhattacharjee & Zhang, 2011).

The influences of cultural differences on negotiations can be viewed in several aspects. Those differences may range from the negotiator selection criteria to the preferred outcomes or the role of the third party (see Figure 3). Moreover, Lewicki et al. (2005) suggest that cultural differences may influence negotiations in several ways:

1. *Definition of negotiations*: Particular cultures define negotiations differently. For instance, Americans tend to think that negotiations are a process of rivalry, whilst Poles see them as the game of poker.
2. *Selection of negotiators*: The selection criteria are dependent on culture and they can include: knowledge of a given subject, seniority, sex, age, experience and status. Different cultures seem to have a different attitude towards these criteria. For instance, teams in Poland are slightly bigger than in the U.S. and the hierarchy is very often the decisive factor when a team is being composed.

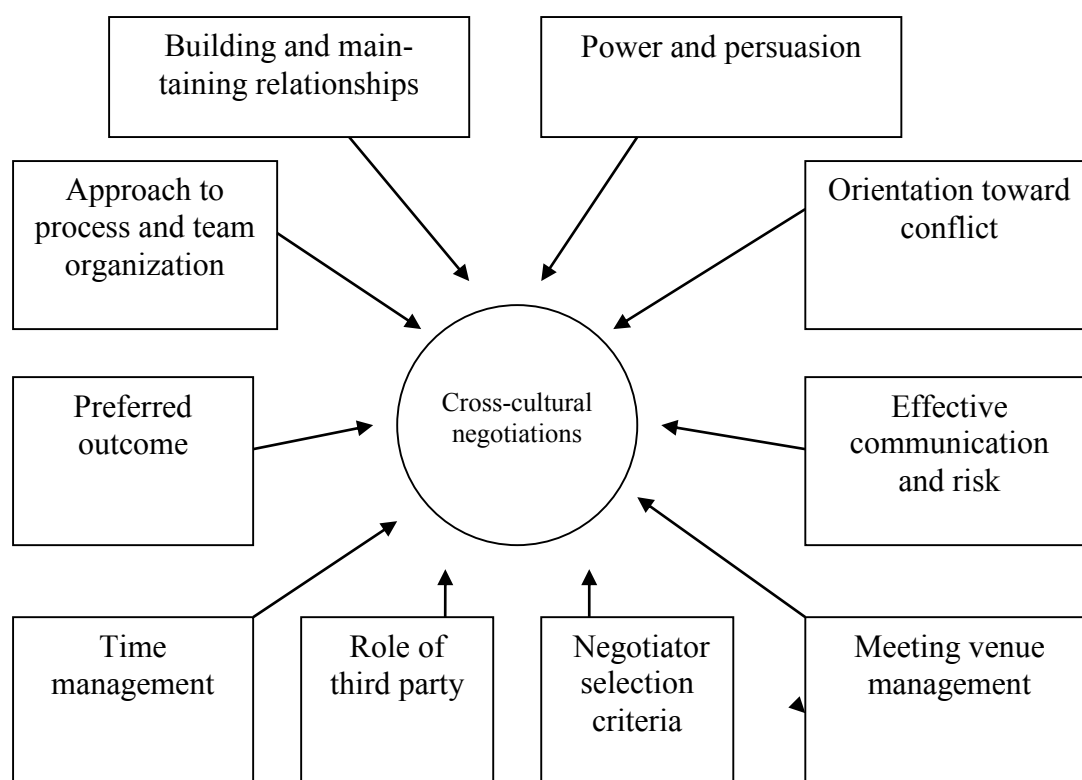


Fig. 3. Influences of cultural differences on negotiations

Rys. 3. Wpływ z różnic kulturowych w negocjacjach

Source: Chmielecki M., 2012.

3. *Protocol*: Various cultures seem to have different attitudes towards the degree of formality between/among the negotiating sides. For example, American culture tends to be one of the least formalized cultures in the world. In contrast, a high degree of formalization occurs in Poland, and as a result Poles find it typically rude when the official titles of their professions are ignored.
4. *Communication*: Culture influences both the verbal and nonverbal way of communication. Thus negotiators ought to be aware of intercultural differences in order to avoid confusion.
5. *Time*: Since culture has a great impact on the attitude towards time, it influences negotiations too. For instance, in the U.S. people are usually very punctual and they obey deadlines. Americans seem to think that doing something 'faster' is better than doing something 'more slowly' because 'faster' means more effectively. Poles seem to have a similar notion of time.
6. *The avoidance tendency*: Representatives of some cultures are very bureaucratic and conservative and they need a lot of information to make a decision. Such an attitude is still typical of Polish culture.

7. *A group versus a unit*: Some cultures seem to concentrate on groups, whilst the other ones tend to concentrate on individuals. These differences may have a horrendous impact on negotiations. For instance, representatives of collectivistic cultures need more time to reach an agreement because they tend to work in big groups and they want to reach a consensus during negotiations.
8. *Form of agreement*: Some cultures form an agreement on the basis of logic, whilst in other cultures, reaching an agreement is based on the social status or political orientation of contractors.

As portrayed in the scholarly literature (see e.g. Chmielecki, 2013), different cultural systems produce different negotiating styles, which are shaped by each nation's culture, history and other factors. Therefore, negotiators in a cross-cultural environment experience not only differences in language or dress code, but first and foremost, differences in the perception of the world definition of business goals and motivation. Cultural misunderstandings occur not only when a difference is noticed and misinterpreted, but very often when a surface similarity (e.g. in etiquette) obscures a significant difference that exists at a deep level. All in all, it emerges that treating each negotiation process as a unique one is the key to success.

2.5. Business cultures typologies

To analyze which cultural variables influence certain negotiation behaviors it is necessary to provide a cultural division or a model. However, there is no universal form, model or evaluation system of national culture. The variety of the models illustrates how multifaceted the approach can be. Nevertheless, there are some common dimensions for most cultural models such as concepts of collectivism vs individualism, orientation towards time, or equal or non-equal rights. The most popular cultural divisions were introduced by: Hall (1989), Hofstede (1991) and Gesteland (2000).

The cross-cultural business communication researcher – Hofstede (1991) – created a global model for the purpose of helping business professionals to distinguish the culture differences for individual countries. Hofstede identifies the following dimensions of national cultures: power distance (small versus large), individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance, indulgence versus restraint.

As far as Gesteland is concerned, he divides cultures into: pro-transactional and pro-partnership ones, low and high context, ceremonial and non-ceremonial, monochronic and polychronic, expressive and reserved [Gesteland R., 2000, p. 60-75].

Hofstede's and Gesteland's analyses seem to be based on Hall's findings, who among others coined the terms low vs high context and polychronic – as opposed to monochronic – which will be used in this cultural analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1

Cultural dimensions used in the analytical part of the paper

Hall	Hofstede	Gesteland
Low vs high context	Uncertainty avoidance	Pro-transactional and pro-partnership
	Individualism vs collectivism	Expressive vs reserved
Monochronic vs polychronic	Power distance	Ceremonial and non-ceremonial
	Masculinity	Monochronic vs polychronic
	Long time orientation	

Source: Own study.

3. The results of the research

3.1. Research methodology and sample

The purpose of the research was to analyze how the Polish managers' negotiation style is perceived by Western expatriate managers operating in Poland. The research was conducted in the first nine months of 2013 and had a qualitative character. This article presents the unique results of 39 in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of 7 countries, namely the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland and Sweden. Table 2 and 3 describe the group of the participants.

Table 2

The participants' nationality

Nationality	The number of participants
American	5
English	6
Spanish	6
Dutch	5
Irish	6
German	7
Swedish	4

Source: Own study.

The 39 participants were mainly mid-level managers experienced in cooperating with Poles, who represented different departments and organisational units of MNCs. The sample was selected via non-probabilistic methods, i.e. purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The participants come from 24 MNCs with majority of foreign capital. Each interview lasted from about 20 minutes to half an hour.

Table 3

The female and male participants' characteristics

Respondents' gender (number)	Female (11)	Male (28)
The average age	39 years old	42 years old
Higher education	9 people	25 people
The average time of foregoing cooperation with Poles	7 years	6 years
The dominant language of interactions:		
1) Polish	1) 1	1) 3
2) My native language	2) 5	2) 12
3) English (English as the second language)	3) 5	3) 13

Source: Own study.

3.2. Empirical findings

There is a universal model of the basic procedures of negotiations. However, this impressive consensus on the process of negotiations conceals subtle, yet far-reaching differences in the way the basic concepts and moves are interpreted, evaluated and actualized (Chmielecki, 2013).

Although quite homogeneous in terms of culture, Poland showed an interesting mix of influences from the West and East. Poland is characterized by a high level of power distance and uncertainty avoidance as well as average individualism, while in the dimension of masculinity Poles are slightly above the average (Sitko-Lutek, 2004). The authors' research also suggests that Poland represents a more pro-partnership culture than a pro-transactional one. Family and friend bonds still play the key role in Polish business culture, as stated by several respondents:

"Building lasting relationships is important and can be crucial for the success of your business interactions. Generally, it is best to give your counterparts time to become comfortable with you." R12

"If you enter a personal circle, if you know what I mean, they will treat you differently, they will also expect more from you." R19,

"For Poles business relationships exist both at the individual and company level. Poles usually want to do business with the ones they like and trust." R22

"Poland's culture expects its members have a sense of belonging to and conforming to their group." R34

"Be prepared for being asked and answering many personal questions to gain your counterparts trust. It may take time. Patience is important." R30

The research also revealed that many Western expatriates have problems with not only understanding those mechanisms but also behaving in that particular manner, as can be found in the following citation:

“(…) personal relationship creates obligations in professional life. It sometimes can be dangerous.” R3

Furthermore, for most of the participants there are clear boundaries between private and professional lives, yet in Poland those two worlds blend, and in most cases it is difficult to leave out of the equation the private sphere:

“They find it difficult to separate their professional life from their personal life.” R21

The pro-partnership character of Poles is also stressed by valuing personal contact, as emphasized by the respondents:

“Poles value a personal contact. If possible, it is far better to take part even in a short meeting than to make a phone call or write an e-mail.” R35

“Warm people, who value people-oriented approach in business.” R23

Due to the pro-partnership character of negotiations, the concept of the third party interventions is not seen well by Poles, as one of the respondents says:

“Poles are not willing to use a mediator’s help.” R14,

and another one adds:

“Suggesting any form of the third party intervention is not a good idea, believe me.” R21.

The research also suggests rather a hierarchical type of business culture. The expatriates perceived Poles as closed to ideas of people who were placed lower in the hierarchy. They stressed that Poles like power, hierarchy, formality and titles:

“In business circles titles are used often and are viewed as highly prestigious.” R31

“Overly one’s informal behavior could be interpreted as a lack of respect for senior management.” R11.

The Western expatriate managers also stressed that Polish managers symbolically showed their status and success. According to the expatriates, formality along with hierarchy led to limiting authority during negotiations and slowing the decision making process:

“Negotiations with Poles are characterised by superiors interfering the process.” R9

“Because of hierarchy decisions take far too much time” R14

“Poles pay special attention to their professional titles.” R23

“Limited decision power” R19

Companies in Poland were often seen as very hierarchical and people were expected to work within clearly established lines of authority. Openly disagreeing with or criticizing superiors was in most cases unacceptable.

It is also apparent that in the view of the Western expatriate managers the Polish approach towards the negotiation process itself is rather flexible than systematic. Preparation is still a problem among Polish negotiators and they do not attach much importance to it. Several respondents emphasized that issue:

“Negotiators from Poland have a tendency to improvise. They are not earnestly prepared.” R14

“Sometimes I got the feeling that they start the process without even knowing where they are heading for.” R21

“(…) while the negotiations take place, Poles very often waste the time on issues which should be already known to them from the documents and mails, or even from the people’s opinion.” R32

“Poles quite often don’t realize how important a preparation for negotiations is.” R36

“They often don’t prepare a plan for a conversation, and it happens that they don’t have a clearly determined aim of negotiations.” R19

“Polish negotiators work in a rush. Many issues are agreed at the last moment, just before leaving the negotiation table, when there is no time for reflections.” R3

Moreover, the Western managers describe Poles as unsystematic. Poles leave important decisions as well as actions until the last minute. Several respondents stressed making decisions by Polish negotiators in a rash way:

“Conversations are led in a rush.” R3

“Many bad decisions are made simply because they move through the process too hastily.” R7

To some extent, the above issue is a result of a holistic approach to the process and a tendency to widen the subject area:

“Poles have a taste of widening the subject area which initially was planned as a subject of trade talks and negotiations.” R8

“There is a lot of room for stories and anecdotes but very often later on the lack of time leads to an unnecessary rush in making important decisions.” R39

According to the research, Poles appeared to be very creative, although, as mentioned before, they possess limited organizational skills.

“Polish negotiators are very creative. They are able to prepare alternative solutions very quickly.” R10

“I must say they can be extremely creative.” R22

“They can prepare something out of nothing.” R34

Another aspect that was very often stressed during the interviews was poor communication skills, mainly listening skills of Poles:

“Polish negotiators tend to listen incompetently to arguments which are presented by the other side. They overtalk and provide many detailed information which is unnecessary.” R23

“They cannot listen. Then you have to repeat and explain sometimes several times in a row”. R38

Furthermore, a lack of an empathetic approach was also raised by the respondents:

“Emotional intelligence and empathy is not a strong skill of Polish negotiators. It often leads to conflict escalations. What is more, ‘saving the opponent’s face’ doesn’t have any important function for Poles.” R32.

The expatriates quite often mentioned modesty and the lack of self-confidence as peculiar traits of Polish negotiators:

“Poles are very modest, I would even say too humble.” R5

“They are not willing to talk about their achievements.”R13

“They don’t like bragging about themselves.” R31

Modesty is reflected in many aspects of everyday behavior in Poland, e.g. in the ways people respond to compliments, in the Polish self-presentational style and in the overall manner of managing the self (Bogdanowska-Jakubowska, 2011). Additionally, almost all of the expatriates highlighted Poles’ unwillingness to talk about their achievements and success.

When it comes to the architecture of a Polish negotiation team, the research suggests that Polish culture represents a typical co-operational approach towards inter-group interactions. However, inside a team there are very often no clearly fixed positions, tasks and roles.

“Sometimes one can get the impression that someone in a negotiation team is there completely by chance, as if it was an opportunity to visit another country or something like that.” R34

“There is often some sort of chaos inside the team.” R12

The research also displayed that, partly due to a high uncertainty level, Polish managers do not like changes inside negotiation teams, as one of the respondents suggested:

“Once the team has been established and the relationships seem to be working quite well, it is important to keep the team together and do not change the managers. Poles can be cautious with strangers and they do not like changes.”R33.

The empirical findings indicate that inside negotiation teams the accountability was rather mutual. Moreover, Poles were naturally reluctant to any procedures or norms. They also dealt with collective individualism, i.e. the desire to achieve the objective of individuals by membership in a group that helps to achieve it. Furthermore, Poles valued belonging to their groups, but at all costs they tried to protect their own identity. They would support the objectives of their team and company as long as they were compatible with their personal goals. Thus, Polish individualism was manifested by individual objectives, actions and declining loyalty to organizations.

4. Conclusions

Since cultural differences often lead to behavioral differences, it is indeed difficult for people from different cultural backgrounds to effectively negotiate with one another.

Cross-cultural differences can thwart negotiators' plans and, as a consequence, they can lead to a failure of an expatriate assignment. It is therefore crucial that expatriate managers incorporate their cultural competence and global mindset. In addition, negotiators should expand their knowledge of world cultures, languages, customs and ways of conducting business (Chmielecki, 2013). Therefore, when preparing for an expatriate assignment or analyzing an ongoing one, it might be worth asking the question of which cultural factors determine the discrepancies in a negotiation process between an expatriate manager and the host country personnel.

As the authors' research discovered, negotiation difficulties among expatriates and the local managers in Poland were often influenced by the following factors: hierarchy, formality, communication, a division between personal and professional life, an approach to planning and improvisation, and many others. The research also stressed that since diverse cultures may lead to differences in cognition as well as understanding and evaluation, a singular approach to negotiations cannot be applied everywhere.

The research contributions and limitations are as follows. This paper contributes to the research on cross-cultural negotiations among expats and the local managers. With regards to research limitations, it must be highlighted that it was a pilot study and the results cannot be generalized. The empirical findings serve as a starting point for further in-depth research in this area. It is recommended that in order to gain a complete picture of the issues underlying the results, both qualitative and quantitative research on a bigger sample should be undertaken. Additionally, further research could focus on a comparative approach to negotiations between Poland and countries with the highest number of FDI in the Polish economy.

Acknowledgment

The financial support from the National Science Center in Poland is gratefully acknowledged (the research grant no. DEC-2013/09/B/HS4/00498, entitled "Cross-cultural interactions in foreign subsidiaries of multinational corporations – traditional and Positive Organizational Scholarship approaches").

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