

Päivi Vaahterikko-Mejía



**CULTURAL  
DIFFERENCES  
IN IBERO-NORDIC  
COMMUNICATION**

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FINNISH  
AND COLOMBIAN NEGOTIATORS



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Päivi Vaahterikko-Mejía  
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Communications  
Perceptions about Finnish and  
Colombian Negotiators

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## ABSTRACT

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Summary

Diss.

This study had three objectives: (1) to investigate the Latin American negotiators' perceptions of Finnish and Colombian negotiators; (2) to study the cultural differences that the Latin American negotiators perceive when communicating with Finnish negotiators; (3) to compare the Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions of Finnish negotiators. The two main areas of interest in the study were: (1) perceptions in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations, and (2) Finnish-Latin American communication. These two fields of research were decided because the negotiators in Finnish-Colombian business are from different Latin American countries.

Negotiation occurs when Finnish and Latin American (Colombian) negotiators communicate by telephone, fax, e-mail, traditional mail, and in face-to-face meetings for commercial ends. The commercial purposes are importing and exporting between Finland and Colombia.

This study is built on the assumption that national culture influences negotiators' behaviour, communication, negotiation, perceptions and expectations in their business relations. The basic guidelines for this study are drawn from the following authors' theories: Hofstede, Hall, Adler, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner.

Data was collected by interviewing (in 1997-1999) eleven Latin American negotiators conducting business with Finland negotiators in Bogota, Colombia. Fifteen Spanish negotiators (interviewed in Madrid in 1995-1997) who participated in Vaahterikko's (1997) previous study were included as a reference group to give wider perspective and increase the reliability of the study.

The data was analysed qualitatively by interpreting interviewees' responses and quantitatively by using descriptive statistics to find out frequencies and percentages. Two sets of indicators were developed for the present study.

This study shows that there are culture-bound intangible aspects in the negotiators' way to do business and communicate, which exert positive or negative influence on Finnish and Colombian negotiations. For the most part, differences appear to cause complications in business relations. However, some differences seem to promote more fluid communication and to open business opportunities. Latin American and Spanish interviewees perceive Finnish negotiators rather similarly. The results of the present study can be used when training professionals in the Latin market, especially in instructing them on the intangible aspects of the international negotiation process.

**Key words:** culture, intercultural, communication, negotiation, negotiator, international, perception, conflict, globalisation, competitiveness

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work reviewed in this thesis was carried out during the years 1995-2001 at the Department of Communication & PR at the University of Jyväskylä, in Jyväskylä, Finland, though physically it was conducted in Madrid, Spain and in Bogota, Colombia.

This project has been a great challenge to me both personally and professionally, while in Finland, Spain and Colombia. I believe that intercultural aspects can never be simply theoretical facts, but rather there must be a great deal of personal immersion into the culture under study. In this case, there has indeed been a great deal of intercultural immersion.

I give thanks to my Heavenly Father for the health, both physical and psychological, to be able to carry this thesis to its end. I also thank Him for bringing to my path institutions and individuals who have helped me and have made this project possible.

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Päivi Vaahterikko-Mejía, Jyväskylä, September 2001



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to offer theoretical and practical knowledge regarding international Finnish-Colombian business negotiations and intercultural communication between Finnish and Latin American negotiators. The perceptions of both parties will be explored through the perspectives of the interviewees who come from different Latin American countries. There are also two Finnish interviewees in a group. Additionally perceptions about Finnish negotiators given by Spanish negotiators, dealing with Finns in Madrid, are also included in the study in order to gain two perspectives - from a selected group of negotiators from Latin America and from Europe - on the subject.

Geographical distance can be a complicating matter, but it is not such a dilemma when communicating by e-mail, fax or telephone. Fortunately today's technology offers solutions to break that distance when Finnish and Colombians (Latin Americans) negotiate through these communication channels. In the actual global and international world, communication networks offer rapid information transfer possibilities. The difficulty arises when the parties need to communicate face-to-face. It is not always possible to organise such meetings very often due to the high costs of airfares. The distance may also complicate the logistics and delivery of goods; despite today's developments make efficient goods transportation easier. However the greater the distance the more risky and slower it is to transport goods. Technology brings solutions nearer but monetary, legal and political systems all influence the negotiation process.

Geographically speaking, distance can often be understood as a difference between the countries. Also, distance can be perceived as something unknown. One is normally familiar with the nearby countries' main characteristics, but the far away countries can be conceived as not known or strange. Finland and Colombia are geographically far from each other. The history, climate, politics, religion and economy for example are different in Finland and

Colombia. These aspects have created the particular national cultures in both countries.

The objective of this study is not to focus on operational aspects, but on the non-operational and intangible factors deriving from the different mental (cultural) programming of the negotiators. Colombian negotiators in general operate in collective, hierarchical, masculine and uncertainty avoiding context. On the contrary, Finnish negotiators behave according to the individualist, little hierarchical, feminine and little uncertainty avoiding cultural system. (Hofstede, 1991)<sup>1</sup> The Finns tend to be monochronic and the Colombians polychronic. (Hall and Hall, 1987)<sup>2</sup>, The Colombian negotiators admit that the trust towards them as business partners far too often fails because of their too impulsive and short-term approach to business. (Arévalo Yepes, Vaahterikko-Mejía and Barreto Bedoya, 1999)<sup>3</sup>

The communication context: high or low (Hall and Hall, 1987) in which the Finns and the Colombians communicate is different for these two nationalities. The Finnish communicate more explicitly, verbally and rather directly whereas the Colombians “read” each situation and the communication is indirect, especially in the initiation stage of the negotiation, when trust has not yet developed. Colombians are able to draw conclusions already from the small talk, observing the partner and the situation regarding the stage of the business relation.

Finns and Colombians also behave differently in respect to the relationship nets (Fitch, 1998)<sup>4</sup>. Fitch (1998) explains about connectedness and ‘palanca’ (a connection through which objectives are pursued). She says that in Colombia interpersonal connections revolve around the notion that almost any goal may be accomplished with the help of strong relationships with appropriately powerful others. In Colombia one needs to have friends in good positions in order to achieve his/her objectives. Even in Curriculum Vitae when applying for a job one has to write personal references to show his/her ‘amigo-net’ to gain trust as well as possibilities to be selected. One Finnish negotiator in Madrid (Vaahterikko, 1997) explains this phenomenon as follows: *“The first question is whether you know anybody or do they know you? Firstly, if you are not known, you can not go anywhere.”*

This is an over simplified generalisation of these two countries’ culture of negotiation and communication. Such over simplifying may serve as clear evidence that these two business partners function according to different

---

<sup>1</sup> Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and Organisations: Software of the Mind*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>2</sup> Hall, E. and Hall, M. 1987. *Hidden Differences: Doing Business with the Japanese*. New York: Anchor Press/ Doubleday.

<sup>3</sup> Arévalo Yepes, C., Vaahterikko-Mejía, P. and Barreto Bedoya, S. 1999. *Perfil del Negociador Colombiano. Una Aproximación Regional*. Investigación no publicada. Santafé de Bogotá: Fundación Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano. Vicerrectoría de Estudios de Postgrado.

<sup>4</sup> Fitch, K. 1998. *Speaking Relationally: Culture, Communication and Interpersonal Connection*. New York: The Guilford Press.

cultural norms. The differences are not necessarily obstacles to functional and successful commercial relations, but it is important to be aware of one's culturally bound perception process and behaviour. Also it is necessary to widen one's intercultural communication skills and negotiation skills, in order to maintain more flourishing business relations.

There are eleven Latin American negotiators participating in this study.<sup>5</sup> Seven of them could be called to a certain extent "global nomads"<sup>6</sup>. They have a long history of negotiating in different countries. Four of the Latin American negotiators have been negotiating internationally in Colombia. It is interesting to analyse whether the negotiators' perceptions follow their national culture's (their passport country<sup>7</sup>) perceptions, communication and negotiation values, norms and styles or have they adapted them to the Colombian style where the negotiators are actually located. One possibility could be that the negotiators have developed a more global and international attitude toward the negotiations in which they participate. Also the distance between Colombia and Finland affects the perceptions. It is expected that Latin American negotiators have a less stereotypical view of Finnish negotiators than the Spanish negotiators do. Fifteen Spanish negotiators' perceptions are therefore included for the purpose of comparison to find out whether Latin American images of Finns are different from the Latin European (Spanish) ones. The present study focused on the following four questions:

1. How do the Latin American negotiators located in Bogota and doing business with Finnish negotiators describe the Finnish and Colombian negotiators?
2. Which are the indicators, according to the Finnish and Colombian general cultural characteristics and negotiation styles, that may be described?
3. What aspects, in Finnish-Latin American communication and business negotiations, do the interviewees consider as cultural differences?
4. What similarities or differences are there in the Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions about the Finnish negotiators? The aim is to open up more insights into the subject of intercultural communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations.

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<sup>5</sup> Due to the context where the negotiators are operating, they are called Latin Americans even there are two Finns in the group of interviewees. See the section 4.10

<sup>6</sup> Global Nomads term was introduced by Global Nomads International (<http://globalnomads.association.com>) Organisation. The term refers to persons "who have lived outside of their passport countries because of their parent's occupation. Children of diplomats, international business people, educators and scholars, military personnel, missionaries or inter-governmental organisation such as the United Nations are often global nomads." In 19.11.1999 <http://globalnomads.association.com/gniintro.htm>

<sup>7</sup> The present author uses the term 'passport country' referring to the country where the person has been born or lived the majority of her/his life. Passport country is the country, which has most influenced the person's language, values, attitudes, norms, styles, etc

The perceptions given by the negotiators introduce the concrete experiences of the participants, and also provide experimental data about the Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. Together with these perceptions a profound theoretical analysis is needed. The pertinent theoretical concepts are analysed in chapter two. The combination of theory and practice is believed to be the way to create knowledge (what and why) about the perceptions and intercultural communication in Finnish-Colombian international negotiations.

## 1.1 Globalisation, a context where Finnish and Latin American negotiators operate

The globalisation of the marketplace has been one of the most significant trends of the past three decades. Companies have increasingly more operations abroad in order to achieve sales and develop to a greater extent than they can do domestically. The smaller and less developed the country, the greater are its challenges in trying to adapt to the globalised world economy (Väyrynen, 1998:196)<sup>8</sup>. Globalisation has impacted on the lifestyles, income and values of customers as well as the structure and competitiveness of the marketplace in general. The growing internationalisation of the economy demands the managers to have a global perspective in their negotiations.

According to Cavusgil and Ghauri (1990)<sup>9</sup> the following trends in the international environments are among the major forces behind the globalisation of markets:

- Changed market environment, due to the increased growth and wealth of the nations.
- Resource environment, currently it is much easier to conduct overseas transactions due to the introduction of modern, sophisticated and economical forms of communication.
- Competitive environment, the more notable specialisation among nations and firms has led to the development of many new products and services.

Globalisation and internalisation should not be confused: Globalisation aims to standardise the jurisdiction and functions beyond cultural limits whereas internationalisation attempts to respect and understand different cultures and their functions (Martín-Barbero, 1998)<sup>10</sup>. Considering the objective of globalisation defined by Martín-Barbero it is understandable that countries, which do not find themselves fully in this process, may be insecure to enter in it. For example, Colombia is worried about the process of globalisation.

<sup>8</sup> Väyrynen, R. 1998. *Globalisaatio: Uhka vai Mahdollisuus*. Juva: WSOY/Atena Kustannus.

<sup>9</sup> Cavusgil, A. and Ghauri, P. 1990. *Doing Business with Developing Countries: Entry and Negotiation Strategies*. London: Routledge.

<sup>10</sup> Martín-Barbero, J. 1998. 'La Globalización desde una Perspectiva Cultural.' In *La Revista Número*. No. 7. Marzo-Abril-Mayo. 1998. Pp.46-52. Bogotá.



Colombia fears that global European and North American companies will dominate the Colombian culture and raw materials. In Latin America globalisation is based on two phenomena: the national opening process and regional integration. In European Union countries, despite the variety of languages and cultural backgrounds a certain social equality and cultural exchange between the countries is maintained. In Latin American countries despite the common language and long shared traditions, competition wins over co-operation. (Martín-Barbero, 1998)

Today's business faces two opposite trends: globalisation and localisation. The union of these two opposing phenomena is called 'glocalisation'. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998:3)<sup>11</sup> explain it as follows: "*As the markets globalise, the need for standardisation in organisational design, systems and procedures increases. Yet managers are also under pressure to adapt their organisation to the local characteristics of the market, legislation, the fiscal regime, the socio-political system and the cultural system. This balance between consistency and adaptation is essential for corporate success.*" Now, more than before people and companies need to clarify their identity and vision on which they base their norms, values, strategies and styles. This is necessary for the competitiveness of the country, company and the negotiators.

## 1.2 Competitiveness, a challenge to Finland and Colombia

Today's international context requires competitiveness from the countries participating in international negotiations. Competitiveness can be defined according to Vignaraja (2000)<sup>12</sup> as "*the degree to which, under open market conditions, a country can produce goods and services that meet the test of foreign competition, while simultaneously maintaining and expanding domestic real income.*" International competence is a national dilemma, because the specific knowledge of foreign cultures including the professional capacity in foreign languages, and the understanding of the mayor political, economical and social variables affect the intercultural and international relations. International competence can be defined as the competence and adequacy of required skill, knowledge and qualification for a specific international situation or task. It is not limited to the area of commerce, but it is more than ever a national problem affecting many aspects of life. These are national security, diplomacy, scientific progresses, and international political and economic relations. (Ferraro, 1994)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>12</sup> Vignaraja, G. 2000. *Competitiveness in a Rapidly Globalizing Economy: Lessons of Experience*. International Labour Organization. 24 January, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Ferraro, G. 1994. *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Both Colombia and Finland have to take care of their local commerce in order to have a good base for the international business. There can not exist international competitiveness without national competitiveness. The government, as an important buyer of goods, can stimulate a sophisticated local demand through its practices in buying. The presence of sophisticated local demand can help the industry to develop and progress nationally and internationally. A Finnish company has to first create sophisticated machines to produce high-quality paper for newspapers in Finland before it can export such machines abroad.

It is possible to create a matrix of competitiveness in three levels: the negotiator, the organisation and the state (country). The state should create through its national and international economy, its government, and its finances, infrastructure, science and technology, transportation and material resources an optimum environment of competitiveness for the company. (IMD, 1999)<sup>14</sup> The company can through its organisation; strategies, location, trade, products, management and the people create a supporting environment for the negotiator in international negotiations. The negotiator can be internationally competitive, if s/he has pertinent skills, the characteristics, knowledge, experience and attitudes to function in an optimum way in the international arena.

The foundation of the competitiveness is encountered in this relationship between the negotiator, organisation and the state. The skills in order to anticipate and learn from the competitors, to know the needs of the consumer and to know how to manage the costs are all important. In the international market differences in salaries, levels of productivity, the devaluation of currencies, the introduction of new currencies such as the Euro, the value systems of the countries and cultural differences influence the competitiveness of the country directly. For example, in Colombia, the prolonged revaluation of the monetary unit of the country has affected negotiations negatively. (Fernandez de Soto, 1997)<sup>15</sup>

The political sphere should reflect what is needed for organisations to be successful. The private sector has to give more attention to themes such as the relationships between producers and buyers, management of costs, knowledge of the consumer, the organisational structure and the selection of strategies. (Fernandez de Soto, 1997)

The International Institute for Management Development (IMD) evaluates and classifies continuously through The World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY), how the environment of the nations supports the competitiveness of their companies. The IMD, differentiates between the competitiveness of nations and companies in 47 countries: 28 of them are members of OECD

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<sup>14</sup> IMD, 1999. World Competitiveness Yearbook. [http://www.imd.ch/wcy/wcy\\_online.html](http://www.imd.ch/wcy/wcy_online.html). April, 13 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Fernandez de Soto, G. 1997. *Compromiso Empresarial con el Futuro*. Santafé de Bogotá: Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá.

(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, and 19 are emerging economies (developing countries). (IMD, 1999)<sup>16</sup>

The WCY qualifies the countries' competitiveness through 223 criteria, using the Delhi method. Delhi describes the environment of the country and its international competitiveness. The criterion is divided into eight (8) factors: the domestic economy, internationalisation, government, finances, infrastructure, management, science-technology and human resources. Colombia declined from a ranking of 33 in 1995 to number 43 in 1999 among 48 countries, which were considered as not very competitive. Finland moved from 18<sup>th</sup> in 1995 to number 3 in 1999. One of the determinant factors in this classification is the implementation of the techniques - strategies and styles - of international negotiation (such as training the negotiators to manage intercultural contexts, and creating functional logistics for the transportation of goods, for example), which is the object of the present research. (Ibid.) This great difference in competitiveness is important to know when analysing Finnish and Colombian negotiations. Finland is a highly competitive and developed country, whilst Colombia is not very competitive.

Competitiveness includes two important criteria: The level of the attractiveness and the level of the aggressiveness of the country. The attractiveness means how willing the rest of the countries are to market or to invest in their country as it can lead to more employment. The aggressiveness is the criteria through which the international dynamism of the country is measured on the international market (exports and the internationalisation of management). The economic part of this should be highlighted as the aggressiveness generates incomes. (IMD, 1999)

Colombia's level of attractiveness is diminished due to the insecurity and continuous guerrilla war, but the country is making an effort to proceed in creating more aggressiveness in its exports. The minister of foreign trade Martha Lucía Ramírez de Rincón has launched a project, which is known under the motto of "Exportar o Morir" (Export or Die) with the aim of doubling Colombia's exports. (Ocampo, 1999 and Dinero, 1998)<sup>17 18</sup> Colombia does have very good products it could sell, but it has to develop a more competitive structure (country, company and the negotiators) for its negotiations. Finland is an attractive country, but it is relatively unknown in Latin America. Finnish aggressiveness is based on the high-tech products, which have made Finland the third most competitive country in a world.

There are certain management and personal skills in the competitive world, which are considered very important by the WCY (IMD, 1999):

Management skills:

- Remote management: the skill to control activities, which are geographically scattered.

<sup>16</sup> IMD, 1999. World Competitiveness Yearbook. [http://www.imd.ch/wcy/wcy\\_online.html](http://www.imd.ch/wcy/wcy_online.html). April, 13 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Ocampo, L. 1999. 'Exportar o Morir' In El Expectador. Martes 16 de Noviembre, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Dinero, 1998. 'Competitividad, Objetivo Nacional.' In Dinero, Agosto 18 de 1998.

- Management of the individuals (clients): the development of the interpersonal skills.
- Management of the values: the efficiency of implementing the strategies.
- Management of technology: the skill to explore the potential benefits of productivity using technology.
- Management of the costs: the skill to increase profitability through the productivity of products.

Interpersonal skills:

- Skills to create nets (networking): manage distance and mobility.
- Diversity skills: manage the diversity in the culture, sexes, ages, etc.
- Energy skills: manage the pressure and the stress while enthusiasm is generated in the company.
- Intuitive skills: understand the non-verbal messages of the language and live in the ambiguity.

These skills are developed at the organisational (management) and at the individual (negotiator) level. They have a direct effect on the negotiator in the negotiation process, the competitiveness of the company and country.

The objective of the present study is to analyse these interpersonal skills. Management skills are the operational aspects of the negotiating process, which are well mastered by the international negotiators. They have helped to prepare international negotiators in the last 30 years. The intangible aspects are given some attention only rather recently. One of today's main areas of competitiveness is soft technology (management know-how, design of the processes, education, innovation, communication and value systems). Competitive products, competitive negotiators together with successful negotiations make a competitive company. When aiming to promote efficiency in Finnish-Colombian negotiations and more satisfactory Finnish-Latin American communication in this study, in fact the objective is to improve Finnish negotiators' competitiveness in the Latin market.

### **1.3 Context in international negotiations**

The aspects influencing context can be focused in different ways depending on the operating parties (people, companies, and nations for instance). At the level of the people (negotiators), the context can be defined as the background (culture and experience), the location (where the negotiations take place) and the circumstances (the relationship between the parties, the stage and the objectives of the negotiation) where the negotiators operate. The context affects the negotiations and the performance of the negotiators.

If the negotiators are doing business in their own country, they have various aspects in their favour. They are familiar with the laws, the national as well as the subcultures, the behaviour and language. Also they have the people

from their organisation supporting them. The selection of the place where the negotiations take place is crucial, because it influences the nature and the results of the negotiation. The negotiator does not have to move to another place after the negotiations, so there is not pressure to finish the negotiations as quickly as possible. For this reason the negotiators abroad make concessions more easily than in their own countries.

Ball and McCulloch (1996)<sup>19</sup> describe the aspects influencing the context rather widely as all the forces that surround and influence the life and development of the company. They make a difference between internal and external forces. Internal forces are those, which the management can control. External ones are those, which the management does not have any direct control over or even being able to influence them. Ball and McCulloch present a list of different forces influencing the context:

- Competitive forces: types and number of competitors
- Distributive forces: national and international agencies
- Economic forces: variables such as GNP and unitary costs of workforce
- Socio-economic forces: human characteristics and population distribution
- Financial forces: types of interests, taxes, and inflation
- Legal forces: diverse national and foreign laws
- Physical forces: nature, climate, natural resources, etc.
- Political forces: elements of political context/environment of the nations
- Sociocultural forces: elements of culture (attitudes, beliefs and opinions), that are important for the international negotiators
- Work force: composition, skills/abilities, and attitudes towards work
- Technological forces: skills and technical capabilities, which influence the conversion of resources into products

All the mentioned aspects influencing the context affect the Finnish-Colombian negotiations and the communication in them, as well as the perceptions about the Finnish and Colombian negotiators. Surely the political realities of these two countries also reflect their relations. Colombia is under civil war and Finland has had rather closed international commercial relations with foreign countries. Business with Colombia may also be influenced by suspicious attitudes due to stereotypical views about the nature of the Colombian economy (corruption and drug traffic, for example).

As to the intercultural communication and perceptions held in Finnish-Colombian negotiations, Hall (1976, 1984 and 1987) provides a functional framework for context. Hall (1984)<sup>20</sup> describes the context as *"the information that surrounds an event and is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event"*. Hall divides the cultures into high and low context groups according to how the

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<sup>19</sup> Ball, D. and McCulloch, Jr. 1996. *Negocios Internacionales: Introducción y Aspectos Esenciales*. Madrid: Clamades, S.L.

<sup>20</sup> Hall, E. 1984. *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*. New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday.

messages are transmitted in them. The aspects, which determine how to interpret the meaning, are culturally bound. (See section 2.3.3)

In the context of international business high and low contexts have an important meaning. For example, context influences the ways the information is gathered. The negotiators with high context inclination have extensive information networks among family, friends, colleagues and clients. They do not necessarily need formal information as they obtain what they need from the mentioned people. The negotiators who communicate according to the low context influence need more background and contexting e.g. explicit information. They obtain such information from their advisors, from TV and by reading. This difference surely affects business where high and low context people negotiate. The high context negotiators are quickly able to obtain a wider amount of information among their "friendship-nets".

The context influences the kinds of relationships the negotiators build in conducting business. As negotiators operating according to low context put their trust in contracts and papers, they do not pay so much attention to building long-lasting relationships with their colleagues or clients. They want quick results and sales. It is the opposite to the negotiators with high context practices who put a lot of effort into building lasting and personal relationships in order to conduct successful business and have long-lasting results. In Southern Europe and especially in Latin America it is impossible to conduct negotiations or any business if one does not have good personal relationships with the right people who have the power to make-decisions. Negotiators need to know each other's expectations of context in order to avoid or to manage differences and conflicts.

Context also has a lot to do with the time concept. Low context oriented people are in general monochronic time system representatives and task oriented while high context tendency people are members of polychronic time system and oriented toward people. Monochronic and polychronic time system representatives have a rather different attitude toward time segmenting and for example towards being forced to wait for a partner in order to start a meeting. (Hall and Hall, 1987) For the 'low context negotiators' being kept waiting is surely an offence since they have probably renounced all other tasks to complete the negotiation with their partner. For high context negotiators, time is not so clearly segmented as there are many other things happening all the time. Also being kept waiting may mean that the person is not in a high enough position to negotiate with the person they are waiting for. In order to be able to clarify the situation, negotiators need to clarify the context they are negotiating in.

#### **1.4 Finnish-Colombian business relations**

Business relations between Finland and Colombia are active even though the economic and political instability in Colombia has made many Finnish

companies rethink their business operations in the country. To Finland, Colombia is one of the most important business partners in Latin America. In 1997 the value of the trade between these two countries was 898 million Finnish Marks. The exports from Finland to Colombia was placed as the fourth most important, and the imports from Colombia to Finland was placed as the second most important in value after Brazil. (Suomen Konsulaatti, 1998)<sup>21</sup>

Traditionally, the trade between Finland and Colombia has been deficient from the Finnish side. Finnish imports from Colombia have been more than its exports to Colombia. However, exports from Finland to Colombia have increased during the last few years. Exports from Colombia to Finland were about 658 million Finnish Marks in 1997, 0,4% of Finnish total imports. The principal import products were then: coffee (40%) (Finland is the major coffee drinking country in the world, and 30% of the coffee coming to Finland is of Colombian origin.), iron, steel (36%) and coal (18%). (Ibid.) In the same year, 1997 the exports from Finland to Colombia increased by 4%. The value of the exports was 244 million Finnish Marks meaning 0,2% of Finnish total exports. The principal export products from Finland to Colombia were the following. Paper and paperboard (45%), industrial machines (17%) colours and pigments (13%) iron and steel (10%). (Ibid.)

Finnish exports to Colombia in the beginning of 1998 were worth 157 million Finnish Marks, an increase of 49% on the previous years' exports. The Colombian imports to Finland increased by 8% from 1997 to 1998, a total of 292 million Finnish marks. Finnish industry has a lot to offer to Colombia, for example, in the area of forest, environmental industry and telecommunications where Finland is the world leader. Nokia -company opened its office in Colombia, Bogota, in October 1998. (Ibid.)

The Finnish and European Minister of Foreign Trade, Ole Norrback, visited Colombia together with Finnish managers at the beginning of October 1998. The objective of the Minister was to know Colombia better as a trade-area, create more commercial relations between these two countries, and also to define the need of Colombian enterprises as well as the interests towards Finnish products. In 1999 when Finland received the chairmanship of the European Union, the relations between European Union and Latin America were made closer and more diverse. More exchange was planned in the areas of science, business and culture.

Neira (1995)<sup>22</sup> summarises the possibilities of business between Finland and Colombia as follows: "The possibilities of the entrepreneurial activities and socio-economic rapprochement between two so far away countries are not only possible, but also they should be utilised. The benefits (profits) of such activities

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<sup>21</sup> Suomen Konsulaatti. 1998. Lehtitiedote 1.10.98. Suomen ja Euroopan Ulkomaankauppaministerin, Ole Norrbackin vierailusta ja Suomen ja Kolumbian välisistä kauppasuhteista. Bogota.

<sup>22</sup> Neira, J. 1995. Desde el Final de la Tierra. Visión, Imágenes y Perspectivas de un País Interesante y Distinto: Finlandia. Helsinki: Omakustannus.

and operations in canalising bilateral, multilateral and continental possibilities to third areas are really great. Finland and Colombia can function as bridges in the negotiations not only between Europe and Latin America, but also especially Finland, can serve as a canal to Russia and further to East.”

Colombians are very conscious of their negative image in the world. There have been actions to improve the image both in the private and the public sector. The negative image has had such an influence that Finns together with many other international investors and enterprises consider very carefully whether they want to create business relations with Colombian enterprises. Even though the country is one of the richest as far to its natural resources (flora, fauna and mineral resources) go.

One Colombian negotiator describes the negative image with respect to Venezuelans as follows: “We Colombians have bad image everywhere. That is why we have to show them that we can offer confidentiality as business partners. We do not even want to make business with the dollar’s exchange value, as it may influence them.” (Ogliastri, 1997)<sup>23</sup>

In Colombia there does not exist either a positive or a negative image of Finland. The interviewed negotiators expressed that Finland is not known in Colombia. Also various other negotiators the present author has discussed with in different universities in Bogota claim the same. The country is not known in general, but the negotiators involved in international business know that Finland is a high-tech country with a developed structure and strong government.

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<sup>23</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1997. *La Cultura de Negociación en Venezuela y Colombia*. Dos Estudios. Serie Empresa, Economía y Sociedad. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.



## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical analysis of the pertinent concepts in this study is done in chapter 2. What is understood by pertinent concepts are those aspects, which influence the theme of intercultural communication, perceptions and international negotiations. The practical analysis (analysis of the results from the interviews) is done in the results chapter (chapter 5) and the combination of analysis and results can be found in the conclusions chapter (chapter 6).

The main concepts in this study are the following: national culture, intercultural communication and aspects shaping it, perception, concept of time, negotiation process, international negotiation, international negotiator, language in the international negotiations, conflicts, globalisation, competitiveness, and context.

### 2.1 National culture

Finnish and Latin American negotiators operate in an international context, which requires them to have global attitudes and use global strategies. However, the negotiators are persons who to a certain point function according to their national culture's values, identity and mental programming, which they learned in the country where they were born or where they lived the majority of their life<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The present author uses a term 'passport country' referring to the country where the person has been born or lived the majority of her/his life. Passport country is the country, which has most influenced the person's language, values, attitudes, norms, styles, etc.

In the group of interviewed negotiators there is a Mexican who has a Mexican Spanish accent when he speaks in Spanish. The Argentinean negotiator has an Argentinean Spanish accent. The Finnish negotiator who has lived nearly 30 years in Colombia still communicates with long silent pauses. He listens to his interlocutor, talks only when he has something to say and when it is his turn. The latter aspect is usually referred as the Finnish communicating style. Even when the negotiators have a lot of experience in living outside of their 'passport countries' they seem to guard values, norms, styles and attitudes from their national culture. Surely they have adopted many other identities, attitudes, strategies and styles during their working and living in other countries with other nationalities. These experiences are like extension layers around the one and the most inner layer of the national identity.

The concept of national culture is very important in this study. Through the understanding of national culture it is easier to understand the mental programming of the negotiators, even it is only to be aware of the differences. Probably the two most known definitions of the (national) culture in the area of intercultural communication and international business negotiations are those of Hall (1959)<sup>2</sup> and Hofstede (1991)<sup>3</sup>. Hall considers the relation between culture and communication inseparable. "*Culture is communication and communication is culture.*" For Hofstede "*culture is a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another*". These two definitions are also considered as the basic guidelines in this study.

In today's continuously changing world, where countries divide into smaller units, it is not always easy to define the national cultures. In the present study the national culture is considered to be the country which is geographically limited and has a certain history of its own and own language(s), laws, flag, currency, education and religion(s). The national culture, where the person has been born, has grown up and educated is of utmost importance in her/his decisions, value systems, the way of perceiving the environment, the way of communicating and way of work. Culture regulates people's thought and actions.

The national element is not always the main source of the culture. There are also other sources of culture. The feeling of belonging to a certain linguistic or professional group for instance can prevail. The latter is often the case for the international negotiators. They live and work in an intense goal oriented environment where their educational and professional backgrounds are similar.

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<sup>2</sup> Hall, E. 1959. *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

They may feel similarity due to their experiences in identical assignments and countries.

Usunier (1993)<sup>4</sup> defines the following list of sources of culture: language, nationality, education, profession, ethnical group, religion, family, sex, social class, corporate and organisational culture. These sources can be said to form various subcultures and subgroups inside the main, national culture. The sources of culture help to better understand the national culture, its subcultures and its members, as also to appreciate and understand the diversity inside the same culture. The scholars are nowadays theorising about culture independent from its bond to nationhood, due to stronger impact of the other sources (besides the national) of culture. (Fitch, 1998) Other sources of culture have become more important, because of the globalisation process.

The subculture is a racial, ethnic, regional, economic or social community, which manifests the characteristics of the behaviour differentiating it from other groups (cultures) in the society. (Samovar, 1981)<sup>5</sup> In Colombia the following subgroups are representative: the bogotans, the people from the coast (costeños), black, white, Indians, high and low class members, Catholics and Christians (not state church). In Colombia there are great differences between the regions, race, social classes and religions. In Finland the important subgroups would be differentiated according to education, region, and profession, but there are less difference between the subgroups than in Colombia. Finland can probably be said to be more homogeneous as far as its culture than Colombia.

The subgroups are products of the dominant culture. Their existence has not persisted very long nor have they developed their forms of behaviour in order to be called a culture or subculture. The main characteristic, which distinguishes one subgroup from another, is confirmed by its values, attitudes and behaviours, which are not the same with the majority of the community. (Samovar, 1981)

Subcultures and subgroups influence human relations and so the communication between people. If the person is a Finnish engineer, his profession may create a strong familiarity with his foreign counterpart. His nationality may not influence so much when negotiating with a Colombian engineer. The same person may have possibly been educated in Spain and he might have had a long experience in Poland, Colombia and Japan. In this case he is not "a typically Finnish", but he has learnt through a process of socialisation and experience to operate in various cultures. The negotiator has not "lost" his Finnish cultural identity, but on the contrary, he has learnt other cultural identities and can use them when he is communicating and negotiating with the members of those cultures he is familiar with. The negotiators with

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<sup>4</sup> Usunier, J-C. 1993. *International Marketing: A Cultural Approach*. New York: Prentice Hall.

<sup>5</sup> Samovar, L. 1981. *Understanding Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth, Inc.

experience in various countries and those who are experts in negotiating according to different cultural norms are very much wanted in the companies doing international business. Such negotiators function as mediators and “shock absorbers”<sup>6</sup> between different negotiating styles and cultures.

When Finnish and Colombian negotiators meet each other, it is very important to be conscious and to know their background. The negotiators should make at least the following three questions in order to clarify the context in which they are negotiating. Do they have international experience and in which countries? Is their national culture the main motivator of their behaviour and communication? Are there some other subcultures or experiences influencing their behaviour as negotiators? Which are the influencing subcultures? Responding to these questions helps the parties to orient themselves better in their negotiations.

Religion also has a strong impact on the negotiations. Christianity, Islam, Indigenous believes have different ways of organising work and daily activities as well as the orientation towards the future. For example, one Finnish negotiator in Madrid (Vaahterikko, 1997)<sup>7</sup> tried to explain the difference between the religion (Lutheran and Catholic doctrines) and how they influence the negotiation style: *“according to the Catholic word-explaining doctrine all that is not forbidden is allowed. According to the Lutheran one it is totally opposite. If you do not have permission to do something in a certain way, then it is surely forbidden”*. In the present study religion is not studied. It is only indicated that the religion is one aspect affecting the behaviour, which surely influences the international negotiations and the intercultural relations.

## 2.2 Intercultural communication

The understanding and managing of intercultural communication is of utmost importance in international business negotiations as it influences the negotiator’s trust-developing process, perceptions, negotiation style and generally the mutual understanding of the counterparts. In fact, the basis of the negotiations is in communication, in the exchange of ideas and in the formulation of the proposals. Negotiation can be seen as one specific case of communication. (Cohen, 1996)<sup>8</sup> All international business activity involves

<sup>6</sup> “Shock absorber” term was used by one Finnish negotiator in Madrid, Spain, to explain the need to be able to change the messages so that it is correct in Finland and in Spain. In Vaahterikko, P. 1997. Ibero-Nordic Communication Aspects: Finnish-Spanish negotiations. Unpublished Licentiate Thesis. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

<sup>7</sup> Vaahterikko, P. 1997. Ibero-Nordic Communication Aspects: Finnish-Spanish Negotiations. An Unpublished Licentiate Thesis. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, R. 1996. Negotiation Across Cultures: Communication Obstacles in International Diplomacy. United States Institute of Peace Press.

communication. Intercultural communication occurs when two or more persons from different cultures communicate.

Intercultural communication includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. The companies have paid some attention on the verbal part of the communication. They have trained their negotiators by offering them language courses, which are very important in preparing successful international negotiators. Companies do not employ people, who do not master the languages needed in the negotiations. The eleven interviewed negotiators participating in the study all speak at least English and Spanish. Some of the negotiators can speak three, four or even seven languages. But nobody (apart from the two Finnish and one Finnish-Argentinean persons) can speak Finnish. When the negotiator masters his counterpart's language, it certainly demonstrates the interest and the effort of the negotiator to facilitate the communication and the respect toward his counterpart. However, little attention has been paid to the training of non-verbal communication skills, which enable the capacity to understand the language of the mind, values and attitudes.

Non-verbal communication has its stumbling blocks with different elements having diverse intrinsic significances. Those include the following aspects (Borisoff and Victor, 1991)<sup>9</sup>:

- Paralanguage, which means the quality and volume of the language used
- Kinesics, which is also explained as body language, gestures and eye contact
- Proxemics is the distance according to what the persons communicate.
- Haptics is the touching behaviour used during the communication.

The person may speak very good French, as far as the words and sentences are considered, and still the French do not understand him/her if s/he does not communicate accurately non-verbally. In languages like, Chinese, Japanese, and to some extent Spanish the tone of voice is very important. If the person uses an inadequate tone of voice, s/he is not understood. It also depends on the linguistic group how many errors the foreigner is allowed to make. French speakers are known to be rather impatient in this aspect. They want their language to remain pure, and they do not like to hear incorrect French even from foreigners. The conflict aspects in Finnish-Latin American non-verbal communication could be found in the kinesics, proxemics and haptics. Finns use little gestures; communicate in greater distance than the Latin Americans and the Finns do not usually touch frequently their interlocutors. Latin Americans in general communicate non-verbally rather opposite to the Finns.

The main objective of the intercultural communication is the understanding of different mental programming. Nehru (1991)<sup>10</sup> explains it as

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<sup>9</sup> Borisoff, D. and Victor, D. 1991. *Gestión de Conflictos*. Madrid: Ediciones Diaz Santos, S.A.

<sup>10</sup> Nehru J. 1991. In Adler, N. 1991. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*.

follows: *“If we seek to understand the people, we have to try to put ourselves, as far as we can, in that particular and cultural background.... In order to understand them, we have to understand their way of life and approach. If we wish to convince them, we have to use their language as far as we can, not language in the narrow sense of the word, but the language of the mind. That is one necessity. Something that goes even much further than that is not the appeal to logic and reason, but some kind of emotional awareness of other people.”*

Worldwide negotiators are challenged to achieve effective communication both when the workforce is culturally homogeneous and when it is heterogeneous. When the company has employees from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, effective two-way communication becomes more difficult. As the communication is indirect it can be considered to be symbolic behaviour. The message sent is not identical to the message received. That is why when two people translate meanings into words and behaviours and back into meanings, they do it based on their cultural background and it is not the same for each person. (Adler, 1991)<sup>11</sup>

## **2.3 Aspects shaping intercultural communication and behaviour**

There are many aspects influencing both the intercultural communication and behaviour. In this study there are some aspects, which are considered to be important in this process. They are power distance, collectivism and individualism, femininity and masculinity, the time concept as well as low and high contexts.

### **2.3.1 Four cultural dimensions<sup>12</sup>**

Hofstede (1991)<sup>13</sup> compiled some very extensive research in the 70's in IBM companies in more than 50 countries. On the basis of the results he defined four (4) cultural dimensions according to which countries can be said to differ culturally. Hofstede's work has been strongly criticised for various reasons, but there is no doubt that it has created the basis and guidelines for intercultural research. The four dimensions he defined are the following: 1) power distance,

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Belmont, CA.: The Wadsworth Publishing Company.

<sup>11</sup> Adler, N. 1991. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*. Belmont, CA.: The Wadsworth Publishing Company.

<sup>12</sup> The following four dimensions are analysed on the basis of Hofstede's work.

<sup>13</sup> Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

2) collectivism versus individualism, 3) femininity versus masculinity and 4) uncertainty avoidance.

These dimensions together form a four-dimensional model of differences among national cultures participating in Hofstede's study. Each dimension characterises the communication, behaviour, values, attitudes and beliefs of the national culture, which influence the way to negotiate and the intercultural communication between the parties.

### 2.3.1.1 Power distance

Power distance measures to what point the members of a given culture are accustomed to the inequalities between the people in the society. When the members are not accustomed to deal with inequalities they do not accept the power difference. That means that they do not manage hierarchical relations. In this case the culture has little power distance. Small power distance countries are Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), the USA and Canada for example. In high power distance cultures (Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Spain and Italy for example), the inequality within a society is visible. It is seen in the existence of different social classes: the upper, middle and lower classes. The members of the culture accept the unevenness and need their own social class to feel secure and to know how they are supposed to behave. Colombia is placed according to Hofstede, among the 17 most high power distance cultures. Finland's score rank in power distance is 46. Finland is therefore a very small power distance country.

Difference in power distance has several implications on Finnish-Colombian business relations. To mention one of them: The Finns normally send a person who is a specialist in the Latin market to negotiate with Colombians, and the Colombians send the president or the manager with the most power. From the Colombian side the decision can be taken at once as the person negotiating has all the power to do so. Finns normally need to discuss (more democratic way of doing business) with other members of the organisation before making the final decision.

### 2.3.1.2 Collectivism versus individualism

According to Hofstede, individualism belongs to societies where the ties between individuals are loose. Every one should take care of her/himself and her/his immediate family. In collectivism the opposite is true. People care for each other and especially their large family including grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. In a collectivist workplace harmony is appreciated and direct confrontation between people is considered rude and undesirable. A person from an individualist organisational culture feels uncomfortable with such harmony. For her/him it may seem like s/he is not being sincere. *"Employed people in an individualist culture are expected to act according to their own*

*interest, and work should be organised in such a way that this self-interest and the employer's interest coincide. .... In a collectivist culture an employer never hires just an individual, but a person who belongs to an in-group.*" (Hofstede, 1991) Colombia is placed among 49 most collectivist countries and Finland among the 17 most individualistic ones.

There are various levels of individualism and collectivism. Colombia, for example, is a very collectivist country as far as the family relations are concerned, but at a government or state level Colombia can be described as a very individualistic country. The state does not take the responsibility for its members, and there is no social security or other support for those in need. This is due to the fact that Colombia is a Third World country, and a collectivist one. The family is the group, which takes care of the people not the state. There is not a feeling of collective good for the people at the state level. Everybody fights for his/her own best. This has to be considered in business making as the great amount of laws and rules may not always be respected due to the lack of trust in government and state procedures. Corruption is one aspect to blame here, and collectivism together with low-income rates (poverty) also creates more aggressive negotiation style.

The author of the present research does not agree with Hofstede that *"the management in collectivist organisations is a management of groups"*. The personal experience of the author is that in Bogota, Colombia, which is defined as a collectivist culture, teamwork is difficult. Each member of the organisation is proud of his/her way of doing the things, which are not even argued. Everyone acts according to his or her own priorities and a lot of time is used in trying to agree on themes. Also, it is not easy to talk about different opinions because in Colombia, people's face has to be saved. It is a very strong offence to damage the interlocutor's image. By each context, one has to understand why the people work as they do. This fight for one's own best and face-saving is present in the negotiation process. It is also a part of the distributive negotiation style. (See section 2.6)

The present author considers the face saving to be one reason for the violence. If the things are not said directly and a big part of the communication is indirect there is probably a great deal of frustration. The great social injustice in a country has maintained a general frustration, envy and even hate between Colombians. There may be even very old things bothering the people, but they do not discuss about the problems but rather take other more dangerous procedures as guns or damaging each other's property to solve the problems. Here at least two aspects are influencing. They are collectivism and high-context communication (see the section 2.3.3).

### **2.3.1.3 Femininity versus masculinity**

A third cultural dimension defined by Hofstede has to do with the gender roles in society. The masculinity measures up to what point the culture appreciates



the assertiveness, high incomes and taking care of others. Masculine societies also want to maintain a clear difference between the social gender roles. What is a masculine job and what is a feminine job is also culturally bound. Colombia is between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> most masculine country in Hofstede's ranking. Finland has a score ranking number 47, which means that it is a very feminine country.

The masculinity and femininity dimension creates different management styles and conflict solving strategies. In feminine cultures the manager is not very visible, is intuitive rather than decisive, and accustomed to seeking consensus. In feminine countries, compromise and negotiation solve the conflicts. On the contrary in masculine countries conflicts are resolved aggressively, manipulating and trying to win the other person or group over.

#### **2.3.1.4 Uncertainty avoidance**

Hofstede (1991) defines the uncertainty avoidance as *"the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations"*. Uncertainty forms part of every individual's life. All human beings have to handle the fact that s/he does not know what will happen tomorrow, and one has to live with that uncertainty. Uncertainty creates anxiety, which Hofstede defines as *"a diffuse state of being uneasy or worried about what may happen"*. Rules, laws, religion and technology are used to alleviate uncertainty. The countries with a high need to avoid uncertainty normally have many and rather exact laws and rules. The rules and laws may not be respected as these are so many and sometimes their function is hard to see. Colombia scores as 20<sup>th</sup> country among 50 countries in its uncertainty-avoiding index. Finland is placed between 31 and 32 in this index.

There are great differences over how much uncertainty there is in every culture. USA, Canada and Europe as whole are comparatively well organised where problems like natural devastations, kidnappings and murders are not that common as they are in Latin America or Africa. The reality of the country greatly affects the necessity to avoid uncertainty. Hofstede would position these things as risks and not as uncertainties. He clarifies that uncertainty avoidance is not the same as risk avoidance. In the present research natural disorders and continuous violence, taking place at the moment in Colombia, are considered as uncertainty factors. Uncertainty can not come out of anywhere, there are specific reasons for it and people react to those specific aspects. The above mentioned factors surely affect the interest of other countries which are involved in international negotiations with Colombia.

#### **2.3.2 Concept of time**

The concept of time is one very important aspect in international business negotiations as in all intercultural communication. When it is not understood or

taken into consideration it may cause a great number of conflicts and problems in the international relations.

Hall (1984)<sup>14</sup> determines that the societies organise time in two extreme different ways. One way is to schedule the elements as separate events, one thing at a time. Hall calls this system a monochronic, M-time system. This organisation of time is followed for example in North Europe. Latin America is an example of the other way that a society organises its time. In Latin American countries several things are involved at once. This way to organise the time is named by Hall a polychronic, P-time system. Hall states that these two systems are like oil and water, they do not mix. The present author does not agree on this. In every society there are combinations and different emphasis of these two time systems. Both systems have strengths and weaknesses.

By the following list of characteristics M-time and P-time systems are clarified and differentiated. (Hall and Hall, 1987)<sup>15</sup>

TABLE 2.3.2 M-time and P-time system characteristics

| Monochronic time system                                        | Polychronic time system                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Are accustomed to short-term Relationships                     | Have strong tendency to build lifetime Relationships  |
| Are low-context and need information                           | Are high-context and already have Information         |
| Concentrate on a job                                           | Highly distractible and subject to Interruptions      |
| Do one thing at a time                                         | Do many things at once                                |
| Emphasise promptness                                           | Base promptness on the relationship                   |
| Show great respect for private property; Seldom borrow or lend | Borrow and lend things often and easily               |
| Take time commitments seriously                                | Consider time commitments an objective to be achieved |

The present author has a personal experience in the differences between monochronic and polychronic time systems. She agrees with Hall in all the descriptions except the time orientation in relationships in general (The first characteristic in the table.). In the polychronic cultures the short-term relationships are very usual and in the monochronic countries the long-term relationships are cultivated. The descriptions Hall offers reflect the different mental programming in respect to time. Trying to adapt into the opposite time

<sup>14</sup> Hall, E. 1984. *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*. New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday.

<sup>15</sup> Hall, E. and Hall, M. 1987. *Hidden Differences: Doing Business with the Japanese*. New York: Anchor Press/ Doubleday.

scheme is not at all easy. Time has such a strong value weight especially for monochronic people that breaking the monochronic "rules" causes a great stress, offence and disappointment. As well as forcing monochronic norms in a polychronic system may easily produce confusion.

Time shapes our daily rhythm, our socialising with people and organisation of tasks. Time itself is invisible, but its influence on people's behaviour is easily noticeable. Nothing occurs except in some kind of time frame. A complicating factor in international negotiations and in general intercultural relations is that each culture has its own time frames in which the patterns are unique.

According to Hall (1984) Finland forms part of the monochronic time system and Colombia is a polychronic time system country. This difference has to be clear to the negotiators and they should be able to manage the time difference in benefit for both parties. The time system is not only in the level of the people, but the whole society is organised according to a certain time system. In Finland one has to behave monochronically or s/he is not trusted. If the negotiator in Finland promises something s/he is supposed to fulfil his/her promises, which is considered as professional and efficient. In Colombia the time is not so tangible, and if some circumstances alter the plans that is all right. Also, the promises may change and time limits can be modified. Anyway, the more global the negotiation is toward the more monochronic the negotiation process tends to develop.

All cultures with high technologies seem to incorporate both polychronic and monochronic functions. (Hall, 1984) Not all M-times and P-times are the same. There are tight and loose versions of each. The deficiency of the highly monochronic organisation is the lack of humanity of its members. The weakness of the polychronic time is the chaos and the lack of organisation. Also the extreme dependence on the leader to handle contingencies and stay on top of the things is a weakness of the polychronic type. Polychronic cultures are by their very nature oriented to people. M-time is oriented to tasks, schedules, and procedures. Monochronic negotiators feel they are being underestimated and psychologically stressed in polychronic environments. There is no order and time seems to be wasted for them. The polychronic negotiators, instead, in monochronic environments may feel that people have no value, but the schedules overrun everything. They are not able to obtain information or create the friendship-nets when everything is ordered not by the relationships, but by schedules.

People behaving according to monochronic system associate schedules with reality, but M-time can alienate its members from themselves and from others by reducing context. It subtly influences how the people think and perceive the world in segmented compartments. This is convenient in linear operations but disastrous in its effect on non-linear creative tasks. Latino people are an example of the opposite. In Latin America, the intelligentsia and the academicians frequently participate in several fields at once – fields which the average North American or Scandinavian academician, business, or

professional person thinks of anathema. Business, philosophy, medicine, and poetry, for example, are common and well-respected combinations. One Spanish negotiator (Vaahterikko, 1997) refers to this when she says that Spanish mix life and work in their daily operations.

The principal shortcoming of P-type bureaucracies is that as functions increase, there is a proliferation of small bureaucracies that are not set up to handle the problems of outsiders. In polychronic countries, one has to be an insider (of that nationality) or have a “friend” who can make things happen. (See chapter 1. Introduction)

Monochronic and polychronic time systems are reflected also in the countries’ tendency of long-term or short-term orientation in their world vision, planning and strategies. Colombia is a short-term orienting country. The Colombian negotiators normally do not make long-term plans. (Arévalo Yepes, Vaahterikko-Mejía and Barreto Bedoya, 1999) They think in the present and want to solve today’s problems. Also the situation, in which the country is affects long-term planning, but principally it is due to the time system in the country. Finland functions in an opposite time orientation system. Finnish companies focus on long-term planning and strategies. They try to prevent the conflicts and problems already in a long run with a careful planning. (Vaahterikko, 1997) This may sometimes seem a very rigid way to make business in the eyes of the Colombian negotiators, but Finnish careful planning and consideration of things carefully is also seen as a strength in Finnish business making.

When preparing for a negotiation, usually the attention is paid to information and research, negotiation strategies and styles as well as the counterpart’s outlook. The negotiators frequently fail to consider one of the most important determinants of negotiation settlement: time.

### 2.3.3 High and low context communication

Hall (1959<sup>16</sup>, 1960<sup>17</sup>, 1976<sup>18</sup>, 1984<sup>19</sup>; and Hall and Hall 1987<sup>20</sup>) divide the cultures into high and low context groups according to how the messages are transmitted in them. This division also strengthens Hall’s other descriptions about the close relation between culture and communication: “Communication is culture and culture is communication”. Context here means the amount of information the parties have to have in order to communicate effectively. Trompenaars and

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<sup>16</sup> Hall, E. 1959. *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

<sup>17</sup> Hall, E. 1960. ‘The Silent Language in Overseas Business.’ *Harvard Business Review*. 38. 3. May-June: 259-278.

<sup>18</sup> Hall, E. 1976. *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

<sup>19</sup> Hall, E. 1984. *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*. New York: Anchor Press.

<sup>20</sup> Hall, E. and Hall, M. 1987. *Hidden Differences: Doing Business with Japanese*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Hampden-Turner (1998)<sup>21</sup> call them specific (low context) and diffuse (high context) cultures. Specific people segregate out their life areas. They treat their clients as clients only in a negotiation and business context. Outside of that environment their clients transform into their friends, even enemies or people, who have no specific importance in their lives. Diffuse people extend their relation subordinate-director or seller-buyer to outside of the work context. The director has the right to order his/her subordinate even during their Sunday lunch if s/he so wants. The dimensions high versus low context communication and specific versus diffuse context behaviour are used simultaneously in this study.

In high context cultures the messages move inside the context. In fact the person him/herself can serve as a context in this culture group. High context cultures are usually polychronic and people-oriented by nature, as is the case in Latin American, Asian and Southern European countries. In low context cultures messages are communicated explicitly and verbally. Low context cultures are generally monochronic and procedure (task) oriented by nature, as with Northern European countries and the USA for example. There are great differences between cultures whether little or much information is transmitted and how. According to Hall (1984:60) no communication is totally independent of context, and all meaning has an important contextual component. Putting things into context requires a decision concerning how much information the other person can be expected to possess and how much information one should offer him/her on a given subject. Here too the rules vary from culture to culture.

In general the problem in intercultural communication is the lack of being able to read and interpret the other parties' non-verbal messages. Both low and high context representatives have no problem as far as they communicate inside their own cultural systems. When these two systems meet problems may arise. For low context people it is normally rather complicated to understand high context communication as too little explicit information is given during the interaction. For high context members there is too much verbal information and too little or confuse non-verbal context. The use of context is not only a problem of amount but also the difference in the way to use the context. The low context negotiators often feel that they are being open and telling all the possible aspects during the negotiation process and high context negotiators for them are withholding information.

The "illiteracy" of interpreting non-verbal messages shows the importance of culture in communication. For a long time attention has been focused on the learning and studying of languages. It is also very important to study the culture as well. Language can be said to be a reflection of each culture. Without knowing about the culture one can not use the language appropriately. Language and culture are inseparable. Hall (1984:65) states that to discover the culture will take a lot longer than discovering the language.

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<sup>21</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

### 2.3.4 Universalism versus particularism

The dimension of universalism and particularism is reflected in Finnish-Latin American communication in their negotiations. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998)<sup>22</sup> use these terms in differentiating the importance paid on rules or on relationships. Also, the aspect of task versus people orientation refers to the similar cultural differences in behaviour. The dimensions, universalism versus particularism and people versus task orientation, are used in parallel to this study. Universalist members use the same rules and obligations to all the persons similarly. The rules do not change for the friends or for the important and famous people. The particularist people change the rules and obligations according to the people they are with. If a very good friend of a particularist person has committed an error, the particularist person will try to protect the person no matter what the rule says. A universalistic person would not do this. S/he would judge the person the same whether s/he is his/her friend or not.

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) Protestant countries are usually universalistic and Catholic countries are normally particularist. In Colombia (and in general in the Latin American countries) the main religion is Catholicism. It can therefore be suggested that Colombia is a particularist country. The main religion in Finland is Lutheranism and it can be assumed that Finland is a universalistic country. Thereby showing that these two countries are different in this respect.

Universalism may look as rigidity for the particularist people and the particularism may be experienced like flexibility to the universalists. Changing the rules according to each person is chaotic for universalistic people. Normally, the more international the business is the more universal it will become. When the distances are long and different cultural and legal aspects need to be combined, it would be too complicated to also change norms for different clients.

## 2.4 Perception

The world around the individual is such a complicated whole that has to select, classify, evaluate and organise the stimuli around her/him. This process is called perception. It is an internal process through which the physical events of our environment are transformed into personal and external experiences. By perceiving an individual creates familiar and comfortable surroundings for

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<sup>22</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

him/herself, and s/he may function better and with more security in it. (Samovar, 1981)<sup>23</sup>

Perception can be said to be a personalised interpretation. The experiences one has influence the perceptions. An individual learns from his/her experiences to perceive as well as dangers and interesting occurrences. (Russell and Black, 1972).<sup>24</sup> Neisser (1976)<sup>25</sup> emphasises that making perceptions is not only to confirm pre-existing assumptions, but also to provide new information. It has to be known that without some pre-existing structures, no information could be acquired at all. It can be deduced, that if the Finnish and Colombian negotiators do not have much background information of each other or experience in negotiating together, it may not be very easy for them to perceive each other's behaviour and objectives. Also the way one perceives something is culturally learnt. The way to perceive one's environment as acceptable in one culture is different in another culture. The culture gives the guidelines for individuals to see and observe distinctly. That is why people from different cultures perceive the reality differently, as also they often have unlike interpretations of the same event.

The interviewed negotiators in Madrid and Bogota reflected the following perceptions of North American, Finnish and Colombian negotiators. The North American negotiators enter directly in the theme of the meeting, being rather punctual and pragmatic in general. Such behaviour is considered efficient and characteristic of a skilful negotiator in the United States. Colombian negotiator may interpret American's behaviour as cold and offensive. The Colombians need human relationship (warming up, socialising and strong people-orientation) in their negotiations. A Finnish negotiator would not have major problems with the American approach. American behaviour would be perceived as efficiency and seriousness in business making in Finland. The Finnish also go straight to the point and keep mainly to the themes of the meeting during their negotiations. The Japanese also organise their negotiations strictly and are rather reserved in their way to express their feelings in meetings. They do not seem to look for friendship, which is so important for Latin-American negotiators, but rather look for the excellence in their business activities. This behaviour is perceived as cold and distant to the Colombian negotiators. (Ogliastri, 1992)<sup>26</sup> The Japanese are more task-oriented than the Finns are for example. The Japanese consider Finnish negotiators too spontaneous and to have too many gestures in their communication. (Sajavaara

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<sup>23</sup> Samovar, 1981. *Understanding Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.

<sup>24</sup> Russell, H. and Black, K. 1972. *Human Behaviour in Business*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

<sup>25</sup> Neisser, U. 1976. *Cognition and Reality: Principles and Implications of Cognitive Psychology*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.

<sup>26</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1992. *El Sistema Japonés de Negociación. La Experiencia en América Latina*. Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, S.A.

and Lehtonen, 1997) Perceptions surely are relative depending on who is making the perception.

*"We perceive characteristics of other people according to our frame of reference, but we may not be aware that we are doing so"* (Russell, and Black, 1972). Greenberg and Baron (1995)<sup>27</sup> consider the social perception as the need to combine, integrate and interpret the information of the others in order to obtain an accurate understanding of them. The social perception is a very important factor in the organisations and international negotiations. Person's perceptions obviously affect his/her way to negotiate. The perceptions the Latin American negotiators hold about Finnish negotiators could be assumed to be rather free from heavy stereotypes and prejudices as the countries are far from each other and their contact is rather distant. Finland and Colombia do not have a common history or border, and this explains why the "mind map"<sup>28</sup> between these countries does not exist or it is very vague. The perceptions may be based on the commercial relationship the person has with Finnish negotiators.

It is also possible to make errors in perception. By an error in perception what is meant is that the particular perception is not in line with "reality" (Russell and Black, 1972). This may happen when the individual has very strong expectations, prejudices<sup>29</sup>, stereotypes<sup>30</sup> and preconceived ideas in general, and s/he is incapable of seeing or experiencing the situation s/he finds him/herself in. This may be due to a very strong change of environment the person is living and working in and the perception also functions as a psychological defence. In order to be effective in one's thinking and reasoning activity, one needs to be free from rigid assumptions and even false assumptions.

*"Some psychologists say that we are what we say we are. Others say that we are what we do. Still others say that we are what we think others expect us to be"* (Russell and Black, 1972). Indeed, much of person's behaviour is strongly influenced by his/her intense desire to look favourable in the eyes of the other people. This can be negative and positive. The members of a given culture may try to change the negative image their country or nation has for example. Also an opposite reaction may occur, the members might just accept the negative image and live according to it as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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<sup>27</sup> Greenberg, J. and Baron, R. 1995. Behaviour in Organisations. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.

<sup>28</sup> See: Vaaherikko, P. 1993. 'Avoimet Espanjalaiset ja Kylmät Suomalaiset: Totta vai Tarua?' Tempus 8. 1993:26-27.

<sup>29</sup> Prejudice is a rigid and unchanging attitude about a group of people, which is based on wrong beliefs or images. (Allport, G. 1954. The Nature of Prejudice. New York: Macmillan.; Gudykunst, W. 1994. Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.)

<sup>30</sup> Stereotype is a tendency to perceive another person as belonging to a single class or category (Hodgetts, R. and Luthans, F. 1994. International Management. New York: McGraw-Hill. p.61-62). Stereotype is a belief, not an attitude.



The stereotypes may be thought to be reflections of the perception process. Often the contact with other people requires an immediate response on the basis of our interpretation of the reality (environment and people with whom one communicates). The way the person responds shows how capable s/he is to observe and to deal with those observations. This process is called 'selective perception'. (Lippman, 1956)<sup>31</sup> Perceptions resulting in specific stereotypes can be seen as a survival method. Through it some common and predictable points and contact for human communication are introduced.

## 2.5 Language in international negotiations

Perceptions, values, norms and national culture are all reflected in the language the person uses. When the negotiators are from the same culture and the same language group, they normally can communicate without greater misunderstandings. When the people come from both a different language group and national culture, they need to pay more attention as to whether both parties understand what is being agreed.

It is not enough, in the international negotiations, to only know the language in the business relations. The negotiator also needs to manage the negotiation process and the behaviour, which directs and influences the negotiation. To obtain satisfactory negotiations in intercultural (international) contexts, the negotiator has to 1. Be conscious of the negotiation process. 2. Be capable to understand and use the persuasive and influential behaviour. 3. Have empathy toward the culture in which the negotiator is interacting. The language has a very important function in all the three mentioned aspects. The language is the server of the three factors. (McCall and Warrington, 1989)<sup>32</sup> and every negotiation is composed of language. The negotiators should know the power language has together with its potential as a negotiating instrument. This knowledge is a part of effectiveness in the negotiation skills. (Mulholland, 1991)<sup>33</sup>

The ability to communicate in the counterpart's language is a basic factor of success in the international negotiations and interpersonal relations. Language is not the only way to be successful in international negotiations. Language is only one part of the communication in the negotiations and the negotiator has to know the cultural codes and non-verbal communication according to which s/he has to perform. Luckily the modern language teaching

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<sup>31</sup> Lippman, W. 1956. *Public Opinion*. New York: Macmillan.

<sup>32</sup> McCall, J. and Warrington, J. 1989. *Marketing by Agreement: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Business Negotiations*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

<sup>33</sup> Mulholland, J. 1991. *A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Improving Communication*. London: Routledge.

methods include cultural awareness in the learning process. Language in the present study is understood as inseparable from the cultural codes. There is little in peoples lives in which language does not have an essential part.

The tight connection between the language and culturally bound behaviour can be seen in the problems arising when someone knows the foreign language "too well". Such a good proficiency may complicate the communication and trust developing process. Usually, when the person dominates a foreign language very well s/he is also expected to dominate the cultural and social codes. If a person behaves against these codes s/ he is attributed<sup>34</sup> as acting strangely. His/her language proficiency together with the lack of insight about the social codes makes the counterpart consider him/her as someone who is behaving oddly in a new culture.

This example clarifies the fact that people coming from different linguistic cultures do not only communicate differently, but they also perceive reality differently. Language affects the person's way of perceiving the world. This is because culture influences language and language influences culture. Mutual trust and respect is a basic factor in international negotiations as it is in any interpersonal relationship. Mastering the counterpart's language as well as the non-verbal and cultural codes help enormously to manage the interpersonal relations so that respect and trust may be developed between the negotiators. (Ferraro, 1994:42)<sup>35</sup> Negotiators have two basic tasks to dominate during the negotiations. 1) They have to maintain good relationships with their counterparts and in general with people they are doing business with. 2) They must deal with members from different cultures. The present author wants to include a third task. 3) They have to behave and express themselves so that the people they are negotiating with may trust and respect them. Considering the matter of language in its deep sense, language and negotiation cannot really be separated. Without language there are no negotiations.

The economic, political and military leadership of the United States has generated the fact that English has converted into the first language in the world during the twentieth century. Thurow (1996:171)<sup>36</sup> confirms the following: "*A world wide leader has to have a kind of economy and society that the foreigners can understand and penetrate in*". The North Americans have understood this principle very well as English has reached to penetrate the very diverse cultures and regions of the world. Mccrum (1998:10)<sup>37</sup> also stresses the

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<sup>34</sup> Attribution refers to our process of making inferences about the unobservable characteristics of other people, ourselves, objects or events. There are two – external and internal – attribution processes. In external attribution the external factors guide the person's actions. In internal attribution the person's personality define his actions. Oskamp, S. 1991. *Attitudes and Opinions*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.32-33.

<sup>35</sup> Ferraro, G. 1994. *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.

<sup>36</sup> Thurow, L. 1996. *El Futuro del Capitalismo. Cómo la Economía de Hoy Determina el Mundo de Mañana*. Buenos Aires: Javier Vergara Editor, S.A.

<sup>37</sup> Mccrum, R. 1998. 'Idiomas y Nacionalismos. Futuro del Inglés.' In *Lecturas Dominacles*.

same fact: *“English seems to be established as the first global language, spoken by every one of the five inhabitants of the world. Among the remaining four fifths, close to 1,500 million inhabitants, live in countries where English is officially recognised. This figure grows each year. English is the number one language in the world in the area of books, newspapers, magazines, airports, international business, academic conferences, sports, diplomacy, music and publicity. Just add to this list the fact that during the last decade, English has also become the language of Internet”.*

Today’s negotiations are nearly always carried out in English even it may not be the native language of either of the parties in the business relation. This means that usually the negotiators communicate in a second or even in a third language. That is due to various matters. The companies nowadays have a rather multicultural workforce in their functions and English is used as a lingua franca inside and outside (international relations) the office. The company usually has various offices (subsidiaries or sales offices, etc.) in different countries and it may be complicated to dominate all the local languages.

The importance of English is also seen in the Finnish-Colombian business relations as the communication in international commerce is in English. Spanish may be used in Bogota inside the offices but English is the main language. Both Finnish and Colombian negotiators are communicating in a second language. To learn a second language is of vital importance in order to gain more awareness of the different cultural codes. Already in the 1950’s, Whorf (1956:212-214)<sup>38</sup> mentions three reasons why the international negotiator should be competent in a second language. The present author considers that nowadays the second language may not be enough, but the negotiator should master third and even fourth language.

1. Learning a second language is the only way to understand another world vision.
2. The experience of learning a second language helps to learn a third and fourth language.
3. To learn a second language is the best way to better understand one’s own language and culture.

The command of a second or more languages helps the negotiators to recognise its influence in negotiations. There are aspects, which can not be solved by language, high interest rates and inflation for example, but generally speaking during the negotiation process language has an utmost importance. Mulholland (1991) states that a fuller awareness of how language functions in communication can lead to various outcomes. It permits greater creativity at both personal and institutional levels. It improves the quality of participant’s contributions to a particular negotiation and it favours the accurate reading of

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El Tiempo. Junio 14 de 1998. p.10. Translated from The New York Times by Guarín, L.

<sup>38</sup> Whorf, B. 1956. Language, Thought and Reality. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. In Ferraro, G. 1994. The Cultural Dimension of International Business. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.

others' negotiation strategies. The mentioned competencies can not be reached by trying to fulfil a certain set of correct performances. The negotiators should instead try to acquire more sensitivity and knowledge about the factors in language that affect negotiation.

It is difficult to "read" (business) people from other cultures. The question of culturally bound perception and language barriers often causes difficulties in the negotiation process. It may be difficult to know when the other party is angry, embarrassed or agreeable even if the negotiating team speaks the same language. That is why for example the technical instructions and other material should be provided in the negotiators' native languages. This does not only facilitate effective communication, but it also shows respect for the parties' languages and their ability to proceed with the business relation. The person who is speaking the foreign language should also know the attitude the representatives of that language group have toward speaking incorrectly or using the language appropriately.

One needs to know the context to understand the meaning. No communication is totally independent of context, and all meaning has an important contextual component (Hall, 1984:60)<sup>39</sup>. Negotiators frequently struggle with ambiguity, as the languages have different meanings for the same words. That is why people with different mother tongue find it difficult to communicate. The expressions may become rather inconvenient, as their meaning may be distinct in different countries. "I would not like to be in your shoes", is an expression used in the United States, but in the Arab countries it is a strong offence as the shoes are considered unholy. "Mi amor" ("My love") is normally used as an affectionate and respectful expression in the offices in Colombia and generally in Latin America. In Finland such an expression would cause problems by being too emotional.

International negotiators have to be aware of problems arising from translation. General Motors' NOVA trade mark sounds like "no va" meaning "it does not go" in Spanish speaking countries. "If you use our deodorant, you won't be embarrassed" was translated in Spanish 'If you use our deodorant, you won't be pregnant' ('Si usa nuestro desodorante no se quedará embarazada'). This announcement caused more losses than profits. (Cavusgil and Ghauri, 1990<sup>40</sup>; Borisoff and Victor, 1991<sup>41</sup>)

There are also cultural differences in how silence and talk are considered. Generally there are two main groups: Western countries and Eastern, oriental, countries. In Asia, for example, the silence and a few chosen words are appreciated. (Sajavaara and Lehtonen, 1997) In Finland, even it is a Western country there is a similar attitude towards silence. Silence is valued and it is

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<sup>39</sup> Hall, E. 1984. *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*. New York: Anchor Press.

<sup>40</sup> Cavusgil, S. and Ghauri, P. 1990. *Doing Business in Developing Countries: Entry and Negotiation Strategies*. London: Routledge.

<sup>41</sup> Borisoff, D. and Victor, D. 1991. *Gestion de Conflictos*. Madrid: Ediciones Diaz Santos, S.A.

considered an important part of the communication. In Colombia the silence is considered as a weakness in a person's communication abilities. The interviewed negotiators in Bogota expressed this. Also the present author has come to this conclusion during her living and working in Colombia.

Silence in Finland means isolation to solitude and non-communication. This is different to the silence in Japan, where non-talkativeness is active silence. Japanese silence is expected to create the right kind of atmosphere and make the evaluation of the other party. Silence in Finland is used in order to make silent observations of the people they are communicating with. Silence is used to analyse and consider matters. After a moment in silence a Finn feels more capable and secure to give his/her opinion (Sajavaara and Lehtonen, 1997; Gudykunst, 1989).<sup>42 43</sup>

Also the explicitness of the language is a factor of difference in international negotiations and in general intercultural communication. This aspect has to do with the high and low contexts of communication (Hall, 1959; see section 2.3.3). Latin American negotiators as well as the Asian negotiators do not explain explicitly all the different phases of the negotiation process. On the contrary, Finnish and other Scandinavian, North American and for example Canadian negotiators need very clean-cut explanations and summaries of what the counterpart expects from him and what has been done or agreed. (Mulholland, 1991) This aspect causes ambiguity and misunderstanding.

The listening process also varies in different cultures. In some countries the person is supposed to listen carefully without major comments or noises. There may be some supportive expressions like "Really?" or "Oh, that's interesting" to animate the speaker. These cultures are for example: Scandinavian, North American, Canadian and generally Central and North European countries. Finnish communication style is receiver-oriented. A Finn in general does not want to be the first speaker. S/he prefers to be a quiet listener. This is how a Finn shows his/her respect towards those who are speaking (Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1987)<sup>44</sup>. In Latin America as well as in Latin Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Romania.) people communicate by fighting to be heard. In most cases real listening is not taking place. Everyone wants to tell his/her opinion and point of view. In negotiation, listening is very important. It is not only to listen but also to adapt the listened messages into one's frame of reference and create new meanings and opinions. To be able to do this requires the person to have a rather open mind as strong attitudes,

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<sup>42</sup> Sajavaara, K. and Lehtonen, J. 1997. The Silent Finn Revisted. In Jaworski, A. (ed.) 1997. *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

<sup>43</sup> Gudykunst, W. 1989. Culture and the Development of Interpersonal Relationships. In Anderson, J. (ed.). 1989. *Communication Yearbook 12*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. Pp 315-354.

<sup>44</sup> Sallinen-Kuparinen, A. 1987. Culture and Communicator Image. Paper Presented at the Western Speech Communication Association Convention, Salt Lake City.

prejudices or stereotypes block new perceptions and ideas in international business as well as in general intercultural relations.

## 2.6 Negotiation process

Negotiating in the present study is understood very broadly as an activity all people do. Negotiating is a basic, human activity. It is fundamental in communication and in human interaction. It is a process that is often used in labour-management relations, in business deals, in international affairs, but also in many everyday activities. Knowledge about negotiation and skill in carrying it out is essential to anyone who has to work with and through other people to accomplish objectives. (Lewicki and Litterer, 1985)<sup>45</sup>

Negotiation can also be seen as a process of mutual communication directed at achieving an agreement with others when there are some shared interests and other opposing ones. Negotiation is the way to make decisions in the personal, professional and corporate life. (Cely, 1997)<sup>46</sup> Hendon, Hendon and Herbig (1996)<sup>47</sup>, describe the negotiation as *"the process through which at least two try to obtain an agreement in themes of mutual interest"*.

Ogliastri (1997)<sup>48</sup> considers that the negotiation is the behaviour and the concepts, expectations and values, which the people have when they are confronting a situation with conflicting interests, but also a situation with a common area in which the conflict can be solved. In the present study negotiation is not understood in a social level, with social patterns of behaviour, but in a more concrete and particular level of relations between the individuals. It is supposed that the individual behaviour reflects cultural patterns. (Ogliastri, 1998)<sup>49</sup> The structure and processes of negotiation are fundamentally the same at the personal level as they are at the diplomatic and corporate level.

One of the most important theories of negotiation is that of two main forms of negotiating: distributive and integrative. Distributive bargaining is characterised by mistrust and strategies to beat the opponent. The negotiation process is seen as haggling in which one's profits are obtained when the other

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<sup>45</sup> Lewicki, J. and Litterer, A. 1985. Negotiation. Homewood, Illinois: Irwin.

<sup>46</sup> Cely, V. 1997. Estrategias de Negociación. San José de Cúcuta: Ediciones Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander.

<sup>47</sup> Hendon, D.; Hendon, R. and Herbig, P. 1996. Cross-Cultural Business Negotiations. Westport, CT.: Quorum Books.

<sup>48</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1997. Una Introducción a la Negociación Internacional. La Cultura Latinoamericana frente a la Angloamericana, Japonesa, Francesa y del Medio Oriente. Monografías de Administración, 49. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.

<sup>49</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1998. Tertulias de Investigación. Investigaciones sobre Negociaciones Interculturales. Memorias, 9 de Junio de 1998. Bogota: Universidad de los Andes.

party loses. Integrative negotiating is characterised by trust, openness and strategies to achieve the best solutions for both parties. (Lewicki and Litterer, 1985) In integrative negotiation the parties seek to accept each other's opinions, attitudes and information as accurate, logical and valid. In distributive negotiation an attempt is made to justify and maintain the benefit of each party's own positions.

Ogliastri (1992)<sup>50</sup> has come to an opinion, when comparing Japanese and Chinese negotiation styles, that the economic wealth of a nation influences its negotiation style as to the integrative and distributive negotiation approach. Ogliastri states that the difference between Japanese and Chinese styles lays in the fact that Japan is a rich country and China a poor one. Surely there is a great generalisation expressed here, but the present author agrees with Ogliastri. When country and company have few resources the people have to fight more and their attitude is more defensive. Mistrust is descriptive when negotiating in these countries. Chinese negotiation style can be expected to be more distributive than integrative. When the country is economically well, it is reflected in peoples' behaviour. They do not have to fight to get their basic necessities fulfilled. Neither do they have to haggle and try to beat the opponent in business. Ogliastri thinks that the fact of economical wealth of Japan is reflected in its integrative negotiation style. The relation with poverty and richness with distributive and integrative negotiation styles is still rather simplified here. This aspect should be studied with more detail in future studies.

The negotiation styles used by the Finnish could probably be closer to the integrative bargaining. Finnish negotiators are considered trustworthy and not aggressive in general. (See Table 5.1). Also Finland has a better economical situation than Colombia. The negotiation style used by the Colombian negotiators might be identified as distributive. One Brazilian negotiator (N1) participating in the present study mentioned that *"the culture of the mistrust is very characteristic to the negotiations in Colombia. The people are always mistrusting each other. .... Everyone is a possible robber"*. This statement can be a reflection of the distributive negotiation model in Colombia. In the present study the integrative negotiation view is taken as a basic guideline for the negotiation process. The integrative bargaining process is considered to be today's way of doing business and also the most likely to be successful.

Lewicki and Litterer (1985)<sup>51</sup> differentiate tangible and intangible factors in negotiation. Tangible factors are those aspects such as the formal agenda, the prices which need to be paid, the terms and conditions of the deal, the language of the contract and the wording of an agreement. Tangible factors could be also called as the operational factors of the negotiation. Intangibles are the psychological aspects that affect the negotiator's behaviour. Such aspects are for

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<sup>50</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1992. El Sistema Japonés de Negociación: La Experiencia de América Latina. Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, S.A.

<sup>51</sup> Lewicki, J. and Litterer, A. 1985. Negotiation. Homewood, Illinois: Irwin.

example: the perception of the process, how one is seen and evaluated by others, how one feels the negotiation process and the outcomes of it. Certainly the failure to understand the importance of the negotiator's psychological (intangible) needs causes unsuccessful negotiations. The intangible aspects of the negotiation are very much the point of view stressed in the present study. For example the negotiators' experience, personality and negotiation behaviour as well as their impact do influence the negotiation styles and outcomes.

There are many times when the intangibles of negotiation will dominate the tangibles. In fact, that is normally the situation in international negotiations. The relationship between the parties is incredibly important. Even they may have good products to negotiate about and all the technical, political and diplomatic help to support their interaction. If the parties can not create a mutual trust and show that their business will be successful in future projects; it is possible that the negotiations fail. (Lewicky and Litterer 1985)

The negotiation process in general may be described in terms of different stages (Kennedy, 1985<sup>52</sup>; Ghauri, 1983<sup>53</sup> and 1986<sup>54</sup>). These stages are:

- I. *Planning for the first contact*: this stage includes a careful analysis of the possible counterpart, the needs, culture, markets and logistics, and in general an investigation of the real possibilities of the wished business. This phase is probably the most important before and during all the negotiation process.
- II. *Offer*: this stage includes the first contact between the parties on the possible business.
- III. *Informal meetings*: in this phase, after the offer, the parties examine each other's position
- IV. *Planning for formal negotiations*: if stage II has ended in success, parties formulate their strategies for face-to-face negotiations.
- V. *Formal negotiations* are the moments when signed and final outcome may be expected.
- VI. *Implementation*: at this point all terms have been agreed upon and it is important to check that both parties have really understood what they have agreed on.

During all these stages the communication is an extremely important factor. Success in the negotiation process is heavily dependent upon the quality of the communication, each side's behaviour and expectations. Informal meetings are often more important than formal negotiations, especially in Latin America,

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<sup>52</sup> Kennedy, G. 1985. *Doing Business Abroad*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

<sup>53</sup> Ghauri, P. 1983. *Negotiating International Package Deals: Swedish Firms and Developing Countries*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.

<sup>54</sup> Ghauri, P. 1986. 'Guidelines for International Business Negotiations'. *International Marketing Review*. 3,3. Autumn: 72-82.



Asia, Africa and Middle East. The purpose of the informal meetings is to create a positive atmosphere and trusting relationship between the counterparts.

Nadel (1987:89-116)<sup>55</sup> criticises strongly the negotiation through intimidation, fear and bluffing or dishonest tactics. In a negotiation table there are two parties, who have a common need (problem) and who want to solve it to a mutual advantage. Nadel stresses that it is better not to make any deal than making a bad deal. Only amateurs try to accomplish something that isn't real or possible; it is an attempt that inevitably leads to failure. Amateurs tend to dream, but professionals instead consider the realities of a deal. That is why the planning process is such an important stage of the negotiation. The planning requires that the negotiators are able to formulate their goals (and understand the goals of their counterpart) together with the realistic possibilities. Planning also demands a thorough understanding of the negotiation process.

There are at least two types of planning. 1) Short-term planning aims to solve the acute themes, but this planning also takes into consideration the long-range objectives. 2) Long-term planning takes a more global view of the negotiation process by achieving the long-range goals. Managers are anyway too inclined to take action than to spend time reflecting about conditions and planning (Mintzberg, 1973).<sup>56</sup> When proper planning is not done the negotiators fail to set clear objectives. Neither they can formulate convincing arguments or estimate the other party's needs. In negotiation, the planning is very important, but especially then when the company enters in the foreign markets.

## 2.7 International negotiation

In order to initiate international negotiations, negotiators should ask at least the following questions:

- Are there a national and an international demand for the product that the company is selling?
- Can the product be modified and adjusted into the international market?
- Is the climate of the international trade adequate for imports and exports?
- Can the company obtain the needed skills and know-how in order to develop its commerce abroad?
- If the responses to these questions are affirmative, the company may be prepared to enter to the international market and so begin the international negotiations. (Ball and McCulloch, 1996)<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Nadel, J. 1987. *Cracking the Global Market*. New York: Amacom.

<sup>56</sup> Mintzberg, H. 1973. *The Nature of Managerial Work*. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>57</sup> Ball, D. and McCulloch, Jr. 1996. *Negocios Internacionales: Introducción y Aspectos Esenciales*. Madrid: Clamades, S.L.

The above-mentioned reasons for starting to negotiate internationally are mainly rather technical, concentrating on the product and the sales. The last question considers one very important aspect: human resource and leadership. The company may have an excellent product but its business (exports and imports) may fail. That has happened with many good companies. Attention has to be paid to the human resources, which the company has, and the corporation needs to have a very skilful leadership as well as capable negotiators. This aspect in international negotiations is analysed in the section 2.8 International negotiator.

Companies must develop global strategies in order to succeed. *“Many firms still conduct the world wide management of people as if neither the external economic and technological environment nor the internal structure an organisation of the firm had changed”* (Adler, 1991).<sup>58</sup> The stage where the company finds itself influences the need or courage to get involved in the international commerce.

Adler (1991) proposes another way to see the relation between national culture and international negotiations. Instead of analysing *“whether organisational dynamics are universal or culturally specific”* the examination could focus on *“when and how to be sensitive to national culture”*. Adler and Ghadar (1990)<sup>59</sup> describe the relation between the need to focus in national culture and the stage of internationalisation of the company (the cross-cultural evolution of the company) with the following table.

TABLE 2.7 Adler, N. and Chadar, F. 1990. The cross-cultural evolution of the company

|                      | Phase I<br>Domestic           | Phase II<br>International         | Phase III<br>Multinational | Phase IV<br>Global                 |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Primary orientation  | Product/ Service              | Market                            | Price                      | Strategy                           |
| Strategy             | Domestic                      | Multidomestic                     | Multinational              | Global                             |
| Perspective          | Ethnocentric                  | Polycentric/<br>regiocentric      | Multinational              | Global/<br>Multicentric            |
| Cultural sensitivity | Marginally important          | Very important                    | Somewhat important         | Critically important               |
| With whom            | No one                        | Clients                           | Employees                  | Employees and clients              |
| Level                | No one                        | Workers and clients               | Managers                   | Executives                         |
| Strategic assumption | “One way” /<br>“One best way” | “Many good ways”,<br>equifinality | “One least-cost way”       | “Many good ways<br>simultaneously” |

<sup>58</sup> Adler, N. 1991. *International Dimensions of Organisational Behaviour*. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

<sup>59</sup> Adler, N. and Ghadar, F. 1990. “International Strategy from the Perspective of People and Culture: The North American Context.” In Rugman, A. (ed.) 1990. *Research in Global Strategic Management: International Business Research for the Twenty-First Century*; Canada’s New Research Agenda, vol. 1. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press. p.179-205.

The table above shows how the company's reality to operate more in the international market creates greater need to be culturally sensitive. Global firms have to develop a functional strategy and create cultural sensitivity with the employees it has inside the company and with the clients, agents, distributors and counterparts it deals in the external relations.

After the company has decided to start international activities, it should consider thoroughly the form of entering and participating in the foreign markets it will choose. Whatever form the firm selects, the negotiators participating in the international negotiations first of all need a lot of patience. The firm may want to make sales and purchase agreements. In these agreements, the buyer-seller relationship is substantial. The more similar the parties, their expectations and negotiation styles are, the more likely a favourable outcome or a sales agreement will occur (Evans, 1963).<sup>60</sup>

Another way to participate in international markets is through the agency and distribution agreements. Whether the company chooses this type of participation, it has to select carefully its overseas partner. The election of the agent or the distributor is also an important phase. The difference between agents and distributors is that agents act for their principals and they receive a certain percentage of sales made commission. The distributors act on their own behalf. They are like merchant intermediaries. (Cavusgil and Ghauri, 1990)

The company may also choose the licensing agreements as their way to enter into the international markets. In these agreements both parties must benefit from the deal. That is why the negotiation process in this type of contract has more of a problem-solving nature. *"Licensing entails a variety of contractual agreements between the domestic firm and foreign company. ... When a firm licenses to an independent foreign firm the main purpose is to penetrate a foreign market"* (Cavusgil and Ghauri, 1990).

Also joint ventures may be a suitable way for the company to negotiate internationally. A joint venture is *"the establishment of a new and separate organisation owned jointly by two or more organisations. It has its own entity, and it is free from the financial and legal positions of its parent organisations"* (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978:152).<sup>61</sup> Joint ventures are increasing in international business. It is a relatively flexible and easy way to enter into the foreign country. Many countries, especially the third world ones like Colombia do not allow foreign firms to own subsidiaries unless they have a local partner. Joint ventures have been compared to a marriage as it includes a very intense kind of long-term business relation.

In general the basic tasks and functions in international business are rather similar to those of national commerce. The main difference is that international business transactions take place in more than one country and market

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<sup>60</sup> Evans, E. 1963. 'Selling as a Dyadic Relationship: A New Approach.' *American Behavioral Scientist*. 6. May: 76-79.

<sup>61</sup> Pfeffer, J. and Salancik, G. 1978. *The External Control of Organisations*. New York: Harper & Row.

environment. Due to this the level of risk is higher in international commerce. International business is more complicated due to the level of the uncontrollable elements. One of the factors causing more challenge and greater uncertainty is the geographic as well as psychic distance. Even today, when the highly developed communication channels make fast and flexible interaction possible, the geographic distance complicates the logistics in international business. Especially in less developed countries where transportation may cause greater difficulties.

In Colombia, the geography and the guerrillas provoke national as well as international problems. Eln - Ejército de Liberación Nacional- (National Liberation Army), Farc - Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – (Colombian Revolutionary Forces) and Epl - Ejército Popular de Liberación – (Popular Liberation Army) are the main guerrilla groups causing lack of communication between cities in Colombia. They do not let the vehicles nor people travel freely in the country, and the kidnappings by these groups are daily events. The psychological distance includes the cultural differences between countries. The company probably has a very similar style and strategy when negotiating but the political, legal and time system may be different in the country where the firm is located. These aspects influence the international commerce.

The concomitant variables in the negotiation environment are the cultural, subcultural and ideological differences, the foreign bureaucracy, laws and governments, the financial insecurity and political instability. These factors are very important and they may become obstacles in the international negotiations, but they do not have as much importance in the national negotiations. (Salacuse, 1991)<sup>62</sup> The experience indicates that the lack of information of foreign markets, of the buyers (clients), of the marketing practices, the competence, the language and the lack of knowledge of the exportation procedures mean that the companies abstain from the exporting (Cavusgil and Ghauri, 1990).<sup>63</sup> In today's business world companies are practically obligated to have commercial activities abroad. Abstention from international business would be a weakness factor for the company.

The success by Kremenjuk (1991)<sup>64</sup> in an international negotiation is influenced by the following determinant factors:

- The negotiator's culture; his ideology, experiences and values
- The context where the negotiation occurs; if the context is familiar to the negotiator, he knows better how to conduct and control the negotiation.

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<sup>62</sup> Salacuse, J. 1991. *Making Global Deals: Negotiating in the International Marketplace*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

<sup>63</sup> Cavusgil, S. and Ghauri, P. 1990. *Doing Business in Developing Countries: Entry and Negotiation Strategies*. London: Routledge.

<sup>64</sup> Kremenjuk, V. 1991. *International Negotiation: Analysis, Approaches, Issues*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- The factors influencing the situation, for example the nature of the negotiation and the type of relationship between the negotiators
- The character of the negotiator: The negotiator needs to have a quick and open mind. He should be extrovert, patient, flexible, and sure about the decisions he takes.

All the businesses are done on the basis of respect and mutual trust. That is why the negotiator's character and the relationship between the partners is such a vital matter. The negotiators need to be able to find the common code according to how their communication flows and then both parties proceed with negotiations to their satisfaction. Building trust and commitment for a long-term relationship is particularly important in some cultures, for example in Arab, Chinese and Latin American cultures.

One of the main challenges of international business transactions is to operate effectively in a multicultural setting. Different cultures require the companies to adopt different behaviour patterns as the strategies; structures and technologies appropriate in one cultural environment may fail in another. The influence the local culture will have on the foreign firm depends on the amount of involvement in the particular market. The greater the connection, the greater the confidence on cultural growth and survival, and greater the need for an understanding of the cultural environment. Intercultural effectiveness is not measured only by the degree to which you are able to understand the opposite value. It is measured by the negotiator's competence in reconciling the dilemmas, i.e. the limit to which the person is able to make both values work together (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:46).

There is a great challenge in the area of international negotiations. After 100 years of studying the national commerce still it is not really understood. Even less is the international business comprehended. That is a reason to investigate the international aspects, which are a lot more complex and surrounded by a lot more intangibles. (Taggart and Modermott, 1996)<sup>65</sup>

## 2.8 International negotiator

In this study by an international negotiator is understood as a person who is in a decision-making position in international operations. In this group of persons are included: managers, directors and executives, for example. Nowadays the function of the negotiator is not to travel from one country to another and to manage from one country. Today, companies look for new ways of

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<sup>65</sup> Taggart, J. and Modermott, M. 1996. *La Esencia de los Negocios Internacionales*. México: Prentice Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A.

international co-ordinating and integration. That is why as an international negotiator is understood as a person who directs simultaneous operations from various countries. (Barham and Wills, 1993)<sup>66</sup> The negotiators in the present study are people who are situated in one main place and they maintain intense business relations with various people around the world. They also travel, but their decisions are not tied to a certain country, and they seem to be able to make decisions by phone, e-mail and fax.

The ability to negotiate is not innate or instinctive, but the negotiation as a technique can be learned. That is why there are a great variety of university studies, courses and training offered in order to increasingly prepare more skilful negotiators in the national and international market. Lewicki and Litterer (1985) stress that the most important learning about the negotiation process comes from the skills, training and practice. That means that negotiator's personal characteristics, his/her experience and the specific training on negotiation all together create a qualified international negotiator.

Over the past few years the attention has not only been on the tangible (technical aspects of the negotiation) factors but also on the intangible (the psychological and relationship aspects of the negotiation) ones. Negotiators' experience, personality, behaviour and their negotiation skills influence the negotiation process. The personality may particularly play an important role when there is very little information about each other and there is great stress. Case studies indicate that even if negotiators from the seller's side do not have enough information on their competitors they can handle the situation effectively due to experience and personality. A favourable personality is defined according to Cavusgil and Ghauri (1990) "*as an individual with the ability to make others understand his position, to approach strangers with care and confidence, and to appreciate the other person's position*".

In view of diverse culture and business traditions prevailing in different countries, the negotiator in international negotiations inherently involve a discussion of environmental differences. It is impossible that the negotiator would comprehend, agree or adjust to each other's cultures or traditions, but in order to reach successful international negotiations and pleasant intercultural relations, it is important to be aware of those differences. There are certain intangible factors the international negotiator should have and develop in his personality and behaviour. In fact these aspects may be direct reflections of the negotiator as a representative of his/her culture especially when that is the same as the nationality of the company.

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<sup>66</sup> Barham, K. and Wills, S. 1993. *Management Across Frontiers: Identifying the Competence of Successful International Managers*. Berkhamsted: Ashridge Management Centre.

### 2.8.1 Self-image

One of these intangible factors the negotiator should develop is self-image. The image one has about her/himself is very important. The self-image is shaped by a wide variety of aspects (education, sex, age, traditions, language, family, etc.) that are part of the personality of an individual. One of those aspects is our nationality. The feeling of belonging to a certain nationality normally strengthens when dealing with other nationalities. In situations when someone threatens this self-image, one normally and automatically tries to defend it immediately. In intercultural relations, in special international negotiations, the person often encounters situations when s/he feels his/her self-image to be threatened.

The way one defends his/her self-image can be beneficial or damaging in the ongoing business relation. Russell and Black (1972) offer six (6) different ways to defend one's self-image. They are:

- 1) *Through aggression*: Defending through aggression is not an advisable way in international negotiations. It seldom leads to mutually satisfactory solution to the human problem we face.
- 2) *Through rationalisation*: The person using this way tries to find a reason for his behaviour. Normally these reasons are excuses for explaining one's own decisions better than the real reasons.
- 3) *Through regression*: When the occurred failure hurts too much, the person is likely to retreat according to an earlier kind of adjustment or an earlier behaviour pattern.
- 4) *Through compensation*: This is a way to protect one's feelings by excelling in something else when the person fails in one thing.
- 5) *Through repression*: Sometimes the person needs to "forget" some uncomfortable occurrences, which have happened. In fact the person is trying to fool her/himself and deny the things within her/him.
- 6) *Through reaction formation*: When the person needs to keep some ideas repressed, s/he may stress the very opposite feelings s/he unconsciously has.

It is not possible to analyse the aspect of the self-concept in this study. The data, which has been obtained does not allow investigation of which self-protection models the Finnish and Colombian (Latin American) probably use. It is considered important to introduce this aspect presenting some basic features of it in this study. In international negotiations as well as in intercultural relations the miscommunication and pseudoconflicts (See section 2.9) may lead the negotiators to aggression and defensive behaviour. The theoretical knowledge about the defence of self-image may help the negotiators to solve these kind of interpersonal and intercultural conflict situations in business.

### 2.8.2 Creativity

Creativity is one of the basic factors the international negotiator needs in all the volatile environments s/he operates. Creativity is an often-mentioned skill by Latin American as well as Latin European negotiators. It is frequently joined together with spontaneity. It is likely that the person who is mature, flexible and creative can better solve problems and find alternative solutions than one who is afraid, rigid, overconforming and uninspiring. Creativity has to do with persuasion. It is the capacity to innovate, invent or find different and new solutions. Creativity is a product of life. (Russell and Black, 1972)<sup>67</sup>

Creativity may emerge only when a person has satisfied his/her basic needs, and at the same time s/he finds him/herself in an environment of dissatisfaction. Creativity is a response to that environment of unconformity. The risky and uncertain environment (as Colombia actually is) normally encourages creativity as well as courage. On the contrary the organised and secure milieu does not, as the creativity is not needed in finding the way out of risky situations. Finnish negotiators are not usually perceived as creative (at least not by those people interviewed in Madrid and Bogota), but organised, punctual and calm, for example. Finland is not very risky place to live. Instead it is rather organised and secure country. In International negotiations rapid changes are characteristic and that is why creativity is required.

### 2.8.3 Networking skills

The success or failure in international business is greatly influenced by the social network and the negotiator's capacity to create different networks. (Johanson and Mattsson, 1984)<sup>68</sup> This approach suggests that companies and negotiators should develop network relationships among suppliers, distributors, competitors and clients, which serves as a barrier to newcomers or competitors positioned outside the network. Kealey and Brotheroe (1995)<sup>69</sup> call these networking skills, partnership skills, which include the effective working relationships with national colleagues and partners.

The most common network is the social network, which are the relationships the negotiator (firm) makes with the local people. These relationships may be purely social or both social and professional. Through friendship with the local people the negotiator gets real insights about the culture (country) and his/her counterparts s/he is negotiating with as well

<sup>67</sup> Russell, G. and Black, K. 1972. *Human Behaviour in Business*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts. Meredith Corporation.

<sup>68</sup> Johanson, J. and Mattsson, L-G. 1984. 'Marketing Investments in Industrial Networks'. Paper Presented at the International Research Seminar on Industrial Marketing. Stockholm School of Economics. August 29-31.

<sup>69</sup> Kealey, D. and Protheroe, D. 1995. *Cross-Cultural Collaborations: Making North-South Cooperation More Effective*. Quebec: CIDA.



about the negotiation styles. It is also important to locate the existing networks for example by gaining access to influential people and related authorities in the particular market. The existing networks help in negotiation and in the early stages of the relationship development.

In Colombia the networks and friendship can often be the only way to proceed with the negotiations or to obtain something specific. In Finland the social networks are also important, but not up to a level as they are in Colombia. In Colombia, this kind of network is called 'palanca'. It means literally a lever. Symbolically it is a connection, a personal contact that enables someone to obtain a desired objective. Such an objective can be a job, entry into a university and contact with other important people (Fitch, 1998).<sup>70</sup> One Finnish negotiator (Vaahterikko, 1997) explains the need of network in Spain and in generally Latin European and Latin American countries. He says: *"It depends on which stage you are. .... The first question is whether you know anybody or do they know you? Firstly, if you are not known, you can not get anywhere. Normally the wrong people receive you or the irrelevant ones, who throw you here and there. .... I take care of my connections every year."*

One kind of network (palanca) are the intermediaries, who are necessary especially in third world countries. Intermediaries work closely to the government in order to have an effect on any business deals. They are like mediating persons, who try to gain understanding between the counterparts and the governments. They are paid automatically as they are like lubrication payments. Developed countries and specifically European countries, the USA and Canada consider them as bribes. (Cavusgil and Ghauri, 1990)

Asheghian and Ebrahimi (1990)<sup>71</sup> provide a list of points to consider, for the multinational managers as to the necessity in adapting their behaviour as well as strategies into the intercultural context. A list is totally suitable for the international negotiators in general. A given list is meant to facilitate negotiators' labour when encountering situations of intercultural differences in their business relations. The aspects, which Asheghian and Ebrahimi mention here, have a direct influence on the ability to develop different networks in international business.

- Be prepared culturally: prevention is to anticipate.
- Learn the local language and its non-verbal elements.
- Also, mix with the locals socially.
- Be creative and experimental without the fear to fail.
- Be culturally sensible, do not form stereotypes and do not criticise.
- Recognise the complexities of the host culture.
- Consider yourself as protectors and ambassadors of the local culture.

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<sup>70</sup> Fitch, K. 1998. *Speaking Relationally: Culture, Communication and Interpersonal Connection*. New York: The Guilford Press.

<sup>71</sup> Asheghian, P. and Ebrahimi, B. 1990. *International Business*. New York: Harper and Row. Pp.283-283.

- Be patient to understand and accept the locals.
- Be realistic in your expectations.
- Accept the challenge of the intercultural experiences.

All the recommended aspects have to do with the adaptation, network creation and “the getting local” process. It is supposed that an international manager already masters the purely operational aspects of the business. S/he also has to learn the local context by getting involved with the host culture and operating in it. These encounters are normally flavoured with conflicts.

## 2.9 Conflicts in international negotiations

There are various definitions of the term ‘conflict’. Coser (1956:8)<sup>72</sup> introduced the concept of conflict in North American sociology as “*the struggle on values and aspirations in order to enjoy a certain position, power and resources in which the opponents have as an objective to neutralise, hurt and eliminate the rivals*”. Deutch (1971)<sup>73</sup> distinguishes five types of conflicts: 1. Intrapersonal (inside oneself), 2. Interpersonal (between persons), 3. Intragroup (inside the group), 4. Intergroup (between the groups), and 5. International (between nations) conflicts. In fact all the possible conflicts may be present in international relations, as there are persons, groups and nations involved.

Conflicts exist as a part of human condition. They are an unavoidable phenomenon in all the organisations. It is not always easy to differentiate between intercultural and organisational conflicts for example. That is due to the language barriers, differences in transmitting and understanding non-verbal messages, value differences and intercultural misunderstandings. The conflict may be caused by internal or external factors. The term ‘conflict’ is rather complicated to define, as it is such an elastic concept. (Ting-Toomey, 1985:71)<sup>74</sup>

Today’s world is characterised by rapid technical advances. There is a greater number of multinational corporations and more frequent mobility of people. As a result the contacts between members from different cultural groups are increasing by frequency and importance. Increased contacts also create more conflicts. The conflicts and failures in the international context of negotiations occur most frequently because of the incapacity to understand and

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<sup>72</sup> Coser, L. 1956. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. New York: Random House.

<sup>73</sup> Deutch, M. 1971. ‘Toward an Understanding of Conflict.’ *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 1, pp. 42-54.

<sup>74</sup> Ting-Toomey, S. 1985. *Toward a Theory of Conflict and Culture*. In Gudykunst, W.; Steward, L. and Ting-Toomey, S. (eds.) 1985. *Communication, Culture and Organisational Processes*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

adapt to the new context (i.e. a different country and people from different backgrounds), and not because of technical or professional incompetence. (Ferraro, 1994)

In all the intercultural relationship where ever they are the cultural relativity has to be taken as a basic guideline for experiencing healthy intercultural relations. The main point in cultural relativism is that no culture has the only true criterion in order to consider itself superior or inferior in comparison to other cultures.

The interpersonal conflicts are inevitable because the individuals bring their different needs to the transactions. This occurs in particular in those situations in which the players represent different cultural systems. Asuncion-Lande and Womac (1982)<sup>75</sup> observe that a greater understanding and knowledge of the intercultural communication increases the opportunities to better intercultural understanding and the resolving of international conflicts. That is why the international negotiations are very important. The international negotiations assume a role, which shows the need to study how the culture influences the individuals and how these individuals differentiate in their focus and managing of the conflict situations. (Nadler, Nadler and Broome, 1985)<sup>76</sup>

In the international environment the values have a great importance. Values provide an order and discretion to our thoughts and acts. The person's value system affects to his/her perceptions in particular situations. In the international negotiations the values influence the attitudes the counterparts bring to the conflict, the resolution of the conflicts and the process of negotiation. This occurs in the national environment also, but the differences tend to be greater in international relations.

The cultural background of the person affects the way in which s/he approaches the conflicts. In general three different forms of perceiving how conflicts may be defined (Nadler, Nadler and Broome, 1985):

1. The conflict may be perceived as a very negative event. This perception creates a tendency to avoid conflicts.
2. The conflict may be perceived as a normal and positive event. The individuals with this orientation are involved regularly in conflicts and tend to enjoy them.
3. The conflict may be perceived as an inevitable or normal event, which sometimes is positive and sometimes negative.

In recent years, international projects have increased. Years of experience have shown that projects with two or more parties from different cultural backgrounds

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<sup>75</sup> Asuncion-Lande, N. and Womack, D. 1982. Communication and Conflict Management Across Cultures. Paper presented at the International Political Science Association Convention. Rio de Janeiro. August, 1982.

<sup>76</sup> Nadler, L., Nadler, M. and Broome, B. 1985. Culture and Management of Conflict Situations. In Gudykunst, W., Stewart, L. and Ting-Toomey, S. (eds.) 1985. Communication, Culture and Organisational Processes. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

complicate international business. "Cultural problems bedevil strategic alliances, as they do other forms of partnership. Too often people expect their partners to act or respond in an identical fashion." (Barham and Wills 1993:11)<sup>77</sup> According to Nadler, Nadler and Broome (1985:88) "the problem of lack of awareness of cultural differences in intercultural bargaining situations presents a key obstacle to negotiation success". Barham and Wills (1993:13) present a case of one British manager who was involved in setting up an alliance in Europe. He admitted: "I am staggered at the impact that cultural differences have. The Germans want to do things one way and the French want to do them another way. I was not prepared for it."

The conflicts may lay in unrealistic schedules, budgets and costs, a lack of information or knowledge about a counterpart's laws and customs. All these conflicts are external to the individuals. Olsen (1976)<sup>78</sup> calls them instrumental conflicts. They are the types of conflicts, which are more usually taken into consideration in business life. International business training consists normally of these instrumental, material, physical and external differences. Internal conflicts such as culture and self shock, ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudices, fear, intolerance and unwillingness to adapt to the culturally diverse business project or to a new country are less studied or included in training programmes. Olsen (1976) calls them expressive conflicts. Business people often overlook them, and they can cause considerable obstacles and ineffectiveness in international business negotiations. Internal conflicts are the subject of this study.

A brief description of some of the above-mentioned internal conflicts is needed here. They are usually derived from our automatic and unconscious tendency to refer to our own thought framework, which is mainly tied to our national culture, to interpret situations, evaluate people, communicate, negotiate, or decide which attitude to take (Lee 1966:106-111)<sup>79</sup>. *Culture shock* refers to the state of tension and stress caused by losing the familiar symbols and meanings in the social relations in a new culture. The uncomfortable feeling of being like an infant is one result of culture shock. *Self-shock* according to Zaharna (1989)<sup>80</sup> is a contrary to culture shock, which is a reaction to the difference between oneself, and the other, is a concept that extends to differences with and inside the self. Sumner (1906)<sup>81</sup> defines *ethnocentrism* as "the view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it". *Stereotypes* are oversimplified and overgeneralized categories of groups of people which are often falsely based on half-truths that we have heard or on our own very subjective experiences which we generalise to be describing

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<sup>77</sup> Barham, K. and Wills, S. 1993. *Management Across Frontiers: Identifying the Competence of Successful International Managers*. Berkhamsted: Ashridge Management Centre.

<sup>78</sup> Olsen, J. 1976. *Ambiguity and Choice in Organisation*. Bergen: Universitets Forlaget.

<sup>79</sup> Lee, J. 1966. *Cultural Analysis in Overseas Operations*. In *Harvard Business Review*. March-April. 1966. Pp.106-114.

<sup>80</sup> Zaharna, R. 1989. *Self-Shock: The Double Binding Challenge of Identity*. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Vol.13, No. 4, pp.501-526.

<sup>81</sup> Sumner, G. 1906. *Folk Ways: A Study of Sociological Importance of Usages*. New York: Ginn Custom Publishing.

the whole group of people or a nation (De Vito 1982)<sup>82</sup>. Stereotypes are an important part of the process in forming our picture of the world. Allport (1954)<sup>83</sup> discovered that the *prejudice* originally means a precedent - a judgement based on previous experiences and decisions. Prejudice includes a present interpretation and it has an emotional flavour and a judgement that is based on premature or impulsive judgements.

Barna (1994)<sup>84</sup> identifies the following six stumbling blocks in intercultural contacts:

1. Assumption of similarities
2. Language differences
3. Non-verbal misinterpretations
4. Preconceptions and stereotypes
5. Tendency to evaluate
6. High anxiety

Barna's mentioned obstacles in international relations are rather similar with the conflicts mentioned by Barham and Wills (1993) and Ting-Toomey (1985, 1994<sup>85</sup>). They are all expressive and internal conflicts. The importance of the intangible factors is seen in Barna's list. The language differences are the most visible and easiest difficulties to notice. High anxiety can be considered to be the result from the other five complicating factors. By the tendency to evaluate is meant such that we easily jump the pure description and even the interpretation of the new situation, and evaluate the new according to our own culture's values and norms.

As Ting-Toomey (1985) states, conflicts are inevitable in any relationships. Conflicts occur whether we want them to or not. According to Gudykunst (1994)<sup>86</sup> they are mainly viewed as negative, but in fact they are neither negative nor positive, but the consequences they have in our relationships indeed may be either positive or negative. The present author does not quite agree with Gudykunst. The conflicts are normally results of incompatibilities and misunderstandings. The other party has violated the normative expectation of their partner in the communication episode. This makes the other party feel offended or frustrated. According to Ting-Toomey (1994) expectation violations occur frequently, especially if one party is from an individualistic culture and the other party comes from a collectivist culture. The conflict is a sign that something has to be clarified and probably changed. The conflict is a possibility to a new and

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<sup>82</sup> De Vito, J. 1982. *Interpersonal Communication Book*. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>83</sup> Allport, G. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. New York: Macmillan.

<sup>84</sup> Barna, L. 1994. *Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication*. In Samovar, L. and Porter, R. (eds.) 1994. *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

<sup>85</sup> Ting-Toomey, S. 1994. *The Challenge of Facework: Cross-Cultural and Interpersonal Issues*. Albany, NY.: Suny Publications.

<sup>86</sup> Gudykunst, W. 1994. *Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

better situation. The focus should not be so much on avoiding conflicts, but knowing how they start, and managing them wisely. How to handle conflicts is crucial. According to Ting-Toomey (1994) intercultural conflicts typically start off with miscommunication which often leads to misinterpretations and pseudo conflict. Ting-Toomey (1994) emphasises that if the miscommunication goes unmanaged or unclarified, it can become a current interpersonal conflict.

There are cultural differences in attitudes toward conflicts as well as in the ways in which to manage and solve them. Task oriented, individualistic people tend to see the conflicts arising from instrumental matters. People-oriented, collectivist people tend to interpret the conflict as expressive in nature. For low context communicators, conflicts can usually be both functional and dysfunctional. It is functional when it provides a possibility for solving problems. For high context communicators the conflicts are mainly dysfunctional. The conflicts are avoided and denied. They should not be dealt openly either, but discreetly. Cohen (1991)<sup>87</sup> states the following differences in individualistic and collectivist negotiators: *“Individualistic, low context, negotiators can be described as primarily problem oriented. Collectivist, high context, negotiators are seen predominantly as relationship-oriented. For them, negotiation is less about problem solving but attending to the relationship; relationship mending.”*

The conflict-solving strategies are chosen according to the attitudes toward the intercultural conflicts. Negotiators from individualist cultures tend to defend their own control and territory. They can separate the conflict issue from the personal relationships. They prefer direct styles of dealing with conflicts. Negotiators forming the collectivist cultures tend to look for the acceptance of their own (in-group) members. Face saving is a very important issue. Collectivist negotiators prefer indirect styles of dealing with the conflict. They may concentrate on trying to make the relationships between the partners better in order to solve the conflict. This procedure is difficult for low context people. They feel that the problems are not faced, but hidden “under the carpet”. This dilemma is present in Finnish-Colombian negotiations. Negotiators need to know each other's conflict management styles in order to be more aware of the reasons for existing conflicts and to be able solve them. Gudykunst (1994:200) gives helpful advice for such intercultural conflict resolution situations. *“In conflict situations, it is important to be aware of potential cultural or ethnic differences in the approach to conflict, but the focus in resolving the conflict has to be on being mindful of our communication and dealing with the other person as an individual.”*

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<sup>87</sup> Cohen, R. 1991. *Negotiating Across Cultures: Communication Obstacles in International Diplomacy*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

## 2.10 Successful conflict management

Conflicts are inherent to social interaction and common to organisational life. That is why the scholars and practitioners need to change their opinion about the conflict. (Katz and Kahn, 1978)<sup>88</sup> Negotiators have to know that conflicts and harmony are equally needed in international operations. There is a need to search for conflict management strategies that help conflict to be productive.

It is rather logical to try to avoid conflicts. People fear uncontrollable consequences and prefer to suppress the conflicts rather than stimulate them. Van de Vliert, Euwema and Huismans (1995)<sup>89</sup> studied the effectiveness of different conflict management styles. They state that *“avoidance has a robust negative impact on interpersonal relations and conflict resolution, sometimes even exceeding the negative impact of contending behaviours”*. They give the following negative influence from conflict avoiding:

- Avoidance leaves the conflict issue intact, so that necessarily returns to the stage sooner or later.
- Avoidance and suppressing a particular thought may lead to increased presence of this and related thought when suppression is alleviated.

In order to gain the positive properties (to turn the possible damaging conflict into a productive one) from the conflicts one has to be able to manage them skilfully. It is important in the problem-solving process that both parties want to take their opponent's goals and interests into consideration. This position leads the negotiators toward the integrative negotiation style. Problem-solving means reconciling the parties' basic interests. When the parties want to take the challenge to solve the problems constructively their relations become more real and more satisfactory. The greater the interaction with the parties produces more involvement and communication, which is surely a positive component in international negotiations. Conflicts provide the parties with the possibility to know the needs of others and to express their own dilemmas. The absence of conflicts leaves the false impression that people understand each other (Tjosvold, 1997)<sup>90</sup>.

Tjosvold (1997) states that conflict is a way of confronting reality and creating new solutions to tough problems. He emphasises that when a conflict is well managed it strengthens the independence of the parties and makes them

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<sup>88</sup> Katz, D. and Kahn, R. 1978. *The Social Psychology of Organisations*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>89</sup> Van de Vliert, E., Euwema, M. and Huismans, S. 1995. 'Managing Conflict with a Subordinate or Superior: The Effectiveness of Conglomerated Behaviour.' *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 271-281.

<sup>90</sup> Tjosvold, D. 1997. *Conflict within Interdependence: Its Value for Productivity and Individuality*. In De Dreu, K. and Van de Vliert, E. 1997. *Using Conflict in Organisations*. London: Sage Publications.

more innovative and productive. Conflict is indispensable for a real involvement, empowerment and democracy. Johnson, Johnson and Tjosvold (1990)<sup>91</sup> call the dynamics generated by promotive interdependence and contributing to effective joint work as constructive controversy. Constructive controversy suggests that the open-minded discussion of opposing conceptions is crucial for making co-operative circumstances productive and enhancing. The present author considers Johnson, Johnson and Tjosvold's theory functional in a task oriented and individualistic context, in which the conflicts are seen as operational and functional. Probably their theory would not work as well in person oriented and collectivistic cultures. The people from the latter culture group should at least be prepared and instructed to manage constructive controversy.

The global village demands the challenge to manage across cultures where people have their own conceptions and procedures about which attitude to hold toward conflicts and how conflicts should be resolved. Finnish people do not have the same style and manner when dealing with conflict as Colombians or Spanish. "*Culturally diverse people have conflict over how they manage conflict*" (Tjosvold, 1997). Conflict is a common challenge for employees, negotiators, European and Latin American. All have to deal with conflicts and learn to manage them constructively.

The present study looks to minimise and effectively manage the possible intercultural conflicts in Finnish-Colombian negotiations. This is done through offering more knowledge about perceptions, which are held about Finnish and Colombian negotiators as well as about the cultural differences in Finnish-Latin American communication.

Both globalisation and internationalisation of the business demands changes in the negotiators' operations. The tangible (operational factors) such as budgeting, laws concerning the commerce, transportation of goods and logistics form an important part of the negotiations. The intangible factors presented in this study require more attention in international negotiations as they have been given until now. International negotiators need to dominate their business partners' language(s). They have to be trained in cultural differences, in intercultural communication and in their ability to make different forms, styles and attitudes work together in international trade. These aspects are essential because the negotiators perceive and operate according to their national cultures' values and strategies.

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<sup>91</sup> Tjosvold, D. 1990. 'Making a Technical Innovation Work: Collaboration to Solve Problems.' *Human Relations*, 43, 1117-1131.



### 3 RESEARCH METHOD

The method of the present study is qualitative, and the technique to recollect the data is semi-structured topic and active interview. The interviews form an important part of the data, but the bibliographical study serves as the basic guideline throughout the research. Qualitative method is considered to be a pertinent method when people, their behaviour and perceptions are studied. The objective of the study is to find and reveal new aspects, and so create new theory, in intercultural organisational communication, i.e. how it applies to Latin American Colombian and Finnish business negotiations. The objective is not only to simply describe things but also to try to explain what is happening and why. *"In the past, much attention has been given to describing, coding and counting events, often at the expense of understanding why things are happening. By contrast, qualitative methods might concentrate on exploring in much greater depth the nature and origins of people's viewpoints"* (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:1)<sup>1</sup>. The focus in qualitative methods is on meanings and not on "facts".

This study forms part of the management research, in which *"the aim is to draw together the main threads of management research and to provide a bridge between theoretical and practical issues"*. (Ibid.:1) Surely the new theoretical outcomes need to be the "heavy" results of the present study. The focus is on individuals (managers) who are called 'negotiators' in this study. These negotiators are operating in an intercultural context. They resolve actions in uncertain circumstances and creating order in chaos. The purpose of this study is not only to open better understanding of management itself, but also to gain more comprehension of negotiators, their perceptions about their counterparts and about the cultural differences in their communication. The study seeks to

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<sup>1</sup> Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. 1991. Management Research: An Introduction. London: Sage Publications.

understand how these perceptions may influence the international negotiations and intercultural communication.

The form of the present study can also be identified according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991:8) as an active research as it departs from a view that *“research should lead to change, and therefore that change should be incorporated into the research process itself”*. In active research the designs should be open-ended problems, rather than ‘puzzles’ with identifiable solutions, and for this reason a focus on change is often chosen (Reavans, 1980)<sup>2</sup>. The active research has a strongly collaborative nature. That is why *“the participants (the researcher and the researched) are likely to learn a lot from the process itself, and their interest may be in what happens next rather than in any formal account of research findings”* (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991:8).

The collaboration between researcher and the researched is very important. Through that co-operation it is desired to have a shared understanding about the development of meaning making. Meaning and knowledge are socially constructed. This approach is strongly a phenomenological in nature. The aim in this scientific tradition is to try to understand and explain what kind of perceptions people have and why they probably are different, rather than search for external causes and rigid laws to explain their behaviour. The interview is considered as a social encounter. The interview is not merely a neutral conduit or source of distortion, but instead an occasion for producing knowledge itself. (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997)<sup>3</sup> The interviewer and the interviewed are both considered being active members in producing knowledge.

Through the points of contradiction among the outcome the study attempts to better understand the phenomenon. The objective is not to base the arguments on a theory in order to prove, abandon or accept the hypothesis. That is typical of deductive research. On the contrary in qualitative and inductive research, the “weak points” in the first conclusions are always sought. The contradictions are found and they are explained. This study does not only seek to verify the theory and the obtained data, but also to falsify it. That is, it looks for evidence that will disconfirm the generally maintained hypothesis or existing views (Popper, 1959).<sup>4</sup> More the contradictions and differences, more rich is the research (Ogliastri, 1998).<sup>5</sup> In this sense, the process starts from the data and reaches to the theory, to the explication of the data.

Methodological triangulation is used in this study, because:

- Both qualitative and quantitative methods are applied.

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<sup>2</sup> Reavans, R. 1980. *Action Learning: New Technology for Management*. London: Blond and Briggs.

<sup>3</sup> Holsein, J. and Gubrium, J. 1997. *Active Interviewing*. In Silverman, D. 1997. *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>4</sup> Popper, K. 1959. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London: Hutchinson.

<sup>5</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1998. *Tertulias de Investigación: Investigaciones sobre Negociaciones Interculturales*. Memorias, 9 de Junio de 1998. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.

- Different qualitative methods are employed for a better reliability. This way the data gathered with both methods can be compared.
- Different points of view are contrasted: for example Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions about Finnish negotiators are analysed comparatively.

Triangulation (Cohen and Manion, 1985; Patton, 1990)<sup>6</sup> is a name for a research approach, in which different methods, researcher, data and theories are applied. The results obtained from apparently opposite methods can both be correct, but they present the phenomenon from different points of view. (Firestone and Dawson, 1988)<sup>7</sup> Patton (1990) emphasises that the researcher should be prepared to obtain differences when gathering results. The main point to analyse is where the differences are and for what reason there are differences. (Tynjälä, 1991)<sup>8</sup>

The research is descriptive and prescriptive by nature. By descriptive, it is meant that through the present study it is attempted to clarify how the negotiators participating in the research behave, how do they perceive their counterparts and how do they perceive the communication maintained in the negotiations. By prescriptive, it is meant that this study attempts to create solutions in order to maintain better intercultural communication and international business between Finland and Colombia.

The study is characterised with the openness and respect toward the outcome. This is seen also in the absence of the hypothesis. Neither the study nor the outcome are not forced into rigid numbers or congruent results. The frequencies and percentages are used to better visualise and categorise the results, but during the whole research process the quality is focused not the quantity. The results are to be presented in a very precise way. This is done for example presenting the interviewed negotiators' direct quotations. This way the research (interview) situation may become very real to the reader. (Patton, 1989)<sup>9</sup> quantity. The results are to be presented in a very precise way. This is done for example presenting the interviewed negotiators' direct quotations. This way the research (interview) situation may become very real to the reader. (Patton, 1989)

The semi-structured (semi-open) interviews have been chosen as enough real and sensitive method to recollect the material, as the interviews make a closer relation between the researcher (the interviewer) and the object of the

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<sup>6</sup> Cohen, L. and Manion, L. 1985. *Research Methods in Education*. (2nd ed.) London: Croom Helm.; Patton, M. 1990. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. (2nd ed.) London Sage Publications.

<sup>7</sup> Firestone, W. and Dawson, J. 1988. *Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis Intuitive, Procedural, and Intersubjective*. In Fetterman, D. (ed.) 1988. *Qualitative Approaches to Evaluation in Education. The Silent Scientific Revolution*. New York: Praeger, 209-221.

<sup>8</sup> Tynjälä, P. 1991. *Kvalitatiivisten tutkimusmenetelmien luotettavuudesta*. Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakausikirja *Kasvatus* 22,5-6,387-398.

<sup>9</sup> Patton, M. 1989. *Qualitative Evaluating Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

study (the interviewed) possible. (Cassell and Symon, 1994)<sup>10</sup> The semi-open interviews give also space to add new and essential themes appeared during the process of the research. The present author agrees with Ogliastri's (1998:1)<sup>11</sup> opinion: *"It is only towards the end of the study that researcher really discovers what s/he was doing"*.

### 3.1 Research objectives

The aim of this study is to facilitate, for mutual convenience, the commercial relations and intercultural communication between Finland and Colombia. It is attempted to know the differences and similarities the Finnish and Colombian negotiators have in their way to negotiate and communicate. Therefore, the principal and secondary objectives of the study follow.

#### 3.1.1 Principal objective

The principal objective of the present study is to create a group of indicators by finding them inductively from the data. According to this group of indicators, it is possible to define the perceptions Latin-American negotiators (doing business in Colombia) have of their business partners, Finnish and Colombian negotiators, with respect to their cultural characteristics and negotiation styles.

#### 3.1.2 Secondary objective

The principal objective is to be achieved by examining how Finnish and Latin American communication differ in their business negotiations. The aspects, which are considered cultural differences in Finnish-Latin American communication in business relations, are identified.

#### 3.1.3 Comparative objective

A comparative aim is to study the Latin American and Spanish perceptions of Finnish negotiators. This is done by comparing the perceptions given by Spanish negotiators doing business with Finns in Madrid, Spain<sup>12</sup>, and with the perceptions given by Latin American negotiators together with two Finnish

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<sup>10</sup> Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (eds.) 1994. *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.

<sup>11</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1998. *Tertulias de Investigación: Investigaciones sobre Negociaciones Interculturales*. Memorias, 9 de Junio de 1998. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.

<sup>12</sup> The perceptions of the Spanish negotiators are gathered in Madrid, Spain, between 1995 and 1997. See Vaaherikko, P. 1997. *Ibero-Nordic Communication Aspects: Finnish-Spanish negotiations*. Unpublished Licentiate Thesis. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

businessmen (with a long experience in Latin America) conducting business with Finnish negotiators in Bogota, Colombia.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2 Research questions

Using the following questions the author of the present study attempts to obtain the above-mentioned objectives.

3.2.1 How do the Latin American negotiators located in Bogota and doing business with the Finnish negotiators describe the Finnish and Colombian negotiators?

3.2.2 Which are the indicators, according to the Finnish and Colombian general cultural characteristics and negotiation styles, that may be described?

3.2.3 What aspects, in Finnish-Latin American communication and business negotiations, do the interviewees consider as cultural differences?

3.2.4 What similarities or differences are there in the Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions about the Finnish negotiators?

### 3.3 Data collecting process in this study

The first contact was made in May 1997 from Finland to the Finnish Consulate in Bogota. The Consulate offered their database of 17 Finnish companies located in Bogota. Alicia Mejía, living in Bogota, called all the companies to inform them about the study of Finnish-Colombian perceptions and communication in business negotiations.

Initially only six (6) of the seventeen (17) companies were interested in participating in this study. Possibly, this was due to the fact that the companies may not be very open to local researchers. The negotiators may have thought that the person doing the research is Colombian (Alicia Mejía and not Päivi Vaahterikko-Mejía), and that may have caused some apprehension in responding to the questions. Also the present author may not have given Alicia Mejía enough good instructions about the research and about the method of conducting the interviews.

One reason for the lack of initial success in recruiting participants for the interviews was that some of the 17 companies had moved outside the city or country or they had closed their actions in the country, due to the economic and political recession. Later, the present author found new companies, which were interested in joining the study. She called the negotiators and explained the research method, purpose and content. She also explained for which university in Finland the study was being done. In total there are eleven (11) negotiators and ten (10) companies participating in the study.

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<sup>13</sup> This data is recollected in the present study.

The interviews were conducted between December 1997 and June 1999 in Bogota, the capital of Colombia. The group of interviewed persons is rather small, 11 persons, for various reasons. First, there are few companies who do directly business with Finland in Bogota. Secondly, the purpose of the study is to find depth in knowledge and not necessarily a large interview group. The interviewed persons are Finnish (two persons) and Latin American (nine persons) negotiators. The criterion for choosing the interviewees was that the company and the negotiator maintain business with Finnish companies and people.

Fifteen (15) Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators were included, as comparison for the discussion in order to have a wider perspective in the study. The present study does not investigate Finnish-Spanish negotiations. That was done in Vaahterikko's (1997) earlier study. Only the Spanish perceptions about the Finnish negotiators are included. Spanish negotiators are presented in the context chapter (see section 4.10.9-4.10.14).

### 3.3.1 Qualitative research interview

The same interview structure was used with all the Latin American interviewees (see the appendix number 2). The interview included the following type of questions:

- Questions about the negotiator
- Questions about the negotiators' company
- Questions about the communication channels used in the company
- Questions about the language used in the negotiations
- Questions about the perceptions the interviewed person has about the Finnish and Colombian negotiators
- Questions about some specific cultural differences in communicating with Finnish negotiators

The negotiators gave their perceptions in two ways. One way was by closed-ended questions, selecting six (6) aspects - three (3) positive and three (3) negative - from the list of characteristics (see the appendix number 2) given to them together with the interview questions.

The other way was that the interviewed persons explained some possible cultural differences in communicating with the Finnish negotiators. They did that by responding the open-ended question: "When communicating with Finnish negotiators, are there some aspects you consider cultural differences?" The interviewees were motivated to talk freely about those aspects that they considered important in their experience in Finnish-Colombian commercial relations. Giving these perceptions the negotiators compared Finnish and Colombian, or more generally Latin American<sup>14</sup> way of communicating in business relations with Finland.

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<sup>14</sup> In the group of interviewees there are: Argentinean-Finnish, Austrian-Argentinean, Argentinean, Brazilian, Colombian, Finnish and Mexican negotiators.

The perceptions about the Finnish negotiators are compared with the Spanish negotiators' opinions given in Vaahterikko's (1997)<sup>15</sup> previous study. In that study, the Finnish and Spanish interviewees gave their perceptions about Finnish and Spanish negotiators. Some of the interviewed gave their opinions also about Colombian and in general Latin American negotiators. In the present study it is interesting to compare the perceptions from the Latin American and Spanish (Latin European) point of view. How Finnish and Colombian negotiators are perceived can be very relative, depending from which point of the geographical angle they are observed.

The atmosphere during the interviews was supposed to be comfortable and open moments of conversation. The interviews were conducted in Spanish. Only one of the interviews was held in Finnish with a Finnish person, who had just arrived to Colombia from Mexico. Even though he speaks Spanish very well, he felt more comfortable talking in Finnish. The interview with the other Finnish person was held in Spanish. This means that there is one interview conducted in other than the negotiator's native language. In the group of negotiators there are two (2) Finnish persons whose mother language is Finnish. They have a long experience in Latin American countries. That is why the group of negotiators is called 'Latin American'. One of the negotiators is Argentinean-Finnish. Spanish was used in the interviews, because it is the native language of the nine (9) negotiators.

Using Spanish reduced the need to translate the negotiators' opinions, and it also lessened the possibility of losing the meaning of the original opinions. The interviews were all recorded person by person. There were no difficulties in recording the interviews. Nobody refused the use of microphone and tape recorder. All the negotiators agreed that it was the most practical and convenient method to proceed with the interviews.

The interviews were interesting interactional moments of experience and knowledge exchange. Surely they can be considered forming a part of meaning-making and knowledge construction process. (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995).<sup>16</sup> The research 'subjects' are considered as participants who actively construct meanings through their answers. That is why the conducted interviews can be described active and semi-open. The interviews were semi-open, because the interview questionnaire was used as a guide in each interview session even though the negotiators could openly tell about the aspects that they considered important. The interview process requires creativity. The word 'creative' refers according to Douglas (1985)<sup>17</sup> to the interviewer, not to the respondent. The interviewer should have sufficient skill to establish a climate for mutual disclosure and to probe the respondents' 'deep experience'. Douglas (1985) offers a set of guidelines for a creative interviewer:

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<sup>15</sup> Vaahterikko, P. 1997. *Ibero-Nordic Communication Aspects: Finnish-Spanish Negotiations*. Unpublished Licentiate Thesis. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

<sup>16</sup> Holstein, J. and Gubrium, J. 1995. *The Active Interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

<sup>17</sup> Douglas, J. 1985. *Creative Interviewing*. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications.

1. Genius in creative interviewing involves 99% perspiration.
2. Researcher, know thyself! Especially in participant observation the researcher may have difficulties in distinguishing her/his own experiences from those of the interviewees.
3. Show a commitment to disclosure by expressing an abiding interest in feelings. The researcher should remember that her/his main data source are persons, who by telling about their own experiences and opinions are letting the interviewer to know them a bit. Even the researcher probably wants to quickly obtain data; s/he should respect the interviewees' feelings.

It is important to pay attention to the role of the interviewer, as the focus may easily be too much on the interviewed person/s. But, in the three aspects Douglas mentions above, he pays too little attention to the interviewees. An interview situation is always a mutual co-operation process. Both the interviewer and the interviewee have to feel that they are benefiting from the co-operation. This is the main motivator in the interview process. The percentage of perspiration is a bit exaggerated but even conducting interviews is hard work. The researcher has to plan the questions and her/his objectives very well and prepare her/himself for the situation.

Every interview lasted about an hour. The part where the participants had to select three (3) positive and three (3) negative characteristics and describe the negotiators according to a list of features (see the appendix number 2), appeared to be a bit uncomfortable for them. They seemed to have enough knowledge and experience to defend the fact that it is very difficult to describe the negotiators according to certain limited set of characteristics. When they were told that these characteristics are only orientative and the kind of tendencies that might be found among a certain national group of negotiators, the participants were more relaxed. Surely the national characteristics are not the only influentiators of the perceptions in this study. Also personality, individuality, experience, profession and the education of each negotiator are to be respected. One of the participants is a sociologist and one is an anthropologist. These two persons were in the beginning more uncomfortable in giving their perceptions and the reason is clear. They know to some extent about the behaviour of the people in general and do not want to generalise. Also they had in their knowledge some rather old theories about culture and human behaviour. They totally disagreed with those theories and thought erroneously that the present study has a similar focus.

### **3.4 List of characteristics for describing Finnish and Colombian negotiators (research instruments)**

One of the research instruments created and applied in this study is the list of characteristics. This list of characteristics was elaborated on the basis of the



most frequently mentioned aspects by the Finnish and Spanish negotiators in Vaahterikko's (1997) study. Also in Vaahterikko (1997) the interviewed persons -- managers, directors and presidents -- were all given a common denominator - 'negotiator'. The interviewees were asked to describe Finnish and Spanish negotiators. They were not given any list of characteristics from where they should choose the features, but the question was kept completely open. Some of the interviewed persons compared also the Latin American and Spanish negotiators. From these descriptions the present author became interested to investigate the perceptions of Finnish and Colombian (Latin American) negotiators. This was done with the goal of demonstrating how relative human perceptions can be. There seem to be differences in the way Finnish negotiators are perceived by Colombian and Spanish negotiators. This underscores the fact that national culture does have a great influence in negotiators' perceptions and the way in which they communicate and negotiate.

The list of 25 characteristics was not elaborated with the help of some specific theory. As said before, it was created inductively from the data obtained in Vaahterikko's (1997) previous study on Finnish-Spanish communication in their negotiations. In the categorisation process of the list of characteristics, three very important areas (negotiation process, negotiator's personality and communication) in international negotiations were grouped in order to be measured. The way the negotiators selected the aspects from the list of characteristics and the measurement of the results is based on Emmert and Barker's (1989)<sup>18</sup> bipolar scales. But in the present study there are no degrees between the extreme poles. There are only opposites, from which the interviewed persons were to choose three positive and three negative features. As the group of interviewed negotiators is such a small one, the bipolar scale would have complicated the result analysing.

In the present study the Latin American interviewed negotiators had to select six (6) aspects (3 positive and 3 negative) from the following list of characteristics in order to describe the Finnish and Colombian negotiators. The following list of characteristics was used in the present study:

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<sup>18</sup> Emmert, P. and Barker, L. 1989. *Measurement of Communication Behavior*. New York: Longman.

## List of characteristics

| POSITIVE ASPECTS – A -                                | NEGATIVE ASPECTS – B -                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Quick decision-making                              | 1. Slow decision-making                                  |
| 2. Creative                                           | 2. Not creative                                          |
| 3. Serious                                            | 3. Not serious                                           |
| 4. Collaborative                                      | 4. Not collaborative                                     |
| 5. Good sense of humour                               | 5. Not good sense of humour                              |
| 6. Flexible                                           | 6. Not flexible                                          |
| 7. Master foreign languages                           | 7. Do not master foreign languages                       |
| 8. Manage international operations                    | 8. Do not manage international operat.                   |
| 9. Efficient                                          | 9. Not efficient                                         |
| 10. Open to other cultures                            | 10. Not open to other cultures                           |
| 11. Aggressive                                        | 11. Not aggressive                                       |
| 12. Good listeners                                    | 12. Not good listeners                                   |
| 13. Good verbal expression                            | 13. Not good verbal expression                           |
| 14. Good technical know-how                           | 14. Not good technical know-how                          |
| 15. Trustworthy                                       | 15. Not trustworthy                                      |
| 16. Punctual                                          | 16. Not punctual                                         |
| 17. Good manners                                      | 17. Not good manners                                     |
| 18. Organised                                         | 18. Not organised                                        |
| 19. Prepare well the meetings                         | 19. Do not prepare well the meetings                     |
| 20. Democratic                                        | 20. Authoritarian                                        |
| 21. Help to obtain information                        | 21. Do not help to obtain information                    |
| 22. Proud                                             | 22. Not proud                                            |
| 23. Well dressed                                      | 23. Not well dressed                                     |
| 24. Modern organisations                              | 24. Not modern organisations                             |
| 25. Concentrate on the themes (agenda) of the meeting | 25. Do not concentrate on themes (agenda) of the meeting |

### 3.5 Categorisation of the data

The objective of the present study is not to delimit invariable parameters or laws of the perceptions given by the interviewed persons, but to define and characterise tendencies of how the negotiators are perceived and what differences (difficulties) there exist in Finnish-Latin American communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. In order to reach the objective of creating a group of indicators according to which it is possible to define and measure perceptions the Finnish and Latin American negotiators have of their Finnish and Colombian business partners, the data has been categorised. Also it is necessary to define and measure the comparative perceptions held about Finnish negotiators by Spanish negotiators. The measure was administered as follows, in order to reach a successful categorisation and analysis of the results.

#### 3.5.1 Categorisation of the list of characteristics

The list of characteristics (see appendix number 2 and section 3.4) was grouped into three (3) main categories. These three groups are considered to be the main indicators according to which the cultural differences in perceptions about

Finnish and Colombian negotiators as well as in Finnish-Colombian negotiation style may be detected. More generally these categories are considered to be the three most important dimensions of international negotiation reflecting the actual tendency in international business. These dimensions (indicators) are:

- *Managerial aspects dealing with the negotiation process*

Through this category the task or technical orientation of the negotiators as well as the operational aspects of the international negotiation are analysed.

- *Personal characteristics dealing with social skills*

Through this category the negotiators' people orientation as well as the non-operational aspects of the international negotiation are analysed.

- *International preparedness*

Through this category the practical international attitudes and communication skills are analysed.

The categorisation was made with the objective of showing these above-mentioned three main interest areas where possible cultural differences were to be found. The number of factors (items) in each group varies a bit. Ten (10) positive and negative items constitute the indicator of 'managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process'. The category of 'personal characteristics dealing with social skills' contains nine (9) positive and negative items. The indicator of 'international preparedness' consists of six (6) positive and negative aspects. In total there is twenty-five (25) positive and negative aspects. The classification was done after recollecting the data. This can be an unbalancing factor in the study, as the categorisation was not defined when creating the list of characteristics. The list of characteristics was classified as follows:

#### Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process

| POSITIVE ASPECTS – A -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | NEGATIVE ASPECTS – B-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick decision-making</li> <li>• Serious</li> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Efficient</li> <li>• Aggressive</li> <li>• Good technical know-how</li> <li>• Organised</li> <li>• Prepare well the meetings</li> <li>• Modern organisations</li> <li>• Concentrate on the agenda of the meeting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow decision-making</li> <li>• Not serious</li> <li>• Not Flexible</li> <li>• Not efficient</li> <li>• Not aggressive</li> <li>• Not good technical know-how</li> <li>• Not organised</li> <li>• Do not prepare well the meetings</li> <li>• Not modern organisations</li> <li>• Do not concentrate on the agenda of the meeting</li> </ul> |

The above-mentioned characteristics are considered to form part of the 'managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process'. The following five (5) characteristics: serious, flexible, efficient, aggressive and organised need some explanation. These aspects are rather ambiguous and could be grouped into the category of 'personal characteristics dealing with social skills'. The negotiators themselves emphasised that they selected them as aspects reflecting the operational negotiation process or the way to do business. That is why these

aspects were placed into the category where they actually are: 'managerial aspects dealing with the negotiation process'.

#### Personal characteristics dealing with social skills

| POSITIVE ASPECTS – A –                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | NEGATIVE ASPECTS – B –                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Collaborative</li> <li>• Good sense of humour</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Punctual</li> <li>• Good manners</li> <li>• Democratic</li> <li>• Proud</li> <li>• Well dressed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not creative</li> <li>• Not collaborative</li> <li>• Not good sense of humour</li> <li>• Not trustworthy</li> <li>• Not punctual</li> <li>• Not good manners</li> <li>• Not democratic</li> <li>• Not proud</li> <li>• Not well dressed</li> </ul> |

'Personal characteristics dealing with social skills' are composed of nine (9) items. The aspect 'proud' is considered as a positive feature even though it surely could be analysed as opposite. In the present study 'proud' reflects empathy, assertiveness, confidence, and conviction in social relations in business.

#### International preparedness

| POSITIVE ASPECTS – A –                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | NEGATIVE ASPECTS – B –                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master foreign languages</li> <li>• Manage international operations</li> <li>• Open to other cultures</li> <li>• Good listeners</li> <li>• Good verbal expression</li> <li>• Help to obtain information</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not master foreign languages</li> <li>• Do not manage international operations</li> <li>• Not good listeners</li> <li>• Not good verbal expression</li> <li>• Do not help to obtain information</li> </ul> |

Six (6) items constitute the category of international preparedness. Especially in intercultural communication in international negotiations the negotiator has to master the languages of the nationalities with whom s/he is doing business or at least English and Spanish when conducting business in Latin market. But as mentioned earlier (see section 2.5) the language is not the only factor. The negotiator has to be able to listen, respect and to be interested in other cultures. Surely s/he has to master international operations.

The Spanish negotiators' perceptions of Finns gathered in the interviews conducted in Madrid, are grouped into the same three categories. The purpose of comparing Latin American and Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators is to have two perspectives of the Finns.

### 3.5.2 Categorisation of the data from the open question

Another way to recollect the data was by asking the negotiators an open question: "When communicating with Finnish negotiators, are there some aspects you consider cultural differences?" This question is considered an important one. *"In order to discover these cultural characteristics and to be able to*

*work on them, one has to analyse the concrete experiences. This makes it possible to understand the why's and what's of the experiences, and so move from the description into the explication". (Van Hoof, Bernal and Ogliastri, 1999)<sup>19</sup>*

Responses, in all 50 aspects (cultural differences), to this question are categorised into eleven (11) groups and quantified without statistics. Summing up the frequencies and percentages of all the aspects pertaining to each categorised group does it. This was done in order to respect the negotiators' responses and to express the data by direct quotations. The categorising is needed in order to create indicators, to measure and to analyse the data. The frequencies and percentages of these results are expected to show the tendencies of the themes, which the negotiators consider cultural differences and at the same time probable conflicts in Finnish-Latin American communication in their negotiations.

The negotiators expressed their perceptions comparing Finnish and Colombian or more generally Finnish and Latin American negotiators' communicative behaviour. In all they gave 50 different cultural aspects. The eleven categories serve as indicators showing the cultural differences, which cause difficulties in communication (see chapter 7). The original idea was only to have one indicator of 'communication' and measure the items, which construct this category. But the negotiators reported a variety of themes, which have an indirect influence on communication. That is why ten other categories were created, according to the themes emerged inductively from the negotiators' responses.

These ten groups specify differences in time concept, in products-prices and in orientation towards the tasks or towards the people. The negotiators also mention about some business opportunities and they give advice. They also indicate that Finnish and Colombian do not know each other. For example the aspect of time concept was mentioned eight times. Finns have long-term and Latinos short-term activities. This cultural difference complicates the communication in their negotiations.

The eleven indicators measuring the cultural differences in Finnish-Latin American communication are as follows:

- Communication
- Time concept
- Lack of knowledge
- Product-Price
- Task or people orientation
- Suggestions by the interviewees
- Finland, a positive culture
- Comments on specific subjects
- Business opportunities
- Finnish women
- No cultural differences

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<sup>19</sup> Van Hoof, B.; Bernal, J. and Ogliastri, E. 1999. *Los Negociadores Colombianos: Una Comparación con los Holandeses*. Santafé de Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.

The data gathered from the responses to the open question is not divided into positive and negative categories. That is because the negotiators gave their answers by comparing Finnish and Latin American negotiators' communication and their behaviour in business relations. They did not only perceive Finns. So, in their comparisons, in some aspects they consider the Finnish style good (positive) and Latin American a deficient (negative) one, and vice versa. Only the areas where the negotiators perceive cultural differences are counted.

Comparing the answers from these two different ways of recollecting, processing, analysing, categorising and presenting the data, provides a better insight into the perceptions given about Finnish and Colombian negotiators, and their way to perceive the communication in the negotiation process.

### **3.5.3 Categorisation of the comparative data recollected with Spanish negotiators**

Spanish negotiators (interviews conducted in Madrid, Spain, between the years 1995 and 1997) were asked to describe the Finnish negotiators' positive and negative characteristics. The question was open. The interviewed could tell freely their positive and negative perceptions of the Finns and about their experiences when negotiating with the Finns. The negotiators' perceptions were gathered into tables (see table 5.4) and classified into three categories (see section 3.5.1). These three categories<sup>20</sup> are the three main indicators according to which the Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators can be measured. These indicators are the same as those used in Latin American perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators. The categorised aspects were counted; the frequencies and the percentages were computed.

The responses to this question guided in the elaboration of the list of characteristics (see section 3.4) used in the interviews conducted with the Latin American negotiators in the present research. That it why there is a continuity between the answers given by Spanish and Latin American negotiators even the interviews were held in different stages (years) and different countries.

There are responses (perceptions), which do not fit as such (e.g. a different word is used for the character) into the group of 25 aspects named in the list of characteristics, even though they do place into the three categories. These aspects are marked with a symbol \*. Some of these aspects are interpreted as one of the 25 aspects in the list and some of them are left such as they were given. For example the aspect 'straightforward' is interpreted as 'efficient', and 'rigid' is interpreted as 'not flexible' both belonging to the category of managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process. The aspects 'cold', 'kind' and 'ambitious' are all left as such (without interpreting them) in the group of personal characteristics dealing with social skills.

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<sup>20</sup> 1) Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process, 2) Personal aspects dealing with social skills, and 3) International preparedness.

The comparison of the Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions of the Finnish negotiators is considered to give a wider and deeper perspective of how Finns are perceived as negotiators in two different continents.

### **3.6 Analysis of the interviews**

The data obtained through the interviews was recorded on magnetic tapes. Later, these tapes were listened to and written down into individual files interview by interview. The opinions expressed by the interviewed negotiators were written down textually. This was done in order to respect the given opinions of the interviewed persons. (See appendices 1 and 2)

The responses to the questions made to the interviewees were analysed one by one. The answers were categorised, tabulated and the frequencies as well as the percentages were counted. This was done question by question. The tabulation made possible the comparison and the differentiation of the given opinions.

The data, gathered from the list of characteristics, was codified and registered in Excel format. Later, this data was transferred to the database, and again imported to the Einfo program. This process was made in order to generate a statistic process, which obtains frequencies and percentages for each question attained. The negotiators gave a great variety of answers. The responses to the open question (When communicating with Finnish negotiators, are there some aspects you consider cultural differences?) were not processed with Einfo program neither with statistic processes. This is due to the great variety of themes given by the interviewed negotiators. In this question the present author wanted with detail to show the negotiators' responses as such with direct quotations and to place those into the respective categories in order to make the measurement possible.

The information gathered from the open questions was transferred into the word format tables. This process was done in accordance with the established categorisations (see the sections 3.4-3.5.3). This process also made the data summarising possible. The tables facilitate the distribution of the obtained information. All the given answers were tabulated and summarised into rather general files. With the help of these files the frequencies and percentages are presented. The files show and verify the most important data as well as the contrasts in the process of analysis.

All the answers were categorised into tables, which allows the observation of the distribution evaluated in each aspect. The categorisation makes it easier to detect the areas, which the negotiators focus in their answers and opinions. The perceptions reflecting weaknesses and strengths in Finnish and Colombian (Latin American) negotiations and communication, the aspects under investigation, were evaluated. The frequencies and percentages were

established on the different categories. The categories show the priorities the different aspects have in the present study. (See the tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.2.1, 5.3 and 5.4)



## 4 CONTEXT

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995)<sup>1</sup> defines 'context' as "*the situation, events or information that are related to something, and that help you to understand it better*". In section 2.3.3 of chapter 2 in this study, "high" and "low" context cultures (Hall 1976, 1984, and 1987) are analysed. Hall's two contexts are used in order to clarify the two rather different methods of message transmission in Finnish-Colombian business communication. In this study, the word 'context' is also used in a broader sense, to refer to 1) the background (country of origin), 2) location (country and company where the business is conducted) and 3) the conditions (type of business relations) in which the negotiators operate. 4) Communication channels are another context considered in this study.

The following three contexts are the subject of this chapter, beginning with 1) company background (sections 4.1 to 4.9), followed by 2) the negotiators' background (sections 4.10 to 4.11) and ending with 3) communication channels (sections 4.12 to 4.16). These contexts are relevant ones to the object of this study because they shed light on the conditions in which the negotiators operate. As mentioned before, the focus in this study, as in general in qualitative research, is on meanings and not on "facts". This study tries to analyse the background to the negotiators' perceptions. The author has tried to use a variety of means of presenting information about the companies and negotiators participating in the study. That is why tables and graphics below are used.

Company background consists of information such as the age of the company, its head office, subsidiaries and office size. (Tables in sections 4.1 to 4.4.1) Other factors considered include the nationalities of negotiators in each

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<sup>1</sup> Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: The Complete Guide to Written and Spoken English. 1995. Barcelona: Cayforsa.

office and the language used internally and externally (international relations). It is important in this study to know whether the negotiators work in new or old, small or large, English-speaking or Spanish-speaking firms. Together, these facts explain the context in which the negotiators conducting Finnish-Colombian business operate.

Information provided about the negotiators' backgrounds (Tables in sections 4.10 to 4.10.8.1) includes their gender, age, nationality, marital status, and number of children, profession, position and time served in the company concerned. All these aspects reflect the profile of the international negotiators participating in this study. In Colombia, there has been some debate about managers' ages. Companies have observed, that older negotiators (more than 40 years old) have very valuable experience, providing them with more common sense and better decision-making abilities. The crisis the Colombian economy is going through makes this extra experience especially important. (El Periódico El Tiempo. 1999)<sup>2</sup> Negotiators in this study are generally older, with eight (8) of the eleven (11) being more than 40 years old.

The number of children the negotiators have indicates whether those with small or large families are more likely to conduct international business in the Latin market. It might be assumed that negotiators with children are less likely to be in international posts than single people (because of the difficulties in moving from one place to another, schooling and education in general, for example). The present study shows that six (6) families, more than half of the negotiators in the study, have three (3) children. Nowadays a family with three children is considered large.

The negotiators' professions give an idea of the types of occupation that might lead a businessman or woman to work in Latin America. In this study the majority of the negotiators are engineers (5/11). But there are also three journalists, one anthropologist and one sociologist. These three professions are rather humanistic in outlook, perhaps unusual in an international business context. In polychronic cultures, such as Latin America, it is common for professionals to be involved in a combination of different fields, such as business, poetry and medicine, for example. (See section 2.3.6) Usually in monochronic time system cultures (in the USA, Germany and Scandinavian countries, for example) people do not mix different professions, perhaps because the monochronic system tends to segregate life and thought.

The section on the communication context (4.12) shows which communication channels are used and how negotiations proceed when Finnish-Colombian business is conducted. Communication in Finnish-Colombian business flows via telephone and e-mail. This reflects international practices. It appears that the tendency towards low context communication style (fast, task-orientated, with little need for face-to-face communication) has influenced Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. There are hardly any face-to-face meetings. This may also be due to the high cost of travel between Finland and

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<sup>2</sup> El Periódico El Tiempo. 1999. 'Reviven Gerentes Cuarentones'. Santafé de Bogotá. 26.09.1999.

Colombia. High context communication, common in Colombia, usually demands human contact (face-to-face).

The importance of the English language is seen in this study. The companies' attitude toward the kind of negotiators they hire and their respect for language proficiency shows they want people in their operations who master English. English is fundamental to Finnish-Colombian business relations. The negotiators do not mention different cultural codes or styles when asked about the importance of English in international negotiations. The cultural aspects are only mentioned when the interviewees are asked about cultural differences in communication (the open question).

In the following sections (4.1 to 4.12) the above-mentioned three contexts: 1) company background, 2) negotiators' background and 3) communication channels are presented with the help of tables and graphics.

#### 4.1 Age of the company

| FOUNDATION      | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 2 years "1998"  | 2         | 18,2       |
| No information  | 2         | 18,2       |
| 21 years "1978" | 1         | 9,1        |
| 3 years "1996"  | 1         | 9,1        |
| 37 years "1962" | 1         | 9,1        |
| 46 years "1953" | 1         | 9,1        |
| 5 years "1993"  | 1         | 9,1        |
| 9 years "1990"  | 1         | 9,1        |
| Doesn't know    | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

There are two companies that have only been in business for two (2) years. Two (2) negotiators gave this reply, equivalent to 18,2% of the total. Another two companies, equal to the same percentage, gave no information about their company's longevity. Five (5) of the ten (10) companies were founded in the 90s. They are quite young companies. There are further three (3) organisations with long experience in the Latin market and international business. The one with the longest experience was founded 46 years ago. The negotiators working in them may be assumed to possess very good experience, knowledge and negotiating ability.

#### 4.2 Location of head offices

| HEADOFFICE       | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Colombia: Bogota | 6         | 54,5       |
| Finland          | 3         | 27,3       |
| USA: New York    | 1         | 9,1        |
| No information   | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

Six (6) of the ten (10) organisations or 54,5%, have their head office in Bogota, Colombia. Another 27,3% of the companies have their head office in Finland. One (9,1%) firm has its head office in New York City, the USA. One (1) negotiator (9,1%) did not answer this question.

#### 4.3 Location of subsidiaries

| SUBSIDIARIES                 | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| All over the world           | 6         | 54,6       |
| None                         | 2         | 18,2       |
| Cali, Medellin, Barranquilla | 1         | 9,1        |
| Colombia, etc.               | 1         | 9,1        |
| No information               | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

Six (6) negotiators, or 54,6%, say their companies have subsidiaries all over the world. This reflects the fact that the companies are multinationals. Two (2) negotiators (18,2%) said their subsidiaries are located in Colombia. One (1) of those participants mentioned some specific cities (Cali, Medellin and Barranquilla). This company is included in the figures for organisations with subsidiaries in Colombia, but the extra information is included in order to provide as much detail as possible. Two (2) negotiators said their companies have no subsidiaries.

#### 4.4 Number of employees in the office

| No OF EMPLOYEES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 250 persons     | 1         | 9,1        |
| 120 persons     | 1         | 9,1        |
| 35 persons      | 1         | 9,1        |
| 15 persons      | 1         | 9,1        |
| 10 persons      | 1         | 9,1        |
| 8 persons       | 1         | 9,1        |
| 6 persons       | 1         | 9,1        |

(Continues)

|                |           |            |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 5 persons      | 1         | 9,1        |
| 3 persons      | 1         | 9,1        |
| 2 persons      | 1         | 9,1        |
| No information | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

The number of employees in the offices varies rather a lot in the companies participating in this study. This data is categorised in the following section.

#### 4.4.1 Categorisation: size of the offices in Bogota

| OFFICE SIZE                 | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very small office (1-10)    | 6         | 54,5       |
| Small office (11-50)        | 2         | 18,2       |
| Large office (101-200)      | 1         | 9,1        |
| Very large office (201-300) | 1         | 9,1        |
| No information              | 1         | 9,1        |
| Medium office (51-100)      | 0         | 0,0        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

The majority (54,5%) of the offices can be categorised as very small, if we define very small as staffed by less than 10 people. The next most frequent office size in the study is small (18,2%), employing between 11 and 50 people. There are no medium offices (between 51-100 employees). There is one (1) large office (between 101 and 200 employees) and also one (1) very large office, employing between 201 and 300 persons. Most of the companies in this study have very small offices, probably due to the need to cut personnel costs. Small offices also adapt more quickly to changing economic and political situations.

#### 4.5 Other nationalities in the office

For the purposes of this study, "other nationalities" or "foreigners" should be taken to mean non-Colombians.

| OTHER NATIONALITIES IN THE OFFICE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Finnish                           | 3         | 16,7       |
| No other nationalities            | 3         | 16,7       |
| Americans                         | 2         | 11,1       |
| Argentineans                      | 2         | 11,1       |
| Brazilians                        | 1         | 5,6        |
| French                            | 1         | 5,6        |
| German                            | 1         | 5,6        |
| Mexican                           | 1         | 5,6        |
| No information                    | 1         | 5,6        |
| Scottish                          | 1         | 5,6        |

|              |           |            |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Swedish      | 1         | 5,6        |
| Swiss        | 1         | 5,6        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>100</b> |

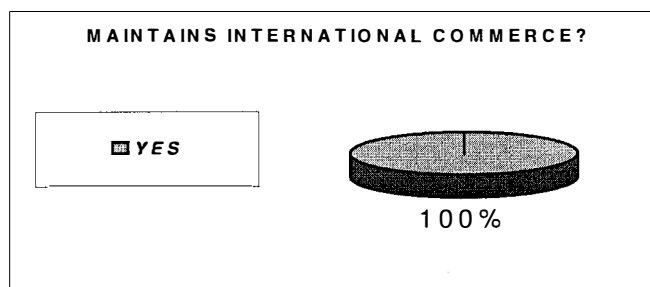
#### 4.5.1 Categorisation: other nationalities in the offices in Bogota

| OTHER NATIONALITIES IN THE OFFICE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| European                          | 8         | 44,4       |
| No other nationalities            | 3         | 16,7       |
| South American                    | 3         | 16,7       |
| North American                    | 2         | 11,1       |
| Central American                  | 1         | 5,6        |
| No information                    | 1         | 5,6        |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>18</b> | <b>100</b> |

Eight (8) of the eleven (11) participating negotiators said they worked with foreign employees. The negotiators work with ten (10) different nationalities. The largest proportion of other foreign employees is Finnish (3), equivalent to 16,7%. The next most frequent nationalities are Americans (11,1%) and Argentineans (11,1%). One (1) negotiator did not give any information about foreign employees in his company.

The foreign employees were categorised by their continents of origin. In the Bogota offices, European foreign employees make up the largest percentage. Clearly this is because the business negotiations under analysis here are those between Finland and Colombia. The next most frequent continent of origin is South America (16,7%). Another 16,7% of companies have only Colombian employees.

#### 4.6 International commerce maintained by the companies



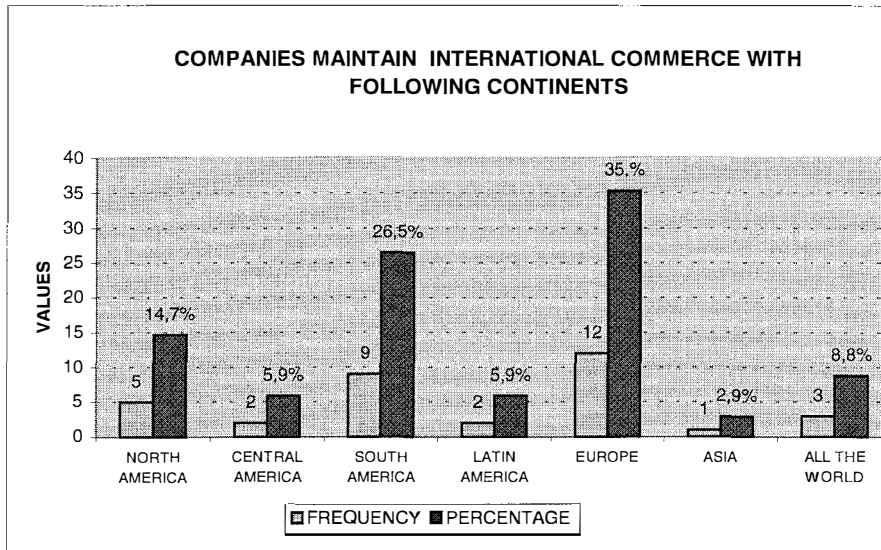
Logically all the participating companies maintain international commerce due to the criteria for the development of the study. Only companies maintaining international business (principally with Finland) were invited to participate.

#### 4.7 Companies maintain international commerce with the following countries

| WITH WHICH COUNTRIES? | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Finland               | 8         | 23,5       |
| USA                   | 5         | 14,7       |
| The rest of the world | 3         | 8,8        |
| Venezuela             | 2         | 5,9        |
| Chile                 | 2         | 5,9        |
| Argentina             | 2         | 5,9        |
| Latin America         | 2         | 5,8        |
| Uruguay               | 1         | 2,9        |
| Switzerland           | 1         | 2,9        |
| Sweden                | 1         | 2,9        |
| Spain                 | 1         | 2,9        |
| Mexico                | 1         | 2,9        |
| Japan                 | 1         | 2,9        |
| France                | 1         | 2,9        |
| Ecuador               | 1         | 2,9        |
| Central america       | 1         | 2,9        |
| Brazil                | 1         | 2,9        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>34</b> | <b>100</b> |

The interviewees were asked about the countries with which their companies maintain commerce. The majority of negotiators mention specific countries, but three (3) of them replied with the whole continent. The companies in the study principally maintain international commerce with Finland (23,5%). USA (14,7%) is the next most important country. The third most intense commerce is maintained with "the rest of the world". The negotiators have not specified which countries. Venezuela, Chile, Argentina and other Latin American countries represent 5,9% of the total.

#### 4.7.1 Graphic of the categorised continents with which the companies maintain international commerce



The countries were categorised according to the continent they belong to. The most intense business is done with Europe, followed by South America. South America is of course a natural market for Colombia.

#### 4.8 Language inside the offices

| LANGUAGE INSIDE THE OFFICE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Spanish                    | 8         | 72,7       |
| English-Spanish            | 3         | 27,3       |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

Inside the office Spanish is the main language used (72,7%). Logically enough, Spanish is the language of the country where the offices are located. Negotiators operating in Colombia have to master the Spanish language.

#### 4.9 Language used in international relations

| LANGUAGE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| English                             | 10        | 90,9       |
| English-Spanish                     | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |



International communication is maintained mainly in English (90,9%). English is obviously the language of today's global world of international business. The negotiators participating in this study are proficient both in English and in Spanish language.

The data about the negotiators and companies participating in Finnish-Colombian business reveal two contexts (1) company background and 2) negotiators' background) in which and by whom the mentioned trade occurs. Negotiators from various nationalities maintain Finnish-Colombian commerce. Also, the countries with which the companies do business are from all around the world. The communication in the negotiations is widely intercultural even it is held predominantly in English (90,9%). In the sectors 4.12 to 4.16 the third context of communication channels is analysed.

#### 4.10 Interviewed negotiators

In this study, eleven (11) negotiators from ten (10) companies that conduct business with Finnish negotiators were interviewed. These negotiators are called 'Latin American' even though there are two (2) Finnish persons in the group. The two Finns have a lot of experience in the Latin market. The negotiators are called 'Latin American' as they all operate in Latin American context of laws, culture, politics and economy. Information regarding the eleven (11) Latin American negotiators is presented with the help of tables and graphics in this section. This study also includes fifteen (15) Spanish negotiators' perceptions in order to compare them with the Latin American perceptions. These negotiators were interviewed in Madrid, Spain, from 1995 to 1997. The relevant information is presented briefly with the help of tables (see 4.10.9).

##### 4.10.1 Latin American negotiators' sex distribution

| SEX          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Masculine    | 10        | 90,9       |
| Female       | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

The majority of the negotiators are men (90,9%). The women represent only 9,1% of the total. There is only one female negotiator in this group. Finnish-Colombian business negotiations seem to be conducted by a rather masculine team.

#### 4.10.2 Latin American negotiators' age distribution

| AGE DISTRIBUTION   | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE  |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| N1                 | 51        | 1           |
| N2                 | 47        | 1           |
| N3                 | 44        | 1           |
| N4                 | 60        | 1           |
| N5                 | 45        | 1           |
| N6                 | 37        | 1           |
| N7                 | 35        | 1           |
| N8                 | 48        | 1           |
| N9                 | 32        | 1           |
| N10                | 57        | 1           |
| N11                | 66        | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>       |           | <b>11</b>   |
| <b>Average</b>     |           | <b>47.5</b> |
| <b>Age minimum</b> |           | <b>32</b>   |
| <b>Age maximum</b> |           | <b>66</b>   |

The negotiators participating in the study tend to be older. Most fit into one of two age groups, being 41-50 or 51-60 years of age (36,4%). This reflects the importance of experienced negotiators in the Latin market.

#### 4.10.3 Latin American negotiators' nationalities

| NATIONALITY OF THE NEGOTIATORS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Colombian                      | 4         | 36,4       |
| Finnish                        | 2         | 18,2       |
| Argentinean                    | 1         | 9,1        |
| Argentinean-Austrian           | 1         | 9,1        |
| Brazilian                      | 1         | 9,1        |
| Finnish-Argentinean            | 1         | 9,1        |
| Mexican                        | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

As there are two dual nationalities among Latin American negotiators, another table was elaborated to show all the nationalities separately.

| NATIONALITY OF THE NEGOTIATORS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Colombian                      | 4         | 30,8       |
| Argentinean                    | 3         | 23,1       |
| Finnish                        | 3         | 23,1       |
| Austrian                       | 1         | 7,7        |
| Brazilian                      | 1         | 7,7        |
| Mexican                        | 1         | 7,7        |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>13</b> | <b>100</b> |

Within the group of negotiators there are two (2) people with dual nationality, the Argentinean-Austrian and the Finnish-Argentinean. The majority of the

negotiators are Colombian (30,8%). The next most frequent nationalities are Argentinean and Finnish (23,1%). Other nationalities represent 7,7%. The nationalities are shown in the table above. What is interesting is that negotiators conducting Finnish-Colombian business are not just Finnish or Colombian, but of other nationalities as well.

#### 4.10.4 Latin American negotiators' marital status

| MARITAL STATUS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Married        | 9         | 81,8       |
| Single         | 1         | 9,1        |
| Widowed        | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

The majority of the negotiators are married (81,8%). This is logical, as the negotiators are mostly older people. There is only one single person in the group of negotiators. He is the youngest person in the study.

#### 4.10.5 Latin American negotiators' number of children

| NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Zero children           | 2         | 18,2       |
| One child               | 2         | 18,2       |
| Two children            | 1         | 9,1        |
| Three children          | 6         | 54,5       |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Average                 | 2         |            |
| Minimum of the children | 0         |            |
| Maximum of the children | 3         |            |

Six (54,5%) of the negotiators have three (3) children. The average number of children is two (9,1%). Families of three children are considered to be large, so it may be concluded that Finnish-Colombian business negotiators have rather large families.

#### 4.10.6 Latin American negotiators' professions

| PROFESSION                       | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Engineer                         | 3         | 27,3       |
| Economist                        | 2         | 18,2       |
| Anthropologist-<br>correspondent | 1         | 9,1        |
| Diplome engineer                 | 1         | 9,1        |
| Electrical engineer              | 1         | 9,1        |
| Journalist                       | 1         | 9,1        |
| Lawyer- journalist               | 1         | 9,1        |
| Sociologist                      | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

Negotiators represent a rather wide group of professions. The majority of them are engineers (27,3%). Two interviewees specified their professions in detail as a diplome-engineer and an electrical engineer. In the next section these professions are categorised into one group of 'engineer'. Two of the negotiators have two careers: one is a lawyer-journalist, the other an anthropologist-correspondent. In the section 4.10.6.1 these professions are separated for the categorisation. 'Correspondent' is placed into the group of 'journalist'.

#### 4.10.6.1 Latin American negotiators' categorised professions

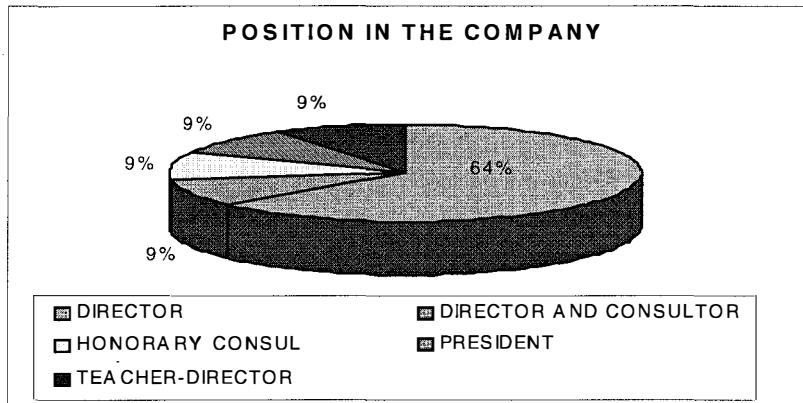
| PROFESSION     | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Engineer       | 5         | 41,7       |
| Journalist     | 3         | 25,0       |
| Economist      | 2         | 16,7       |
| Anthropologist | 1         | 8,3        |
| Lawyer         | 1         | 8,3        |
| Sociologist    | 1         | 8,3        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>12</b> | <b>100</b> |

The most common profession among the negotiators is that of engineer (41,7%). The next two most common professions are journalist (25,0%) and economist (16,7%). The number of negotiators, who have a background in humanities, is interesting. There are four (4) people who have studied humanities. This may mean that these negotiators are better able than most international negotiators to work in the intangible phases of negotiation processes.

#### 4.10.7 Latin American negotiators' position in the company

Negotiators' position in the company is presented in the table and in the diagram for the better visualisation.

| POSITION IN THE COMPANY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Director                | 7         | 63,6       |
| Director and consult    | 1         | 9,1        |
| Honorary consul         | 1         | 9,1        |
| Chairman                | 1         | 9,1        |
| Teacher-director        | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |



The most frequent position among the participant negotiators in the companies is that of director (63,6%). The rest of the positions are very diverse. For Finnish negotiators, it is important to know that their partners, this group of Latin American negotiators, are in a position to make decisions. The decision-making process may for that reason be rather quick in Finnish-Colombian negotiations, at least from the Latin American side.

#### 4.10.8 Latin American negotiators' time in their current position

| TIME         | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 18 years     | 2         | 18,2       |
| 5 years      | 2         | 18,2       |
| 2 years      | 2         | 18,2       |
| 33 years     | 1         | 9,1        |
| 20 years     | 1         | 9,1        |
| 6 years      | 1         | 9,1        |
| 8 months     | 1         | 9,1        |
| 3 months     | 1         | 9,1        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

The time period the negotiators have occupied in their positions varies from 3 months to 33 years. There is a great difference in this aspect. The Latin American group of negotiators includes both recent arrivals and very experienced negotiators. Negotiators' time in the current positions is categorised in the section 4.10.8.1

#### 4.10.8.1 Categorized data of negotiators' time in their current position

| TIME DISTRIBUTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Less than 1 year  | 2         | 18,2       |
| 1-5 years         | 2         | 18,2       |
| 5-10 years        | 3         | 27,3       |
| 10-33 years       | 4         | 36,4       |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>11</b> | <b>100</b> |

Among the group of negotiators there are four groups with a rather similar frequency with respect to the length of time they have been in their current position. One group consists of those who have very little experience (less than 1 year). The same proportion of negotiators has been in their current job for rather short time (between 1 and 5 years). Both groups represent 18,2% of the total. Four negotiators, representing 36,4%, have been in their current job for a long time (10 to 33 years). Negotiators with 5 to 10 years in their current position represent a slightly smaller proportion, 27,3%

#### 4.10.9 Spanish negotiators

Spanish negotiators are included in this study as a comparison group and therefore are dealt with in a rather short and precise way. Only the most relevant information about them is presented in the following sections.

##### 4.10.9.1 Sex distribution of the Spanish negotiators

| SEX          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Masculine    | 11        | 73,3       |
| Female       | 4         | 26,6       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>100</b> |

The majority (73,3%) of the Spanish interviewees are men. Only four (26,6%) of the fifteen negotiators are women.

##### 4.10.10 Spanish negotiators' age distribution

| AGE DISTRIBUTION  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 20-30 years old   | 4         | 26,6       |
| 31-40 years old   | 3         | 19,9       |
| 41-50 years old   | 3         | 19,9       |
| 51-60 years old   | 2         | 13,3       |
| Over 60 years old | 3         | 19,9       |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>15</b> | <b>100</b> |

The Spanish negotiators are comparatively young. Even though there are two (13,3%) negotiators who are over 60 years old, there are seven (46,6%) negotiators who are between 20 and 40 years of age.

##### 4.10.11 Spanish negotiators' marital status

| MARITAL STATUS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Single         | 4         | 26,6       |
| Married        | 11        | 73,3       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>100</b> |

The majority (73,3%) of the negotiators are married. The youngest negotiators are single.

#### 4.10.12 Spanish negotiators' educational distribution

| EDUCATION         | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Engineer          | 8         | 53,3       |
| Economist         | 3         | 19,9       |
| "Self-made woman" | 1         | 6,6        |
| No information    | 3         | 19,9       |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>15</b> | <b>100</b> |

The Spanish negotiators are technically oriented. The majority (53,3%) of them are engineers. A total of 19,9% of the interviewees are economists, while one female negotiator calls herself a "self-made woman", meaning she has not had any specific education, learning her profession through experience. None of the Spanish negotiators has a background in humanities.

#### 4.10.13 Spanish negotiators' position in the company

| POSITION            | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Director            | 12        | 79,9       |
| Secretary-assistant | 2         | 13,3       |
| No information      | 1         | 6,6        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>15</b> | <b>100</b> |

The great majority (79,7%) of the negotiators are directors. They are in a decision-making position in their companies and in international business.

#### 4.10.14 Spanish negotiators' time in their current position

| TIME IN THE COMPANY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1-5 years           | 7         | 46,6       |
| 6-10 years          | 2         | 13,3       |
| 11-20 years         | 2         | 13,3       |
| Less than 1 year    | 1         | 6,6        |
| No information      | 3         | 19,9       |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>15</b> | <b>100</b> |

The majority (46,6%) of the Spanish negotiators have been working from 1 to 5 years in their current position. They could be considered relative newcomers and also innovators to their jobs. Four of them (26,6%) have been in their current position for between 6 and 20 years. The Spanish group of negotiators includes both recent arrivals and very experienced negotiators.

#### 4.11 Latin American and Spanish negotiators in this study

The purpose of this section is to summarise the information obtained about the negotiators participating in this study. This is considered pertinent because the negotiators' background will necessarily influence their perceptions.

Finnish-Colombian business conducted in and from Bogota, Colombia, is not exclusively handled by Colombians. In this study, there are four (4) Colombians, two (2) Finns and another five (5) negotiators of other Latin American nationalities. That is why it is pertinent to talk about Finnish-Latin American communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. Analysing Latin American perceptions about Finnish negotiators and comparing them with Latin American perceptions about Colombian negotiators is considered an interesting line of inquiry.

A group of fifteen (15) Spanish negotiators are included to provide a comparison. This group is homogeneously Spanish. The aim of including their perceptions in this study is to widen the perspective so that Latin European and Latin American perceptions can be compared.

The group of Spanish negotiators is a little bigger than the Latin American, but that is not of real importance to this study. The groups operate in a similar professional context. They are negotiators conducting business with Finnish companies located outside of Finland. This makes them "observers" of a kind. They are not operating in Finland, so their perceptions of Finnish negotiators doing business in a Latin market are made outside of their national context.

Among the Spanish negotiators there is a greater variety of ages. There are very young (20-30 years old) and older (over 60 years old) participants in the group. The age of the negotiators naturally influences their perceptions. Young Spanish negotiators' perceptions may be considered more personally oriented, as they do not have yet very much experience in negotiations. The Latin American perceptions may be more internationally oriented as the interviewees are from a variety of nationalities and many of them have long experience working in other countries. Latin American negotiators are mostly over 40 years old. They all speak fluent English and some of them are also proficient in other languages. Spanish negotiators are not that proficient in foreign languages.

The Latin American group of negotiators includes a greater variety of professions. There are engineers, economists, journalists, lawyers, anthropologists and sociologists in this group of participants, while over half of the Spanish negotiators are engineers. Three of them are economists, one has no formal education and three do not mention their education. The profession of each interviewee is considered to be a subculture, which may influence the negotiators' perceptions.

The gender difference is rather difficult to analyse in this study. It is worth noting that in both the Latin American and Spanish negotiators' group, men are in the majority. It is not possible to make any conclusions as to the influence of gender on the perception process.



#### 4.11.1 A brief description of the interviewed negotiators

There are altogether 26 negotiators in this study: fifteen (15 Spanish, and eleven (11) Latin American negotiators. The negotiators are presented shortly in this section. Latin American negotiators are given a symbol [N] and Spanish negotiators the symbol [S]. The number together with the symbol refers to the order the negotiator is placed among the interviewees. The Spanish negotiators participated in Vaahterikko's (1997) previous study. Their numbers are not in chronological order as in that study there were Finnish nationals included, who in the present study are not included.

##### [N1]

This interview was the first one. It was conducted in the end of 1997. The company where this negotiator operates is multinational and a very large-size enterprise. The negotiator is 51 years old, Brazilian citizen, who has worked 5 years in his current company. This person has also worked as a university teacher. He is interested in intercultural aspects. He compares the cultural differences in communication and in general between Colombia and other countries.

##### [N2]

This negotiator is the only woman in the group of interviewees. She is between 45-50 years old, Argentinean-Austrian director. She has been in her current position for 20 years. Before she worked as a sociologist. In the beginning this negotiator was not very interested in the subject, but when she understood what the interview was about she got rather enthusiastic. She even asked some colleagues to join the conversation. This negotiator has rather positive attitude toward Finns in general. Especially she considers the Finnish women very pleasant. This interview was conducted in July 1998.

##### [N3]

This negotiator is 44 years-old Finnish-Argentinean correspondent. He speaks three languages, and he has lived in various countries. He has worked 8 months in the company. The negotiator has a bit negative image of the intercultural aspects as he has read some of the first books published on the subject, with which he does not agree. However, he answers kindly to the questions, and shares his own experiences about negotiating with the Finns. This interview was conducted in May 1999.

##### [N4]

This negotiator is 60 years-old Colombian, lawyer-journalist who has worked in very many different companies. He has occupied for two years his current position. The negotiator has also been a Colombian Consul in Finland for three years. He likes very much Finland, and is thinking about moving back to Helsinki. The negotiator has rather clear idea about opening more commerce between Colombia and Finland. He tells very much about his plans and

opinions, and does not sometimes respond the questions made by the interviewer. This interview was conducted in April 1999.

**[N5]**

This interview was conducted in August 1998. The negotiator is about 55 years old economist. He is a Colombian citizen married with a Finn. He has been working 33 years in his current position. The negotiator is a very pleasant person to interview. He talks clearly, and stays in the subject. He focuses very much on the lack of knowledge between Finland and Colombia. He also considers that English language is very important in the business nowadays.

**[N6]**

This negotiator is between 35-40 years old Finnish diplome-engineer. He has worked in various Latin American countries in similar positions. The negotiator has occupied his current position for three months. The interview was conducted in Finnish, and the negotiator was interested in the subject. The company had recently opened the office in Bogota, so there was a lot of organising taking place at the moment of the interview. The negotiator focuses the Finnish efficiency and Colombian flexibility. This interview was conducted in August 1998.

**[N7]**

This interview was conducted five months later in the same company as the previous one. At the time of this interview the company was already organised. The negotiator is 35 years old Argentinean engineer. He has worked 6 months in the company in Bogota. The negotiator has lived 6 years in Finland, and he talks very well in Finnish. However, the interview was conducted in Spanish. This negotiator focuses that the Latin American negotiators are very human and the Finns are very technical persons.

**[N8]**

This interview was conducted in April 1999. The negotiator is 48 years old Colombian engineer. He has worked 5 years in the company. He has no experience in working abroad. He is a very pleasant person to interview. He goes straight to the point and answers the questions clearly. The negotiator says that there have been some linguistic problems when communicating with the Finns. He also comments about Finnish rigidity as to the prices. The negotiator considers that the Finns are very efficient and professional when they do business.

**[N9]**

This negotiator is the youngest in the group. He is between 30-35 years old, single, Colombian journalist. He has worked 17-18 months in his present position. He is a very active person, visualising his plans and strategies constantly. This negotiator tells about some cultural differences in communicating. He wonders why it is sometimes a little bit difficult to

communicate with the Finns even both he, his Finnish colleagues as well as his clients speak very good English. The negotiator also comments about the difference in formalism between Finnish and Colombian negotiators. For the Colombian negotiators it is very strange (too informal) to receive hand-written faxes, for example. The negotiator is interested in learning Finnish. The interview was conducted in July 1998.

**[N10]**

This interview was conducted in July 1998. The negotiator is between 55-60 years old Mexican engineer. He dominates seven languages and he has worked in various countries. He is the owner of the company, in which he has worked 6 years. He gives the impression that he pays all the attention to the tangible aspects in business. For this negotiator it seems to be a little bit difficult to talk about the intangible cultural differences. He says that there is a culture inside the company and that is more important than the national culture of the negotiator when doing business.

**[N11]**

This negotiator is 66 years old Finnish economist. He has been working for 18 years in different positions and companies in Colombia. At the moment he is retired but he will not leave Colombia. This interview was conducted in Finnish. The negotiator speaks calmly and listens with attention to the interviewee. He explains various intercultural aspects of Latin American-Finnish communication in his own terms based on his experience. This interview was conducted in June 1999.

**[S1]**

This interview was conducted in 1995. The company is situated in the surroundings of Madrid. The negotiator is a young, 25-year-old, man who has probably lived all his life in Spain even though his origin is Finnish. He has a Finnish name. The interview was conducted in Spanish. He has been working in his present position for three years. This negotiator has quite little experience in international business. It is seen in his observations, which are about the clothing, language skills, working hour differences and about Finnish drinking habits. This person speaks quite negatively about the Finns. He speaks more positively about the Norwegians.

**[S2]**

This interview was conducted in 1995. The company is situated in the surroundings of Madrid. This person is a young, 27-year-old, secretary, with a little experience in international business. She has been working for three years in present job. Before this, she was working in England in order to improve her English. This person has rather superficial contacts with the Finnish and other international negotiators. She mainly receives them in order to guide them to the persons they come to meet. This negotiator has a rather exotic view of international business: she can speak in English and meet different people. She

also has a rather positive picture about the foreign negotiators. "*Son más educados.*" ("*They are better-mannered.*"), is her opinion about them.

[S3]

This interview was made in 1995. The company is situated in Madrid's surroundings. This negotiator has a long experience in international business. He has only been in his present position for seven months. The company is a Finnish subsidiary, but it has been divided into smaller units. That is why the negotiator has the most intensive business relations with the French, but he conducts business also with the Finns. He is 59 years old. This person strongly emphasises language and bilingualism in negotiations. He is married to a French woman and their children are bilingual. This negotiator also stresses the cultural differences in international business.

[S4]

This interview was conducted in 1995. This negotiator has long experience in international business and negotiating with the Finns and the Swedes. He has been about 22 years in the paper and cellulose sector. His behaviour and his outlook are rather Finnish according to the present author. He is between 40-50 years old. This negotiator strongly emphasises the good relationships he has with the Finns. He mentions alcohol as one of the negative aspects in Finland. He reports that the language and national character differences sometimes may cause problems. Preparing a detailed agenda for the meetings is one big difference between Finland and Spain. The agenda is not made normally in Spain.

[S5]

This interview was conducted in 1995. The negotiator is between 40-50 years old. He is very experienced in doing business with the Finns. He looks like a Finn, with fair hair and blue eyes. This negotiator is rather relaxed. He expresses his opinions without too much exaggerations or emotions. It is supposedly due to his intense business relations with the Finns. He jokes about some Spanish behavioural customs. He seems to have adopted the "neighbour fight" between Finland and Sweden as he makes some satirical comments about the Swedes.

[S6]

This interview was conducted just after the previous one in the same company, in 1995. The interviewed is between 30-40 years old. The negotiator was a bit suspicious at the beginning as if he were waiting for difficult questions. Later on, however, he relaxed and the interview atmosphere improved. He has been conducting business with the Finns for some years. He describes the Finnish negotiators very positively. The only negative aspect he mentions is that sometime the Finns talk together in Finnish and he does not understand them. After the interview he explains that he was born in Madagascar. It is a pity that he did not want to include his this kind of background information into the interview. This person's international childhood could have been very interesting subject for discussion in more detail.

**[S8]**

This interview was conducted in 1995. The interviewed negotiator is 53 years old. She has been working with the Finns for 26 year. She is a rather exceptional woman. She was involved in international business already when many Spanish women could not even imagine about studying or working outside their homes. She calls herself "a self-made woman" as she is not a graduate of any university, but rather has the basic education supplemented by various courses in her field of paper industry. This negotiator emphasises that one of the success factors in her office is the collaboration between the Finnish and the Spanish negotiators. In her office, they can serve the Finnish and Spanish clients in their own languages and with the knowledge of their cultures.

**[S10]**

This interview was conducted in 1995. The negotiator has been 30 years in his present position. He is over 60 years old. He is very familiar with international business as well as negotiating with the Finns. The experience is reflected in his analysed comments and relaxed behaviour. He has a very big and luxurious office. It can be observed that he has power. He stresses the Finnish-Spanish cultural differences in talking. The Spanish are more expressive and the Finns are more concrete. He also emphasises that professionalism is one key point in conducting successful business. In some cases the professionalism can even level down the cultural differences.

**[S11, S12]**

This interview was conducted in 1995. It is the only interview with two people at the same time. [S11] is over 60 years old and [S12] is 40. They both are experienced businessmen. This interview was the only difficult one. The negotiators were aggressive in the beginning. They thought that the interviewer (the present author) was a journalist and they wanted to impress her. Also they seemed to be bitter toward some Finnish subsidiaries where the Finns, in their opinion, were in the high posts and the Spanish in the lower ones. The subject of intercultural communication and cultural differences seem to have no value or importance for them. They stressed the technical aspects and structured communication. Later on they and especially [S12] started to pay some more attention to the cultural matters. The interview was more pleasant at the end.

**[S16]**

The interview was conducted in 1996. Negotiator is 49 years old and feels familiar with the character of Finnish negotiators and their working style. He has been working five years in his present position. He is the only person in the office. This person provided facts about Finnish-Spanish negotiations, and also about the ideal situation in a very neutral way. He does not mention any negative aspects. He emphasises the characteristics of a good international negotiator. Also he

stresses that negotiators in international business are like "an interface" between the north and the south. He thinks that when negotiators from different countries meet, they are very international. When they are with their local clients they try to be local.

**[S19]**

This interview was conducted in 1996. This negotiator is 30 years old. He is not very experienced businessman yet. He is interested in '*psicosociología industrial*' ('industrial psychosociology') and '*análisis transaccional*' ('transactional analysis'), which are the subjects on communication he has studied in the university. The negotiator has been recently in Finland for one month. He tells his experiences and impressions about Finland and the Finns. In Finnish-Spanish business he is impressed about the Finnish style of long-term planning. This person makes many comments about the issues referred to M-time and P-time concepts.

**[S20]**

This negotiator participates in the study through a questionnaire (in 1996). The questionnaire was sent to him from Finland. The present author appreciates that he filled and sent the questionnaire back. He is 62 years old. He has been working in his current position for five years. He is an experienced negotiator in the field of international business. He emphasises the Finnish seriousness and the way that the Spanish mix their professional and social life together.

**[S21]**

This is the other "interview" conducted by the questionnaire in 1996. This negotiator is a young, 26-year-old sales assistant who wants to study some more in order to ascend in the company to a better position. She describes the Spanish as conservative negotiators, and the Finnish as rigid, but very trustworthy.

**[S22]**

This interview was conducted in 1997. This negotiator is a very active and innovative Spanish woman in a rather high post. She is 38 years old. She has been working for six years in her current position. Before she was in the US. She is an easy person to interview. She is clear and concise in her responses. She is very interested in intercultural communication and as she has been abroad quite a lot. She understands what is it about. This negotiator emphasises directness and learning from different cultures.

## **4.12 Communication channels in the company**

The table below presents the collected data the negotiators provided when asked which communication channels they use in order of importance. The answers are not categorised channel by channel in this table. The number immediately after the communication channel (for example: fax -3) refers to the

rank the channel was given out of five different methods of communication: telephone, fax, e-mail, traditional mail and face-to-face meetings. Not all the negotiators classified all five communication channels. Four (4) persons mentioned one channel outside the list of five: couriers, or express mail. This surely tells us something about the fast pace of business today and the need to send and receive information quickly. One (1) negotiator said telex was the most common communication channel when he started working in Colombia 20 to 25 years ago. Telex's role as the most important communication channel can now be considered history.

| COMMUNICATION CHANNEL   | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Fax-3                   | 5         | 12.82      |
| Courier-4               | 4         | 10.26      |
| E-mail-1                | 4         | 10.26      |
| E-mail-2                | 4         | 10.26      |
| Telephone-1             | 4         | 10.26      |
| Fax-2                   | 3         | 7.69       |
| Telephone-2             | 2         | 5.13       |
| Telephone-3             | 2         | 5.13       |
| E-mail-3                | 1         | 2.56       |
| Face-to-face meetings-4 | 1         | 2.56       |
| Face-to-face meetings-5 | 1         | 2.56       |
| Fax-1                   | 1         | 2.56       |
| Mail-1                  | 1         | 2.56       |
| Mail-2                  | 1         | 2.56       |
| Mail-3                  | 1         | 2.56       |
| Mail-4                  | 1         | 2.56       |
| No information          | 1         | 2.56       |
| Telephone-4             | 1         | 2.56       |
| Telex-1                 | 1         | 2.56       |
| Total                   | 39        | 100        |

Of the eleven (11) interviewees, five (5) companies ranked fax the third most important communication channel. However, the most important channel is e-mail. E-mail is placed first or second in importance by eight (8) negotiators in total. Telephone is the most important channel for four (4) negotiators. Couriers are also used by four of the companies, but ranked only fourth in importance. Three (3) companies use fax as the second most important communication channel.

#### 4.12.1 Communication channels in the company, categorised by order of importance

In this table the same channels as above are categorised by importance.

| CHANNEL ONE                 | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| E-mail-1                    | 4         | 36.4       |
| Telephone-1                 | 4         | 36.4       |
| Mail-1                      | 1         | 9.1        |
| Fax-1                       | 1         | 9.1        |
| Telex-1                     | 1         | 9.1        |
| Total                       | 11        | 100        |
| CHANNEL TWO                 | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| E-mail-2                    | 4         | 40.0       |
| Fax-2                       | 3         | 30.0       |
| Telephone-2                 | 2         | 20.0       |
| Mail-2                      | 1         | 10.0       |
| Total                       | 10        | 100        |
| CHANNEL THREE               | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| Fax-3                       | 5         | 55.6       |
| Telephone-3                 | 2         | 22.2       |
| E-mail-3                    | 1         | 11.1       |
| Mail-3                      | 1         | 11.1       |
| Total                       | 9         | 100        |
| CHANNEL FOUR                | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| Courier-4                   | 4         | 57.1       |
| Face-to-face meetings-4     | 1         | 14.3       |
| Mail-4                      | 1         | 14.3       |
| Telephone-4                 | 1         | 14.3       |
| Total                       | 7         | 100        |
| CHANNEL FIVE                | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| Face-to-face meetings-5     | 1         | 100        |
| DID NOT MENTION ANY CHANNEL | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
| No information              | 1         | 100        |

E-mail is an even more important communication channel than the telephone in Finnish-Colombian business. Both are considered the most frequent methods of communication. Both are also regarded as the second most important channel, except that e-mail is used more often as a second communication channel than the telephone. Traditional mail is hardly used at all. As mentioned earlier, couriers seem to have some importance as the fourth type of communication channel, needed for sample packages and large documents. Face-to-face meetings are very rare. Only two (2) negotiators place them in fourth and fifth place in importance in their business. This detail is very important as it reflects



in the kind of relationships the negotiators have. They either know their counterparts very well or they are continuing a relation developed before. Finnish-Colombian business seems to be maintained on the basis of telephone and e-mail communication. This reflects a rather modern, global, task-oriented and trust-based (distributive) method of negotiation.

#### 4.13 The importance of English in international negotiations

| IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| English is fundamental | 10        | 100        |
| Spanish is sufficient  | 1         | 1          |
| Total                  | 11        | 100        |

Ten (10) of the eleven (11) negotiators consider English to be a fundamental language in their business relations. Indeed it is surprising that one (1) of the negotiators say that Spanish is enough. He clarifies that Spanish is sufficient inside Colombia. This perception may be influenced by this interviewee's need to communicate with the Colombian business community, as this participant is a correspondent providing news from Colombia to the rest of the world. This person is fluent in English, Finnish and Spanish. He can be considered trilingual, and he has two nationalities.

#### 4.14 English proficiency of the Latin American negotiators

| PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes                   | 11        | 100        |

All the negotiators are fluent in English. They are conducting highly international business in a non-conventional context.

#### 4.15 Company support in language learning

| DOES THE COMPANY SUPPORT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| No                                            | 6         | 54.5       |
| Yes                                           | 3         | 27.3       |
| No information                                | 2         | 18.2       |
| Total                                         | 11        | 100        |

Six (6) of the negotiators say that their company does not offer support to their personnel in learning English. These companies select only bilingual staff. If the person does not know English (and possibly other languages as well) the company does not employ her/him. Three (3) negotiators say that their company does support the staff's English courses. This may mean that the company at one point did not have enough employees with a mastery of English and the necessity of the language in international business has urged them to start training their staff. Two (2) people said nothing about this aspect. One of them was the first interviewee and this question was not put to him. The other is one participant who was a little complicated to interview. The question was not put to him either.

#### 4.16 Language in meetings with foreigners

| SPEAK IN THE CLIENT'S LANGUAGE OR<br>USE INTERPRETERS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Speak in English                                      | 11        | 100        |

English is certainly the language of face-to-face meetings in Finnish-Colombian business. The wide use of English can be seen in the response to this question. The interviewees were asked whether they speak in their client's language or use interpreters. The clients either all speak English as their mother tongue or they choose to use English in their business in Colombia even though they are not of English-speaking nationalities. It is interesting to see the connection here. The word 'client' is immediately connected to 'speak in English' as the negotiators answered mainly: *"No. I do not use interpreters, I speak in English"*. In some cases the negotiator really is able to speak various languages and so s/he may speak in her/his client's language even though it is not English.

## 5 RESULTS

Data for this study were gathered by collecting the responses to three different kinds of questions. 1) The responses to the closed-ended questions using the list of characteristics describing Finnish negotiators (Section 5.1). 2) The responses to the closed-ended questions using the list of characteristics describing Colombian negotiators (Section 5.2). The results to the first two groups of questions are compared in the table 5.2.1. 3) The responses to the open-ended questions about communication: "When communicating with Finnish negotiators are there some aspects you consider cultural differences" (Section 5.3). Fourth (4) part of the results consists of the Spanish negotiators descriptions about Finnish negotiators (Section 5.4).

In the method chapters (3. Research method) the recollection, analysing and presentation of the results is explained. The categorising is done in order to better analyse and visualise the data, and to be able to elaborate the indicators for the study.

Comparing the answers recollected through these four different ways, provides a better insight into the perceptions given about Finnish and Colombian negotiators, and their way to perceive the communication and negotiation process. Contrasting the perceptions given by Spanish and Latin American negotiators offers two 'Latino' perspectives (Latin European and Latin American) about Finnish negotiators as business partners.

### 5.1 Latin American perceptions about Finnish negotiators

The data obtained from the list of characteristics (see table 5.1) is categorised into three main groups: managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process, personal characteristics dealing with social skills and international preparedness. These groups are the three indicators to measure the interviewees' perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators. All the

characteristics in these three indicators are divided into positive and negative aspects. The numbers in the parenthesis mean the frequency and the percentage given to a certain characteristic.

All the mentioned aspects both positive and negative are 76. The positive aspects are totally 42 and the negative 34. Even when the interviewed persons were asked to choose three positive and three negative aspects, some of them chose more characteristics. This is not believed to be an unbalancing factor in the study. On the contrary, it is a strengthening aspect in this qualitative study. It is an important outcome to see that the negotiators perceive more positive than negative aspects.

Finnish negotiators are perceived to have their principal strengths (21/50,0%) and weaknesses (14/41,2%) in their management abilities (managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process). The Finnish satisfactory (positive) personal characteristics dealing with social skills are the less mentioned aspects (10/23,8%). Finnish weaknesses in international preparedness (8/23,5%) are also given little attention.

Not only the individual frequencies and percentages are considered important. It is meaningful to analyse whether the same characteristic is mentioned in both positive and negative group. The aspects, which are mentioned, both as positive and negative ones can be perceived as not very determined images of the persons. Those, which are only mentioned in either positive or negative category, can be interpreted as definite and probably "correct" perceptions of the people under analysis.

Finns are *serious* (7/16,7%) negotiators. This characteristic stands clearly out as the principal feature for Finnish negotiators in their way to manage. Seriousness is mentioned seven times (by seven participants). The next two most frequent qualities are *efficient*, stated four times, (4/9,5%) and *organised* (3/7,1%). The seriousness has to do with Finnish capacity to organise and fulfil the given promises. This is important when maintaining business with Colombia. In comparison, Colombian unpunctuality was reported (5/17,9%) as a lack of seriousness, which seems to be characteristic in the Latin market.

In management skills the slow decision-making (5/14,7%) is mentioned as a negative quality, but among the positive aspects the quick decision-making (2/4,8%) is also reported. The difference of the frequency and percentage of the positive and the negative aspects gives a sum of 3 as a frequency and percentage of 8,8% for *slow decision making*. Also, flexibility is indicated as a positive character (2/4,8%) and the lack of flexibility (3/8,8%) as a negative feature of the Finnish negotiators. The *lack of flexibility* (1/2,9%) seems to be more frequently mentioned. These two characteristics can be understood as not very definite perceptions about Finnish negotiators. The *lack of aggressiveness* seems to be more certain estimation about the Finnish negotiation style - five (5/14,7%) Latin American negotiators report it. Finnish lack of aggressiveness could be a rather definite Finnish attribute.

In the group of personal characteristics the *punctuality* (4/9,5%) appears to be the most notable feature of the Finnish negotiators. The next characteristic is trustworthiness (2/4,8%). Good manners, collaborative and democratic are all

mentioned once (1/2,4%). But, as they are mentioned also as negative features, they in fact can not be considered. The aspect “*fighters*” was mentioned by one negotiator [N4]. This adjective is from outside of the list of characteristics. This person discerns Finns as fighters for their history and for their capacity to dominate the difficult climate and to become a high-tech country.

In the category of international preparedness the *good proficiency in foreign languages* (5/11,9%) is the most frequent positive attribute to the Finnish negotiators. Finns seem to be known for their good language proficiency. Foreign language proficiency partly equips the Finnish negotiators to be internationally oriented. The second most frequent quality to the Finnish negotiators in this category is their listening skills (*good listeners*, 3/7,1%).

The main Finnish weakness appears to be the lack of aggressiveness (*not aggressive*, 5/14,7%) in their management. *Lack of sense of humour* (2/5,9%) and *lack of creativeness* (2/5,9%) are the main defects in Finnish personal characteristics dealing with social skills. Finns are also perceived to be authoritarian (2/5,9%) but they were also said to be democratic (1/2,4%). These aspects are not considered significant as they were given such small frequencies.

The main deficiency in Finnish international preparedness is their *insufficient verbal expression* (6/17,6%). Finns are good at languages. They know to listen to their partners, but their communication (expression) skills do not fit the Latin American demands. Finns are too silent. The Latin Americans do not seem to understand the Finnish communication style. Two other characteristics outside of the list of aspects were chosen referring to the communication. They are *timid* (1/2,9%) in personal characteristics and *too silent* (1/2,9%) in communication skills.

**TABLE 5.1 Latin American interviewees' perception of Finnish negotiators: categorised data**

| POSITIVE ASPECTS                                    |           |             | NEGATIVE ASPECTS                                    |           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | PERCE       | MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | PERCE       |
| Serious                                             | 7         | 16.7        | Not aggressive                                      | 5         | 14.7        |
| Efficient                                           | 4         | 9.5         | Slow decision-making                                | 5         | 14.7        |
| Organised                                           | 3         | 7.1         | Not flexible                                        | 3         | 8.8         |
| Good technical know-how                             | 2         | 4.8         | Do not prepare the meetings well                    | 1         | 2.9         |
| Flexible                                            | 2         | 4.8         |                                                     |           |             |
| Quick decision making                               | 2         | 4.8         |                                                     |           |             |
| Modern organisations                                | 1         | 2.4         |                                                     |           |             |
| <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>21</b> | <b>50.0</b> | <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>14</b> | <b>41.2</b> |
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | PERC        | PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | PERC        |
| Punctual                                            | 4         | 9.5         | Authoritarian                                       | 2         | 5.9         |
| Trustworthy                                         | 2         | 4.8         | Not good sense of humour                            | 2         | 5.9         |
| Good manners                                        | 1         | 2.4         | Not creative                                        | 2         | 5.9         |
| Collaborative                                       | 1         | 2.4         | Not well dressed                                    | 1         | 2.9         |
| Democratic                                          | 1         | 2.4         | Not good manners                                    | 1         | 2.9         |
| *Fighters                                           | 1         | 2.4         | Not proud                                           | 1         | 2.9         |
|                                                     |           |             | Not collaborative                                   | 1         | 2.9         |
|                                                     |           |             | *Timid                                              | 1         | 2.9         |
|                                                     |           |             | *Individualist                                      | 1         | 2.9         |
| <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>10</b> | <b>23.8</b> | <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>12</b> | <b>35.3</b> |
| INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | PERC        | INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | PERC        |
| Master foreign languages                            | 5         | 11.9        | Not good verbal expression                          | 6         | 17.6        |
| Good listeners                                      | 3         | 7.1         | Not open to other cultures                          | 1         | 2.9         |
| Manage international operations                     | 2         | 4.8         | *Too silent                                         | 1         | 2.9         |
| Help to obtain information                          | 1         | 2.4         |                                                     |           |             |
| <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>11</b> | <b>26.2</b> | <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>8</b>  | <b>23.5</b> |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>42</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>34</b> | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>76</b> |             |

## 5.2 Latin American perceptions about Colombian negotiators

These results (see table 5.2) are selected from those responses that the negotiators selected from the list of characteristics when describing Colombian negotiators. The comparison between the perceptions given about Finnish and Colombian negotiators is shown in a table 5.2.1. The analysis of this comparison is done in the section 6.3.

The principal strengths (19/54,3%) and weaknesses (10/35,7%) ascribed to the Colombian negotiators are found in the group of personal characteristics dealing with social skills in the negotiation. It seems that the attention when describing Colombian negotiators is focused in the personal aspects of the negotiators. Colombians' deficient management skills and international preparedness seems to give some reason for preoccupation. Both are given a rather high percentage (32,1%). The international preparedness is given the least attention (6/17,1%) of all the chosen aspects.

Colombian negotiators are *creative* (6/17,1%). This aspect is the most frequent among the personal characteristics, followed by *good manners* (4/11,4%) and *good sense of humour* (3/8,6%). In the group of personal characteristics dealing with social skills the main weakness is the *lack of punctuality* (5/17,9%), followed by not being trustworthy (2/7,1%). It is difficult to maintain any opinion about trustworthiness as it has been mentioned, with the same frequency 2 and the percentage of 7,1%, as positive and negative feature. The perception about Colombian negotiators as trustworthy does not seem to be very clear. The interviewees chose two more adjectives outside of the list of characteristics for Colombians in this group of aspects. They are *impatient* (1/3,6%) and *extremely sensitive* (1/3,6%). Generally the Colombians get offended if you do not greet them every time you meet them – even if you pass them 50 times in one day. Also, saying one's opinion directly (especially if it is a negative one) or not smiling in a social situation, generates an offence.

In management the Colombian negotiators are *flexible* (4/11,4%). Flexibility is the most frequent adjective in the category of managerial aspects. Even though it is also mentioned that Colombian negotiators lack flexibility (1/3,6%). After combining these two opinions they can still be considered flexible (3/8,5%). Quick decision-making is indicated as a Colombian strength (2/5,7%), but *slow decision-making* is also mentioned as a weakness (3/10,7%). The decision-making seems to be more slow than quick with the percentage of 3,5%. The perceptions about the Colombian negotiators seem rather disparate as four of the six aspects are contradicted e.g. mentioned both as a positive and as a negative aspect. *Short-term actions* (1/3,6%) are stated as a negative aspect outside of the list of characteristics.

In the international preparedness category only two persons (2/5,7%) perceive Colombian negotiators skilful in their verbal expression. In general, the interviewed persons did not pay a lot of attention to the aspects in this category. The good verbal expression has the highest frequency and percentage

in this category anyway. *Openness to other cultures* is mentioned as a positive aspect (2/5,7%) but one (1/2,9%) interviewed person denies it. In total the openness to other cultures has a frequency and a percentage of 1/2,9%. Colombian negotiators do not master foreign languages. That is stated by four participants and denied by one. The *lack of foreign language proficiency* can be considered as the main weakness in Colombian negotiators' international preparedness (3/10,7%). Also it was expressed that Colombians *do not manage international operations* (2/7,1%).

There are a few attributes that seem to characterise Colombian negotiators. They are *creative, not punctual, and they have good manners*. (personal characteristics dealing with social skills, *flexible*, (managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process) and *do not master foreign languages* (international preparedness). The rest of the aspects seem not to determine a very definite image of the Colombian negotiators since they are mentioned as both negative and positive features.



**TABLE 5.2 Latin American interviewees' perception of Colombian negotiators: categorised data**

| POSITIVE ASPECTS                                    |           |             | NEGATIVE ASPECTS                                    |           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | PERC        | MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | PERC        |
| Flexible                                            | 4         | 11.4        | Slow decision-making                                | 3         | 10.7        |
| Quick decision-making                               | 2         | 5.7         | Not modern organisations                            | 2         | 7.1         |
| Aggressive                                          | 1         | 2.9         | Not flexible                                        | 1         | 3.6         |
| Good technical know-how                             | 1         | 2.9         | Not organised                                       | 1         | 3.6         |
| Organised                                           | 1         | 2.9         | Not serious                                         | 1         | 3.6         |
| Serious                                             | 1         | 2.9         | *Short-term actions                                 | 1         | 3.6         |
| <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>10</b> | <b>28.6</b> | <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>9</b>  | <b>32.1</b> |
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | PERC        | PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | PERC        |
| Creative                                            | 6         | 17.1        | Not punctual                                        | 5         | 17.9        |
| Good manners                                        | 4         | 11.4        | Not trustworthy                                     | 2         | 7.1         |
| Good sense of humour                                | 3         | 8.6         | *Extremely sensitive                                | 1         | 3.6         |
| Collaborative                                       | 2         | 5.7         | *Impatient                                          | 1         | 3.6         |
| Trustworthy                                         | 2         | 5.7         | Authoritarian                                       | 1         | 3.6         |
| Proud                                               | 1         | 2.9         |                                                     |           |             |
| Well dressed                                        | 1         | 2.9         |                                                     |           |             |
| <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>19</b> | <b>54.3</b> | <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>10</b> | <b>35.7</b> |
| INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | PERC        | INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | PERC        |
| Good verbal expression                              | 2         | 5.7         | Do not master foreign languages                     | 4         | 14.3        |
| Open to other cultures                              | 2         | 5.7         | Do not manage international operations              | 2         | 7.1         |
| Good listeners                                      | 1         | 2.9         | Not good listeners                                  | 2         | 7.1         |
| Master foreign languages                            | 1         | 2.9         | Not open to other cultures                          | 1         | 3.6         |
| <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>6</b>  | <b>17.1</b> | <b>Total of categorised aspects</b>                 | <b>9</b>  | <b>32.1</b> |
| Total of positive aspects                           | 35        | 100         | Total of negative aspects                           | 28        | 100         |
| Total of aspects                                    |           |             |                                                     | 63        |             |

(Continues)

TABLE 5.2.1 Comparison: Latin American positive perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators

| Finnish negotiators                                 |           |             | Colombian negotiators                               |           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           | MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           |
| Serious                                             | 7         | 16.7        | Flexible                                            | 4         | 11.4        |
| Efficient                                           | 4         | 9.5         | Quick decision-making                               | 2         | 5.7         |
| Organised                                           | 3         | 7.1         | Aggressive                                          | 1         | 2.9         |
| Good technical know-how                             | 2         | 4.8         | Good technical know-how                             | 1         | 2.9         |
| Flexible                                            | 2         | 4.8         | Organised                                           | 1         | 2.9         |
| Quick decision-making                               | 2         | 4.8         | Serious                                             | 1         | 2.9         |
| Modern organisations                                | 1         | 2.4         |                                                     |           |             |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>21</b> | <b>50.0</b> | <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>10</b> | <b>28.6</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>31</b> |             |
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           | PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           |
| Punctual                                            | 4         | 9.5         | Creative                                            | 6         | 17.1        |
| Trustworthy                                         | 2         | 4.8         | Good manners                                        | 4         | 11.4        |
| Good manners                                        | 1         | 2.4         | Good sense of humour                                | 3         | 8.6         |
| Collaborative                                       | 1         | 2.4         | Collaborative                                       | 2         | 5.7         |
| Democratic                                          | 1         | 2.4         | Trustworthy                                         | 2         | 5.7         |
| *Fighters                                           | 1         | 2.4         | Proud                                               | 1         | 2.9         |
|                                                     |           |             | Well dressed                                        | 1         | 2.9         |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>10</b> | <b>23.8</b> | <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>19</b> | <b>54.3</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>29</b> |             |
| INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           | INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           |
| Master foreign languages                            | 5         | 11.9        | Good verbal expression                              | 2         | 5.7         |
| Good listeners                                      | 3         | 7.1         | Open to other cultures                              | 2         | 5.7         |
| Manage international operations                     | 2         | 4.8         | Good listeners                                      | 1         | 2.9         |
| Help to obtain information                          | 1         | 2.4         | Master foreign languages                            | 1         | 2.9         |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>11</b> | <b>26.2</b> | <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>6</b>  | <b>17.1</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>17</b> |             |

(continues)

**TABLE 5.2.1 Comparison: Latin American negative perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators**

| Finnish negotiators                                 |           |             | Colombian negotiators                               |           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           | MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           |
| Not aggressive                                      | 5         | 14.7        | Slow decision-making                                | 3         | 10.7        |
| Slow decision-making                                | 5         | 14.7        | Not modern organisations                            | 2         | 7.1         |
| Not flexible                                        | 3         | 8.8         | Not flexible                                        | 1         | 3.6         |
| Do not prepare the meetings well                    | 1         | 2.9         | Not organised                                       | 1         | 3.6         |
|                                                     |           |             | Not serious                                         | 1         | 3.6         |
|                                                     |           |             | *Short-term actions                                 | 1         | 3.6         |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>14</b> | <b>41.2</b> | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>9</b>  | <b>32.1</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             | <b>Total of aspects</b>                             | <b>23</b> |             |
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           | PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           |
| Authoritarian                                       | 2         | 5.9         | Not punctual                                        | 5         | 17.9        |
| Not good sense of humour                            | 2         | 5.9         | Not trustworthy                                     | 2         | 7.1         |
| Not creative                                        | 2         | 5.9         | *Extremely sensitive                                | 1         | 3.6         |
| Not well dressed                                    | 1         | 2.9         | *Impatient                                          | 1         | 3.6         |
| Not good manners                                    | 1         | 2.9         | Authoritarian                                       | 1         | 3.6         |
| Not proud                                           | 1         | 2.9         |                                                     |           |             |
| Not collaborative                                   | 1         | 2.9         |                                                     |           |             |
| *Timid                                              | 1         | 2.9         |                                                     |           |             |
| *Individualist                                      | 1         | 2.9         |                                                     |           |             |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>12</b> | <b>35.3</b> | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>10</b> | <b>35.7</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             | <b>Total of aspects</b>                             | <b>22</b> |             |
| INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           | INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           |
| Not good verbal expression                          | 6         | 17.6        | Do not master foreign languages                     | 4         | 14.3        |
| Not open to other cultures                          | 1         | 2.9         | Do not manage international operations              | 2         | 7.1         |
| *Too silent                                         | 1         | 2.9         | Not good listeners                                  | 2         | 7.1         |
|                                                     |           |             | Not open to other cultures                          | 1         | 3.6         |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>8</b>  | <b>23.5</b> | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>9</b>  | <b>32.1</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             | <b>Total of aspects</b>                             | <b>17</b> |             |

(Continues)

### 5.3 Cultural differences perceived by Latin American negotiators when communicating with Finnish negotiators in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations

**When communicating with Finnish negotiators are there some aspects you consider cultural differences?**

This open question was made in order to let the negotiators express freely their own experiences and opinions. The interviewed are from different Latin American countries and they report their own communication experiences with the Finns. That is why not only Finnish-Colombian communication, but more generally Finnish-Latin American communication is discussed in this section. The opinions are gathered from the conversation maintained with the interviewed participants (see table 5.3). This question was also included to clarify through a comparison with the other results (those recollected from the list of characteristics) the cultural differences in Finnish-Colombian negotiations and in intercultural communication. These responses may give inductively an idea of the aspects the Northern European and Latin American negotiators perceive as cultural differences in their communication. In qualitative research it is usually the differences, which are under analysis; through these differences, the researcher may find the conflict areas in the field of analysis. In the present case the field of analysis is international negotiation and intercultural communication. *“Cultures whose norms differ significantly tend to speak about each other in terms of extremes. This is because it is differences rather than sameness, which we notice”* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998)<sup>1</sup>.

The responses, 50 aspects, are categorised into the following eleven (11) groups to better analyse and measure the data. These categories serve as indicators showing the cultural differences, which probably cause difficulties in communication (see chapter 7). In the parenthesis is the frequency and percentage given for each theme when the data was organised:

- Communication (16/32,0%)
- Time concept (8/16,0%)
- Lack of knowledge (5/10,0%)
- Product-Price (3/6,0%)
- Suggestions by the interviewees (3/6,0%)
- Task or people orientation (3/6,0%)
- Finland, a positive culture (3/6,0%)
- Comments on specific subjects (3/6,0%)
- Business opportunities (2/4,0%)
- No cultural differences (2/4,0%)
- Finnish women (2/4,0%)

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<sup>1</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

### 5.3.1 Brief review of the categorised indicators

The majority of the comments apply to '*communication*' as such (32,0%). This is rather logical as the negotiators were asked about the cultural differences in communication. The category of '*communication*' was supposed to be the only one to classify the responses from the open-ended questions in this study. However, the negotiators mention a variety of other themes, which influence indirectly the communication. For this reason other ten (10) categories were to be elaborated. They specify differences in time concept, in products-prices and in orientation towards the tasks or towards the people. The negotiators also mention some business opportunities between Finland and Colombia and they give suggestions, for example. The themes are categorised as presented in the section 5.3.

The second most frequent theme the participants commented is '*time concept*' (16,0%). This indicator reflects the Finns too rigid and the Latinos too flexible in their business. The items referring to the category '*Lack of knowledge*' are the third most frequently mentioned ones. This reflects the geographic distance between Colombia and Finland. Due to the distance, the people do not know nor understand each other.

The indicators '*Product-Price*', '*Suggestions by the interviewees*', '*Task or people orientation*', and '*Finland, a positive culture*' are all given the same percentage of 6,0%. In the category of '*Comments on specific subjects*' (3/6,0%) there are three aspects indicated. One remark has to do with the problem of alcohol in Finland. The negotiators drink too much. Another mention is about the culture shock Finns have with Latinos. Third remark was made to comment that Finns and Colombians are very different.

The indicators '*business opportunities*' (2/4,0%), '*no cultural differences*' (2/4,0%) and '*Finnish women*' (2/4,0%) have to do with different subjects. Interviewees consider that the business between Finland and Colombia could be more active if Finland was more open to new markets in Colombia. Two negotiators [N2 and N10] do not see any cultural differences in Finnish-Latin American communication. Finnish women are mentioned twice (2/4,0%). Finnish women are regarded similarly pleasant and enjoyable as the Latin women.

#### 5.3.1.1 "No cultural differences"

There are two [N2, N10] persons who said in the beginning of the interview that there are no cultural differences in communication with Finnish negotiators. One of them [N2] mentioned that the communication is something more universal. The other negotiator [N10] commented that there is a culture inside the company. This culture is more important than the national culture of the negotiators. Later both persons reported various aspects in which Finnish and Latin American communication differs.

N2: *“Es algo más universal.”*

*(“It is something more universal.”)*

N10: *“Existe una cultura dentro de la empresa. No importa tanto la nacionalidad de las personas sino la cultura de la empresa.”*

*(“There is a culture inside the company. The persons’ nationality is not so important, but the company culture is what matters.”)*

The rest of the interviewed persons said from the beginning that there are cultural differences in communicating with the Finnish negotiators.

### 5.3.1.2 Purely linguistic differences

Only one [N8] negotiator mentioned purely linguistic differences causing problems in communication. As English is not the native language of either party, there is a continuous need to check whether both parties understood the agreed and disagreed points of the negotiation. This makes the meetings slow. He says:

*N8: “Digamos que en cuanto a la comunicación, pues hemos tenido tal vez unas dificultades idiomáticas. Digamos en cuanto a los funcionarios con los cuales mejor nos entendemos. Hablan inglés, pero es un inglés un poco difícil de entender. Y nosotros, pues, no somos 100% fluidos, porque no es nuestro idioma nativo. Entonces eso hace que las reuniones sean un poco más lentas. Necesitamos estar confirmando que nosotros estamos entendiendo bien.”*

*(“Let’s say as far as to the communication we probably have had some idiomatic difficulties. Say, as to the employees with whom we understand the best. They speak English, but it is a little difficult kind of English to understand. And we are not 100% fluent, because it is not our native language. Then, this makes that the meetings are a bit slower. We need to be confirming that we are understanding well.”)*

### 5.3.1.3 Communication differences due to the cultural distinctions

Two [N9, N11] negotiators comment that there are communication barriers, which are not due to the language. One of them [N9] is a bit confused, because he speaks English well and the Finnish person with whom he communicates in the USA also has very good English proficiency. Still, there are barriers in communication. The other negotiator [N11] explains that there are differences in the thought process between Finnish and Colombian negotiators.

*N9: “Yo lo que tengo con ellos es una barrera de comunicación. A veces nos encontramos y no seguimos. Es raro, porque él lleva mucho tiempo viviendo en los EE.UU. Y mi inglés es lo suficientemente bueno como para comunicar con las personas con quienes exportamos.”*

*("I have a communication barrier with them. Sometimes we meet and we do not follow. It is strange, because he has been living for a long time in USA. And my English is enough good to communicate with the persons with whom we are exporting.")*

N11: *"Pero, hay diferencias en el modo de pensar."*

*("But, there are differences in the way to think.")*

There are few specific themes, which appear to cause confusion and obstacles in Finnish-Latin American communication in negotiations. Finnish silence and little expressiveness in contrast to Latin American talkativeness and expressiveness are one of those aspects. Six [N1, N2, N3, N6, N7, N11] of the total of eleven (11) negotiators (54,5%) mention about the silence in some way. This number of negotiators is large and may be considered representative of the difference in Finnish-Colombian negotiations. Here are two opinions:

N1: *"Los finlandeses escuchan mucho y hablan muy poco. Casi no hablan. Entonces ese silencio para los latinos es mortal."*

*("The Finns listen a lot and talk very little. They nearly do not talk. Then, this silence is mortal for the Latinos.")*

N3: *"En estas culturas (latinoamericanas) si uno no habla hay algo mal. Si yo estoy con alguien, no puedo estar con esa persona sin decirle nada. En Latinoamérica todo el mundo está hablando todo el tiempo. Si no hay conversación entre dos personas, porque bueno, hay algo mal. En Finlandia es totalmente normal estar con un amigo y no decir nada."*

*("In these cultures (Latin American), if one does not talk there is something wrong. If I am with somebody, I can not be with somebody without saying something to him/her. In Latin America people are talking all the time. If there is no conversation between two persons, something is wrong. In Finland it is totally normal to be with a friend and not to say anything.")*

One [N9] negotiator is surprised about another aspect of the communication. That person believes that this has to do something with the people working in the USA. The Finnish people, according to him, are influenced by the North Americans in that they respond to faxes written by hand on the same fax they have received. That is not viewed as a good thing in Colombia. This aspect was also mentioned in the interviews made with Spanish negotiators in Madrid, Spain. (Vaahterikko, 1997) This practice seems to be too informal to the Latin Europeans and Latin Americans, who guard certain formalism in their communication and negotiations. The person states:

N9: *"Sí. Hay un tema muy claro. Los americanos y la gente que trabaja en los Estados Unidos. El caso de mi jefe que es finlandés, escribe las cosas a mano. Yo le mando un fax y en ese mismo fax me escribe los comentarios y me devuelve. Eso en Colombia no está bien visto. En Colombia todo debe ser por computador o por una maquina de escribir. Debe ser muy formal. Los colombianos somos más formales."*

*("Yes. There is one very clear theme. The Americans and the people who work in the USA. The case of my boss, who is a Finn. He writes the things by hand. I send him a fax and in the same fax he writes his comments and he returns it to me. This is not well seen in Colombia. In Colombia all has to be written by computer or by typewriter. It has to be very formal. We, Colombians, are more formal.")*

One Finnish negotiator [N11], who has been negotiating more than 20 years with Colombians and living in Colombia, mentions about the way the Colombians communicate. Actually, this person talks about Colombians having a face saving and high-context culture without really knowing about these abstract terms. He says that a Latin American can not say something, which is even vaguely rude. He means that Latin Americans are not at all direct.

*N11: "...un latino no puede decir algo que no es muy agradable. Yo recuerdo una vez, durante el tiempo de Sisu. Estuvimos en Ecuador. Los dos amigos míos finlandeses y yo fuimos a exhibir un vehículo en Ecuador. Salieron de Quito, y le preguntaron a un indio por allá. ¿Si queda mucho tiempo todavía para llegar a Calipartá? Le contestó el indio: 'No, eso queda aquisito nada más'. Eran 92 km."*

*("... A Latino can not say something, which is not very nice. I remember once during the time of Sisu. We were in Ecuador. Two Finnish friends of mine and I went to exhibit one vehicle in Ecuador. They left from Quito, and they asked one Indian there. Is it still a long way to Calipartá? The Indian responded them. 'No, it is right here.' That town was about 92 km away.")*

The same negotiator [N11] continues about another communication aspect in Colombia. He explains that it is very important first to talk about something before getting into the point of the negotiation. Another participant [N1] comments the same aspect also.

*N1: "Aquí siempre hay una charla. La gente empieza a hablar de futbol, de la familia, del 'environment'. Siempre hay un 'warm-up' antes de entrar en el tema. .... Siempre hablan general y después se entra en el tema."*

*("Here there is always a chat. The people begin to talk about football, about the family, about the environment. Always there is a warm-up before starting the real conversation ... Always they talk in general and then they begin the matter at hand.")*

*N11: "Por ejemplo con un latino no se puede empezar a hablar YA de negocios. Hay que hablar algo general, conocerse un poco, acercarse. Y hacerse amigo con el paso de tiempo."*

*("For example with a Latino you can not begin to talk RIGHT AWAY about the business. You have to talk something in general, get to know a bit, get near. And to make friends little by little.")*

Surely the way to "break the ice" and to begin the Finnish and Colombian business negotiations is different as the interviewed person wanted to point out how it is done among Latin Americans.



### 5.3.1.4 Differences in time concept

The second most frequent aspects refer to the 'time concept'. Time is mentioned eight times by six [N1, N3, N4, N7, N9, N10] interviewed persons. Two of them [N7, N9] speak about the difference in planning. Finnish negotiators act in a long-term plan and Latin Americans in a short-term plan. The explanation the negotiator [N9] gives is rather interesting. He says that Colombians do not have temporality. Colombia is living in a state of war, and they have to have a war psychology. The situation the country is going through affects the time concept. To make plans for one week is already long-term planning. This person explains that such behaviour is caused by the war.

*N9: "... En el caso colombiano no hay una temporalidad. Los colombianos vivimos en guerra y por lo tanto tenemos una psicología de guerra. Entonces largo plazo es una semana. .... El 100% de los casos cuando tu haces un plan anual tu sabes que no se va a cumplir, porque no sabes que va a pasar."*

*("... In a Colombian case there is no temporality. We Colombians live in a war and that is why we have a war psychology. A long-term plan is one week. .... In 100% of the cases, when you make an annual plan, you know that it is not going to be fulfilled, because you do not know what is going to happen.")*

The negotiator [N1] says that Colombia is a "mañana culture". By that he means that time is not very exactly defined in Colombia. One may say that 'mañana' (which means literally 'tomorrow' or 'in the morning') we will do this and that, but it really means that one of these days the thing will be done. This time system is important for the Finnish negotiators to know as it reflects directly in Colombian Latin American communication and negotiation practises. He says:

*N1: "Mañana es una cosa que uno no sabe nunca cuando va a pasar."*

*("Mañana is a thing, which one never knows when it is going to happen.")*

### 5.3.1.5 "Lack of knowledge"

The category of 'lack of knowledge' between Finland and Colombia is mentioned five times (10,0%) by three [N4, N5, N11] negotiators. This indicator is given the third highest percentage among the eleven categories. The negotiator [N5] considers that there is a mutual ignorance between these two countries. A Finnish participant [N11] states that the Finnish do not understand the Colombians. Two Colombian negotiators acknowledge that the ignorance is due to the geographical distance between the countries. If the parties hardly know each other, the communication is not easy. They remark:

*N5: "Otro es el desconocimiento de los finlandeses. En general desconocen mucho de Colombia. Y los colombianos desconocen todo de Finlandia."*

*("Another thing is the lack of knowledge of the Finns. In general they do not know very much about Colombia. And the Colombians know nothing about Finland.")*

N11: *"No los entienden. Pero, por otra parte no se espera que entiendan tampoco."*

*("They do not understand. But, on the other hand, they are not expected to understand either.")*

### 5.3.1.6 Differences in attitude toward the product-price relation

Two negotiators [N3, N8] mention that Finnish negotiators are *not flexible*. The negotiator [N3] refers to the lack of flexibility in time. The negotiator [N8] specifies that the lack of flexibility applies especially with prices. His answer is classified into the 'product-price' category. He says that Finnish are convinced that their product is excellent and that is why it can be very expensive. He also advises that the Finnish negotiators should come to Colombia with alternative prices. Latin Americans expect to have a good, inexpensive product and Finnish want to offer an excellent and very expensive product. The subject of the product-price was mentioned three times (6,0%) in the interviews by two negotiators. The price factor seems to cause problems, as Colombians consider the Finnish products too expensive. The negotiator [N8] comments:

*N8: "Sino que han sido muy convencidos de que su producto es muy bueno y de que el precio es muy alto, pero que no importa si el precio sea alto si el producto es bueno. ....que vengan preparados con alternativas, con alternativas más económicas. .... Latino espera un producto bueno y barato. El finlandés trae el producto que es excelente y caro."*

*("Instead they have been very convinced that their product is very good and the price is very high. But the high price does not matter if the product is very good. ...they should come prepared with alternatives, with more economic alternatives. .... A Latino expects a good and cheap product. A Finn brings a product, which is excellent and expensive.")*

### 5.3.1.7 "Business opportunities"

One Colombian [N4] negotiator makes an observation about Finnish traditions. This answer is categorised as 'business opportunities'. There are two responses classified as business opportunities. He found that his observed traditions could open possible markets for Colombia. One of the exporting products could be coffee, as *"all the family or business meetings in Finland begin or finish with a cup of coffee"*. (*"En Finlandia toda reunión familiar o de negocios se inicia o culmina con una taza de café."*) He clarifies that in Finland there is Colombian coffee, but it is often mixed with Brazilian or African coffee and it does not have the Colombian characteristics. The interviewed person considers the pure Colombian coffee a better option. He had even given some coffee to the president Ahtisaari and few ambassadors in Finland. Some people commented

after tasting the Colombian coffee: *"Por fin volví a tomar café."* ("At last I drink real coffee again.")

This negotiator [N4] had observed during his three years of working and living in Finland that the Finns take flowers to all possible events. (*"En todo acontecimiento llevan flores."*) Colombia exports flowers and it is known for its national flower: orchid. There is a huge variety of flowers and according to this negotiator it could be a product to export to Finland also. He considers that there are enormous possibilities for more business between Finland and Colombia, but they are not worked out yet. Finland is not known in Colombia and both Colombian and Finnish negotiators do not know each other. In the opinion of this negotiator, Finns are too traditional and hesitant to look for new markets. That hinders the communication and business. This negotiator feels that the differences may be productive also. He gives a following opinion:

*N4: "Primera referencia que me llamó muchísimo la atención era que Finlandia era el mayor consumidor, per capita en el mundo, de café. En Finlandia toda reunión, reunión familiar o de negocios, se inicia o culmina con una taza de café. Es un instrumento para aprovechar. .... Y de allí podría haber un instrumento. .... En todo acontecimiento llevan flores. Entonces si bien ustedes tienen problemas por el clima, podríamos encontrar unos puentes. Además para que Finlandia entrara en el proveedor al mercado ruso y al todo del Ex Unión Soviética allí encontré otro punto de.. .... Finlandia es muy importante en esto, pero a veces no se capta desde allá. Y desde aquí muchas personas no ven esa acción bien, porque Finlandia no ha sido promocionada bien, porque no es conocida. ... .No obstante la distancia y lo distintos que son Colombia y Finlandia podrían hacerse acciones de naturaleza conjunta."*

*("The first reference that caught my attention was that Finland is the major consumer of coffee per capita. In Finland, every meeting, whether meetings of the family or business meetings, start or finish with a cup of coffee. It is an opportunity to take advantage of. .... And there could be an instrument. .... In all the events they take flowers. Then, if you have problems with the climate, we could find bridges. Besides, for Finland to enter as a provider into the Russian and all the Ex Soviet market, there I found another point of.. .... Finland is very important in this, but sometimes it is not captured from there. And seen from here, many persons do not see this action well, because Finland has not been promoted well, because it is not known. .... Anyway the distance and the different they are Colombia and Finland could do common actions.")*

#### **5.3.1.8 Suggestions for the Finnish negotiators with regard to the Finnish-Latin American communication**

Three (3/6,0%) specific recommendations were given by two [N1, N3] negotiators. These suggestions are very important for the Finnish negotiators to know in order to avoid losing time. One of these interviewed persons [N1] comments about "the follow-up" culture in Colombia. It means that the person waits to be reminded that s/he has to accomplish the task, which s/he has promised to do. Without this "follow-up" (reminder) the person does not feel required to do the task. This occurs in all areas: in the companies, in the travel agencies, in the universities, etc. The other aspect mentioned by the same

negotiator is about “the mistrust culture” in Latin America in general. The person is trusted after s/he has proved to be a friend. This is different in Finland for example. The person is automatically trusted and mistrusted only when s/he does something that the trust in her/him is lost. “The mistrust culture” is expensive, as all the possible security measures must be activated. Also, it complicates the communication and the negotiations. Here are two opinions about the above mentioned aspects:

*N1: “Otra cosa que es muy mala para nosotros es que todas las personas están esperando un “follow-up”. Tienes que entregar mañana, pero a ellos se les está esperando a ser cobradas para que la persona de “deliver” para entregar. Eso es muy malo. Las personas, si tu no haces un “follow-up” ellos no se sienten comprometidos. .... Muy malo, porque duplica el trabajo. Si tu dices: “¿Me entregas esto para la próxima semana en jueves?” Y te dicen: “Listo.” Te volteas en EE.UU., en Finlandia, la persona en jueves está comprometido. Pero en general en Latino América las personas están esperando que antes de una fecha les recuerdes que tiene que entregar esto. Para que realmente no tengas una mala sorpresa: “Uy, se me olvidó.”*

*(“Another very bad thing for us is that all the people are waiting for a follow-up. You have to hand over, but they are waited to be charged so that the delivery person would give.. This is very bad. If you do not do a follow-up, the persons do not feel obligated to do what they said they would do). This is very bad, because it doubles the work. If you say; ‘Give me this on Thursday next week, will you?’ And they tell you ‘Ok.’ In the USA and in Finland, the person is obligated to complete the task by Thursday. But, in general in Latin America, people expect that, before a due date, you remind them that they have to finish the task. That way, you won’t have a bad surprise: ‘Uy, I forgot that.’”)*

*N1: “Es que yo llamo la cultura de desconfianza. Eso cuesta cualquier cantidad de plata. La gente está siempre desconfiada. .... Eso significa que todos son potenciales ladrones. Yo tengo que chequearlos. Cuando salen tengo que revisarlos.”*

*(“I call it a culture of the mistrust. It costs a lot of money. The people are always mistrusting. .... That means that everyone is a potential robber. I have to check them. When they leave, I have to check them.”)*

### 5.3.1.9 Task or people orientation

Three negotiators [N4, N7, N10] comment about aspects referring to the task orientation (the category of ‘task or people orientation’) of the Finns. They compare it to being technical, which is something very positive. Colombians in their opinion are more humanist and emotional. They focus on intangible features in communication and negotiation. Colombians make more errors because of their emotionalism. Finns concentrate on their task and that makes for good progress on the task. Two examples are given here:

*N4: “... los finlandeses han ido con el paso lento, pero bien. Y está observando hacia donde camina. Lo está haciendo con un paso firme para no equivocarse. Aquí se actúa muy caprichosamente en ciertos instantes. Y como muy emocionalmente.”*

*("... the Finns have been progressing slowly but surely. They watch closely the direction in which they are walking. They are making it with a steady step, in order not to make mistakes. Here, one acts very capriciously in certain moments. And very emotionally.")*

*N7: "...en general es una cultura muy técnica. Por ejemplo los celulares... tienen un gran número de usuarios.. Hay un montón, hay una docena de funciones. Los finlandeses las aprenden todas, mandan mensajes, ... Los latinos son más humanistas. .. Quizás al principio son choques de mundos. Yo creo que a nosotros, los latinos nos aísla mucho que los latinos damos mucha importancia a las relaciones humanas."*

*("...in general it is a very technical culture. For example, the cellular phones... They have a great number of users. A lot, there is a dozen of functions. The Finns learn all of them; they send messages, .... The Latinos are more humanist. .. Probably in the beginning these are clashes with the worlds. I believe, that we Latinos are isolated a lot because we put too much importance on the human relations.")*

The differences in Finnish-Latin American communication are not due to the language, but the differences between cultures. Latin American negotiators are aware of the differences. However they do not analyse the causes of the variances. The differences mainly hinder the optimal communication, understanding and trust in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. The contrasts are not catastrophic anyway. There are also differences, which the negotiators consider as aspects of curiosity and interest.

TABLE 5.3 Categorisation of the open responses:

| CATEGORY                        | MENTIONED ASPECT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | NEGOTIATOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • <b>Communication</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finns go directly to the point (high – low context).</li> <li>• Finnish listen a lot and speak little. Finnish silence is deadly.</li> <li>• Silence</li> <li>• In Finland it's normal not to speak, in L.A. if one doesn't speak something is wrong.</li> <li>• Latinos explain very much.</li> <li>• Finns are not very expressive and Latinos are very expressive.</li> <li>• Colombians like to chat a little bit before getting into the point.</li> <li>• In Finland spoken word is valuable. In Colombia only the written word matters.</li> <li>• Finns respond by hand on the same fax they received instead of using a new fax.</li> <li>• Some have a very good communication: a certain form to write faxes.</li> <li>• Finns are quick and agile to respond.</li> <li>• Linguistic: we have to check if we understood &gt; slow meetings.</li> <li>• Communication barrier, which is not only due to the language.</li> <li>• Latin Americans can not say something, which is not very nice.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N1</li> <li>• N1</li> <li>• N2</li> <li>• N3</li> <li>• N6</li> <li>• N7</li> <li>• N1, N11</li> <li>• N9</li> <li>• N9</li> <li>• N10</li> <li>• N8</li> <li>• N8</li> <li>• N9, N11</li> <li>• N11</li> </ul> <p>Total: 16 (32,0%)</p> |
| • <b>Time Concept</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finnish long-term and Latin short-term activities.</li> <li>• Colombia is a 'mañana culture'. Time is not specific.</li> <li>• In Finland there are few changes, in Colombia many changes.</li> <li>• Latinos fail to fulfil their promises ("incumplida").</li> <li>• Finns are very serious. Latinos are more flexible.</li> <li>• Finns are slow, very exact; they don't make quick decisions.</li> <li>• Finns are very rigid, demanding and programmed in their way to work.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N7, N9</li> <li>• N1</li> <li>• N9</li> <li>• N1</li> <li>• N3</li> <li>• N10</li> <li>• N4</li> </ul> <p>Total: 8 (16,0%)</p>                                                                                                           |
| • <b>Product-Price</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of flexibility in prices, too high prices.</li> <li>• You have to have a good price and good quality.</li> <li>• Finns have an excellent and expensive products.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N8</li> <li>• N11</li> <li>• N8</li> </ul> <p>Total: 3 (6,0%)</p>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| • <b>Business opportunities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the meetings begin with a cup of coffee – coffee.</li> <li>• Finns bring flowers to all the events – flowers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N4</li> <li>• N4</li> </ul> <p>Total: 2 (4,0%)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                       |

(Continues)

|                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Suggestions by the interviewees</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Colombia you always have to remind the people – a follow-up culture.</li> <li>• You have to know that Finns trust in people and Latinos mistrust people.</li> <li>• Don't try to talk about the business during the lunch. Do it after the lunch.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N1</li> <li>• N1</li> <li>• N3</li> </ul> <p>Total: 3 (6,0%)</p>                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Task or people orientation</b></li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finns are technical and Latinos are human.</li> <li>• Finns are very good technicians.</li> <li>• Finns go slowly but surely, not to make errors – Latinos are emotional. They make errors.</li> </ul>                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N7</li> <li>• N10, N4</li> <li>• N4</li> </ul> <p>Total: 3 (6,0%)</p>                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of knowledge</b></li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finns ignore a lot about Colombia– Colombians ignore all about Finland.</li> <li>• We are very far from each other.</li> <li>• Finns don't understand Colombians; they don't have to either.</li> <li>• Finland is not known in Colombia.</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N5</li> <li>• N5</li> <li>• N11</li> <li>• N4</li> </ul> <p>Total: 5 (10,0%)</p>                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No cultural differences</b></li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is something more universal.</li> <li>• The national culture doesn't matter as much as the company culture.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N2</li> <li>• N11</li> </ul> <p>Total: 2 (4,0%)</p>                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finnish women</b></li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finnish women are very sweet, like Latinos.</li> <li>• Finnish women are quicker than Finnish men are.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N2</li> <li>• N2</li> </ul> <p>Total 2 (4,0%)</p>                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finland, a positive culture</b></li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finland is a consensus culture – Latin America is a dissension culture.</li> <li>• Finland is a very positive culture.</li> <li>• Finns take care of their environment (“Cultura de aseo”), Colombians throw rubbish in the street.</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N7</li> <li>• N7</li> <li>• N1</li> </ul> <p>Total 3 (6,0%)</p>                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comments on specific subjects</b></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finland is an alcohol culture. They drink a lot.</li> <li>• Finns have a culture shock with Latinos.</li> <li>• We are very different.</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N3</li> <li>• N10</li> <li>• N4</li> </ul> <p>Total. 3 (6,0%)</p> <p><b>Total: 50 (100%)</b></p> |

#### 5.4 Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators compared with Latin American perceptions

Spanish negotiators expressed a few more opinions, as they were not limited to three positive and three negative aspects from the list of characteristics (see table 5.4). For the Spanish this question was open. Their answers can be placed easily into the three categories elaborated for analysing this data. (On the basis of the Spanish negotiators' answers the list of characteristics was elaborated for the interviews in Bogota.) In the parenthesis is the frequency as well as the percentage of the persons, who mentioned a certain characteristic. It is not considered necessary to notify the exact negotiator by whom the perception was given.

Both Latin American and Spanish interviewees perceive that the main strength of the Finnish negotiators lies in the management (managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process) and the negotiation process as such. Latin Americans mention 21 (50,0%) and Spanish 26 (54,2%) positive aspects dealing with the negotiation process and Finnish ability to manage the international negotiations.

In the group of managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process the most frequent characteristic of the Finnish negotiators that the Latin Americans mention is *serious* (7/16,7%). Spanish express that the main Finnish characteristic is being *organised* (5/10,4%). With this they explain that the Finnish capacity to organise has to do with the seriousness. Also, the rest of the Spanish interviewees' perceptions have to do with a similar quality. They express that Finns are *efficient* (4/8,3%). Finns *prepare well the meetings* (4/8,3%). Finnish negotiators *concentrate on the agenda* (2/4,2%) and they are *planners* (2/4,2%). Seriousness and being organised are clearly appreciated as a Finnish characteristic. Both Latin American and Spanish negotiators value these features. Finns are future and long-term oriented. They plan and envision their future steps and decisions.

As to the personal characteristics dealing with social skills the Latin Americans focus on Finnish *punctuality* (4/9,5%). The present author considers that the Spanish noticed the same aspect. They expressed it as being *organised* (5/10,4%). One Spanish negotiator said:

*"Ellos se programarán para cumplir lo que han prometido. Son más metódicos, más organizados..."*

*("They will program themselves in order to fulfil their promises. They are more methodical, more organised...")*

Spanish interviewees mention that the Finns are *kind* (4/8,3%) and *democratic* (4/8,3%). The *trustworthiness* (1/2,1%) and capacity of *collaboration* (1/2,1%) of the Finns is also notified.



In the category of international preparedness, the Spanish consider Finns to be less internationally oriented than Latin Americans do. The Spanish mentioned six (6/12,5%) aspects in this category, while Latin Americans reported eleven (11/26,2%). The Spanish believe that Finns *do not master foreign languages* well. Only one person interviewed appreciated Finnish foreign language proficiency. Some of them commented that Finns do not master Spanish. That may mean that, for the Spanish, mastery of foreign languages means Spanish proficiency. Latin Americans think that Finns are *good at languages* (5/11,9%). Latin Americans also mentioned the Finnish skill of listening (*good listeners*: 3/7,1%) to the counterparts' opinions. The Spanish, however, did not mention this. Both interviewed groups consider Finnish negotiators to be *helpful in offering information* (Latin American: 1/2,4% and Spanish: 1/2,1%).

In the category of managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process, seven (7/16,3%) Spanish negotiators express that for them the principal Finnish problem is the *lack of flexibility*. Spanish mention also that Finns *do not take care of their image* (2/4,7%). This feature is outside the list of characteristics. It most surely has to do with the low and high context difference, and the difference in face saving strategies. Latin Americans also mention the lack of flexibility (3/8,8%). But the flexibility (2/4,8%) is also reported as a positive quality of the Finns. So after combining the positive and negative frequencies the Finns can be considered lacking flexibility (1/2,9%) for the Latin Americans.

For the Latin American negotiators the two principal Finnish weaknesses in this category of managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process are the *lack of aggressiveness* (5/14,7%) and the *slow decision-making* (5/14,7%). Finns seem to be too slow, too democratic (see Sajavaara and Lehtonen, 1997)<sup>1</sup> and too "well educated" in Latin market. In Colombia, for example, those who have the position and courage to get involved and make quick moves do the business. One Colombian negotiator says anyway that the quick moves are not always the best way to conduct business.

N4: *"Aquí se actúa muy caprichosamente. Decisiones rápidas, pero no lo suficientemente calculadas o estimadas en el respaldo de suficiente tiempo."*

*("Here one acts very capriciously. Quick decisions, but not made with enough calculation or time.")*

The main Finnish negotiators' weaknesses from the Spanish point of view lie in the personal aspects dealing with social skills. The Spanish express that the Finns are *not creative* (5/1,6%) and they are *cold* (4/9,3%). The Spanish compare the Finns with the German negotiators who always need norms and rules to follow. In a situation of chaos, they do not know what to do if the rules are absent.

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<sup>1</sup> Sajavaara, K. and Lehtonen, J. 1997. The Silent Finn Revisited. In Jaworski, A. (ed.) 1997. Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Berlin: Mouton Gruyter.

The negotiators interviewed in Bogota do not mention about the Finnish coldness at all. On the contrary one [N2] of them says that the *Finns are like Latinos*. They are warm and the women are very sweet. In fact, one Finnish negotiator in Madrid mentioned this similarity in characteristic between Latinos and Finns. He maintains business with Latin American negotiators. One (1/2,9%) Latin American negotiator mentioned the aspect of individualism. Three (3/7,0%) Spanish negotiators remark that Finns *do not dress well*. Only one (1/2,9%) Latin American negotiator noticed this aspect. Both Spanish (1/2,3%) and Latin American (2/5,9%) perceive Finnish *lack of humour*. Also both groups of interviewed consider Finns as *timid*. Spanish negotiators report that Finns have problems with *alcohol* (2/4,7%). In meetings, they easily drink too much and that is a very serious problem in business. One (1/2,9%) Latin American interviewed comments (when responding to the open question) about the problem of alcohol.

In the category of Finnish international preparedness both Spanish (7/16,3%) and Latin American (6/17,6%) negotiators focus on the Finnish insufficient (*not good*) *verbal expression*. One (1/2,9%) Latin American person says also that the Finns are *too silent*, so in fact there are seven (7/20,5%) persons testifying Finnish lack of verbal communication.

Latin American negotiators have a more positive image of the Finnish negotiators than Spanish interviewees do. The Spanish transmit more perceptions: both positive (6,6% more) and negative (11,7% more) ones. Latin American negotiators see Finnish strengths (total of 50,0% of the positive aspects) and weaknesses (total of 41,2% of the negative aspects) in their managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process. Spanish negotiators observe Finnish strengths in the category of managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process (total of 55,3% of the positive aspects), but they consider Finnish weaknesses in the personal characteristics dealing with social skills (total of 51,2% of the negative aspects).

**TABLE 5.4 Comparison between Latin American and Spanish positive perceptions about Finnish negotiators**

| Latin American perceptions > FIN                    |           |             | Spanish perceptions > FIN                           |           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           | MANAGERIAL ASPECT DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS  | FREQ      | %           |
| Serious                                             | 7         | 16,7        | Organised                                           | 5         | 10,4        |
| Efficient                                           | 4         | 9,5         | Efficient                                           | 4         | 8,3         |
| Organised                                           | 3         |             | Prepare well the meetings                           | 4         | 8,3         |
| Good technical know-how                             | 2         | 4,8         | *Concrete                                           | 2         | 4,2         |
| Flexible                                            | 2         | 4,8         | *Planners                                           | 2         | 4,2         |
| Quick decision-making                               | 2         | 4,8         | Concentrate on the agenda                           | 2         | 4,2         |
| Modern organisations                                | 1         | 2,4         | Good technical know-how                             | 2         | 4,2         |
|                                                     |           |             | Serious                                             | 2         | 4,2         |
|                                                     |           |             | Flexible                                            | 2         | 4,2         |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>21</b> | <b>50,0</b> | <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>26</b> | <b>54,2</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>47</b> |             |
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           | PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           |
| Punctual                                            | 4         | 9,5         | Democratic                                          | 4         | 8,3         |
| Trustworthy                                         | 2         | 4,8         | *Kind                                               | 4         | 8,3         |
| Good manners                                        | 1         | 2,4         | *Ambitious                                          | 1         | 2,1         |
| Collaborative                                       | 1         | 2,4         | *Calm                                               | 1         | 2,1         |
| Democratic                                          | 1         | 2,4         | *Formalistic                                        | 1         | 2,1         |
| *Fighters                                           | 1         | 2,4         | *Patient                                            | 1         | 2,1         |
|                                                     |           |             | *Young                                              | 1         | 2,1         |
|                                                     |           |             | Collaborative                                       | 1         | 2,1         |
|                                                     |           |             | Good manners                                        | 1         | 2,1         |
|                                                     |           |             | Trustworthy                                         | 1         | 2,1         |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>10</b> | <b>23,8</b> | <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>16</b> | <b>33,3</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>26</b> |             |
| INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           | INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           |
| Master foreign languages                            | 5         | 11,9        | Manage international operations                     | 2         | 4,2         |
| Good listeners                                      | 3         | 7,1         | Open to other cultures                              | 2         | 4,2         |
| Manage international operations                     | 2         | 4,8         | Help to obtain information                          | 1         | 2,1         |
| Help to obtain information                          | 1         | 2,4         | Master foreign languages                            | 1         | 2,1         |
| <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>11</b> | <b>26,2</b> | <b>Total of positive aspects</b>                    | <b>6</b>  | <b>12,5</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>17</b> |             |

(Continues)

TABLE 5.4 Comparison between Latin American and Spanish negative perceptions about Finnish negotiators

| Latin American perceptions > FIN                    |           |             | Spanish perceptions > FIN                           |           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           | MANAGERIAL ASPECTS DEALING WITH NEGOTIATION PROCESS | FREQ      | %           |
| Not aggressive                                      | 5         | 14,7        | Not flexible                                        | 7         | 16,3        |
| Slow decision-making                                | 5         | 14,7        | *Do not take care of their image                    | 2         | 4,7         |
| Not flexible                                        | 3         | 8,8         | Slow decision-making                                | 2         | 4,7         |
| Do not prepare the meetings well                    | 1         | 2,9         |                                                     |           |             |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>14</b> | <b>41,2</b> | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>11</b> | <b>25,6</b> |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    |           |             |                                                     | <b>25</b> |             |
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           | PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DEALING WITH SOCIAL SKILLS | FREQ      | %           |
| Authoritarian                                       | 2         | 5,9         | Not creative                                        | 5         | 11,6        |
| Not good sense of humour                            | 2         | 5,9         | *Cold                                               | 4         | 9,3         |
| Not creative                                        | 2         | 5,9         | Not collaborative                                   | 3         | 7,0         |
| Not well dressed                                    | 1         | 2,9         | Not well dressed                                    | 3         | 7,0         |
| Not good manners                                    | 1         | 2,9         | *Alcohol                                            | 2         | 4,7         |
| Not proud                                           | 1         | 2,9         | *Timid                                              | 1         | 2,3         |
| Not collaborative                                   | 1         | 2,9         | Not good manners                                    | 1         | 2,3         |
| *Timid                                              | 1         | 2,9         | Not good sense of humour                            | 1         | 2,3         |
| *Individualist                                      | 1         | 2,9         | Not trustworthy                                     | 1         | 2,3         |
|                                                     |           |             | *Too punctual                                       | 1         | 2,3         |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>12</b> | <b>35,3</b> | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>22</b> | <b>51,2</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>34</b> |             |
| INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           | INTERNATIONAL PREPAREDNESS                          | FREQ      | %           |
| Not good verbal expression                          | 6         | 17,6        | Not good verbal expression                          | 7         | 16,3        |
| Not open to other cultures                          | 1         | 2,9         | Do not manage international operations              | 1         | 2,3         |
| *Too silent                                         | 1         | 2,9         | Do not master foreign languages                     | 1         | 2,3         |
|                                                     |           |             | Not open to other cultures                          | 1         | 2,3         |
| <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>8</b>  | <b>23,5</b> | <b>Total of negative aspects</b>                    | <b>10</b> | <b>23,3</b> |
| <b>Total of aspects</b>                             |           |             |                                                     | <b>18</b> |             |

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the main results are shown and discussed. The classification is explained and the results are divided according to the categories and the objects of this study. The section 6.1 discusses about the differences and similarities between the given perceptions about the Finnish and Colombian negotiators. The section 6.2 analyses about the cultural differences the interviewees perceive in Finnish-Latin American communication. In the section 6.3 Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions about Finnish negotiators are compared.

### 6.1 Perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators

The perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators in business negotiations are conceptualised and analysed according to three (3) categories. They are regarded to be the main indicators to detect and measure the cultural differences in perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators as well as the cultural differences in Finnish and Colombian behaviour (style) in negotiation. These categories are: managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process, personal characteristics dealing with social skills, and international preparedness. The skills and tasks included in the three categories, and how these aspects are understood in this study, are explained in the section 3.5.

When the perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators are compared, rather opposite strengths and weaknesses are found. It is observed that Finnish and Colombians operate according to different negotiation styles. These differences are believed to be caused by national cultural differences.

Finnish negotiators' strengths (21 aspects/50,0%) and weaknesses (14 aspects/41,2%) are in their management skills. The Colombian strengths (10/35,7%) and weaknesses (19/54,5%) are found in their personal aspects dealing with social skills in negotiation. It could be thought that the negotiators' strengths and weaknesses were found in different categories, but they are

situated in the same groups. Finnish negotiators are skilful in the operational aspects of the negotiation process, but their deficiencies are also found in the same processes. In this study the Colombian negotiators are strong in the personal aspects dealing with the social skills, and their weaknesses lie in the same category.

Finns and Colombian seem to negotiate rather differently. The interviewees' focus appears to be from the beginning in different aspects on Finns and Colombians. The interviewed negotiators selected few Finnish personal characteristics. Their attention is principally on management. Latin Americans pay little attention to Finnish personal characteristics. When negotiating the Finns seem to separate the personal aspects from their business making and they focus on the negotiation process as such. This is a reflection of Finnish universalist (task oriented) cultural system in negotiations. Finns' objective in negotiation is to obtain an agreement and a contract, not to widen their 'amigo-nets'. Finns separate clearly the personal and the job aspects in their life. Latin American negotiators value this characteristic in Finnish negotiators. Latin American negotiators in various occasions comment that there is too much disorder in their business making. For example the most frequent perception mentioned about the Colombian negotiators is '*not punctual*'.

This Colombian weakness in reference to the lack of punctuality is known nationally and internationally. Zuleta (1998)<sup>1</sup> marks that unpunctuality is one of the main Colombian failures. She says, "*unpunctuality is one considerable problem. It means incapacity to value our time and others' time*". Also Lewis (1997)<sup>2</sup> in his training courses for European negotiators mentions that one of the Latin American characteristics is "*a poor sense of time*". Axtall (1990)<sup>3</sup> comments on Latin American unpunctuality in general and states: "*as for punct, a 30 minutes delay is customary*". In North American or Central and Northern European international negotiations such a long delay is intolerable.

The most frequently given perceptions about Colombian negotiators are the following aspects. Colombians are perceived to be creative, flexible and behaving with good manners. They are not at all punctual. Colombian negotiators do not master foreign languages. The perceptions about Finnish negotiators are nearly the opposite. The principal perceptions made about Finnish negotiators by Latin American interviewed are the following. Finns are serious, efficient, organised and punctual. They master foreign languages. Finns are not good in their verbal expression. They are not aggressive<sup>4</sup> enough and

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<sup>1</sup> Zuleta, M. 1998. 'Las Faltas más Comunes de los Colombianos.' El Espectador. 29 de Octubre de 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, R. 1997. Cultural Diversity in Latin America. Seminar in Helsinki (Finland). June 4-5, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Axtall, R. 1990. Do's and Taboos of Hosting International Visitors. New York: Wiley and Sons, Inc.

<sup>4</sup> By aggressiveness in this study is meant the commercial aggressiveness (assertivity and ability to make rapid decisions) in business, not physical violence.

they are too slow in their decision-making. These characteristics are perceived about the Finns when they negotiate with Latin Americans in Finnish-Colombian business.

Finnish seriousness, efficiency, organisation and punctuality are reflections of universalistic (task-oriented) and monochronic behaviour in business negotiations. For Finns, it is important to do what has been promised in a time compromised. Good human relations as well as trust come from fulfilling one's promises and from work well done. Latin American negotiators appreciate these attributes very much. Colombian unpunctuality is mentioned as a lack of seriousness, which is idiosyncratic in the Latin market. Colombians operate according to the polychronic, particularist (people orientation) and diffuse (high context) time system. They treat time with great flexibility. They get involved in various projects, and probably do not finish all of them. For Colombians, good human relations have to be developed first and then the business may be started. The negotiators participating in the present study appear to have a tendency to value the monochronic style of negotiation. International business operations look for more monochronic approaches in their relation to time. *"When companies go global there is an almost inevitable move towards universalist way of thinking"* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998)<sup>5</sup>

There are aspects in Colombian negotiating with the Finns that can be understood as conflicts. Finnish lack of aggressiveness is one of them. Finns seem to be too serious, too slow and too organised (see Sajavaara and Lehtonen, 1997)<sup>6</sup> in Latin market where everything is under continuous changes. Those who are very rapid and have the courage to get involved and make quick moves get the business. The Finnish gentleman type of negotiating does not seem to fit in Latin American market.

Here the difference in aggressiveness may be due to the difference in business making: distributive and integrative (see section 2.6). Integrative looks for collaboration and distributive looks for "fight". Distributive bargainers try to beat the opponents seeing the negotiation process as haggling. Colombian negotiators perceive the negotiation as haggling. (Van Hoof, Bernal and Ogliastri, 1999)<sup>7</sup> In integrative negotiation the parties seek to accept each other's opinions, attitudes and information as accurate, logical and valid. Finnish negotiate according to the integrative style.

The lack of aggressiveness may also be due to the Finnish feminine style of negotiating (See section 2.3.1.3). Masculinity and femininity dimensions create different management styles and conflict solving strategies. In feminine cultures, as Finland is, the negotiators seek consensus and collaboration. In masculine countries, as Colombia is, conflicts are solved aggressively and with

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<sup>5</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>6</sup> Sajavaara, K. and Lehtonen, J. 1997. *The Silent Finn Revisited*. In Jaworski, A. (ed.) 1997. *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

<sup>7</sup> Van Hoof, B.; Bernal, J. and Ogliastri, E. 1999. *Los Negociadores Colombianos: Una Comparación con los Holandeses*. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.

intense, even offensive arguments. One Argentinean negotiator [N7] express this in his opinion. "*Finland is a consensus culture and Latin America is a dissension culture.*"

An aspect, which needs more profound investigation, is the effect the nation's wealth has on the negotiation style. The rich countries usually adopt integrative negotiation strategies. The less wealthy and poor countries are inclined to have distributive negotiation tendencies. One rather exaggerated example may help in visualising this feature. As it was mentioned in the section 2.6 the negotiation in this study is understood very broadly as an activity all people do. Having this in mind people are also negotiating in supermarket when they are offered to taste, for example, a new pasta sauce on the market. People in wealthy countries do not normally run to have their sample, but in poor countries they do rush to have one or more samples. In the latter case the people are negotiating aggressively and distributively due to a great need they face.

It is interesting that the Latin American interviewed mention the Finnish lack of aggressiveness, but only one of them mentions the pertinent Colombian aggressiveness. It may be that Colombians and other Latin Americans are similar in this aspect so that the interviewees do not pay much attention to this characteristic. It is usual that the cultures whose norms differ crucially tend to perceive each other's in terms of extremes. Normally it is the differences rather than similarities, which are noticed.

Latin American negotiators participating in this study master English and even other foreign languages. One Mexican negotiator is proficient in seven languages. Latin American negotiators perceive Finns also very capable in languages. Colombian negotiators are perceived to lack foreign language proficiency. Four negotiators mention this aspect. Finnish-Colombian negotiations are international, and the language is an essential part of them. The interviewed persons express that the Colombian negotiators need to improve their English proficiency. One Colombian negotiator mentions that as English is neither of the parties mother tongue, they have to check continuously whether the agreed and non-agreed aspects are understood by the parties. This process forms part of normal international negotiation. It is especially important during the implementation stage.

Finnish are perceived to master foreign languages, but at the same time their greatest weakness is the lack of verbal expression. Finns have been recorded by Bertol Brecht in one of his plays, as people who are silent in their two national languages: Finnish and Swedish. (Sajavaara and Lehtonen, 1997)<sup>8</sup> It was noticed in this study, that Finns are not only silent in their two languages, as Bertol Brecht indicates, but also in English and Spanish. The reason found for silence in this study is not the language, but the cultural factors. Finnish negotiators are not as expressive as Spanish and Latin American negotiators. One negotiator adds that the Finns are "*too silent*". Finnish lack of

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<sup>8</sup> Sajavaara, K. and Lehtonen, J. 1997. The Silent Finns Revisited. In Jaworski, A. (ed.) 1997. Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Berlin: Mouton Gruyter.



verbal expressiveness seems to make the Latin American feel uncomfortable. The communication style in this aspect is very different. Fluid negotiations are obviously not possible. Finnish and Latin American negotiators need to pay extra attention to this aspect and look for solutions. Only two negotiators mention Colombian good verbal expression. The Colombians are said to speak "*hasta por los codos*" (until their elbow). It is a saying meaning that the Colombians are a very verbal nation. But the Latin American interviewees do not note it. Also, a lot of speaking does not necessarily mean good verbal expression. Little attention to the Colombian verbal expression skills may be due to the similarity with the other Latin American negotiators in this aspect. Again it is noticed that the similarities are not perceived. Four negotiators mention Colombian lack of foreign language proficiency.

Finns need to modify their communication style a little when communicating with Latin Americans. Little talking is a real problem. Talking and socialising even verbosity gain trust and respect. Finnish negotiators have to learn that talking is not small talk, neither is it wasting time, but it is a really important part of business making in Colombia as well as in Latin America in general. Finns have to relax and be willing to get to know their partner and forget pure business a little. For the task-oriented and low context inclined Finns this feels very time-consuming. Surely they will be able to gain agreements and sell later when a good commercial relation has been developed. Latin Americans need to know their partner before making business. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998:89) offer an example of one Swedish company, which invested five days from their one-week selling trip with their Argentinean customer (in Argentina) just in getting to know their customer. After knowing their partner the Argentineans were willing to talk business.

Finnish negotiators listen to their partners and clients. '*Good listeners*' is considered as a very positive quality of the Finnish negotiators in the eyes of Latin American negotiators. In fact it is not any Finnish negotiators' special talent, but it is a part of the Finnish communication style. This style is characterised by turntaking. All the speakers participating in the conversation have a turn to talk. The speakers have an inner clock to feel the timing that everybody may speak more or less similar amount of time. Latin American negotiators perceive this as a special skill Finns have.

Finnish weaknesses in the personal characteristics dealing with social skills are mentioned with various distinctions. Finnish negotiators do not have a good sense of humour. They are not creative. They are authoritarian and not collaborative. Finnish negotiators do not behave with good manners; neither are they well dressed. Finns are timid and individualists. Even these aspects were given only infrequently; they reflect the necessity the Latin American negotiators put on personal relationships, negotiators' image and in general intangible aspects in business. Latin Americans negotiate with persons and not so much with companies. This can be understood as a cultural difference in negotiating styles between Finnish and Colombians (in general Latin American) as the Colombian negotiators were perceived nearly exactly opposite in these characteristics.

Colombian negotiators are perceived to be creative. That characteristic is the most frequently mentioned strength of the Colombians. Colombian commercial context seems to develop creativity. The risky, uncertain and unsatisfactory environment, as Colombia actually is, encourages creativity. Creativity is a very needed feature for international negotiators. They have to build order from chaos and creativity is a very much valued quality in such contexts. Finnish negotiators, on the contrary, are said to lack creativity. They are programmed to fulfil norms. This is rather understandable from the Colombian and Latin American point of view. Finnish negotiators, who negotiate with the Latin Americans, seem to do it from Finland via telephone, fax and e-mail primarily. That means that they operate in a Finnish cultural context where time is controlled, plans are made even years in advance and no great natural disasters occur. Finland is not at war and the country's economy is on a rather steady base. Finnish negotiators probably try to operate in Colombia in a similar way they are used to in Finland or in Europe. That does not lead to any success. With Colombians (even more if the negotiations are done in Colombia) Finns have to learn another kind of negotiation style, which is very much based on operating creatively and spontaneously.

## **6.2 Perceived cultural differences in communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations**

The cultural differences in intercultural communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations are categorised into eleven (11) groups. These groups are: communication, time concept, lack of knowledge, product-price, business opportunities, suggestions by the interviewees, Finnish women, Finland - a positive culture, task or people orientation, no cultural differences and comments on specific subjects. The groups serve as indicators to reflect and measure the cultural differences in communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. The differences indicate the areas of possible conflicts in business relations, but they also denote how differences may work for the good of both parties. The differences in communication demonstrate the areas where special intercultural skills and knowledge as well as conflict management is needed.

The interviewees are aware of the cultural differences even though two of them do not accept the differences in the first place. These two persons say that the company culture is stronger than the national culture. Later they mention various national cultural differences in communication. The negotiators are operating in their companies glocally. They have to respect the local, Colombian laws and norms. Also they need to respect their Finnish counterparts' and clients' regulations, as well as those countries' laws in with which they operate. They can be said to form a part of the glocalisation process. *"Glocalisation means that companies have to deal not only with world-wide considerations, but also with*

*specific rules and conditions of each country in which they operate. Glocalisation represents the need for transnational companies to be global and local at the same time.*" (Lubber, 1999)<sup>9</sup> The objective of the corporations seems to be global companies, but probably the firms are not yet at the global stage. The companies can be interpreted according to their negotiators' attitudes and operations to be approximately at the multinational level. (See Adler, 1991 in section 2.7)

The cultural differences in communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations can be divided into eleven (11) different themes. These themes can be considered as the principal indicators in detecting the cultural differences in Finnish-Latin American communication. The main confusions are found in the aspect of communication itself. This does not include the linguistic aspects as only one negotiator reports linguistic difficulties in his negotiation. Language is after all a small part of the intercultural communication in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. Language is only one, and then insufficient, instrument for understanding another culture and meanings in it. The differences in communication have to do with how much talk is needed, how directly and explicitly one is expected to communicate, whether the communication is used for purely transmitting knowledge and information or is it used for interpersonal and social ends. Whether hand-written or printed faxes are acceptable. The cultural aspects influence at a deep level and affect international negotiations. There is anyway a need to train international negotiators both in linguistic and in intercultural aspects.

Another category in which the Latin Americans find differences is the time concept. Finland and Colombia (Latin America in general) operate according to different time concepts and the logic in them is different. Naturally there are misunderstandings. In Colombia it is difficult to plan for the long run, because the country is at war and planning is not distinctive to a polychronic time system culture. The negotiators say that Colombia is a 'mañana' country and Latinos do not fulfil their promises, but they are very flexible. These all are reflections of polychronic time system culture. The present author agrees that the war and natural disasters cause so much insecurity and rapid changes that long-term plans are nearly impossible. In Colombia's case the war is obviously not the only reason, but the time system in the country is polychronic and very present oriented. These time systems reflect in little planning for the long run and continuous changes in agreements.

These findings are enough to show that even for the interviewed negotiators operating in a global and international world, there still are national cultural differences in the negotiators' level of functioning. These differences do influence the means to manage and negotiate. The negotiators have to be aware of the cultural aspects in their operations. It is the collective programming of the mind that Hofstede uses to describe culture which most influences the differences and the misunderstandings in intercultural communication and in international negotiation. Negotiators can not really understand people of

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<sup>9</sup> Lubber, R. 1999. In (<http://www.globalize.org/lexicon/glocalization.html>) 19 April 1999.

different nationalities. But they can and they have to know which kind of differences exist and how do they affect the process of doing business.

In communication there are some specific aspects, which may be considered as conflicts in Finnish-Colombian business. Hand-written faxes are commented not to be appropriate in Colombia. For Colombian negotiators it is important that the faxes are printed in a formal style. This aspect was also commented in Spain, by the Spanish negotiators. They said that Finns write the faxes by hand and also respond on the same fax they have received. In Finland this is surely considered as practical and quick method, but in Colombia (and in Spain) it is considered inappropriate to business negotiation protocol. In Colombia, the written word is what matters. The spoken word does not have the same value as in Finland. One negotiator reported this. Anyway, the Latin American negotiators appreciate Finnish promptness in responding to faxes. Colombia is a more formalistic culture than Finland. Formalism is seen, for example, in the use of titles such as 'doctor' for those, who have finished their university studies, or 'engineer' for those who have pursued a technical career at university. Being 'formal' means also using dark suit for the men; and a dress or trousers and jacket combination for the women. Finns have to respect the rules of Colombian formalism in order to gain the respect and trust of their Colombian business partners.

Finnish silence was also commented on. One Brazilian negotiator said that Finnish silence is mortal to Latin Americans. Another negotiator (Finnish-Argentinean) clarifies that silence to Latin Americans means that something is wrong. He is aware that in Finland silence is totally normal. Silence forms part of Finnish communication and talkativeness is a part of Colombian communication. Finnish negotiators obviously need to learn to be more expressive and understand that talkativeness is not small talk but a Latin American (Colombian) way of communicating. Talkativeness is a part of people and relationship oriented negotiation. This clarifies the importance of making friends in the Latin market. The confidence and respect developed with counterparts in Latin market opens doors to agreements and so makes business possible and easier. Obviously it is important that the Finnish negotiators themselves are aware of this aspect and may both try to be some more expressive as well as let their counterpart know about this Finnish communication aspect. *"Transcultural effectiveness is not measured only by the degree to which you are able to grasp the opposite value. It is measured by your competence in reconciling the dilemmas, i.e. the degree to which you are able to make both values work together."* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:46)

Finns go too directly into the theme of business for Latin American negotiators. Latin Americans need to talk about other things before getting to the point. This can be observed as an aspect of high-context and low-context difference. Finns look for operational aspects of negotiation and the Latin Americans look for relationship with their partner. The perception, which is created from this cultural difference, is that Finns lack flexibility. They are authoritarian, and they do not behave with good manners. But also positive perceptions seem to arise from going directly to the point. Finns are considered

serious, efficient, organised and punctual for example. The need to socialise before getting to the point can be seen also as a part of a mistrust culture in Latin America. The business partners are from a long distance and if they do not know each other there is a need to first socialise and to know the partner and then begin to talk about business.

Finns do not want to mix professional and personal aspects. When they are negotiating they do not look for personal relationship, which the Colombians and in general Latin Americans are looking for. Finnish negotiators are task-oriented (universalist) and low context communicators (diffuse culture system). Finns and Colombians begin to negotiate with rather opposite expectations. To get the business and sign the contract is the main objective in universalist cultures. Universalist or rule-based behaviour is abstract. People expect to be treated in the same way in different situations and with different people. On the contrary in the particularist cultures exceptions are possible depending on the situation and the person. For particularist cultures, as Colombia is, relationships are more important. The relationships are reasons to keep the agreements and promises. Also a good relationship between the negotiating parties influences the partners to do more than the agreed contract dictates. This creates among the universalists sometimes suspects why more efforts are done.

One of the Colombian negotiators expressed business opportunities between Finland and Colombia through Finland as a bridge to Ex Soviet Countries and to Asia. This person lived and worked as a consul of Colombia for three years in Finland. He mentions that especially Colombian coffee and flowers could be excellent products to negotiate. He also suggests that Finland could process some raw materials in Colombia and they would be processed cheaper than in Finland. According to this negotiator, the complicating matter is that Finland is not known in Colombia and Finns are not very open to new markets. Surely the idea of Finland being a bridge between Asia and Latin America is rather new. But the geographical location of Finland with a long boarder with Russia could be used in a positive way. The present author believes that the Finnish negotiators and companies should consider this approach and look for new markets, new products or new partners to do business.

This negotiator reflects one rather Colombian characteristic that the present author has also observed. This attribute is also often mentioned as a national characteristic in Colombia. That is 'empuje' (energy or drive) or 'pujanza' (vigour or strength). These terms mean that the person has guts and a clear challenge to look at different ways to avoid problematic situations, as well as to solve them. Those situations may be for example to gain his/her living and to earn money. In Colombia there is no social security system. If a person looses his/her work, s/he has to quickly find another job to survive. If a person is very laborious and knows what s/he wants, s/he may become a great success. Also, the guerrillas and national disasters may damage the peoples' lives in a few minutes. In such a case the person may have to start to build his/her life from the beginning. In Finland a similar term is 'sisu' (guts). Finns

are known for their guts in the war with the Russians in WW II. Also Finns have needed guts in dominating the difficult climate in order to make the country habitable. Even more, Finns with their guts have been able to build the country as the third most competitive (see IMD, 1999)<sup>10</sup> and as a very highly developed country. The same negotiator, who mentions business opportunities between Colombia and Finland, calls Finns 'fighters' for the achievements the nation has gained.

The price of products was mentioned as a conflict area in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. Latin American negotiators consider that Finnish come to Colombia with too high prices and with little flexibility to lower the prices. One Colombian negotiator says that Finns think that their products are the best and if you do not buy them you are committing an error. The present author agrees with this description. Finns really seem to think that they have the only good products. But today's business world has various excellent companies and the competition is harder than ever. Companies can compete not only with their products, but they have to compete also with their abilities to look for new markets and to win new clients. This Colombian negotiator expresses something, which can be seen as a third world dilemma. He says that Latin Americans want a good and a cheap product. This is a rather tremendous demand. Latin Americans want the high technology countries to lower prices so that in the end they want them to donate good products to Colombia and Latin America. This may be a reflection of an attitude that the Colombians (Latin Americans) believe that the high technology countries have a debt to third world countries to donate good products to them, and in general help them. This is part of the Third World mentality, which focuses on the fact that others have to help us, because we can not help ourselves.

### **6.3 Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators compared with the Latin American perceptions**

Spanish negotiators' perceptions about Finnish negotiators are categorised into the same three categories as the Latin American perceptions about Finnish and Colombian negotiators. The categories are: managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process, personal aspects dealing with social skills, and international preparedness. In this section Latin American and Spanish negotiators' perceptions about Finnish negotiators are compared.

Spanish and Latin American perceptions about Finnish negotiators are rather similar. They both attribute the Finnish strengths to be found in their management aspects. The features both these interviewed groups use are to some extent alike also. The main difference is the division of the weaknesses according to the three categories. Spanish negotiators regard Finns weak in

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<sup>10</sup> IMD, 1999. World Competitiveness Yearbook. [http://www.imd.ch/wcy/wcy\\_online.html](http://www.imd.ch/wcy/wcy_online.html). April 13, 1999.

their personal characteristics dealing with social skills. Latin Americans regard Finnish main weaknesses in their management aspects. The most frequently indicated aspects are: Finns are not aggressive, Finnish decision-making is slow and Finns are not flexible. Latin Americans reckon Finns somewhat more internationally oriented than the Spanish negotiators do. This is quite logical, because the negotiators, who do business so far from Finland as Colombia, have to be internationally oriented persons.

It is possible to elaborate the following table, in which the order of importance of the main indicators perceived by Latin American and Spanish interviewees about Finnish negotiators are presented. The percentage shows the importance given to each category.

| Latin American perception > FIN                     |     | Spanish perception > FIN                            |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Strengths</b>                                    |     | <b>Strengths</b>                                    |     |
| Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process | 50% | Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process | 54% |
| International preparedness                          | 26% | Personal characteristics dealing with social skills | 33% |
| Personal characteristics dealing with social skills | 24% | International preparedness                          | 13% |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>                                   |     | <b>Weaknesses</b>                                   |     |
| Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process | 41% | Personal characteristics dealing with social skills | 51% |
| Personal characteristics dealing with social skills | 35% | Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process | 26% |
| International preparedness                          | 24% | International preparedness                          | 23% |

In general, Spanish give more aspects than Latin Americans do. This may be due to the fact that for the Spanish this question was open. They did not select a limited number of features in a character list. Also the abundance in perceptions given about Finnish negotiators may be because the Spanish probably know the Finns better (or they have more contacts with them) than the Latin Americans do. This is logical, as Finland and Spain are both in Europe, relatively near to each other. Latin American negotiators probably do not have much information or experiences about Finnish negotiators. This is seen directly in difficulty in giving perceptions about the Finnish negotiators. One Colombian negotiator mentions the lack of knowledge between Finland and Colombia. He says.

*N5: "Finns ignore a lot about Colombia. Colombians ignore all about Finland."*

The perception process is culturally learnt. Spanish and Latin American negotiators come from different national cultures and they would be expected to perceive differently the Finnish negotiators. 'Latin' people in this study form both groups of interviewees. They are Latin European and Latin American. This may cause certain similarities in their perceptions. Anyway, such similarities, which appear in this study among the interviewees' perceptions, causes wonder. A culture can be explained symbolically to be the lenses of a person through which s/he observes the environment. Latin American and Spanish

lenses are different, but probably the object of the perceptions, Finnish negotiators, is a rather homogeneous group, which may explain why the Latin American and Spanish perceptions appear so similar.

It is necessary to analyse a bit what the perception process in fact is. Perception is a personalised interpretation, and it is learnt culturally. The way Finnish perceive their environment is supposed to be different from the way Spanish and Latin American negotiators perceive their environment, because their national cultures are different. That is why the perceptions among Latin Americans can be expected to be similar but different from those of the Spanish negotiators. As was said before, in the present study the negotiators are given a common "name" Latin Americans, because the interviewed persons are from different countries in Latin America, including two Finns (with long experience in Latin America) among the interviewed negotiators. There surely are differences in Latin America between the countries, the people and the culture; but there are also likenesses. Ogliastri (1997)<sup>11</sup> found that there are indeed more common aspects between the Latin Americans than he would have thought. The identical perceptions between Spanish and Latin American participants may be due to their similar professional culture and their similar working experiences. The professional culture of the negotiators demands efficiency, punctuality, quick decisions and clear communication. In this case the professional culture has a stronger influence on the perceptions process than the national culture.

There still is a certain amount of confusion. Latin American negotiators perceive the Finnish and Colombian negotiators rather differently. Here then the professional culture would not influence so much in the perceptions. Or the Finnish and Colombian negotiators really operate differently in international business negotiations due to their different national cultures. The perceptions reflect the reality. Colombian negotiators are only perceived by the Latin American negotiators in this study. There are no comparative perceptions about the Colombian negotiators made by Finnish (or Spanish) interviewees. That is why stated generalisations about Colombian negotiators can not be done. It can only be accepted that those Colombian negotiators the group of interviewed participants does business with possess characteristics as perceived in this study. Finnish negotiators are perceived by two groups of negotiators. The validity about them is greater. Both Latin American and Spanish perceptions are rather similar. It can be reckoned that in Latin context Finnish negotiators possess those weaknesses and strengths that have been perceived by the interviewees. Finnish negotiators can then be believed to be very serious, organised, efficient, punctual, not creative, not good in their verbal expression and not aggressive in their negotiation style, among other given perceptions.

Both interviewed groups regard Finnish negotiators as serious, organised and efficient. The efficiency in this study is considered as the capacity to use

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<sup>11</sup> Ogliastri, E. 1997. Una Introducción a la Negociación Internacional. La Cultura Latinoamericana frente a la Angloamericana, Japonesa, Francesa y del Medio Oriente. Monografías de Administración, 49. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.



minimal effort and getting maximum result. In fact, the efficiency is a result of good organising. Spanish negotiators even specify the Finnish capacity to organise in detail. They appreciate the Finnish organisation in preparing meetings, in concentrating on the agenda and making sales plans in the long run. These descriptions are the most frequent in both interviewed groups, so it may hold that Finns really are as Spanish and Latin American negotiators perceive them. It is impossible to analyse in this study whether these characteristics function well in Latin European or Latin American markets, as the data does not permit such a detailed analysis. But those attributes are clearly appreciated and valued by the participating negotiators.

Spanish remark that the Finns are kind. Spanish appreciate that Finns are equal with all the people. Finns do not make exception of people. This has to do with the low power distance of the Finnish negotiators. There may be other interpretations to this aspect also. Spanish demand more similar level negotiating and identical treatment with all the people than the Colombians do. This would be a reflection of universalist behaviour. The Colombians probably accept power distance differences, and so do not pay attention to the differences. The Latin American participants emphasise more Finnish punctuality and trustworthiness than democracy. The interviewed negotiators in Colombia pertain to similar social and professional groups that the differences in power distance are not noticed. Among the Spanish interviewees there are persons in lower positions and they may observe the power distance. The Spanish mention also that the Finns are democratic and they do not try to show superiority. These comments reflect the Finnish horizontal style to negotiate. It is interesting that Spanish pay attention to this feature. Colombia and Latin America in general have greater power distance and social class differentiating cultures than Spain has. Even in Spain the power distance is greater than in Finland, the difference between Finland and Colombia is greater. Spain is ranked as number 31 in Hofstede's list of power distance. Finland scores 46 in that list. Colombia is number 17.

Latin American negotiators appreciate Finnish foreign language proficiency. This quality is the second most frequently mentioned by Latin Americans. On the contrary the Spanish negotiators do not consider Finns good at foreign languages. There are various possible interpretations to this. Finnish negotiators in Latin market are probably linguistically better prepared. Also this may reflect that for the Spanish the foreign language the Finns should master is Spanish. Usually in Europe the Finns master English better than Spanish. In Latin America one can not do business without command of Spanish. The Finns in the Latin American market are a special group of negotiators. They are internationally prepared and a valuable experience possessing group of people. Spanish negotiators mention Finnish lack of flexibility. This is probably due to the different time system. Spanish are more polychronic than Finns are. Finns are indeed very monochronic. Finnish negotiators do not want to change the established rules and plans. For Finns it means being trustworthy and serious in business. For the Spanish it is different. It means rigidity. They see the changing of the plans and opinions as flexibility. In Colombia the negotiators appear to

be a bit tired of too spontaneous business making. Latin American negotiators consider Finnish style of not changing the plans; for example not lowering the prices for Colombian negotiators, as a lack of flexibility. But also, simultaneously they interpret it positively as seriousness.

Spanish perceive the Finnish negotiators as not creative and cold. Latin Americans also consider the Finns as not creative, but they do not mention Finnish coldness. The Latin Americans used the list of characteristics where they chose the aspects to describe the Finns. On that list there was not the aspect 'cold', the Latin American negotiators could mention other pertinent characteristics outside of the list. Some of the negotiators did this. For example the aspects 'fighters', 'individualists', 'too timid' and 'too silent' were not in the list of characteristics. However, the interviewees in Bogota do not give any image of the Finns as being cold or distant. On the contrary, for example, the Finnish women are described to be very warm and similar to Latin women. There may be thought to be a certain similarity in Finnish and Colombian behaviour in this aspect.

The coldness Spanish mention may be due to the lack of human socialising in business. Finns operate according to the specific cultural system. They separate clearly work and personal relations. Spanish are more diffuse than the Finns. They mix the personal and professional life together. The Latin Americans are a lot more diffuse than the Spanish. However, the negotiators interviewed in Bogota do not mention the Finnish coldness at all. Either the Finns in Bogota are more relationship oriented and manage better the 'amigonets' or the images (stereotypes) held about Finnish negotiators are not very clear in such a geographically far country as Colombia is. It may also be that the Latin American negotiators guard the face of the Finnish negotiators and do not express their opinions as directly as the Spanish.

Both Latin American and Spanish negotiators mention Finnish lack of verbal expression. Latin European and Latin American markets are very verbal. The partners get to know each other by talking about a wide variety of themes, not only about business. In the beginning the partners do not talk about business at all. Finnish negotiators may confuse this with small talk or losing time, which 'Latin talking' is not. As for the Finns having clear rules and objectives of the task to be solved does the contexting. For the Latinos the context is obtained by a fruitful discussion and developing a friendly atmosphere. This Finnish weakness ('not good verbal expression') perceived in Latin European and Latin American market does not mean that Finnish verbal communication was bad. It surely functions among Finnish negotiators. But it does indeed mean that it does not fit as such to these markets. Finns need to modify their communication style a little when communicating with Latin Americans.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the challenges for the negotiators in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations, and the context where they operate. The results (chapter 5) obtained together with the theory (chapter 2) are discussed in this chapter.

### **7.1 Colombia, an important and challenging market to Finland**

There are various factors to consider when Finnish and Colombian negotiators conduct business with each other. Firstly, it has to be noticed that Colombia is an important market to Finland. Colombia is the second most important country, after Brazil, in Latin America to Finnish imports. However, the amount of trade doesn't go beyond 898 million Finnish marks a year. (Suomen Konsulaatti, 1998) So, the increasing of the value of the trade is a serious aim to Finnish government, companies and negotiators.

There are various difficulties existing in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations. Geographically the countries are far away from each other. The geographical location is reflected for example in cultural, religious, historical, climatic and economic differences in Finland and Colombia. The logistics and delivery dates are surely a challenge for the negotiators.

The current situation in Colombia, war and insecurity, also complicates business. Colombia in its present situation is not an attractive market to invest for Finnish companies, as it creates even greater risks to those, which are normal (logistics, transportation, differences in legal, political and monetary system for example) in international commerce. However, the products Colombia may provide (coffee, iron, steel and coal, for example) are very important to Finland.

Nowadays, trends of globalisation and internationalisation push the companies to search new markets or widen their present ones in order to achieve more profitable sales than those that can be done domestically. Globalisation aims to standardise the functions beyond cultural limits. Internationalisation, in general, attempts to respect and understand different cultures and their functions. (Martín-Barbero, 1998) Both processes are needed as they function along the same line. Simultaneously another kind of trend can be found: localisation. The executive managers are to adapt their companies and strategies to the local characteristics of the market. The union of globalisation and localisation is called glocalisation. (Hampden-Turner, 1998)

Finnish and Colombian (Latin American) negotiators must behave both globally and locally at the same time. They have to follow Colombian laws as everybody does while in Colombia, outside their business follows the same procedure as any other international or global one. This is known as a glocalisation process. *"Glocalisation means that companies have to deal not only with world-wide considerations, but also with specific rules and conditions of each country in which they operate. Glocalisation represents the need for transnational companies to be global and local at the same time."* (Lubber, 1999) Glocalisation is seen for example in Finnish and Colombian tendency to be rather on the nationalistic side instead of doing business in the American, Japanese, German or any other nationality way as they have done for many years so far. (Vaahterikko-Mejía, 2000)<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to determine where, on which stages the participating companies are at present. The available data do not permit an accurate analysis in this regard. It is just an assumption from the negotiators' perceptions depending on how strongly they appeal by the importancy of the intercultural aspects. Some companies could be found at different stages, some at the multinational and some others at the global one while performing business. (See table 2.7 of the relations between national culture and international negotiations in section 2.7)

The above-mentioned aspects are part of the context in which Finnish-Colombian business negotiations are conducted. This study, nevertheless, has focused on the intangible factors of the negotiations and communication in Finnish-Colombian business. The operating negotiators in Finnish-Colombian business are the most important actors because they convert the differences or difficulties into benefits for both parties. It is the essence of the negotiators to operate as to make Finnish-Colombian business profitable. The present study is an attempt to open new insights into the differences and similarities in perceptions and communication between the negotiators operating in Finnish-Colombian business, and to underline areas where more training and capacitation could be needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Vaahterikko-Mejía, P. 2000. 'Perfil del Negociador Colombiano'. In the TV Program "Es Su Turno". Producer Amparo Peláez. Señal Colombia 22.05.2000. Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia.

## 7.2 **Elaborated instruments to detect and analyse negotiators' strengths and weaknesses in Finnish-Colombian business**

The present study achieved its main objectives by means of creating two groups of indicators. The first group (See sections 5.1 and 5.2, tables 5.1; 5.2 and 5.2.1) consists of three indicators for detecting and measuring cultural differences in Finnish and Colombian negotiators which are perceived by Latin American and Spanish interviewees:

- Managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process
- Personal characteristics dealing with social skills
- International preparedness

The second set comprises eleven indicators (See section 5.3 and table 5.3) for measuring cultural differences as perceived by Latin American interviewees when communicating with Finnish negotiators:

- Communication
- Time concept
- Lack of knowledge
- Product-Price
- Task or people orientation
- Suggestions by the interviewees
- Finland, a positive culture
- Comments on specific subjects
- Business opportunities
- Finnish women
- No cultural differences

The two sets of indicators were elaborated through conviction that the international negotiator has to manage both negotiation process and communication as well as behaviour, for they are present all through the negotiation. Satisfactory negotiations in the intercultural context can be obtained when the negotiator is conscious of the negotiation process. S/he must also be aware of the persuasive behavioural scope. The negotiator must feel empathy toward the culture in which s/he is interacting. Language and communication is a paramount function in all stages of negotiation.

The ability to communicate in the counterpart's language is a basic factor for success in the international negotiations and interpersonal relations. The language, although it is not the only way to achieve successful international negotiations, is a must for success. The negotiator has to be acquainted with cultural codes and non-verbal communication according to which s/he has to perform. That is why the present study focused on communication in the negotiation process.

Communication, either directly or indirectly, is influenced as can be seen by the indicators above. The time concept, for example, defines the moment to talk about business, no matter if plans are discussed, or committed by verbal agreements as agreements become polished. Time concept also indicates rates of faxes, telephone calls, or face-to-face meetings. The eleven indicators are used to measure especially cultural differences in communication, and to verify the perception selected from the list of characteristics given about the Finnish and Colombian negotiators. When some aspects are mentioned in both groups of indicators they are considered to be the essential reflection of the negotiators' behaviour and communication.

This study is an active research necessary to get to a change in a negotiation process. That is why the study aims to detect the conflict areas and to offer solutions in order to minimise the conflicts that arise in Finnish-Colombian business. The detected cultural differences are present in Finnish-Colombian business negotiations as well as in Finnish-Latin American communication. This study shows how cultural differences influence negotiations.

The following sections present the strengths and weaknesses Finnish, Colombian and in general Latin American negotiators are perceived to have by the interviewees, and whether these differences and similarities facilitate or complicate Finnish-Colombian business and communication.

### 7.3 Finnish and Colombian negotiators' profile

The profile of Finnish and Colombian negotiators has been constructed by gathering the five highest percentages given to Finnish negotiators by both Latin American and Spanish negotiators, and to Colombian negotiators by Latin American interviewees. The three categories are MA (managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process), PE (personal characteristics dealing with social skills) and IP (international preparedness). The sign + means positive and - negative characteristic. Only highest values are dealt with in this table.

| Finnish negotiators perceived by Latin American negotiators |            | Finnish negotiators perceived by Spanish negotiators |            | Colombian negotiators perceived by Latin American negotiators |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| IP: Not good verbal expression -                            | 18%        | IP: Not good verbal expression -                     | 16%        | PE: Not punctual -                                            | 18%        |
| MA: Serious +                                               | 17%        | MA: Not flexible -                                   | 16%        | PE: Creative +                                                | 17%        |
| MA: Not aggressive -                                        | 15%        | PE: Not creative -                                   | 12%        | IP: Do not master foreign languages -                         | 14%        |
| MA: Slow decision-making -                                  | 15%        | MA: Organised +                                      | 10%        | MA: Flexible +                                                | 11%        |
| IP: Master foreign languages +                              | 12%        | PE: Cold -                                           | 9%         | PE: Good manners +                                            | 11%        |
| <b>Total negative</b>                                       | <b>47%</b> | <b>Total negative</b>                                | <b>54%</b> | <b>Total negative</b>                                         | <b>32%</b> |
| <b>Total positive</b>                                       | <b>29%</b> | <b>Total positive</b>                                | <b>10%</b> | <b>Total positive</b>                                         | <b>40%</b> |

Spanish and Latin American negotiators have pointed out that the Finnish main weakness has been 'not good verbal expression'. Nevertheless, the image Latin American have of Finnish negotiators is quite a bit more positive than the one from the Spanish interviewees. This was concluded by figuring out positive and negative percentages. It is seen that the negative perceptions about Finnish negotiators are predominant. According to this table Colombian negotiators are favoured by a more positive perception by Latin American interviewees. Although American 'Latinos', consider Finns 'serious' and European 'Latinos' consider them 'organised' the conclusion is that Finnish negotiators are highly thought of by 'Latinos' in general. Colombians on the other hand are perceived rather differently: they are 'not punctual', but they are 'creative'.

When positive and negative aspects are combined the results may differ a bit. The negative perceptions (percentages) about Finnish negotiators descend.

| <b>Finnish negotiators perceived by Latin American negotiators</b> |            | <b>Finnish negotiators perceived by Spanish negotiators</b> |            | <b>Colombian negotiators perceived by Latin American negotiators</b> |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| IP: Not good verbal expression -                                   | 18%        | IP: Not good verbal expression -                            | 16%        | PE: Not punctual -                                                   | 18%        |
| MA: Serious +                                                      | 17%        | MA: Not flexible -                                          | 12%        | PE: Creative +                                                       | 17%        |
| MA: Not aggressive -                                               | 15%        | PE: Not creative -                                          | 12%        | IP: Do not master foreign languages -                                | 14%        |
| IP: Master foreign languages +                                     | 12%        | MA: Organised +                                             | 10%        | PE: Good manners +                                                   | 11%        |
| MA: Efficient +                                                    | 10%        | PE: Cold -                                                  | 9%         | MA: Flexible +                                                       | 9%         |
| <b>Total negative</b>                                              | <b>32%</b> | <b>Total negative</b>                                       | <b>49%</b> | <b>Total negative</b>                                                | <b>32%</b> |
| <b>Total positive</b>                                              | <b>38%</b> | <b>Total positive</b>                                       | <b>10%</b> | <b>Total positive</b>                                                | <b>37%</b> |

The aspect of 'not good verbal expression' remains the same. Finnish 'slow decision-making' is not taken into consideration. Instead Finnish 'efficiency' in the combined table is included. Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators are more positive, but for Colombian negotiators they change a little as it can be easily seen. Colombian 'flexibility' is given a smaller percentage. Latin American interviewees perceive Finnish negotiators a little bit more positively.

#### **7.4 Perceptions of Finnish and Colombian negotiators combined with the cultural differences in Finnish-Latin American communication**

Finnish strengths and weaknesses are found in the management (managerial aspects dealing with negotiation process indicator); while Colombian strengths and weaknesses are discovered in the personal characteristics dealing with social skills. Finns emphasise the tangible and operational aspects in their negotiations.

As to the positive aspects, Finnish are serious, efficient and they master foreign languages; while Colombian negotiators are creative, good mannered and flexible. As to the negative aspects, Finnish negotiators are too passive ('not aggressive'), too silent ('not good verbal expression') and slow in their decision-making; whereas Colombians are unpunctual, poor in foreign languages, and they are not trustworthy.

Finnish and Colombian negotiators begin to negotiate moved by different expectations. Finns are interested in general agreements, contract included, and Colombians are concerned in developing interesting circles of contacts. (Friendship-nets: See section 2.8.3 about networking skills) Obviously, the final and real purpose of both groups of negotiators is profitable business. The way to gain their target is different.

#### **7.4.1 Finnish seriousness**

Being seriousness the most frequent positive characteristic of Finnish negotiators as regarded by Latin American interviewees it would be considered, as far as this paper is concerned, as number one, because it was mentioned in the paragraph related to Finnish negotiators as the first strength. Latin Americans value seriousness, punctuality, efficiency, and fulfilment of commitments although this may sound weird to Latin American people in general. Nevertheless it is the result of this study, in other words what the interviewees think about. Latin Americans respect Finns, because they do value this prerequisite.

Latin American attitude toward seriousness is a paramount result for Finns to know. Among Finns in general and among Finnish negotiators (Vaahterikko, 1997) seriousness is feared to cause a negative impact in Latin European and Latin American market. Spanish seem to regard Finnish seriousness as rigidity, but in Latin American market Finnish seriousness is perceived positively.

It is important to understand that Finnish negotiators are not expected to adopt the polychronic and spontaneous negotiation style reflected in extreme flexibility, changes of plans and easy going negotiations, which is common in Colombia, but they have to be aware of these tendencies. Colombians are expected to be more serious and punctual in international business operations, because this is the global trend. Otherwise they would find themselves out of a market competition. In this aspect, a saying "when going to Rome, do as the Romans do" is not to be followed in all commercial areas in Colombia. The more global or international the business gets, the more universalistic and monochronic the negotiations are.

Some differences could be the cause of conflicts, but some of them may promote more trustworthy and fluent communication in business operations. Finnish believe in taking their time that is why they tend to be prudent. It is considered seriousness in business. Colombians on the other hand, tend to do everything in a rush, spurred by their emotion. They get to a not pondered decision-making. This could be a helpful aspect in their communication



altogether. Obviously, Finns do not tend to make as many mistakes as their counterparts, who in their turn seem to accelerate the Finnish decision making.

#### **7.4.2 Colombian unpunctuality**

The second category, among the set of eleven indicators, in Finnish-Latin American communication, where the majority of the conflicts and misunderstandings arise is 'the time concept'. Finnish and Latin Americans operate (and communicate) according to different time systems: monochronic and polychronic. Colombians are not punctual and they do not plan their actions. They have various projects going on continuously. Finns are punctual and they plan in a long run. Colombian actual situation -war- causes difficulties in planning. According to the interviewed negotiators Colombians do not fulfil their promises and they change the plans continuously. Colombians act emotionally and make too many errors in negotiations. While, Finns proceed slower and consider all decisions. This difference balances the Finnish-Colombian business so, that the decisions are not taken too emotionally or too slowly. In this aspect both parties in Finnish-Colombian business have to look for solutions, which encourage the fluent communication and negotiations, and help the differences to work out well.

So far, when Finnish negotiators have found in doing business with Colombians the greatest handicap has been the unpunctuality (in the category of personal characteristics dealing with social skills) brandished by Colombian negotiators. Latin Americans seem to value seriousness, punctuality, efficiency and fulfilment of commitments in the other party, although they may not live to apply them to their respective operations.

Finns always have to bear in mind that the general tendency in Latin America is not to live up promises and that plans are bound to change any moment. This tendency is found in no matter what polychronic system culture (Colombia is one of them.) where business is done. The context (polychronic time system culture in this case) where the negotiations are done is one of the strongest, influencing aspects. (Kremenyuk, 1991) Whenever, Finnish negotiators go to Colombia on a business trip, they have to do it ahead of time. They have to remember that Colombians believe in taking their time, rushing would create mistrust. Finns also have to remember that the philosophy of 'mañana', meaning literally 'tomorrow' or 'in the morning', in practice it really means 'in any one of these days'.

#### **7.4.3 Finnish mastery of foreign languages**

The second most frequent Finnish characteristics in communication is the mastery of foreign language displayed by Finnish negotiators as considered by Latin American interviewees (in the international preparedness category). Spanish negotiators seem to think differently; they consider Finns as not very fluent in the use of Spanish. In European business, Spanish is not as much spoken as English. English proficiency is not recurrent in Spain, among

Spaniards. In Latin America the negotiators could not really conduct any business without knowing Spanish, as Spanish is spoken nearly everywhere. English is always present in no matter what international relationship. From the language point of view Finnish negotiators, in the Latin American market, could be considered more international. Aside from Finnish they master English and Spanish together with international business; whilst in Europe they master only two languages (Finnish and English). By being international, it's understood that the person masters English and possibly other foreign languages, manage the international negotiation processes, uses modern communication channels and is open to other cultures.

Language does not cause any conflict in Finnish-Colombian business as far as negotiations are concerned. The negotiators have good English and Spanish command. Some of the negotiators are fluent in even more languages. Finnish-Colombian negotiations are mainly conducted in English. The Finnish negotiators in Latin American market are rather international. They manage international operations and therefore their cultural backgrounds have been widened. Finnish negotiators in Spanish market (Spanish perceptions) need to improve their mastery of Spanish.

#### **7.4.4 Colombian creativity**

From the point of view of Finnish negotiators Colombian counterparts are creative, flexible, though not very fond of punctuality and very poor in foreign languages. The creativity of the Colombian negotiators is regarded very highly by the Latin American interviewees. Creativity is the most frequently mentioned positive characteristic of the Colombian negotiators. In fact, it is a very important ability for international negotiators, because they have to adapt to a great amount of different multicultural environment and get around easily. This is how Colombians are perceived by Latin American interviewees. The study has not conducted any research in Finland or among groups of Finnish businessmen. That is why this point of view has been omitted in this paper.

The Latin American and Spanish perceptions about Finnish negotiators are rather similar even their national cultures may be different. These perceptions seem to reflect only the way Finns negotiate and that their behaviour depends on their national culture. The professional culture, as well as the experience of the people interviewed has guided their perceptions. Latin American negotiators appreciate the international know-how of the Finns and the higher capability of their social skills more than Spanish negotiators do.

#### **7.4.5 Colombian 'pujanza' and Finnish 'sisu'**

Finnish and Colombians seem to have one interesting and similar national characteristic. That is Colombian 'pujanza' (vigour or strength) or 'empuje' (push, energy or strive) and Finnish 'sisu' (guts). It means that the person has guts to cope with any troublesome situation. In Colombia, this characteristic is ever present because of the economic crisis the country is undergoing. In

Finland, this quality was probably more prevalent during several decades after Finland gained independence in 1917 and the country was to be rebuilt. In Colombia a large alarm monitoring company, Red Hawk, reflects the appreciation for 'pujanza' by making the following publicity signs about Colombians on big posts along highways. "Los colombianos somos un pueblo pujante con toda seguridad." (We Colombians are surely a people with lots of guts.)

#### **7.4.6 Finnish silence**

The most often mentioned feature causing conflicts in Finnish-Colombian business is communicative style between Latin American and Finnish negotiators. For Latin Americans, Finns are too silent and they even lack verbal skills. This is also mentioned as the main Finnish weakness by the Spanish negotiators. 'Not good verbal expression' was the most selected aspect mentioned in the list of characteristics. This outcome reinforces the Finnish negotiators' need to create more capacities in non-tangible aspects. Business is not just a bunch of techniques and engineering. It is communication of meanings, transmission of knowledge and creation of confidence between the business partners. In this, the intangible aspect, communication problem, dominates the tangible aspects as for example technical know-how and preparation of negotiations. These two tangible aspects are not mentioned as conflicts by the interviewed negotiators. Mainly as far as cultural background differs may cause a breach of communication between Finnish and Latin Americans.

Finnish silence has been the object of interest for many people (scholars, managers and non-Finnish citizens) up to now. But no one has ventured a concrete solution to intercultural communication situation where the partners follow different communication models. In this study, the Cavusgil and Ghauri's (1990) definition of a favourable personality in international negotiations is modified and proposed as a functional approach in Finnish-Latin American communication. Finnish and Latin American negotiators should be able to communicate and to make others understand their point of view, to approach each other with respect and confidence, to appreciate each other's position, and to reach profitable negotiations for both parties.

The whole business is carried out on the bases of mutual trust and respect. That is why it is necessary to develop such a satisfactory and profitable business relationship for the negotiator's personality is very important. The negotiators must develop their own business language to allow their communication flow accordingly, since trust, respect and satisfaction are basic when doing business. Negotiators should try to learn the ability to listen to both partners and customers the way Finnish do because they are perceived as a trustworthy model in this aspect.

#### **7.4.7 Lack of knowledge between Finnish and Colombian negotiators**

When Finnish and Colombian negotiators do not know each other, they fall into the 'lack of knowledge' indicator. It is the third most frequently mentioned indicator on communication in this study. In a situation where the partners do not know each other very well, the negotiator's personality and communication skills become even more important. The possible conflicts that could result from lack of knowledge when negotiations are conducted by telephone or e-mail may be more dramatic because they lack the possibility of relying upon paralinguistics and non-verbal aspects as it would be the case in a face-to-face situation (meetings). Business is carried out mainly by telephone or e-mail. Face-to-face negotiations are minimal due to the distance, and high transportation costs for example.

When this indicator, 'lack of knowledge', is present business opportunities are not exploited in an efficient way. For lack of information may result in fears and prejudices. One Colombian [N4] negotiator said that Finnish in general tend to be reluctant and close their minds to open and develop a stronghold in new markets. This may have been caused by lack of knowledge about business possibilities not only with Colombia but other countries as well. The difficult political and economic situation of Colombia at present does not help them to look at possibilities otherwise. Anyway, products like coffee, fruit, flowers, minerals and oil for example, that Finland could import from Colombia as well as products, which Finland could export to Colombia (paper, paperboard and industrial machines aside from mobile telephones for example) would be very important to negotiate with. There is also the possibility of serving as intermediary, "bridge", to Russia, Eurasia and the Far East something that is worth thinking of.

#### **7.4.8 Finnish women's positive impact on Finnish-Colombian business negotiations**

Finnish women are mentioned twice in this sample. The only woman that was interviewed for this study considers Finnish women to be as sweet as Latin ones. Obviously, this could be a very positive feature in the Latin American market. Finnish female negotiators could cause positive impact on Finnish-Colombian business. It is remarkable that women were not considered as sweet as Finnish. This aspect was also noticed by Spanish negotiators.

The author of the present study, before she came to Colombia, was told that she would find Colombians, in general, more familiar than Spanish people because of their behaviour. This is noteworthy because, being Spain closer to Finland in geographical terms, it could be expected that Spaniards should be more kin to Finns. But this closeness could be better found among models from Spain and Finland.

On the contrary, four Spanish negotiators consider Finns to be cold and distant. This may result from the Finnish cultural background. Lack of expressiveness and scarce social activity in business might have something to

do with alleged Finnish fondness for alcohol, while negotiating they tend to abuse drinking. Finns might try to cope with socialisation through alcohol. This is a mere assumption arising from the interviews, nothing to do with Finns in general. One Latin American and three Spanish interviewees mentioned this aspect.

#### **7.4.9 Finnish integrative and Colombian distributive negotiation process**

As it has been pointed out, Finnish and Colombians negotiate in different ways: Finns consider their partners and clients as collaborators. They follow an integrative negotiation process. Their rather steady Finnish economy may very well have been influenced by this point of view. A wealthy country can depend on high technology in order to produce excellent goods. It could afford from advanced communication and transporting systems, as well as to have a selected portfolio customers. Through these aspects the country, the companies, and the negotiators become competitive in international market. Negotiators are empowered by international relation competitiveness, thus they feel more confident and don't have to be so aggressive.

Colombians view the entire negotiation process as a haggling and win-lose setting. There is always a winner and a loser. Colombian attitude could be considered a little bit selfish, therefore they have to contend to get their best share. This is characteristic of a distributive negotiation style. The difficult and current economic and political situation in Colombia forces its negotiators to strive for profitable agreements in order to be able to help the country to better progress. Distributive bargaining is characterised by mistrust and strategies to beat the opponent. That is why the negotiation process could easily be regarded as aggressive in Latin American markets. The Latin American interviewees consider that Finnish negotiators are rather passive, too friendly. Ogliastri's (1992) hypothesis, that the wealth or poverty of a nation influences its negotiation style, is considered of paramount importance by the author of present study.

This lack of aggressiveness from Finnish negotiators could also depend on femininity and masculinity differences. In Hofstede's (1991) study, Finland's rank is 47 in the femininity-masculinity scale, indicating that Finland is a rather feminine country. Colombia's rank is 11 or 12, which means that Colombia is among the eleven or twelve most masculine countries. Spain's rank is between 37 and 38. Spain is less masculine than Colombia, but a more masculine country than Finland. Spanish negotiators did not make any mention concerning Finnish aggressiveness.

#### **7.4.10 Comments on some specific subjects: cultural issues**

When Finnish negotiators do business with Colombian (Latin American) negotiators various aspects should be kept in mind. One of them would be the so-called policy of mistrust. One interviewee [N1] referred to it as 'la cultura de

la desconfianza' ('the culture of mistrust'). In Latin America, no one trusts anybody s/he is not acquainted with, and sometimes they do not even trust their own acquaintances. They do it only after having developed a strong relationship. That is one of the reasons why socialising is important in the Latin market. Colombians main object is not to get hold of the contract. They look for relationship and warm contact. Finns go straight to the point while Latin Americans have to "break the ice" and they do it by means of conversation. This makes Finns more direct, something regarded as positive, efficient and serious by some of the interviewees, but shocks many Latin American negotiators. Finns ought to be more social and pay more attention to human relations in their commercial operations when they are in the Latin American market.

The 'follow-up culture' could also be a part of Colombian business making. People do not feel committed if they are not reminded constantly of the negotiation until it is finally concluded. Finnish negotiators should remind their partners every now and then during the project in order to get the work done. This may seem strange to Finns, famous for their 'seriousness', once they commit their word they stick to it, no matter what until the whole thing is carried out. It could be a handicap that might cause frictions between Finnish-Colombian business. 'The follow-up culture' may be a reflection of the polychronic time concept. In this time system the plans change continuously. When they are people oriented the 'follow-up culture' may emerge. Employees who are people oriented tend to work for their directors rather than for the task itself.

This study reveals that there are two main areas where Finnish and Colombian negotiators differ due to their national culture. They differ in the attention paid to the people in business (Colombians) and the attention paid to the operational and technical aspects of the negotiations (Finnish). This main difference creates different styles and expectations in the negotiations. The present research also shows that in every negotiation and business relation there is great amount of intangible factors influencing the results to be successful or unsuccessful.

## **7.5 Evaluation and future research possibilities**

In international negotiations and relations, just knowing or even understanding the cultural differences is not enough for developing intercultural efficiency. One needs to be capable to make the differences work together. The complicating aspect is that the same concepts have different meanings in different cultures. For example efficiency in Colombian business includes principally personal characteristics: creativity, flexibility, good manners and good sense of humour. In Finnish business culture it includes mainly managerial aspects: seriousness, organisation skills, punctuality and foreign language dominance. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998:46)

description of intercultural efficiency is a valuable definition in developing prosperous international Finnish-Colombian negotiations. Intercultural effectiveness is measured by the partners' competence in reconciling the dilemmas i.e. the degree to which they are able to make both and various values work together.

The conflicts revealed in this research are mainly interpersonal and intragroup conflicts. They cannot be called international as the partners negotiating are individuals from different nationalities and they are not directly different nations negotiating.

The methodology used in this study permits to investigate, detect, and present some principal factors in Finnish as well as Colombian and, generally, Latin American negotiators' capacities and defects in the Latin market. The present study cannot analyse the aspect of self-image or, in greater depth, the relation between the negotiators with their clients or business partners, for example. The obtained data does not permit that.

In order to deepen and widen the level of analysis, different kinds of data recollecting methods should be used. These could be, for example: group interviews, interviews with the clients the negotiators are communicating with, elaborating a greater number of questions in the interviews, and making a video in real negotiation situations. These approaches would open new possibilities to investigate the Ibero-Nordic negotiations and intercultural communication in them. But at this point, the present study is considered a successful presentation of the national cultures' differences influencing Finnish-Colombian negotiations and Finnish-Latin American communication.

## YHTEENVETO

### Cultural Differences in Ibero-Nordic Communication: Perceptions about Finnish and Colombian Negotiators

#### Kansainvälistyminen, globalisaatio ja lokalisaatio vaikuttajina Suomi-Kolumbia-kaupassa

Liikeneuvotteluiden konteksti on yhä useammin kansainvälinen ja jopa globaali. Yrityksillä on tarve etsiä uusia markkina-alueita oman maan ulkopuolelta saavuttaakseen suurempia myyntituloksia kuin mitä kotimaan kauppa pystyy tarjoamaan. Maansisäinen liiketoiminta ei pysty takaamaan yritykselle kilpailukykyistä kasvupotentiaalia. *”Empiirinen tutkimus viittaa kuitenkin kansallisen perustan merkitykseen. Vaikka yritykset saattavat olla kansanvälisesti aktiivisia, niiden toiminta yleensä rajoittuu naapurimaihin. .... Tämä viittaa siihen, että useimmat monikansalliset yritykset ovat pikemminkin alueellisia kuin globaalisia”* (Väyrynen, 1998:108-109).

Samanaikaisesti, kun kauppa kansainvälistyy yli maan rajojen se myös alueellistuu kunkin maan hallinnon, rahoituksen, poliittisen ja oikeussysteemin sekä yritysten omien strategioiden mukaisesti. Kaksi vastakkaista trendiä - globalisaatio ja lokalisaatio - (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998)<sup>1</sup> vaikuttavat neuvotteluprosesseihin. Globalisaatio pyrkii standardisoimaan liiketoiminnat yli kulttuurirajojen. Kansainvälistymisen tavoitteena on kunnioittaa ja ymmärtää eri kulttuureita ja niiden toimintatapoja. (Martín-Barbero, 1998)<sup>2</sup> Globalisaatio ja lokalisaatio näyttävät olevan ristiriidassa keskenään, mutta näin ei välttämättä ole. (Väyrynen, 1998:113). Kummatkin prosessit operoivat samanaikaisesti, ja ne ovat tarpeellisia kansainvälisissä liiketoiminnoissa. Lokalisaatio vaatii yritysjohdajia sopeuttamaan yrityksensä ja strategiansa kauppa-alueen paikallisiin tarpeisiin ja ominaisuuksiin. Tämän päivän liikesuhteissa yritysjohtajien tulee ottaa huomioon globalisaation ja lokalisaation yhdistelmä globalisaatio.

Kolumbia on Brasilian jälkeen Suomen toiseksi tärkein kauppa-alue Latinalaisessa Amerikassa. Kaupan arvo ei kuitenkaan ylitä 898 miljoonaa Suomen markkaa vuodessa. (Suomen Konsulaatti, 1998)<sup>3</sup> Kaupan arvon nostaminen on Suomen valtiolle, yrityksille sekä neuvottelijoille tärkeä tavoite. Maiden erilaisuus (esimerkiksi erilainen historia, uskonto, kieli ja ilmasto) ja maantieteellinen sijainti tekevät Suomi-Kolumbia kaupasta haasteellisen. Nämä tekijät osoittavat

<sup>1</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>2</sup> Martín-Barbero, J. 1998. 'La Globalización desde una Perspectiva Cultural.' *La Revista Número*. No.7. Marzo-Abril-Mayo. 1998. Pp.46-52. Bogotá.

<sup>3</sup> Suomen Konsulaatti, 1998. *Lehtitiedote*. 1.10.98. Suomen ja Euroopan Ulkomaankauppa- ja liikenne- ja viestintäministerin Ole Norrbackin vierailusta ja Suomen ja Kolumbian välisistä kauppasuhteista. Bogota.



myös, että Suomi-Kolumbia-kaupassa on kyse kansainvälisestä tai globaalista liikesuhteesta.

## Tutkimuksen tavoitteet, tutkimuskysymykset ja metodit

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää millaisia kulttuurienvälisiä eroja tai samankaltaisuuksia (eritoten yritysjohtajien neuvottelustrategioissa, kommunikaatiossa ja toisistaan muodostetuissa mielikuvissa) Suomi-Kolumbia-liikeneuvotteluissa voidaan havaita. Tutkimustavoitteita on kolme: 1) Selvittää latinalaisamerikkalaisten mielikuvia suomalaisista ja kolumbialaisista neuvottelijoista. 2) Tutkia kulttuurieroja, joita latinalaisamerikkalaiset neuvottelijat havaitsevat suomalaisten kanssa kommunikoidessaan. 3) Verrata latinalaisamerikkalaisten ja espanjalaisten neuvottelijoiden mielikuvia suomalaisista neuvottelijoista. Tarkoituksena on analysoida mitkä kulttuurierot tai samankaltaisuudet Suomen ja Kolumbian välisessä kaupassa mahdollisesti aiheuttavat konflikteja ja voivat estää menestyksellisiä kauppasuhteita. Toisaalta tutkimus pyrkii myös selvittämään ne seikat, jotka edistävät menestyksellisiä kauppvoja näiden kahden maan välillä.

Tutkimuskohteena on suomalaisista ja kolumbialaisista neuvottelijoista tehdyt mielikuvat sekä erot ja samankaltaisuudet suomalaisten ja latinalaisamerikkalaisten neuvottelijoiden välillä käydyssä kommunikaatiossa. Tutkimuksen kaksi tärkeintä tutkimuskohdetta ovat 1) mielikuvat suomalaisista ja kolumbialaisista neuvottelijoista ja 2) suomalaisten ja latinalaisamerikkalaisten välinen kommunikaatio. Nämä kaksi tutkimusaluetta ovat tarpeellisia, koska kohteena olevat kaksi kauppaa käyvää maata ovat Suomi ja Kolumbia, mutta haastatellut neuvottelijat, jotka operoivat kyseisessä kaupassa eivät ole ainoastaan suomalaisia ja kolumbialaisia, vaan myös latinalaisamerikkalaisia kuten argentiinalaisia, argentiinalais-suomalaisia, meksikolaisia, brasilialaisia ja itävaltalais-argentiinalaisia.

Tutkimus etsi vastauksia seuraaviin tutkimuskysymyksiin:

1. Kuinka Bogotassa suomalaisten kanssa kauppaa tekevät latinalaisamerikkalaiset neuvottelijat kuvaavat suomalaisia ja kolumbialaisia neuvottelijoita?
2. Mitkä indikaattorit voidaan määrittellä suomalaisten ja kolumbialaisten yleisten kulttuuripiirteiden ja neuvottelutyyliden perusteella kulttuurienvälisen erojen ja samankaltaisuuksien osoittamiseksi?
3. Mitkä piirteet suomalaisten ja latinalaisamerikkalaisten kommunikaatiossa ja kauppaneuvotteluissa ovat haastateltavien mukaan kulttuurieroja?
4. Mitä eroja ja samankaltaisuuksia espanjalaiset ja latinalaisamerikkalaiset neuvottelijat havaitsevat suomalaisissa neuvottelijoissa?

Tämä tutkimus keskittyy neuvottelujen ja kommunikaation ei-konkreettisiin<sup>4</sup> tekijöihin: haastateltavien havaintoihin ja neuvottelijoiden väliseen kommunikaatioon. Olipa liikesuhde kuinka kansainvälinen tai globaali tahansa, silti yritykset ja yritysjohtajat noudattavat mailleen ominaisia toimintatapoja, katsantokantoja ja arvoja. Tutkimus perustuu olettamukseen, että kansallinen kulttuuri<sup>5</sup> vaikuttaa neuvottelijoiden käyttäytymiseen, kommunikaatioon, neuvotteluihin, havaintoihin, odotuksiin sekä olettamuksiin kauppasuhteissa. Tästä johtuen kansainvälisissä liikesuhteissa on aina kulttuurienvälisiä väärinymmärryksiä, jotka voivat olla merkittävä syy epäonnistuneisiin kauppasuhteisiin.

Tutkimusmetodi on kvalitatiivinen. Tutkimusaineisto on kerätty puoli-strukturoitujen teema ja aktiivisten haastatteluiden avulla. Tutkimuksen teoreettisina suuntaviivoina toimivat seuraavien tutkijoiden teoriat: Hofsteden (1991)<sup>6</sup> neljä kommunikaatioon vaikuttavaa kulttuurillista dimensiota (valtaetäisyys, individualismi-kollektivismi, maskuliinisuus-feminiinisyys ja epävarmuuden välttäminen); Hallin (1959<sup>7</sup>, 1976<sup>8</sup>, 1984<sup>9</sup>) monokrooninen ja polykrooninen aikakäsitys sekä kontekstiriippumaton – ja kontekstiriippuva kommunikaatio; Adlerin (1991)<sup>10</sup> teoria kansallisen kulttuurin vaikutuksesta yritysjohtamiseen ja neuvotteluihin; Trompenaarsin ja Hampden-Turnerin (1998)<sup>11</sup> teoria kulttuurin vaikutuksesta yritysjohtamiseen ja liikesuhteisiin.

Tutkimukselle luotiin kaksi indikaattorijoukkoa. Ensimmäinen joukko käsittää kolme mittaria, joiden avulla voidaan määrittellä neuvottelijoiden havainnot keskeisimmistä seikoista, joissa esiintyy kulttuurillisia eroja suomalaisten ja kolumbialaisten neuvottelijoiden välillä: 1) neuvotteluprosessiin liittyvät yritysjohtolliset seikat. 2) sosiaalisiin taitoihin liittyvät henkilökohtaiset piirteet sekä 3) kansainvälinen valmius. Nämä kolme kategoriata osoittavat kulttuurierojen pääalueet suomalaisten ja kolumbialaisten neuvotteluissa. Toinen joukko käsittää yksitoista (11) mittaria: 1) kommunikaatio, 2) aikakäsitys, 3) tiedon puute, 4) tuote-hinta suhde, 5) ihmis- tai tehtäväkeskeisyys, 6) haastateltavien antamia ehdotuksia, 7) Suomi, positiivinen kulttuuri, 8) kommentteja spesifeistä aiheista, 9) liikemahdollisuuksia, 10) Suomalaiset naiset, ja 11) ei kulttuurillisia eroja.

<sup>4</sup> Adjektiivia 'ei konkreettinen' käytetään tässä tutkimuksessa suomennoksena englanninkieliselle adjektiiville 'intangible'.

<sup>5</sup> Tässä tutkimuksessa kansallisena kulttuurina pidetään maata, joka on mantieteellisesti rajoitettu alue ja jolla on oma historia, kieli (kielet), lait, oma lippu, oma valuutta, oma koulutusjärjestelmä sekä uskonto (uskonnot).

<sup>6</sup> Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>7</sup> Hall, E. 1959. *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Hall, E. 1976. *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Books/ Doubleday.

<sup>9</sup> Hall, E. 1984. *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>10</sup> Adler, N. 1991. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

<sup>11</sup> Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

## Tutkimukseen osallistuneet haastatellut neuvottelijat

Tutkimukseen osallistui yksitoista (11) latinalaisamerikkalaista neuvottelijaa (neljä kolumbialaista, yksi argentiinalainen, yksi argentiinalais-itävaltalainen, yksi brasilialainen, yksi suomalais-argentiinalainen ja yksi meksikolainen). Haastateltavien ryhmässä on myös kaksi (2) suomalaista neuvottelijaa. Tälle ryhmälle haastateltavia on annettu nimi 'latinalaisamerikkalaiset', koska näillä kahdella suomalaisella on pitkä kokemus Latinalaisen Amerikan kauppamarkkinoilla, ja koska Suomi-Kolumbia-kauppaa käydään latinalaisamerikkalaisessa kontekstissa. Haastattelut latinalaisamerikkalaisten neuvottelijoiden kanssa tehtiin vuosina 1997 ja 1999. Neuvottelijoiksi kutsutaan kaikkia haastateltavia henkilöitä. He ovat johtavassa asemassa yrityksessä, ja heillä on valta tehdä päätöksiä.

Tutkimuksessa on myös mukana viisitoista (15) espanjalaista neuvottelijaa, jotka osallistuivat Vaahterikon (1997) aikaisempaan tutkimukseen. Espanjalaisten haastateltavien mukaan ottaminen antaa tutkimukselle 'latinalais-eurooppalaisen' näkökannan sekä mahdollistaa vertailun kahden haastattelu-ryhmän välillä. Kahden haastattelu-ryhmän katsotaan lisäävän tutkimuksen uskottavuutta. Haastattelut espanjalaisten neuvottelijoiden kanssa tehtiin vuosina 1995 ja 1997.

## Suomi-Kolumbia-neuvotteluissa käytetty kieli

Englannin kielen merkitys Suomen ja Kolumbian välisissä liikeneuvotteluissa on merkittävä. Vaikka espanjaa puhutaan lähes koko Latinalaisen Amerikan maanosassa, ei sitä käytetä kansainvälisissä liikeneuvotteluissa suomalaisten kanssa, vaan kielenä on englanti. Englanti neuvottelukielenä helpottaa suomalaisten toimintaa Kolumbiassa ja laajemmalti Latinalaisen Amerikan markkinoilla, koska englanti on suomalaisille yleensä vahvin vieraskieli. Haastatellut yritysjohtajat Bogotassa sanoivat, että suomalaiset pystyvät neuvottelemaan ongelmitta sekä espanjaksi että englanniksi.

Espanjassa neuvoteltaessa kielenä on espanjan kieli. Espanjalaiset yritysjohtajat kertoivat, että Madridissa neuvottelevat suomalaiset eivät hallitse kieliä (tarkoittaa, että eivät hallitse espanjaa). Tämän seikan katsottiin olevan ongelmallinen kauppasuhteissa. Lähinnä ongelmana espanjalaisten kanssa neuvoteltaessa on se, että espanjalaiset eivät osaa englantia, jota suomalaiset taitavat, mutta suomalaiset eivät hallitse espanjaa. Yksi (1) latinalaisamerikkalaisista kommentoi, että kieli on ongelmallinen neuvotteluprosessissa. Espanjalaisista neuvottelijoista seitsemän (7) mainitsee kielen olevan ongelmallisen Suomi-Espanja neuvotteluissa. Lähinnä syy on se, että suomalaiset eivät osaa espanjaa tarpeeksi hyvin.

Se, että neuvottelija voi kommunikoida liikekumppanin kielellä on hyvin positiivista ja luottamustaherättävää liikesuhteissa. Kieli on tärkeä seikka kauppoissa, mutta se ei ole kuitenkaan ainoa menestystekijä. Neuvottelijan täytyy olla tietoinen liikekumppaninsa kulttuuriarvoista sekä nonverbaalisesta viestinnästä, joiden mukaan vastapuoli toimii.

## Tutkimustuloksia

Suomalaiset ja kolumbialaiset yritysjohtajat ryhtyvät neuvottelemaan erilaisin odotuksin. Suomalaisten tavoitteena on saada mahdollisimman nopeasti allekirjoitettu kauppasopimus, kun taas kolumbialaiset keskittyvät ensin luomaan hyvää ihmissuhdetta, joka voi tuottaa allekirjoitetun kauppasopimuksen.

Suomalaisten sekä vahvat että heikot puolet neuvottelijoina löytyvät kategoriasta 'neuvotteluprosessiin liittyvät yritysjohtolliset seikat'. Kolumbialaisten vahvat ja heikot puolet taas löytyvät kategoriasta 'sosiaalisiin taitoihin liittyvät henkilökohtaiset piirteet'. Tämä osoittaa, että suomalaiset keskittyvät neuvotteluprosessissa konkreettisiin<sup>12</sup> tekijöihin, kun taas kolumbialaiset toimivat ei-konkreettisten tekijöiden mukaan. Suomalaiset ovat tehtäväkeskeisiä ja kolumbialaiset ihmiskeskeisiä.

Haastateltavat Bogotassa, pitävät suomalaisia vakavina, tehokkaina ja järjestelmällisinä. Nämä piirteet ovat positiivisia latinalaisamerikkalaisille neuvottelijoille. Tämä on tärkeä tutkimustulos, sillä suomalaiset neuvottelijat espanjankielisillä kauppalueilla (Vaahterikko, 1997) ovat tunteneet epävarmuutta suhteessa vakavuuteen ja joustamattomuuteen. Espanjalaiset haastateltavat kokevat suomalaisen vakavuuden negatiivisena joustamattomuutena, mutta latinalaisamerikkalaiset pitävät sitä positiivisena tehokkuutena. Myös suomalaisten kielitaitoa arvostetaan Kolumbiassa. Negatiivisia suomalaisten piirteitä ovat latinalaisamerikkalaisten neuvottelijoiden mielestä suomalaisten passiivisuus ('aggressiivisuuden puute liiketoimissa'), vähäpuheisuus ('hiljaisuus') sekä hidas päätöksenteko.

Kolumbialaisia pidetään luovina, kohteliaina ja joustavina. Luovuutta arvostetaan erityisesti kolumbialaisissa neuvottelijoissa. Se on erityisen tärkeä piirre latinalaisamerikkalaisella markkina-alueella, koska sopimukset, aikataulut ja suunnitelmat muuttuvat jatkuvasti. Tämä on luonteenomaista polykronisen aikakäsityksen mukaan toimiville maille, kuten Kolumbialle. Luovuus on haastateltavien mielestä kehittynyt Kolumbian vaikeassa taloudellisessa ja poliittisessa ilmapiirissä. Haastateltavat Bogotassa pitävät kolumbialaisia epätasällisinä aikataulujen suhteen, huonosti vieraita kieliä taitavina sekä epäluotettavina.

Latinalaisamerikkalaisessa kontekstissa päätökset tehdään nopeasti ja usein hyvin tunteenomaisesti. Virheitä syntyy enemmän kuin suomalaisten te-

<sup>12</sup> Adjektiivia 'konkreettinen' käytetään tässä tutkimuksessa käännöksenä englanninkieliselle adjektiiville 'tangible'.

kemissä päätöksissä, mutta hitautta pidetään negatiivisempänä kuin pikaisista päätöksistä johtuvia virheitä. Suomalaisilta vaaditaan aggressiivisempaa otetta kaupantekoon sekä ihmisläheisempää otetta neuvotteluissa. Erityisesti suomalaisten tulee opetella sosiaalista keskustelua ja kanssakäyntiä Latinalaisen Amerikan kauppa-alueilla. Lämmin neuvotteluilmapiiri saa aikaan luottamusta kauppakumppaniin ja yritykseen. Positiivista kolumbialaisten tunteenomaisten ja nopeiden joskin usein virheellisten päätösten sekä suomalaisten neuvottelijoiden passiivisuuden sekä hitaiden, mutta pohdittujen päätöksenteon erilaisuudessa on se, että nämä erot tasapainottavat neuvotteluja ja päätösprosessia. Kolumbialaiset vauhdittavat suomalaisia ja suomalaiset auttavat kolumbialaisia harkitsevampaan päätöksentekoon.

Mielenkiintoinen yhteinen piirre kolumbialaisten ja suomalaisten välillä on 'sisu'. Kolumbiassa tämän piirteen nimi on 'pujanza' ja 'empuje'. Sekä Suomessa että Kolumbiassa sisukkuutta pidetään erittäin positiivisena ja tarpeellisenä neuvottelijan luonteenpiirteenä. Kolumbiassa sisu on kehittynyt lähinnä viime vuosien (viimeisinä 40 vuotena Kolumbiassa on käyty sisällissotaa sissien, paramilitaarien ja valtion armeijan välillä) taloudellisten ja poliittisten vaikeuksien vuoksi.

Samanlaisuutena pidetään latinalaisamerikkalaisten haastateltavien mielestä myös suomalaisten ja kolumbialaisten naisten inhimillisyyttä ja avoimuutta. Suomi-Kolumbia kauppasuhteissa olisi tärkeätä huomioida suomalaisten naisten osallistuminen liikeneuvotteluihin.

Suomen mahdollisuus toimia siltana kaupassa Latinalaisen Amerikan ja Venäjän sekä kauempana Idässä olevien maiden välillä tuodaan myös esille haastatteluissa latinalaisamerikkalaisten kanssa. Tämän varteenotettavan seikan mainitsee yksi kolumbialainen Suomessa neljän vuoden ajan Kolumbian konsulina toimiva haastateltu. Kyseinen haastateltava tuntee Suomea maana, kulttuurina ja markkina-alueena, joten hän pystyy verbaalisti kommentoimaan kyseistä seikkaa. Toiset latinalaisamerikkalaiset haastateltavat eivät tunne Suomea läheskään yhtä hyvin, joten heidän asenteensa todellistuu indikaattorissa 'tiedon puute' Suomi-Kolumbia kaupassa. Erityisesti kolme latinalaisamerikkalaista haastateltavaa kommentoi sitä, että suomalaiset eivät tunne kolumbialaisia ja kolumbialaiset eivät tunne suomalaisia. Tiedon puute saa aikaan se, että kauppamahdollisuuksia ei tunneta eikä edes etsitä. Tämä on luonnollisesti esteenä Suomi-Kolumbia-kaupassa.

Tämä tutkimus saavutti sille asetetut päämäärät vastaamalla kappaleessa 1 ja 3 asetettuihin tutkimuskysymyksiin. Tutkimus osoittaa, että Suomen ja Kolumbian välisessä kaupassa vaikuttavat useat ei-konkreettiset tekijät, jotka vaikuttavat sekä negatiivisesti että positiivisesti Suomi-Kolumbia-neuvotteluihin. Suuremmalta osalta erot näyttävät aiheuttavan konflikteja kauppasuhteissa. Jotkut erot kuitenkin saavat aikaan sujuvampaa kommunikaatiota sekä avaavat kauppamahdollisuuksia.

Suomalaisten tulee harjoittaa verbaalista kommunikaatiotaan sekä kohdistaa huomionsa ihmissuhteisiin Suomi-Kolumbia-liikesuhteissa (latinalaisamerikkalaisilla kauppa-alueilla). Suomalaisen yritysjohtajien täsmällisyys, järjestelmällisyys, suunnittelu sekä vakavuus ovat erittäin positiivisia piirteitä,

jotka auttavat kauppasuhteissa. Tutkimus osoittaa sekä suomalaisten että kolumbialaisten tarvitsevan kulttuurienvälistä koulutusta operoidakseen tehokkaammin kansanvälisessä kaupassa.

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## **CUESTIONARIO / ENTREVISTAS para la preparación de material de la tesis doctoral**

### **Título de la tesis:**

'Ibero-Nordic Communication Aspects'

### **Entrevistadora:**

Lic. Päivi Vaahterikko-Mejía. Investigadora-Profesora en la Universidad de Jyväskylä (Finlandia): Dpto. de Comunicación (Comunicación Organizacional Intercultural & PR).

### **Plan de entrevistas:**

Realizar entrevistas en Diciembre -97 - Enero -98 en empresas internacionales (particularmente en empresas que comercian con Finlandia) situadas en Bogotá. Los resultados obtenidos serán base de mi investigación.

### **Grupo de entrevistados:**

Directivos colombianos en las empresas que mantienen comercio internacional.

### **Método de investigación:**

Entrevistas, conversaciones abiertas y enfocadas con los entrevistados. Las entrevistas van a ser grabadas en cassettes con micrófono y grabadora. Se asegura la confidencialidad y el anonimato de las conversaciones llevadas.

### **Tema de la tesis:**

Colombianos: imagen que tienen de sus vecinos, y de los españoles, finlandeses y norteamericanos. La comunicación entre ellos y las expectativas que tienen acerca de los negocios con esas nacionalidades. Diferencias y similitudes de comunicación, culturas y maneras de comportamiento. Aspectos en la comunicación transcultural e interpersonal que pueden facilitar o dificultar el comercio colombiano hacia el exterior (internacional: Colombia y Europa).

### **Hipótesis:**

La cultura influye en todo tipo de comportamientos y así también en las relaciones comerciales. Colombia, sus vecinos, España, Finlandia y Norte America tienen diferencias culturales, y tales diferencias van a afectar las diversas maneras de negociar (sobre todo las expectativas acerca de los negocios y el comercio). Supongo que en muchas ocasiones el personal directivo no tiene suficientemente en cuenta el impacto negativo que pueden tener estas diferencias en los negocios y en el comercio colombiano hacia el exterior.

### **Utilidad para la empresa:**

La aportación del presente estudio 'Ibero-Nordic Communication Aspects' es el conocimiento de los aspectos negativos y positivos que pueden tener en las relaciones comerciales, las diferencias transculturales en las relaciones comerciales (internacionales) de los colombianos.

### **Posibles proyectos para el futuro:**

Si la empresa lo considera importante, sería posible organizar cursos y desarrollar material sobre este tema. De todos es sabido los grandes frutos que puede ofrecer la unión entre teoría y práctica.

## CUESTIONARIO / ENTREVISTAS (1)

### Información sobre el entrevistado:

Nombre:  
Sexo:  
Edad:  
Nacionalidad:  
Estado civil y número de hijos:  
Profesión:  
Posición que ocupa en la empresa:  
Tiempo que lleva en su cargo actual:  
En que cargos ha desempeñado antes:  
Ha trabajado en otros países:

### Información sobre la empresa:

Nombre de la empresa:  
Año de fundación:  
Sede (dónde):  
Filiales (dónde):  
Descripción corta de la empresa, campo de actuación:  
Número de empleados en su oficina:  
Otras nacionalidades en la empresa:  
Conduce comercio internacional:  
Con que países:

En que idioma se comunica dentro de su empresa:

En que idioma se comunica en las relaciones comerciales:

¿Considera que el inglés es importante para conducir negocios internacionales?:

¿Domina usted inglés?:

¿Ha participado en cursos de inglés?:

¿Su empresa facilita la participación en cursos de inglés o la personal debe saber el inglés ya al entrar en la empresa?:

Cuando negocia con negociadores extranjeros en Colombia, ¿se les exige que sepan el español?

A través de que canal (tel, fax, correo, e-mail, reuniones,...) se realiza la comunicación más frecuentemente entre su empresa y las empresas con las que conduce negocios (1= con mucha frecuencia,...5= con poca frecuencia):

Teléfono:

Fax:

Correo:

Correo electrónico:

Reuniones:

**CUESTIONARIO / ENTREVISTAS (2)****COL > COL:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores COLOMBIANOS son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > ESP:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores ESPAÑÓLES son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > FIN:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores FINLANDESES son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > [COL < FIN]:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores FINLANDESES piensan que los negociadores COLOMBIANOS son: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > USA:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores ESTADOUNIDENSES son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > PAN:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores PANAMEÑOS son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > ECU:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores ECUATORIANOS son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > PERU:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores PERUANOS son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > BRA:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores BRASILEÑOS son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**COL > VEN:**

Tengo la impresión que los negociadores VENEZOLANOS son:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

## LISTA DE CARACTERÍSTICAS (3)

Eliga de la siguiente lista de "características" cuatro (6) aspectos (3 del lado A, 3 del lado B) para describir las características de los negociadores de las nacionalidades mencionadas anteriormente (por ejemplo: Españoles: 4A, 18A, 24A, 10B, 21B, 7B).

| A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | B                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Toma rápida de decisiones</li> <li>2. Creativos</li> <li>3. Serios</li> <li>4. Colaboradores</li> <li>5. Buen sentido del humor</li> <li>6. Flexibles</li> <li>7. Manejan idiomas extranjeros</li> <li>8. Manejan operaciones internacionales</li> <li>9. Eficientes</li> <li>10. Abiertos a otras culturas</li> <li>11. Agresivos</li> <li>12. Buenos oyentes</li> <li>13. Buena expresión verbal</li> <li>14. Buen nivel de conocimiento técnico</li> <li>15. Confiables</li> <li>16. Puntuales</li> <li>17. Buenos modales</li> <li>18. Organizados</li> <li>19. Preparan bien las reuniones</li> <li>20. Democráticos</li> <li>21. Ayudan a conseguir información</li> <li>22. Orgullosos</li> <li>23. Bien vestidos</li> <li>24. Organizaciones modernas</li> <li>25. Se concentran en los temas de la agenda en las reuniones</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Toma lenta de decisiones</li> <li>2. No creativos</li> <li>3. No serios</li> <li>4. No colaboradores</li> <li>5. No buen sentido del humor</li> <li>6. No flexibles</li> <li>7. No manejan idiomas extranjeros</li> <li>8. No manejan operaciones internacionales</li> <li>9. No eficientes</li> <li>10. No abiertos a otras culturas</li> <li>11. No agresivos</li> <li>12. No buenos oyentes</li> <li>13. No buena expresión verbal</li> <li>14. No buen nivel de conocimiento técnico</li> <li>15. No confiables</li> <li>16. No puntuales</li> <li>17. No buenos modales</li> <li>18. No organizados</li> <li>19. No preparan bien las reuniones</li> <li>20. Autoritarios</li> <li>21. No ayudan a conseguir información</li> <li>22. No orgullosos (modestos)</li> <li>23. No bien vestidos</li> <li>24. Organizaciones antiguas</li> <li>25. No se concentran en los temas de la agenda en las reuniones</li> </ol> |

**LIST OF CHARACTERISTICS (3)**  
**Translated and categorised in English**

Select from the following list of characteristics six (6) aspects (3 from the left part and 3 from the right part) in order to describe the characteristics of the before mentioned negotiators' nationalities. (For example. Spanish negotiators: 4A, 18A, 24A, 10B, 21B, 7B.)

| A                                                     | B                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Quick decision-making                              | 1. Slow decision-making                                  |
| 2. Creative                                           | 2. Not creative                                          |
| 3. Serious                                            | 3. Not serious                                           |
| 4. Collaborative                                      | 4. Not collaborative                                     |
| 5. Good sense of humour                               | 5. Not good sense of humour                              |
| 6. Flexible                                           | 6. Not flexible                                          |
| 7. Master foreign languages                           | 7. Do not master foreign languages                       |
| 8. Manage international operations                    | 8. Do not manage international operations                |
| 9. Efficient                                          | 9. Not efficient                                         |
| 10. Open to other cultures                            | 10. Not open to other cultures                           |
| 11. Aggressive                                        | 11. Not aggressive                                       |
| 12. Good listeners                                    | 12. Not good listeners                                   |
| 13. Good verbal expression                            | 13. Not good verbal expression                           |
| 14. Good technical know-how                           | 14. Not good technical know-how                          |
| 15. Trustworthy                                       | 15. Not trustworthy                                      |
| 16. Punctual                                          | 16. Not punctual                                         |
| 17. Good manners                                      | 17. Not good manners                                     |
| 18. Organised                                         | 18. Not organised                                        |
| 19. Prepare well the meetings                         | 19. Do not prepare well the meetings                     |
| 20. Democratic                                        | 20. Authoritarian                                        |
| 21. Help to obtain information                        | 21. Do not help to obtain information                    |
| 22. Proud                                             | 22. Not proud                                            |
| 23. Well dressed                                      | 23. Not well dressed                                     |
| 24. Modern organisations                              | 24. Not modern organisations                             |
| 25. Concentrate on the themes (agenda) of the meeting | 25. Do not concentrate on themes (agenda) of the meeting |