

P-048

Interaction Patterns in Crisis Negotiations: Persuasive Arguments and Cultural Differences

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Abstract

This research examines cultural differences in negotiators' responses to rational persuasion in crisis negotiations over time. Using a new method of examining cue-response patterns, we examined 25 crisis negotiations in which police negotiators interacted with perpetrators from low- or high-context cultures. As predicted, low-context more than high-context perpetrators were found to use persuasive arguments, to reciprocate persuasive arguments, and to respond to persuasive arguments in a compromising way. These effects were partly mediated by time period, with the more normative, later period of interaction associated with larger cultural effects than the early crisis-dominated period of interaction. Further analyses found that low-context perpetrators were more likely to communicate threats, but that high-context negotiators were more likely to reciprocate them. The implications of these findings for our understanding of inter-cultural interaction are discussed.

### Interaction Patterns in Crisis Negotiations: Persuasive Arguments and Cultural Differences

On August 12, 2002, a Dutch volunteer named Arjan Erkel was kidnapped while working on the Médecins sans Frontières medical aid program in Dagestan, a Republic of the Russian federation. The response of the authorities was to engage the perpetrators in dialogue and persuade them to release, and not physically harm, the volunteer. Among the factors that shaped this crisis negotiation, and one that is becoming increasingly prevalent in applied settings, was the cultural difference between the parties. Police forces in the US and Europe have reported a significant growth in the cultural diversity of the perpetrators of kidnappings and extortions (Giebels, 1999; Ostermann, 2002; Taylor & Donohue, 2006). This trend reasserts the need for scholars to understand cultural differences in approaches to interaction as well as differences in perpetrators' reactions to efforts to dissuade them from causing harm. In this article, we respond to this need by examining the negotiation dynamics of 25 actual crisis negotiations that were perpetrated by individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Culture is often defined as the characteristic profile of a society with respect to its values, norms, and institutions (Lytle, Brett, Barsness, Tinsley, & Janssens, 1995). It is an important determinant of people's attitudes, self-construal, and behavior, and hence their strategic choices in conflict situations (cf. Pruitt & Kim, 2004). Efforts to understand the impact of intercultural dynamics on negotiation have generally taken one of two perspectives. One line of research has sought to understand how the outcomes of conflicts are affected by cultural factors such as social identities and cultural stereotypes (Faure, 2002, 2003; Gelfand et al. 2001; Macduff, 2006; Tjosvold & Sun, 2000). This research has revealed, for example, how divergent framing of messages and poor understanding of cultural values can lead to non-optimal outcomes and escalations of conflict (Hammer & Rogan, 2002). A second line of research has considered how negotiators respond to key negotiation behaviors, such as information sharing and pressure tactics (Adair & Brett, 2005; Adair, Okumura, & Brett,

2001; Tinsley, 1998, 2001). These studies examine the way in which negotiators use culturally normative negotiation behaviors and how their use is linked to the utilization or otherwise of integrative potential. By focusing on the actual building blocks of negotiation, these studies are able to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the communicative process that underlies and structures negotiation.

In this article, we concentrate on the second of these two approaches and build on the existing literature in two ways. First, we extend the focus of previous studies, which has typically been on the use of integrative bargaining strategies (e.g., information sharing), by emphasizing the role of distributive forcing strategies. Forcing strategies are those strategies of influence (French & Raven, 1959; Lewicki, Saunders, & Minton, 1997) by which a negotiator tries to satisfy individual goals and gain advantage over the other party (Deutsch, 1974; Lewicki, Saunders, & Minton, 1997). Forcing strategies may be particularly prevalent in high-stakes, crisis scenarios because they are not bound by the normative framework of cooperation and role obligation that define day-to-day negotiations (Roger & Schumacher, 1983). Moreover, crisis negotiations are typically win-lose in structure and usually contain little integrative potential. In line with this reasoning, research by Donohue and Roberto (1993) shows that negotiators in crisis situations focus on power issues such as “who is in charge” and “how can I force the other”, rather than on substantive issues such as identifying win-win solutions.

In conceptualizing forcing strategies, research distinguishes between two main categories of forcing behavior: persuasive arguments and threats. Persuasive arguments aim to convince the other party to comply with one’s own proposals by using task-related arguments and logic (Giebels, De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 2003). In contrast, threats communicate the intention to punish the other party if they do not concede (Deutsch & Krauss, 1962). Research addressing the use of forcing behavior in negotiation traditionally focuses on the

communication of threats (Deutsch & Krauss, 1962; Tedeshi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1973). More recently, research has also taken into account persuasive arguments (e.g., Adair & Brett, 2005; Adair et al., 2001), although little research has considered both strategies simultaneously, nor differentiated persuasive arguments from the communication of threats. This is surprising, since there is evidence suggesting that both types of forcing behavior are different in their effects. For example, two experiments by Giebels et al. (2003) demonstrate that threats and persuasive arguments are not correlated and that a negotiator's social value orientation influences the use of threats but not persuasive arguments. Another study by Giebels, De Dreu, and Van de Vliert (1998) shows that negotiators with a power advantage communicate more threats than negotiators with a power disadvantage, while the opposite is true for persuasive arguments. In this study, therefore, we differentiate persuasive arguments from the communication of threats. We also focus our hypothesis development on the less examined strategy of persuasive arguments, since evidence suggests that the salience of such rational strategies may be dependent on culture (Drake, 1995; Fu & Yukl, 2000; Grice, 1975). Moreover, this dependence may be particularly prevalent in negotiations with win-lose structures and a focus on individual gains (Adair & Brett, 2004), which are both factors that characterize crisis negotiations.

Second, we focus our examination of cultural differences at the micro-level of cue-response patterns. This focus represents a significant departure from previous research, which has typically examined cultural differences in terms of the frequency of behavior use across several time periods. A focus on the interrelationships among behaviors allows our analysis to consider directly how culture impacts on the way in which negotiators interpret and respond to a message or series of messages. Indeed, there is growing evidence to suggest that the order in which behaviors occur—the interrelationships among behaviors—has a significant impact on their meaning and influence on the negotiation (Adair, 2003; Adair & Brett, 2005; Giebels

& Noelanders, 2004; Taylor, 2002a; Taylor & Donald, 2003; 2004). Interestingly, these impacts are not always the result of conditional responses, but are often the result of delayed responses to a key behavior, or responses to a particular pattern of previous behaviors (Taylor & Donald, in press). Thus, understanding the actual make up of interaction is important for negotiation theory because it provides insight into the process by which various cues and responses come together to allow a conflict to begin, unfold, and resolve. It is also important to an applied psychology of negotiation, since crisis negotiators can make best use of strategies that work to influence a perpetrator at any given moment, rather than in an aggregate fashion.

### Cultural Dimensions and Negotiation Behaviors

The preceding section presented the foundation of our approach to examining negotiation behavior and, in particular, persuasive arguments. In this section, we move to consider the existing literature on cross-cultural interaction and draw hypotheses about the types of cue-response contingencies that will dominate the behavior of perpetrators from different cultural backgrounds. Specifically, based on Hall's (1976) analysis of cultural differences, we distinguish between negotiations with perpetrators from low-context cultures and perpetrators from high-context cultures. The majority of individualistic, Western societies, especially in Northern Europe and the US, can be considered low-context cultures. The majority of collectivistic, Non-Western societies, such as China and Russia, may be considered high-context cultures (see Hofstede, 2001, p. 212).

#### *Use of Persuasive Arguments*

Hall (1976) differentiates the ways in which cultures communicate as either low-context or high-context. Low-context communication involves the use of explicit and direct messages in which meanings are principally contained in the transmitted messages. In contrast, high-context communication is characterized by messages in which information is

more hidden and meaning is located in the social or physical context of the negotiation. This distinction suggests that negotiators from low-context cultures, in comparison to their high-context counterparts, will focus on sending and receiving accurate messages and defining the interaction principally in terms of message content (Harris & Moran, 1991). These notions are consistent with previous research showing that low-context US negotiators are more likely than high-context Japanese negotiators to exchange information directly (Adair et al., 2001; Graham, 1993).

However, it may also have consequences for different types of forcing behaviors. An important assumption that is characteristic of low-context communication is what Grice (1975; see also Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996) labeled the *quality maxim*: one should state only that which is believed to be true with sufficient evidence. This maxim implies that low-context communication is typically centered around logic and rationality compared to high-context communication (cf. Adair & Brett, 2004). This implication is consistent with research in a number of areas. For example, Ting-Toomey's work on cross-cultural communication (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1998) suggests that confronting the other party with rational arguments and factual evidence is more central to American than to Chinese conflict environments (see also, Fu & Yukl, 2000). Similarly, research has shown that U.S. negotiators use more analytic statements than Taiwanese negotiators in a simulated negotiation scenario (Drake, 1995), and that European Canadians rely on more arguments when justifying their choices than Asian Canadians (Hodhino-Browne, Zanna, Spencer, Zanna, Kitayama, & Lackenbauer, 2005). Combined, this evidence leads us to hypothesize that:

*H1*: Low-context perpetrators make more use of persuasive arguments than high-context perpetrators.

*Reciprocity of Persuasive Arguments*

Related to the possibility of identifying differences in the use of persuasive arguments is the possibility of identifying differences in the degree to which the other party reciprocates persuasive arguments. The possibility of observing cross-cultural differences in reciprocation is significant, since the reciprocation norm is often considered an essential, universal feature of negotiation (Rubin & Brown, 1975). Yet, if logic and rationality are considered core elements in low-context communication, then reciprocation of rational arguments should occur more frequently in negotiations with low-context perpetrators compared to negotiations with high-context perpetrators. This proposal is certainly consistent with more general research on message strategies and cross-cultural differences in preference and effectiveness (Hong, 1987; Tai, 2004). For example, two comparisons of low- and high-context negotiators by Adair and her colleagues (Adair & Brett, 2005; Adair, 2003) found differences in the reciprocation of information exchange that matched the elements Hall (1976) associates with the two cultural groups. The Adair studies focus on information exchange because they consider an integrative negotiation task, where information sharing is likely central to good outcomes. However, parallel differences might be expected in win-loose negotiations where influence strategies such as persuasive arguments may be central to success (cf. Adair & Brett, 2004).

Other evidence suggests that the propensity to reciprocate rational arguments might be dependent on negotiation phase. Specifically, the beginning of a crisis negotiation is typically associated with high levels of stress and arousal (Vecchi, Van Hasselt, & Romano, in press). This arousal is likely to inhibit a negotiator's capacity to process information (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), something which is arguably critical if he or she is to understand the other party's reasoning, evaluate their arguments (i.e., to identify weak spots in other's argumentation), and construct reasoned responses to further their own goals. The inhibiting



effect of this arousal is likely to limit the ability of negotiators to use and respond to rational persuasion during the early stages of negotiation. In contrast, the efforts of police negotiators to reduce tension and create a problem-solving environment (Donohue et al., 1991) will mean that later stages of negotiation involve less arousal and, consequently, are relatively more open to rational persuasion playing a more central role. Thus, we hypothesize that:

*H2:* The reciprocation of persuasive arguments will be higher in negotiations with low-context as opposed to high-context perpetrators, particularly in the second part of the negotiations.

#### *Efficiency of Persuasive Arguments*

Finally, persuasive arguments may be regarded as having significant parallels with influence tactics, which we define as deliberate actions by one individual (the influence agent) toward another individual (the target) that are intended to alter his or her attitudes in a way that would not have otherwise occurred (Perloff, 1993). This suggests that the effectiveness of influence strategies may be measured as the extent to which they alter the other party's behavior in the desired direction. If persuasive arguments are considered more central to interaction in low- rather than high-context cultures, then this strategy is also likely to be more influential in low- rather than high-context cultures. This expectation is consistent with the results of a scenario study by Fu and Yukl (2000), which found that low-context US managers perceive persuasive arguments as more effective in influencing people and resolving differences than high-context Chinese managers. It is also consistent with wider research on the commitment and consistency principle, defined as the human desire to achieve apparent consistency between previous beliefs or behavior and current attitudes or behavior (Festinger, 1957; Heine & Lehman, 1997). As such, the commitment and consistency principle appeals to logic and rationality and tends to be developed in "if-then" linear terms, both of which are associated with low-context cultures (cf. Adair & Brett, 2004). Thus, while

the consistency principle is robust in its influence of behavior, research (Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, and Gornik-Durose, 1999) has found that low-context US students are more likely to feel compelled to act in a way that is consistent with previous behavior than high-context Polish students.

This collection of research suggests that influence exercised through the use of cognitive, rational strategies is likely to be more effective in negotiations with low-context rather than high-context perpetrators. Furthermore, and in line with our previous reasoning, we propose that an important prerequisite for cognitive strategies to influence an interaction is a context in which individuals have the cognitive capacity to process them. This is less likely in the early stages of crisis negotiation than in the later stages. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

*H3:* Persuasive arguments by the police negotiator will be more effective in negotiations with low-context perpetrators rather than high-context perpetrators, particularly in the second part of the negotiations.

## Method

### *Negotiation Sample*

Data were transcripts produced from audiotapes of interactions from 25 crisis negotiations that occurred in the Netherlands or Belgium. These cases were selected on the basis that they took place over the last 10 years and that they included at least 10 minutes of conversation between the negotiator and perpetrator ( $M = 39$  minutes). Of the 25 cases, 15 involved kidnapping and 10 involved extortion. All 25 cases concerned the negotiation of instrumental issues. Specifically, in all of the 25 incidents the perpetrators demanded money or other valuable items. All of the incidents were conducted by phone and ended with the perpetrators being arrested. All police negotiators and perpetrators were male.

Twelve of the negotiations were with hostage takers from societies that we regarded as low-context: The Netherlands (3), Belgium (6) and the United Kingdom (3). Of these 12 cases, 6 were kidnappings and 6 were extortions. The remaining thirteen negotiations concerned perpetrators from societies that we regarded as high-context: China (4), Kurdistan (1), Morocco (2), Surinam (1), Russia (2), Turkey (1), and Poland (2). Of these 13 cases, 9 were kidnappings and 4 were extortions.

In 19 cases, the negotiation occurred in a language other than Dutch. To facilitate analysis, the dialogue in these interactions was translated into Dutch by professional translators who were associated with the police but blind to the research hypotheses. These translators were bilingual, native speakers of the language in which the negotiation was conducted. Because of the sensitive nature of this material, it was not possible to use back-translation to evaluate the reliability of the transcription. However, a number of factors serve to militate against the possibility of mistaken translation. First, the translator facilitated interpretation of the transcripts by providing “working notes” in which she or he indicated culturally-specific meanings of particular words or phrases. Second, in their role with the police, the translators had prepared a large amount of material for legal proceedings (e.g., court), such that they were experienced in providing translations with high levels of accuracy. Third, as described in the next section, the dialogue was examined at the level of speaking turn and not in terms of the use of individual words. An analysis pitched at this level arguably minimizes the impact that single word ambiguities will have on the analysis (cf. Taylor, 2002b).

#### *Coding the Transcriptions*

Based on transcriptions of audiotapes of the 25 negotiations, two trained judges (unaware of the hypotheses) coded all the speaking turns for eleven codes (see Giebels & Noelanders, 2004). Specifically, the two coders were initially trained on unrelated negotiation

material. This training continued until inter-rater reliability, as measured Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960), reached .75. This required approximately 30 hours of training. The raters then coded the 26 negotiations by coding each speaking turn of the police negotiator and perpetrator. The inter-rater reliability of this coding was very good, with an average Kappa of .85 and a range across the incidents of .70 to .92 (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997). In cases of disagreement, the raters discussed the particular speaking turn and decided jointly which code was the best to apply.

For the purposes of this research, we focus on the use of four categories of behavior. The focus of our analysis was on patterns in negotiators' use of the behavior *Persuasive arguments*, coded as message behaviors that used rational persuasion or logic to assert a point of view or idea. To test our presumption about the difference between persuasive arguments and threats, and to enable comparisons with previous research (e.g., Adair & Brett, 2005; De Dreu et al., 1998; Giebels, De Dreu, & Van de Vliert, 2000; Giebels et al., 2003; Van de Vliert, Nauta, Giebels, & Janssen, 1999), we also examined negotiators use of the behaviors *Threats* and *Information sharing*. We defined Threats as message behaviors that intimidate, accuse or suggest punishment for not acting a particular way, and we defined Information sharing as message behaviors that provide information about procedural, emotional or substantive issues. Finally, to provide an indication of police negotiator efficiency (see below) we examined negotiators use of *Compromising* behavior, defined as an act of concession or engagement in give-and-take behaviors.

*Police negotiator efficiency.* The efficiency of police negotiator behavior was assessed by establishing the extent to which they were successful in eliciting compromising behavior from the perpetrator. This measure recognizes that an important goal for police negotiators is to turn the negotiation into a more normative interaction characterized by mutual concession making. It is also consistent with research examining the behavioral correlates of successful

win-lose negotiations (De Dreu, 1995; Hornstein, 1965; Michener, Vaske, Shleifer, Plazewski, & Chapman, 1975). The decision to focus on the occurrence of compromising behavior, rather than overall negotiation outcome, is consistent with our focus on cue-response dynamics. If we had used overall outcome as a measure of efficacy, it would be difficult to disentangle the impact of individual persuasion strategies on the interaction. All negotiations involve periods of persuasion that move the interaction toward and away from success and there is no way of distinguishing how each of these patterns of strategies contributed to the unfolding negotiation.

*Time Periods.* To test whether or not the impact of influence tactics is systematically related to time, it was necessary to divide each negotiation into a series of interactions. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Olekalns & Smith, 2000), we partitioned each negotiation into two equally sized periods. This allowed for a comparison of the early period of interaction, often considered to be dominated by crisis and extreme reactions, from the later, usually more normative period of interaction (Donohue et al., 1991).

#### *Analyzing Cue-Response Sequences*

To examine the interrelationships among the four negotiation behaviors, we constructed event sequences (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997) from the coded transcripts. Specifically, for each transcript, the series of assigned codes was used to create a single sequence in which one code appeared on one line of a data file. Because the coding was based at the level of utterance, the resulting file contained a sequence in which the codes alternated between representing the police negotiator's utterances and the hostage taker's utterances.

There are currently a number of methods available to researchers interested in examining the extent to which particular cues (e.g., police negotiator behaviors) lead to particular responses (e.g., perpetrator responses). One common approach is to conduct a log-linear analysis that examines the likelihoods of different responses occurring after a cue

(Olekals & Smith, 2000). However, as Giebels and Noelanders (2004) note, the predominant focus of these analyses is the immediate relationship between behaviors (i.e., whether a behavior at time  $t$  impacts on behavior at time  $t + 1$ ). This focus has the potential of overlooking important relationships between cues and responses that are delayed for a range of interpersonal reasons, including cultural dynamics. Even in advanced analyses where delayed responses are considered (Adair, 2003; Adair & Brett, 2005), the method employed restricts the analysis so that only one type of delay or “lag” (e.g.,  $t + 3$ ) is considered. By not considering the full range of intervals, these analyses lose valuable information about the range and type of interrelationships among behaviors. To overcome this problem, we examine the interrelationships among behaviors using proximity coefficients (Taylor, 2006). Rather than consider the immediate relations among behaviors, the proximity approach considers the relationships among all behaviors as degrees of proximity. This captures more of the complex interconnections among behaviors in an interaction, and so allows for sophisticated comparisons across speakers, over time periods, and between single cases.

The proximity approach is based on the notion that behaviors contribute to the same part of the interaction and have more in common—in terms of the speaker’s motivating concerns, strategies and cognitions—when they occur close together within an interaction than when they occur far apart. This notion, captured by the proximity of two behaviors, is measured using a proximity coefficient (Taylor, 2006; Taylor & Donald, in press). This coefficient, which varies between .00 and 1.00, expresses the relationship between two types of behavior as a direct function of their relative placements in a sequence. The coefficient equals .00 if the behaviors occur only once at the first and last position of the sequence, and it equals 1.00 if one behavior immediately precedes the second behavior without exception. A coefficient score between these two extremes reflects differing amounts of proximity between the two behaviors, with a greater value indicating a more proximal relationship. Thus, the

impact of various negotiation behaviors may be assessed by examining the relative proximity of particular responses to a speaker's cue. A significantly high proximity indicates a strong relationship between the occurrence of a particular behavioral cue and the desired response.

There are a number of ways to assess the significance of proximity as measured by the coefficients (Taylor & Donald, in press). Since our hypotheses require comparisons of coefficients derived from negotiations with low- and high-context perpetrators, we adopt Taylor's (2006) suggestion of using randomization tests (see Edgington, 1995; Good, 1994; Ninness, Rumph, Vasquez, & Bradfield, 2002). A randomization test determines how likely it is that the observed difference may have occurred by chance, thereby providing a  $p$ -value that parallels those obtained through traditional parametric tests (e.g., ANOVA). It achieves this by randomly shuffling the derived coefficients between the two groups, calculating a particular test statistic (e.g.,  $F$ ) from the newly formed groups, and repeating this process a large number of times (in our case 10,000 times). The result of this repetition is a set of test statistic values that form a distribution of likely observations for the statistic. From this distribution, it is possible to estimate the likelihood of observing a value of the test statistic that equals or exceeds the value actually observed in the data. This likelihood therefore provides the equivalent of a  $p$ -value, which may be understood in the same way as  $p$ -values derived through parametric statistical techniques such as ANOVA.

In the analyses that follow, we use the traditional  $F$  statistic as a means of measuring the differences between proximity coefficients. At each randomization of the data, we calculate  $F$  for the main and interaction effects and form a distribution of  $F$  for each effect. The significance of the difference between groups is then determined by locating the observed  $F$  value in the distribution provided by the re-sampling of  $F$ , rather than the sampling distribution that facilitates traditional ANOVA testing. Thus, on some occasions, the absolute value of the  $F$  statistic may be very small but the chance of observing it unlikely (i.e.,  $p <$

.05). On other occasions the absolute value may seem large but such differences are regularly observed within randomized data.

## Results

### *Frequency of Behavior*

The 25 incidents contain a total of 6980 coded speaking turns, of which 3498 were spoken by the police negotiator and 3482 were spoken by the perpetrator. Of these speaking turns, 2045 (29%) could be typified as one of the four negotiation strategies spoken by the perpetrator, while 1810 turns (25%) could be typified as one of the four negotiation strategies spoken by the police negotiators. A series of chi-square tests indicate that there are no significant differences in the frequency of police negotiators use of tactics across extortion and kidnapping cases (all  $\chi^2 < 1.0$ , *ns*), and no significant differences in the frequency of perpetrators use of tactics across extortion and kidnapping cases (all  $\chi^2 < 1.0$ , *ns*).

To test our predictions about the frequency of occurrence of persuasive arguments across cultures, we calculate the frequency of occurrence of the four negotiation behaviors as a function of speaker and time period. Table 1 shows the average frequency of occurrence of speaking turns coded as each of the four behaviors included in this study, as a function of culture and time period.

The data in Table 1 enable a test of Hypotheses 1. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, low-context perpetrators made significantly more use of persuasive arguments compared to high-context perpetrators, and this was particularly true for the second half of the negotiation,  $\chi^2(1) = 7.31$ ,  $p < .05$ . The analysis also revealed a main effect of culture in the use of threats,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.56$ ,  $p < .05$ . Specifically, low-context perpetrators communicated significantly more threats compared to high-context perpetrators. Finally, the analyses showed no significant differences in the use of information sharing and compromising across low- and high-context perpetrators. We also examined



whether or not the police negotiator's behavior differed as a function of the perpetrator's cultural background. We found only an effect for Compromising behavior, with police negotiators making significantly more use of compromising when interacting with a high-context perpetrator compared to a low-context perpetrator,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.75, p < .05$ .

#### *Cross-Cultural Differences in the Organization of Influence*

Table 2 shows proximity coefficients for the responses of high-context perpetrators to police negotiator's cues (upper panel) and low-context perpetrators to police negotiator's cues (lower panel). The panels are divided into time periods (Time 1 and Time 2) to allow a comparison of proximities over time. As can be seen from Table 2, the overall value of the coefficients across the contingencies is high. Consistent with previous accounts (Donohue et al., 1991), this finding suggests that crisis negotiations involve a complex organization of cues and responses, with negotiators quick to move through issues and respond using diverse influence tactics. However, despite their absolute values, the relationships between police cues and perpetrator responses vary considerably. In some cases, the behavior of the police negotiator almost always resulted in an immediate reciprocation by the perpetrator. For example, as indicated by the coefficient of .97, perpetrators from low-context cultures often reciprocated a police negotiator's information sharing almost immediately. In contrast, other responses were rarely given to a police negotiator's cue, as is true for example of low-context perpetrators' reciprocation of compromising in the second half of the negotiation ( $P = .53$ ). This cue-response relationship is quite different during the first period of the same negotiations ( $P = .92$ ). Finally, note the asymmetry in most of the contingencies. For example, during Time 1 of negotiations with high-context perpetrators (Table 2, upper panel), the response of Information sharing to a Persuasive argument cue (.93) is typically more immediate than the response of Persuasive arguments following a cue of Information sharing

(.80). These asymmetries in coefficients provide clues about the overall organization of the interaction, since those that initiate more proximal responses may be thought of as taking the lead in terms of the relationship between the two forms of influence.

The proximity coefficients reveal a number of other characteristics of the data. For example, the variance of proximity coefficients in the four panels of Table 2 provides an indication of the extent to which perpetrators varied the way in which they responded. This variance differs significantly across the high and low-context perpetrators. At Time 1, the variation of proximity coefficients, measured using the coefficient of variation (Howell, 1998), was .18 for high-context perpetrators and .12 for low-context perpetrators ( $M = .15$ ). At Time 2, the variation of proximity coefficients was .17 for high-context perpetrators and .12 for low-context perpetrators ( $M = .15$ ). Consistent with the Hall's (1976) original proposal and subsequent findings of Adair and Brett (2005), perpetrators from high-context cultures show greater flexibility in the way in which they respond to cues compared to perpetrators from low-context cultures. Finally, note the asymmetry in most of the contingencies. For example, during Time 1 of negotiations with high-context perpetrators (Table 2, upper panel), the response of Information sharing following a cue of Persuasive arguments (.93) is typically more immediate than the response of Persuasive arguments following a cue of Information sharing (.80). These asymmetries in coefficients provide clues about the overall organization of the interaction, since those that initiate more proximal responses may be thought of as taking the lead in terms of the relationship between the two forms of influence.

Comparisons across the top and bottom panel of Table 2 enable an analysis of our predictions relating to the cue-response differences between low- and high-context perpetrators. In line with Hypothesis 2, results showed that low-context perpetrators are significantly more likely to reciprocate persuasive arguments compared to high-context perpetrators, but only during the second half of the negotiation (i.e., an interaction effect,  $F =$

6.47,  $p < .05$ ). Specifically, the data revealed that high-context perpetrators reduce the extent to which they reciprocate persuasive arguments over time, while low-context perpetrators increase the extent to which they reciprocate persuasive arguments over time. We also found significant differences in the immediacy with which negotiators reciprocated threats. Interestingly, negotiators from high-context cultures reciprocated threats significantly more often than negotiators from low-context cultures ( $F = 5.68, p < .05$ ).

In line with previous research (Adair et al., 2001), the coefficients reveal a significant main effect of culture for Information sharing across high and low cultures. Specifically, perpetrators from low context cultures were more likely than perpetrators from high-context cultures to reciprocate Information sharing ( $F = 5.54, p < .05$ ). Furthermore, the reciprocity of compromising behavior reduced over time from Time 1 to Time 2, regardless of the perpetrator's cultural background ( $F = 32.95, p < .05$ ).

Our final hypothesis relates to the extent to which the negotiation strategies were effective in bringing about cooperation (i.e., compromising) from the perpetrator. Hypothesis 3 predicted that Persuasive arguments by the police negotiator would be more effective in negotiations with low-context perpetrators than with high-context perpetrators, particularly in the second half of the negotiations. The analysis revealed a main effect of culture for the response of compromising following a police negotiator's cue of Persuasive arguments ( $F = 10.79, p < .01$ ). This response was significantly more likely to occur following Persuasive arguments in low-context cultures compared to high-context cultures, but this effect was not moderated by time. Thus, we found only partial support for Hypothesis 3. No such effect was found for the communication of threats. The analysis, however, revealed a significant main effect of culture for the response of Information sharing following Communication of threats. Specifically, this strategy was more effective at eliciting Information sharing in low-context cultures compared to high-content cultures ( $F = 6.78, p < .01$ ). Interestingly, there was also a

significant main effect of time for this contingency, with Communication of threats leading to less immediate Information sharing at Time 2 compared to Time 1 ( $F = 6.18, p < .01$ ).

### Discussion

On a daily basis, newspapers report on individuals who have been kidnapped in crisis areas around the world, ranging from Dagestan to Iraq. The growing professional reporting of such incidents suggests that they are heavily influenced by the cultural background of the perpetrators. In this study, we examined the communicative dynamics of 25 crisis negotiations with perpetrators from low- and high-context cultures. Taking the opportunity to examine message behavior in these extreme, win-lose structured negotiations, we focused on forcing strategies and, in particular, persuasive arguments. To date, negotiation research and theory has largely neglected this type of negotiation behavior. This is surprising because research shows that negotiators usually devote a relatively large share of their time to discussing arguments, sometimes up to 40 % (Giebels et al., 2003). Moreover, particularly in crisis negotiations, persuasive strategies are expected to be an important building block to resolving the crisis at hand (cf. Vecchi et al., 2004).

#### *Culturally Dependent Negotiation Behaviors*

We found evidence to confirm our general expectation that persuasive arguments are more central to negotiation with low-context perpetrators compared to negotiations with high-context perpetrators. Low-context perpetrators were more likely to use persuasive arguments, to reciprocate persuasive arguments of the police negotiator, particularly in the second part of the negotiation, and to respond to persuasive arguments in a compromising way. Interestingly, the effect on compromising behaviour occurred irrespective of the negotiation phase. This suggests it is sufficient to use arguments to elicit cooperation, regardless of whether the other party is able to fully process or react to them. The reason for this may be that logic and

deductive thinking are generally highly valued in low-context cultures (Gelfand & Dyer, 2000), and tactics that make use of this way of thinking are being rewarded.

As expected, the analysis of threat behaviour revealed a different pattern. While low-context perpetrators were more likely to communicate threats, high-context negotiators were more likely to reciprocate them. These seemingly contradictory findings are arguably explained by the same mechanism. Threats refer to a confrontational and assertive way of handling conflict, which is consistent with low-context communication and considered more inappropriate in high-context cultures (Fu & Yukl, 2000). Consequently, the communication of threats was not only higher for low context rather than high context perpetrators, but this strategy was also more effective at eliciting information sharing from low-context perpetrators compared to high-context perpetrators. On the other hand, high-context perpetrators were more likely to “punish” police negotiators who use them with counter-threats, particularly given that crisis negotiation centre on issues of “who is in charge” (Donohue & Roberto, 1993) and high-context negotiators may be more concerned with establishing dominance (Adair & Brett, 2004). The confrontational nature of threats may also draw attention to the need to preserve face, something that is considered more important within high- rather than low-context cultures (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). All in all, our findings suggest that persuasive arguments and threats are based on different underlying mechanisms, with the use of threats being more relational and identity-oriented, while persuasive arguments are more content-oriented, setting in motion a cognitive process that promotes attitude change.

To allow for further comparison with findings in previous research, we also included information sharing. In line with research by Adair and Brett (2005; see also Adair et al., 2001), low context perpetrators were more likely to directly reciprocate information sharing. As such, our findings parallels other research using an integrative, role-playing exercise. However, contrary to what might be expected, low-context perpetrators did not use

information sharing to a greater extent than high-context perpetrators. An explanation for this finding is that mutual information sharing requires cooperative goals and trust (De Dreu et al., 1998) and therefore is less prominent in win-lose negotiations directed at the value-claiming aspects of negotiation (cf. Adair & Brett, 2004). Yet, this reasoning seems inconsistent with the relatively high occurrence rate of information sharing for both low- and high context perpetrators. Considering the fact that all police negotiators originated from low context cultures, and therefore negotiations with high context perpetrators in fact were intercultural negotiations, adaptation processes may have occurred. Indeed, there is some evidence to conclude that high context communicators are more flexible in their behaviour and therefore may have adapted more to low-context police negotiators than vice versa (cf. Adair, 2003; Adair & Brett, 2005). This line of reasoning is supported by the general observation that police negotiators seem to be quite consistent in their approach, regardless of the cultural background of the perpetrator (see Table 1).

Taken together, our findings support the general expectation that persuasive arguments are more central and effective in negotiations with low-context opponents, and should be distinguished from other negotiation behaviors that may be considered similar in terms of being distribution focused (threats) or in terms of being consistent with low- instead of high-context communication (information sharing). At an epistemological level, our findings highlight the need for negotiation researchers to compliment their analyses of the impact of psychological variables (e.g., emotion, van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004; trust, Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004) with an understanding of how this impact emerges in actual behavior. A single outcome may emerge from a myriad of different interactions, such that any linking of independent variables (e.g., distrust) with particular outcome does little to help us understand why it is that variable had the impact on negotiation that it did. Such questions about why variables have an effect can only be understood by looking under the hood of the

communicative process and learning how such variables impact on negotiator's strategic behavior.

#### *Limitations and Questions for Future Research*

While our research extends previous work by examining the rich communicative dynamics of complex, protracted real-life negotiations, it leaves unanswered a number of important questions. For example, in order to compensate for the small number of interactions available for analysis, we divided interactions into only two time periods. This ensured that the proximity coefficients were calculated on sufficiently long sequences of interaction. However, it is likely that separating interaction into more periods would reveal further, important variations in the cue-response dynamics across high- and low-context cultures (Adair & Brett, 2005). A second area of unaccounted for variation lies in the differences among the national cultures we assigned to low- and high-context categories. By assigning individuals to one of the categories on the basis of what is known about the culture of their country-of-origin, we essentially inferred rather than measured cultural differences. There is of course potentially considerable within-country variation in interpersonal and cognitive style that may how they respond to rational persuasion. For example, research suggests that some of the different national cultures included in our study may vary on other cultural dimensions, such as uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001). Such factors may cause considerable within-group variability, although the data clearly support our theorizing and hypotheses on persuasive arguments as well as previous research on other behavioral categories (e.g., Adair & Brett, 2005).

Finally, the kidnappings and extortions included in our research can be typically seen as instrumental crisis situations. Instrumental crisis situations look much like business transactions in which the victims are used by the perpetrators as "bargaining chips". These situations can be contrasted with the expressive crisis incidents that have dominated research

in the area so far (e.g., domestic crises, Hasslet, Flood, Romano, Vecchi, de Fabrique & Dalfonzo, 2005). In expressive situations, the communication is usually intense and emotional, and the police response may be regarded as adopting a crisis counseling role rather than a negotiation role per se. Our research shows that patterns in instrumental crisis negotiations are more closely aligned to day-to-day negotiations, in particular those negotiations with a win-lose structure. It is thus an open question as to whether similar parallels will be observed when the dynamics of expressive situations are examined. In these situations, we expect other negotiation strategies, such as cooperative statements (Vecchi et al., 2004) or affective influence strategies (Adair & Brett, 2004), to play a more important role.

In this study we consciously departed from the perspective of police negotiators and a focus on how the behavior of police negotiators influences the subsequent behavior of perpetrators. That is, from a practical point of view we are interested in strategies that work to influence a perpetrator and result in a peaceful resolution of the incident at hand. However, interesting additional information may be obtained by examining to what extent the behavior of perpetrators influences the behavior of police negotiators. For example, it might be that immediate retaliation of threat behavior by high context perpetrators is responsible for the somewhat higher occurrence of compromising behavior of police negotiators in encounters with high rather than low-context perpetrators. As mentioned previously, our research also lacks insight into possible adaptation processes occurring in negotiations with high context perpetrators. Future research should aim at including police negotiators from high context cultures as well.

#### *Practical Implications and Conclusion*

An important implication of our findings is that police negotiators should be sensitive to the influence strategies that they use when interacting with perpetrators from low- and high



context cultures. Our research suggests that persuasive arguments, usually found to be a central element of negotiations (Giebels et al., 2003), may be particularly effective when seeking to influence low-context perpetrators. In contrast, threats appeared as ineffective at gaining conciliation from perpetrators, especially from high-context perpetrators, where threats often lead to counter-threats and escalation. Interestingly, for both rational persuasion and threats, the evident differences were found to be greater during the second half of interaction. Thus, cultural differences in responding seem to be particularly acute when the initial crisis response has given way to a more normative form of interaction.

These findings seem important considering our general observation that police negotiators seem to be quite consistent in their approach. While the existing police approach has been relatively successful (Greenstone, 1995), our findings suggest that there are opportunities for further fine-tuning of the use of message tactics to incorporate growing knowledge of cultural differences. This may be particularly important considering the significant growth in the cultural diversity of the perpetrators of kidnappings and extortions (Giebels & Noelanders, 2002; Ostermann, 2002; Taylor & Donohue, 2006). At the micro-level of ongoing crisis negotiations, our findings suggest the value of critically reviewing the interaction process and the pathways that may allow negotiators to break through undesirable interaction patterns.

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Table 1.

*Relative Frequency of Occurrence for the Four Negotiation Behaviors as a Function of Cultural Context and Time Period (Unadjusted Frequencies in Parentheses).*

		Culture					
		<i>High-Context</i>			<i>Low-Context</i>		
	<i>Behavior</i>	Time 1	Time 2	Overall	Time 1	Time 2	Overall
Perpetrator	Persuasive arguments	61.7* (64)	61.7* (64)	123.4* (128)	99.5* (96)	103.6* (100)	203.1* (196)
	Threats	144.6* (150)	133.0 (138)	277.6* (288)	216.7* (209)	161.5 (156)	378.2* (365)
	Information sharing	227.5* (236)	254.5 (264)	481.9 (500)	276.8* (267)	265.1 (256)	541.9 (523)
	Compromise	13.5 (14)	9.6 (10)	23.1 (24)	14.5 (14)	7.2 (7)	21.8 (21)
Police Negotiator	Persuasive arguments	87.7 (91)	61.7* (64)	149.4* (155)	95.4 (92)	102.5* (99)	197.9* (191)
	Threats	48.2 (50)	51.1 (53)	94.5 (103)	63.2 (61)	44.5 (43)	107.5 (104)
	Information sharing	270.9 (281)	274.7 (285)	545.6 (566)	298.6 (288)	288.9 (279)	587.5 (567)
	Compromise	14.5 (15)	13.5 (14)	28.0* (29)	9.3 (9)	6.2 (6)	15.5* (15)

NOTE: \*  $p < .05$  for chi-square difference across high and low-context.

Table 2.

*Proximity Coefficients for High-context Negotiations (top panel) and Low-context Negotiations (bottom panel)*

	<i>Time 1</i>				<i>Time 2</i>			
<i>Police Negotiator's Cue</i>	Persuasive arguments	Threats	Information sharing	Compromise	Persuasive arguments	Threats	Information sharing	Compromise
Persuasive arguments	.95	.91	.93	.66	.88	.88	.92	.65
Threats	.91	.93	.96	.84	.87	.93	.92	.65
Information sharing	.80	.85	.96	.73	.89	.91	.96	.70
Compromise	.66	.88	.90	.94	.94	.98	.93	.56

  

	<i>Time 1</i>				<i>Time 2</i>			
<i>Police Negotiator's Cue</i>	Persuasive arguments	Threats	Information sharing	Compromise	Persuasive arguments	Threats	Information sharing	Compromise
Persuasive arguments	.86	.94	.95	.88	.92	.93	.94	.84
Threats	.92	.89	.98	.94	.93	.85	.96	.77
Information sharing	.81	.87	.97	.79	.90	.88	.97	.88
Compromise	.81	.95	.97	.92	.78	.85	.96	.53