

# The role of intercultural differences and challenges faced in communicating rehabilitation of mine sites' integration from Europe to Africa

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's integrated world, international organisations are expanding globally by creating partnerships for environmental projects<sup>1</sup>. Mine rehabilitation is the restoration of the land, on which mining has taken place, to the intended post-closure land uses<sup>2</sup>. In some jurisdictions, the legal requirement is to restore the pre-mining land use. In contrast, in others, the end uses of the land are open to a process of negotiation, either with the regulatory authorities or with a broader set of stakeholders<sup>3</sup>. Due to cultural differences between the parties, misunderstandings can lead negotiations to fail<sup>1</sup>. Negotiations regarding the rehabilitation of mine sites' integration from one country to another require engagement between all the major stakeholders, not just two<sup>4</sup>. The result of a successful negotiation will reflect the interests of both the investor and the government, and the communities surrounding the mine site.

Furthermore, significant is the need for an integrated understanding of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development for the relevant land<sup>5</sup>. The trend of globalisation demands the study of intercultural communication. The more understanding about people from different cultures, the more intercultural communication risks in negotiations can be reduced. National cultures provide the overall framework of cultural concepts and legislation for business activities. For this study, cultural effects on communicating a project to be integrated across borders via international business negotiations are considered by several well-known models of national culture in literature<sup>1</sup>. By using cultural dimension models introduced by Hall (1989), Hofstede (2008), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), different national cultures are compared with each other, usually by using dimension models and additional existing theory<sup>1</sup>. Trompenaars' and Hofstede's models are considered complementary.

Hence, the study's objectives are firstly to identify the effects of cultural dimensions and challenges in negotiating the rehabilitation of mine sites' integration from Europe to Africa. Secondly, identify the appropriate negotiation strategies analysed through variables defined in the Framework of Negotiations Orientation, proposed by Weiss & Stripp (1985)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> C.Rodolaki, Master Thesis, TU Bergakademie Freiberg (2020). 'The Role of Intercultural Communication and its Challenges in Environmental Project Integration from Europe to Africa'

<sup>2</sup> Chamber of Mines of South Africa/Coal Tech (November 2007). Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Mined Land.'

<sup>3</sup> International Council on Mining and Metals (2008). Planning for Integrated Mine Closure: Toolkit

<sup>4</sup> H.Mann, IISD Handbook on Mining Contract Negotiations for Developing Countries (April 2015). VOLUME I: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

<sup>5</sup> Af. Union 2009, Hobbs 2005.

This study specifically focuses on European and African countries for two reasons. Firstly, culture is a broad topic and analysing its relation to international business negotiations for rehabilitation of mine sites integration in various nations would provide broader insights. Secondly, the rapid growth and importance of European participation in various mine projects in Africa have significant implications when discussing cultural aspects. Europe and Africa differ in many aspects, including their economic and political systems, social values, and laws, despite the substantial historical changes. It is impossible to examine all aspects of all countries on the two continents. Therefore, by focusing on two European and two African countries, this study can help initiate the need to investigate more countries to better understand how diverse cultures can affect business negotiations in the mining sector<sup>1</sup>.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study has adopted social constructivism/interpretivism as the philosophy because the study focuses on observing and comparing cultural differences people have across countries, and aims to analyse their effects on business negotiations for rehabilitation of mine sites’ integration from one country to another<sup>1</sup>. The study was conducted using existing theories and the deductive approach. Therefore, this study's goal is to gain a better understanding of how the dimensions of national culture influence negotiations occurring between European and African parties. As a result, the research purpose of this study is exploratory<sup>1</sup>.

**RESULTS**

As shown in Figure 1, cultural dimensions have been presented at a national cultural level and derived from the study’s theoretical framework that combines three models of national culture; Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions, Trompenaar’s Seven Dimensions of Culture and Hall’s Cultural Factors. Cross-cultural business negotiation strategies have been analysed through variables defined in the Framework of Negotiations Orientation<sup>1</sup>.

With the findings of this study, as depicted in Figure 2, it is concluded that each of the nations’ orientations toward the dimension of universalism vs particularism has the most substantial relevance to the variables of international business negotiations. The dimension universalism vs particularism refers mainly to relationships and rules. According to the findings, this dimension is notably related to the basic concept of the negotiation process, the most significant type of issue, orientation towards time, bases of trust, concerns with protocol, communication complexity, and form of agreement. On the other hand, it shows a weak connection to the variables; selection of negotiators, individuals’ aspirations and risk-taking<sup>1</sup>.

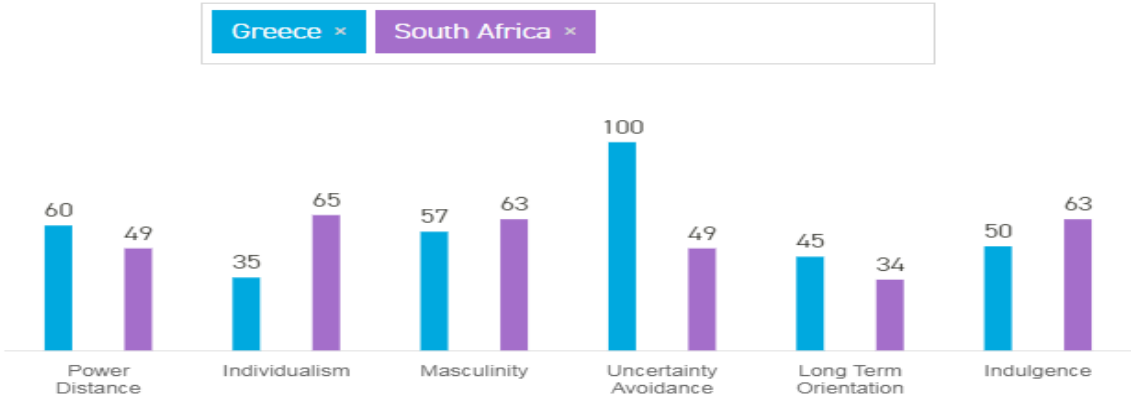


Figure 1. National Culture of Hofstede-Country Comparison. Adapted from Hofstede’s Insights: National Culture-Country Comparison Tool.





Countries of Europe & Africa	Relationships and Rules (basic concept, most significant type of issue, orientation toward time, trust, protocol, communication complexity, form of agreement)
Turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Friendly/informal</li> <li>❖ Both relationship and contract-oriented</li> <li>❖ Attention to details in contract</li> <li>❖ Trust is competency dependent</li> <li>❖ Adaptability high</li> </ul>
Greece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Both relationship and contract-oriented, more relationship</li> <li>❖ First formal then informal</li> <li>❖ Contract agreement in written official form</li> <li>❖ Details, trust, high adaptability</li> </ul>
Cameroon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Relationship-oriented of higher importance</li> <li>❖ Informal/friendly</li> <li>❖ Contract assumed readily modified</li> <li>❖ Based on verbal communication, informal networks, private understandings, less adaptive</li> </ul>
South Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Both relationship and contract-oriented</li> <li>❖ First formal then informal</li> <li>❖ Trust, details, low adaptability</li> </ul>

Figure 2. Nations' orientation towards the dimension universalism vs particularism in relation to the variables of international business negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

With the findings provided, connected to the theoretical framework, it is concluded that each of the nations' orientation toward the dimension universalism vs particularism has the most substantial relevance to the variables of international business negotiations.

This study could be useful for future studies and for researchers who show an interest in intercultural differences, this being a challenge or playing a positive role in negotiating rehabilitation of a mine site to be integrated from Europe to Africa.

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Different countries can show cultural differences and/or similarities based on the same cultural dimension, which can cause uncertainties and dilemmas regarding the categorisation of the country to the relevant cultural orientation. This descriptive study investigated and provided a few of the reasons behind it. Therefore, this study does not compare different organisations to show the effectiveness of a negotiation process between countries. However, negotiators with different backgrounds can work in the same organisation but in different departments or for different projects. Also, from this study, the significance of intercultural and cross-cultural business communication can be observed when identifying negotiation strategies for achieving rehabilitation of mine sites' integration.



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