Negotiation behaviour. 
Dichotomy or continuum?


Abstract

Bearing in mind the importance of negotiation processes in today’s business world and how often they take place, this study focuses on the analysis of behaviour that can be adopted by negotiating parties, considered in the literature to be a key factor in the success or failure of negotiations. The aim is to propose a typology of behaviour that can be applied to any situation involving negotiation. From a purposely critical perspective, the existing ambiguity surrounding the nature of negotiation behaviour in current literature is made clear. By putting forward four types of negotiation behaviour, the intention is to shed light on and unify the different theories presently circulating, whilst defending the exclusively tangible and visible nature of negotiation behaviour and the possibility of adopting intermediate types of behaviour, in contrast with the majority of previous studies.

Keywords: Negotiation behaviour, collaboration, compromise, soft competition, competition.

1. Introduction
Negotiation behaviour is regarded as a key factor in the development and outcome of negotiations that are so common in today’s business world (Rubin and Brown, 1975; Pruitt, 1981; Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Weiss, 1993, 1997; Sánchez, 2005). However, despite the clearly stated importance of negotiation behaviour, there is a certain ambiguity in the relevant literature with respect to this concept and its nature.

The established dichotomy between the two general types of behaviour, integrative and distributive or competitive, has been amply defended and discussed. In my view, such a differentiation is overly simplistic and far from represents the reality of the situation. Other types of behaviour exist that come between these two extremes, thus establishing a continuum. Negotiators present different types of behaviour during the negotiation process, whose impact produces differing outcomes (Roure, 1997; Sánchez, 2005). I put forward a new typology of negotiation behaviour, proposing the existence of behaviour of an intermediate nature.

With this objective in mind, a definition is given of what should be understood by negotiation behaviour to then go on to distinguish between this and other concepts. In doing so, the exclusively tangible and visible nature of negotiation behaviour is thereby justified. The second section will focus on the various existing ideas on behaviour with this author’s subsequent proposal on behaviour in business negotiations and their nature. In the following section, an empirical approximation is presented in order to validate the behaviour typology proposal. The paper ends with conclusions and a description of the main contributions to this study both at an academic and professional level.

2. Negotiation behaviour: delimiting the concept
There are numerous existing definitions for negotiation behaviour, which can be grouped into two different types depending on the extent of their visibility. The first group of definitions, which are broad in nature, are concerned with negotiation behaviour characterized both by tangible
aspects and by intangible ones. The following definitions are examples of this type: “primary parties’ behaviours [...] it includes cognitive domains such as perception, information-processing and judgment” (Weiss, 1993; p. 279); or “these behaviours can be described in detail. They manifest themselves in attitudes, actions and styles” (Dupont, 1996; p. 48).

The second type of definition is of a more restrictive nature, as it only includes visible and tangible aspects. Here, negotiation behaviour is characterized as the group of communicative tactics or actions that guides the negotiator towards the other participants in the process (i.e. Adler et al., 1992; Serrano and Rodriguez, 1993; Tiessen, 1996; Rao and Schmidt, 1998). Such communicative tactics can either be of the verbal kind or the non-verbal kind (Graham, 1985; Adler et al., 1992).

According to Putnam (1990; p.15), negotiation behaviour is defined thus; “tactics are the communicative behaviours that operationalize strategies”, while Rao and Schmidt (1998; p.666) state that “negotiator behaviour is tactical [...] negotiators attempt to achieve their firms’ goals by gaining their counterparts’ compliance through using influence tactics”.

A clear distinction is thus established between tangible or visible aspects and those of an intangible nature. However, the close relation that exists between these aspects is also underlined. They consider the communicative tactics to be the fruit of intangible aspects (Rubin and Brown, 1975; Thomas, 1992; George et al., 1998).

In relation to this last idea, Thomas (1992) establishes that the creation of expectations and the emotions experienced by parties involved in the process of managing conflict pave the way for the appearance of intentions\(^1\), which are defined as reactions or decisions on how to act when a conflict situation arises. These intentions will then lead to a decision on what kind of behaviour to adopt and this will, in turn, produce particular results that will constitute the basis for the creation of new expectations and emotions, thus reinitiating the aforementioned cycle. Therefore, all behaviour is a function of an intention\(^2\).

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\(^1\) Thomas (1992) makes the distinction between five different types of intention: competition, collaboration, compromising, accommodation and avoiding.

\(^2\) It has also been described using other terms such as attitude (George et al., 1998; Altimira, 2000) and motivational orientation (Rubin and Brown, 1975).
Although such a relation has been pointed out in a good number of studies, are few empirically contrasted studies that show the relation between intention and negotiation behaviour, although the works of Rubin and Brown (1975) and Druckman (1994) are some exceptions.

Rubin and Brown (1975) show that motivational orientation on the part of the negotiator, defined by them as a willingness to adopt one type of attitude or another towards the opponent, influences both behaviour and consequently the outcome of the negotiation. These authors thus claim that motivational orientation can take the form of individualism or go right to the other end of the scale and be characterized by cooperativism3.

Druckman (1994), by means of meta-analysis, concludes that the negotiator’s stance in relation to the opponent has a considerable influence on the adoption of a behaviour of compromise.

Therefore, a relation exists between the tactical aspects (behaviour) and those of an intangible nature (attitude or intention) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Cycle leading to negotiation behaviour

![Diagram of the cycle leading to negotiation behaviour]

It is assumed in this study that, although there exists a relation between the two aspects (behaviour and intentions), what can be considered negotiation behaviour should be clearly differentiated from what cannot be thus described.

Lastly, it is also necessary to distinguish between negotiation behaviour and other concepts such as strategy, approach, orientation or style of negotiation.

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(3) Individualism refers to the quest for the maximization of one’s own outcomes in the face of others’ interests, while collectivism is the desire to obtain positive outcomes, not only for one’s own interests but also for those of other interested parties.
As shown in Table 1, the concepts of strategy, approach and orientation have been used as synonyms. However, the greatest amount of confusion revolves around the use of the term *style*, as it has occasionally been used in a similar sense to the previous concepts. On other occasions, it has been endowed with a much wider meaning, including traits of a structural kind, such as the size of the negotiating team (Tung, 1982; Graham and Herberger, 1983; Paik and Tung, 1999).

### Table 1. Concepts regarded as synonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
<th>PREVIOUS STUDIES (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy/ Approach</td>
<td>Campbell et al. (1988)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

However, the concepts of strategy, orientation and approach are clearly differentiated from that of negotiation behaviour (Putnam, 1990; Adler et al., 1992; Dupont, 1996; Yuan, 1998, Rao and Schmidt, 1998). For example, Putnam (1990; p. 15) states that *behaviours* “[…] reveal a bargainer’s intentions […]”. In the opinion of Yuan (1998; p. 73): “the *negotiation strategy* […] refers to the overall game plan that negotiators employ to accomplish their goals. Tactics are generally considered the components of the *strategy*. They are the communicative *behaviours* that operationalize *strategies* in the bargaining process”.

Rao and Schmidt (1998; p. 666) point out that “[…] An array of behavioural tactics are used in negotiations regardless of the negotiators’ general strategy […]”.

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Therefore, the concept of negotiation strategy can be compared to that of intention proposed by Thomas (1992). In this sense, negotiation behaviour corresponds to intentions, approaches, strategies or general negotiation orientation, but is also separate from them.

3. A proposal on negotiation behaviour

Despite the difference that exists between the concepts of negotiation behaviour and negotiation strategy, separating the two when analyzing the relevant literature is not always an easy task. In studies that focus on negotiation behaviour as a key factor in the interactive negotiation process, one sees that this factor has been analyzed with reference to strategies or intentions and not through the actions or communicative tactics that make it up.

Thus, two extreme types of orientation or general negotiation strategies can be established: integrative and distributive (Walton and Mckersie, 1965; Rubin and Brown, 1975; Pruitt, 1981; Fisher et al., 1983). Integrative strategy is that which searches for reconciliation between the interested parties, attaining joint benefits or win/win objectives via the free exchange of information and joint decision-making (Walton and Mckersie, 1965). This means that it 1) focuses on the interests of both sides 2) does not imply confrontation, 3) is aimed at qualitative objectives such as efficiency and fairness, 4) is based on sharing information in an honest way and 5) its aim is to maximize benefits for all sides as an outcome of the negotiation (value creation) (Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Tiessen, 1996). So, integrative strategy of negotiation eases to build a trust relationship and to achieve long term compromise (Rubin and Brown, 1975; Pruitt, 1981; Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Saorín, 2006). Adopting this type of negotiation style is key in negotiation such as relational sales (Román, 2005) or strategic alliances (Menguzzato, 1992; Saorín, 2006). The reason is that in these negotiation situations, to achieve a mutual satisfactory relationship or agreement for long term is essential.

On the other hand, a distributive strategy or orientation 1) focuses on coming out on top in the negotiation, 2) implies confrontation, 3) inclu-
des concealing information, 4) is aimed at quantitative objectives and 5) attempts to maximize benefits or work in the interests of only one of the negotiating parties (Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Tiessen, 1996). Adopting this type of negotiation strategy hinders to achieve agreements. But in case of achieving an agreement, it will not be based on a long term compromise (Lax and Sebenius, 1986; O’Connor and Arnold, 2001; Munduate and Medina, 2005)

Although the majority of studies refer to these two extremes, there are others that establish intermediate stances in an attempt to make a break with the integrative/distributive dichotomy. The dual model of Pruitt (1983) and that of Thomas (1992) particularly stand out in this sense, as they have served as the basis for subsequent studies. While the former model focuses on the processes of negotiation, the latter deals with the wider field of the processes of conflict management.

Pruitt’s dual model (1983) lays down the distinction between four possible negotiation strategies (as previously mentioned, this is a term he uses to describe the intentions that lead to possible negotiation behaviour) in two dimensions; concern about the other side’s outcome and concern about one’s own outcome. This means of classifying would give the results shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Pruitt’s dual model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Concern about the other side’s outcome</th>
<th>Concern about one’s own outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contending</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaction</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Pruitt (1983).
“Problem solving involves an effort to find an alternative that is acceptable to both parties; contending involves an effort to force one's will on the other party; yielding involves a reduction in one's basic aspirations; and inaction involves doing as little as possible in the negotiation” (Pruitt, 1983; p. 167).

For his part, Thomas (1992) proposes a model of five intentions or orientations set in two dimensions: the assertiveness and cooperativism shown by each party involved in the process of conflict management (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Model of intentions

Source: Based on Thomas (1992).

Competing “represents an attempt [...] to satisfy one’s own concerns at the other’s expense”, while collaborating “represents an attempt to fully satisfy the concerns of both parties to achieve an integrative settlement”. Accommodating “involves an attempt to satisfy the other’s concerns at the neglect of one’s own”, avoiding “reflects a desire to ignore or neglect the concerns of both self and other”, and compromising is understood as “midway between competing and accommodating” (Thomas, 1992; p. 668, 669).
Both classifications of intentions cited here are very similar. Their equivalents would be: competing/contending, accommodating/ yielding, avoiding/inaction and collaborating/ problem solving. The only intention without equivalent is that of compromising that appears in Thomas’ model (1992) but is not expressed in Pruitt’s dual model (1983). However, the intentions of avoiding and accommodating cannot lead to negotiation behaviour as they include the non-fulfilment of some of the defining traits of the whole process of negotiation. In the case of accommodating, the characteristic of the tension caused by creating-reclaiming value is not fulfilled, whilst in the case of avoiding, the traits of the will to arrive at an agreement and the reclaiming-creating value tension are not present. It can therefore be suggested that the models of Pruitt and Thomas should be reduced to two or three negotiation intentions or strategies, respectively, with a view to applying them to the analysis of negotiation.

Although negotiation intention or strategy can help us to understand the type of behaviour adopted we propose that it is exclusively characterized by tangible aspects. Therefore, it is the visible aspects that should be analyzed. It is worth pointing out at this stage, that studies that analyze the tangible nature of negotiation behaviour are few and far between. The works of Graham (1985), Adler et al., (1992) and Rao and Schmidt (1998) are notable exceptions and studies by Lewicki and Robinson (1998), Volkema (1999) Volkema and Leme Fleury (2002) and Elahee et al. (2002) might also be included in this rather short list.

When analyzing intracultural negotiations, Graham (1985) studies verbal and non-verbal behaviour shown by negotiators. Verbal communication is measured using twelve different categories, the number of times the word “NO” is used and the degree of concession, measured by comparing the first offer and the initial concession. With regard to non-verbal tactics, coordination in communication is analyzed through the studies of periods of silence and the overlapping of conversations, glances at the opponent (length) and moments of physical contact.

(7) It is said that negotiation has seven defining characteristics: relation of interdependence, interests of a mixed nature, the will on both sides to reach an agreement, expectations, communicative interaction, participation of at least two parties and the tension of reclaiming-creating value (combination of movements aimed at achieving one’s own interests and movements aimed at arriving at an agreement which would mutually benefit all sides).

(8) These were carried out through simulations of intracultural, commercial negotiations (buyer/seller) between businesspeople from three different countries (U.S., Japan and Brazil).

(9) Definitions of the proposed categories (Graham, 1985, p. 88) are: Promise: A statement in which the source indicated his intention to provide the target with a reinforcing consequence which source anticipates target will evaluate as pleasant, positive, or rewarding. Threat: Same as promise, except that the reinforcing consequences are thought to be
In order to analyze negotiation behaviour Adler et al. (1992) used the findings from the previous study but added an extra category, which is the number of times the word “YOU” is employed. In addition, they analyze negotiation strategy, thereby demonstrating the distinction between the concepts of strategy and behaviour.

Both studies cited above, extreme integrative behaviour (problem solving) is characterized by the existence of a high frequency of questions and personal revelations, and by a low frequency of threats, promises, commitments, punishments, demands and rewards. These last categories are more typical of the opposite type of behaviour. In relation to non-verbal tactics, integrative behaviour is characterized, above all, by the low frequency of the use of the words “NO” and “YOU”, by the high level of coordination in the conversation (existence of periods of silence and reduced overlapping), by the high degree of glances at the opponent and by the low degree of physical contact.

Rao and Schmidt (1998) also study negotiation behaviour from its tangible conceptualization. However, their analysis is carried out in a different way from previous studies. In this case, the authors base their ideas on the classification of communicative tactics proposed by Kipnis and Schmidt (1985)\(^\text{10}\).

As previously mentioned, from amongst the studies that analyze negotiation behaviour via the tactics employed, studies by Lewicki and Robinson (1998), Volkema (1999), Volkema and Leme Fleury (2002) and Elahhee et al. (2002) are also worthy of note. The last three are based on the proposal put forward by Lewicki and Robinson (1998), in which group negotiation behaviour (tactics) under general headings: bluffing, misrepresentation of the firm’s position to an opponent, traditional competitive bargaining, attacking the opponent’s network and inappropriate information gathering. It is fair to suggest that previous proposals from Graham (1985) and Adler et al. (1992) are reflected within these groupings.

In this research, adopting and defending the existence of intermediate stances in negotiation behaviour\(^\text{11}\) and its tangible nature, four types of behaviour are proposed that negotiators could predominantly adopt in

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noxious, unpleasant, or punishing.

**Recommendation**: A statement in which the source predicts that a pleasant environmental consequence will occur to the target. Its occurrence is not under the source's control.

**Warning**: Same as recommendation, except that the consequences are thought to be unpleasant.

**Reward**: A statement by the source that is thought to create pleasant consequences for the target.

**Punishment**: Same as reward, except that the consequences are thought to be unpleasant.

**Positive normative appeal**: A statement in which the source indicates that the target's past, present, or future behaviour was or will be in conformity with social norms.

**Negative normative appeal**: Same as positive normative appeal, except that the target's behaviour is in violation of social norms.

**Commitment**: A statement by the source to the effect that its future bids will not go below or above a certain level.

**Self-Disclosure**: A statement in which the source reveals...
their interaction\textsuperscript{12}: collaboration, compromise, soft competition and competition (Figure 3). The names chosen for each type of negotiation behaviour reflect the importance endowed in this study to the contributions of the models of Pruitt (1983) and Thomas (1992) to the literature on negotiation and, in particular, to the typology proposed herein. Thus, collaboration is associated with an extreme integrative strategy. Competition is the type of behaviour based on a highly distributive orientation or highly competitive intention. With respect to intermediate behaviour, while compromise implies the adoption of an integrative approach, though not to such an extent as in collaboration, soft competition involves less competitive orientation than competition. This is how the proposal of a continuum of behaviour can be presented in contrast to the widely supported dichotomy that appears in previous studies.

**Figure 3. Proposal on negotiation behaviour**

As previously pointed out, although intention can help us to anticipate and understand the type of behaviour adopted by negotiators, it is not, in itself, a sufficient indicator. In reality, it is tactics that delimit different kinds of behaviour. Therefore, using the studies by Graham (1985) and Adler et al. (1992) as a starting point, my proposal on negotiation behaviour is characterized as shown in Table 3.
Collaboration implies sharing information in an open, clear, honest, complete manner. It is a type of behaviour that implies establishing effective communication between all sides (obtaining and transmitting information)\(^\text{13}\).

Competition implies that a negotiator can hide the maximum amount of information, and in particular basic information. In this situation, the communication established is ineffectual.

In between these two types of behaviour, are those of Compromise and Soft Competition. Compromise is similar to the behaviour associated with collaboration, but the communicative effectiveness and mutual knowledge reached between sides is less than in the case of collaboration. Information is shared in an open, fairly clear, honest way.

On the other hand, Soft Competition, from its conceptualization as distributive or intermediate competitive behaviour, implies establishing rea-

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### Table 3. Nature of proposed negotiation behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Soft Competition</th>
<th>Competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanations</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal disclosures</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of key issues</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Overlaps</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unforeseen interruptions</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(13\) Effective communication involves a higher frequency of questions, explanations and personal disclosures, as, through these tactics, information is better obtained and transmitted.
reasonably ineffective communication. It involves the biased hiding of information on basic aspects.

4. Empirical approximation

4.1. Methodology justification

Although this research has been proposed more as a theoretical contribution, a first empirical approximation was carried out in order to validate the behaviour typology. A series of case studies were analyzed in relation to three negotiation processes of external growth strategy. It should be noted that this choice is based fundamentally on two aspects. The first is due to the requirements of a qualitative study. The objective is the analysis of behaviour and, more precisely, negotiation behaviour. Therefore, in order to attain this objective, emphasis is placed on answering questions such as how? and why? As stated by Eisenhart (1989), Yin (1994, 1999) and Hurley (1999) among others, the use of case studies is the most suitable qualitative methodology, in particular because it allows the researcher to study a phenomenon as a dynamic process within its own context. The second aspect stems from an attempt to avoid the limitations presented by other methodologies used in the analysis of negotiation behaviour, such as laboratory experiments. Although it is clear that extremely valuable conclusions can be drawn from this type of analysis, they also represent controlled situations that may not entirely reflect real life. The aim of this study is therefore to carry out an empirical analysis that is appropriate, not only according to the phenomenon itself, but also from the perspective of real situations and contexts. It should be pointed out, however, that this makes the study of non-verbal characteristics impossible as there has been no direct observation of the negotiation processes.

From amongst the possible business negotiation situations that might have been used for this analysis, acquisition negotiations were chosen, as these have been seldom analyzed due to the lack of information provided by top management of firms involved in negotiation processes, a challenge addressed in this empirical approximation.
The information obtained through interviews with high-ranking managers, key participants in negotiation processes. The chosen number is based on previous studies such as those by Weiss (1987, 1990) or Yan and Gray (1994).

Characteristics of the firms involved, along with the particularities of the information gathering process are shown in Table 4. For reasons of confidentiality, real names of firms and individuals do not appear.

4.2. Procedures for gathering, assessing and validating information

A *story telling* (Douglas, 1985) approach was used for the interviews, in which interviewees were asked to recount how the negotiation developed, which tactics were mainly adopted and which aspects or key factors affected the final outcome. However, this does not imply that the interviewer took on the role of a passive listener. Indeed, in the terms used by Douglas (1985) a creative strategy was employed for these sessions. He stated that “creative interviewing […] involves the use of many strategies and tactics of interaction, largely based on an understanding of friendly feelings or intimacy, to optimize cooperative, mutual disclosure and a creative search for mutual understanding” (Douglas, 1985; p. 25).

Previous to the interviews, as much information as possible was gathered on the cases by looking at the firms’ web pages and studying newspaper reports as a way of better understanding the context of the negotiation process.

The interviews, which were recorded in their entirety and later transcribed *verbatim*, focused on a series of topics including; attitudes of the negotiators, the type of communication established (exchange of information), the relationship created between the parties involved in the negotiation, and the evolution both of attitudes and of the nature of the information being exchanged. However, for the purposes of this study, the data obtained was placed into three main categories: 1) negotiation strategy, 2) negotiation tactics and 3) negotiation behaviour and its evolution.

It should be noted that the information obtained from the interviews was verified on three fronts. On the one hand, external documentation
was revised and analyzed. It was then verified by checking internal documentation, with the exception of one case, and then contrasted with the opinions of interviewees from the firms involved.

Assessment was carried out on all categories upon which information was based. In this sense, interviewees were asked their opinion regarding a series of topics related to all the previously indicated categories (table 5).

All the information was analyzed using the methodology proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984). Mainly seven-point semantic scales\textsuperscript{14} were used. An expert on the topic was given transcripts of the interviews and subsequently validated the assessments. The validation procedure used was the same as that proposed by Larsson and Finkelstein (1999).

4.3. Assessment outcomes

Although this study is based on the analysis of negotiation behaviour via the tactics that constitute it, with a view to seeing the extent of the presence of the relation with strategies, analysis begins by assessing exactly what these intentions were. Using the information from the interviews, the tactics used in each case are subsequently identified. Due to limitations of space, we will now present the most relevant information used for our assessment.

Acquisition 1

Two stages can clearly be distinguished in which negotiation behaviour presents marked differences. During the first stage, the climate surrounding the negotiation was extremely tense and conflictive. Despite the willingness on both parts to reach an understanding, there was obvious pressure to achieve their own interests. Indeed, it was stated that one of the sides adopted particularly belligerent behaviour during the first stage of the negotiation process.

The exchange of information was not the cause of the climate created. In this case, all the necessary information was at the disposal of both negotiating parties. Moreover, no additional information was required. On
another note, consultants were used to see through the operative side and produce an agreement. In other words, they were given the responsibility of establishing the equation of the deal, subsequently presenting the agreement so that all stakeholders could approve it. The tense situation at the beginning was due to existing differences on the desirability of carrying through the acquisition at all, so that only one firm would be bidding for the contract offered by firm A’s main client. The two sides held different viewpoints on the situation of the water market.

Therefore, in this negotiation process, there were many ups and downs and a good deal of tension although, in the last year (the negotiation process lasted a total of two and a half years), after a change of management in firm A, development of the process was far more amicable, reaching an agreement after six months following the shake-up. Managers who took part in the interviews expressed the view that trust between the two sides increased during this last period.

Topics discussed during negotiation were the key ones, according to the interviewees. Participation percentages and the code of conduct for members of the Board of Directors became two sources of grave disagreement. In relation to the tactics employed, they were regarded as fairly negative, as indicated at the start. This could even have resulted in both companies presenting a bid for the contract, endangering firm A’s chances of renewing their major contract, with serious repercussions for the survival of the firm. At the same time, little was given away due to the attitude of either side as to their position. However, the changes in management brought about more of a consensual perspective and the more negative tactics (demands, threats) gave way to a healthier exchange of information, personal disclosures and explanations.

Acquisition 2
According to the interviewees, the climate created was cordial along the process (six months). In this sense, it was stressed that the culture of the Americans was a key factor as it is characterized by a tendency towards
formality and good manners in this context. It was also underlined that, previous to starting negotiations, the Managing Director of the area of expansion of firm C had already made contact with the other party, and a climate of understanding or mutual interest could be perceived, in which positions could be seen as relatively in line with one another. Firm C produced an initial project with clear objectives and action plans to be implemented, supposing an agreement was reached. Moreover, in the opinion of the interviewees, only certain differences arose among managers that were retained from the acquired firm several months after the agreement was reached with regard to the departure of the Commercial Director who had held the post of treasurer prior to the acquisition.\(^\text{16}\).

There had been a markedly rich exchange of information. Right from the beginning, there was a fair amount of access to relevant information on firm D, such as monthly reports and all kinds of documentation relative to topics that most concerned the acquirer firm or which they wished to analyze.

In addition, information provided by firm C also played an important role right from the start of the negotiation. Information was provided on a wide range of topics related to all the functional areas and on the pre-established objectives and action plans that had been laid down for implementation once the agreement was signed and the firm had been acquired\(^\text{17}\).

With regard to the topics discussed during the negotiation, it was stated that all key areas of the operation were discussed, establishing review clauses that depended on the existence of due diligence that the terms of the agreement would be honoured\(^\text{18}\). Although the choice of a Managing Director and “controller” occurred after the signing of the agreement, firm C had already expressed its interest in the human capital possessed by firm D during the negotiation stage. Therefore, discarding personnel from the acquired firm was not among the objectives of firm C. On the contrary, they were counting on the continuation of all of firm D’s human resources after the acquisition\(^\text{19}\).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Firm</th>
<th>Firm characteristics and acquisition objectives</th>
<th>Information gathering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACQUISITION 1 | FIRM A | Water sector, treatment and installation of purifiers  
1,300 employees. Private company. Turnover: approx. 120 million euros  
Nationality Spanish  
Geographical area of activity: mainly regional (minimal presence in Latin America)  
Objective: to avoid competition bidding for the renewal of a contract with its main, and almost exclusive, client | Type of interview: individual (3) and group (1)  
Interviewees: 4 (Top management)  
2 hours per interview  
Interviews were recorded |
| | FIRM B | Water sector, treatment and installation of purifiers  
370 employees. Private company. Turnover: approx. 43 million euros  
Nationality Spanish  
Geographical area of activity: regional  
Objective: to bid for and win a contract for managing water services with Firm A's main client | Feedback with interviewees |
| ACQUISITION 2 | FIRM C | Generation and distribution of electrical power  
50,000 employees. Private company. Turnover: approx. 14,000 million euros  
Nationality Spanish  
Geographical area of activity: national and international  
Objective: entry into the telecommunications sector in a new Latin American country (Chile) | Type of interview: individual (2) and group (1)  
Interviewees: 3 (Top management)  
2.5 hours per interview |
| | FIRM D | Telecommunications sector  
618 employees. Private company. Turnover: approx. 66 million U.S. dollars  
Nationality Chilean (although the company was the property of an American consortium)  
Geographical area of activity: national  
Objective: to withdraw investment from a non-profitable business | Interviews were recorded  
Feedback with interviewees |
| | FIRM E | Financial and legal consultancy sector  
1,000 employees. Private company. Turnover: approx. 96 million euros  
Nationality Spanish (though the owners are a U.S. multinational corporation)  
Geographical area of activity: national  
Objective: to increase the size of the company and create greater opportunities for the firm's professionals | Type of interview: individual (2)  
Interviewees: 2 (Top management)  
1.5 hours per interview |
| | FIRM F | Financial and legal consultancy sector  
35 employees. Turnover: approx. 2 million euros  
Nationality Spanish  
Geographical area of activity: regional  
Objective: to enter the Spanish market (in particular in the Valencia area) | Interviews were recorded  
Feedback with interviewees |

Table 4. Characteristics of participating firms and procedure for gathering information
The negotiating sides were constant in the behaviour shown. Just as the interviews indicated, this was in accordance with the tactics that predominated throughout the negotiations which included questions, personal disclosures, responses and explanations of everything that both sides desired or needed to know. Negative responses occasionally cropped up at particular moments of the negotiation but these were minimal.

*Acquisition 3*
A reasonably relaxed climate was indicated particularly during the first stage of approximation in which information was willingly provided.

The interviewees expressed the opinion that this process was characterized by a clear desire for understanding on both sides, which allowed the occasional discrepancy to be overcome without excessive problems. At times where there was tension, explicit mechanisms were used to solve any rifts. They opted to delay a decision on those occasions and a proposal was made on the terms under which an agreement could later be reached. A cordial, good-natured relationship was never jeopardized, despite the fact that the sides did not coincide on some points. Negotiations were aimed at creating a relationship of trust. A key factor here was the existence of previous personal and professional relationships that already existed between the interviewees.

Another important trait that was stressed during the interviews was the free exchange of information that increased at later stages in the negotiation. The process was carried out with complete transparency on both sides, with a view to creating a balance between the two parties.

This assessment was ratified when it was indicated that all the key topics related to the operation were treated in as much depth and detail as possible, as both sides considered that a correct analysis of each others’ concerns was fundamental to the success of the relationship.

Finally, with regard to tactics, all those interviewed did not hesitate in replying that throughout the process (which lasted two and a half months), a great deal of questions, personal disclosures, responses and

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(20) Interviewees stated that discussion took place on topics such as financing, production, organization, power, strategy, salaries, management, human resources, decision-making, etc.
explanations were discussed and no threats, refusals or demands were pre
sent at any moment, as they both regarded this as an erroneous way to
conduct a negotiation aimed at mutual understanding and long-term com
mitment. Having an extremely clear professional career plan for the acqui
red firm’s human resources was essential to this process, particularly due
to their key role. It was of utmost importance for personnel not to decide
to leave the company after the acquisition as theirs was a source of know
ledge that was basic to creating the value involved in this acquisition ope
ration.

Table 5. Assesment of categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CASES ANALYZED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACQUISITION 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGOTIATION STRATEGY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of the degree of</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of key issues</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness on both sides to</td>
<td>Medium-low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>search for mutual understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Orientation towards the cre
| Medium-low                  | Very high     | Very high     |
| ation of a relationship of  |               |               |               |
| trust                        |               |               |               |
| Evolution of negotiation be
| Yes                         | No            | No            |
| behaviour                    |               |               |               |
| Reciprocal behaviour        | Yes           | Yes           | Yes           |
| **NEGOTIATION TACTICS**      |               |               |               |
| Integrative (questions,     | From little to a good deal of use | Fairly frequent use | Common use |
| explanations, personal     |               |               |               |
| disclosures)                |               |               |               |
| Competitive (threats,       | From marked to scarce use | Low level of use | Absence of use |
| refusals, demands)         |               |               |               |
| **NEGOTIATION BEHAVIOUR**   | Soft competition to compromise | Compromise | Collaboration |
4.4. Pattern fit
As can be drawn from the assessments of the varying cases analyzed herein, it can be observed that they all fit the expected patterns described by the typology and accompanying characterization proposed in this study. However, the results should be regarded with caution for two main reasons. This is partly due to the number of negotiation processes studied and also to the impossibility of analyzing behaviour through direct observation which would allow for the analysis of non-verbal tactics. However, it can be suggested that these limitations do not affect the validity of the results obtained.

Firstly, with regard to the proposed relationship between the type of intention or strategy and behaviour (tactics), it has been observed that those of an integrative nature are linked with integrative tactics and are directly proportional. In other words, in cases where a highly integrative strategy has been adopted, it has been associated with collaboration behaviour (acquisition 3). In the case of a less marked integrative strategy, the adopted behaviour was that of compromise (acquisition 2). Meanwhile, a competitive strategy is associated with soft competition behaviour. From all of this, it can be concluded that there is a direct relation between the type of strategy adopted and negotiation behaviour.

Secondly, the validity of the proposal on characterization has been analyzed in this study. As can be seen, the fit is equally present for the negotiation processes studied herein. The use of integrative verbal tactics (questions, explanations, personal revelations) is greater in cases of collaborative behaviour and this is less true for cases assessed as employing behaviour based on compromise. On the other hand, verbal tactics of a competitive nature (threats, refusals, demands) are not normally used, though they may arise at certain points in the development of integrative negotiations. It has been observed that in competitive negotiations, tactics of this kind predominate and the use of integrative tactics is scarce. An inversely proportional relation can also be observed between the use of integrative and competitive tactics. The greater the use of integrative tac-
tics, the lesser the use of competitive strategies and vice versa. Thus, the two types of pattern fit are confirmed in this empirical approximation. The first is concerned with the relation between negotiation strategy or intention and behaviour. The second confirmed pattern is linked to the characterization proposal regarding the typology of negotiation behaviour put forward in this study.

5. Conclusions

Although the importance of negotiation behaviour has been underlined due to the influence it has over the success or failure of negotiations, a certain amount of imprecision is still to be found in the literature, as pointed out in the review section. This critical study focuses on the different existing conceptions and characterizations of negotiation behaviour. It is my view that behaviour is exclusively defined by tangible and visible aspects (communicative tactics or actions of a verbal and non-verbal nature), thereby marking out a clear differentiation and delimitation with regard to the concepts of strategy, approach, orientation and style of negotiation. These last concepts represent the intangible aspects that form the basis of negotiation behaviour.

Whilst making a break with the widely supported integrative/distributive dichotomy appearing in previous studies, four types of negotiation behaviour have been proposed that support the idea of the existence of intermediate positioning. This proposal thus presents a continuum of negotiation behaviour, from what is considered clearly delimited, purely competitive behaviour to one which is entirely integrative. It contains a typology that can be applied to any negotiation situation from a tangible, visible perspective, which may help us to better understand negotiation behaviour in determining the success or failure of a negotiation.

Although this study is intended to be, above all, a theoretical proposal, its validity for negotiation behaviour and characterization has been tested. Evidence suggests relation between negotiation strategy and the tactics employed (behaviour).
It is necessary for future research, not only to empirically contrast this proposal on negotiation behaviour, but also to analyze to what extent the proposed continuum of behaviour corresponds to a continuum of different negotiation outcomes.

Another contribution is to be found in the methodology employed and the type of negotiation process analyzed. Negotiation behaviour has been mainly studied in the past via laboratory experiments under totally controlled conditions. Case studies, on the other hand, allow us to study negotiation behaviour in a real context from a dynamic perspective. In addition to this, the choice of the object of analysis should be underlined in the context of acquisition negotiations; a situation that has received little attention on the part of researchers due to the difficulties involved in accessing information from top level managers, who are key players in such negotiations.

It is clear that the empirical analysis of the proposal contained in this study is merely a first approximation. Broader analysis should be undertaken in future research, not only of a larger number of case studies across different negotiation contexts, but even a subsequent empirical contrast of a quantitative nature might be considered of the typology and characterization proposed here. Another project for the future might be to analyze to what extent the continuum of the types of behaviour proposed correspond to a continuum of different situation outcomes. The relation between the type of negotiation behaviour and the final outcome is a line of research that goes further than the objectives laid down for this study though it is considered to be of enormous interest and should be one of the questions that researchers should address in the future.

The contributions at a professional level are also important. In particular, it is worthwhile pointing out the usefulness of this proposal for business professionals when participating in a negotiation process. A successful outcome is the primary objective of all negotiators and therefore, understanding the different types of behaviour they might adopt to this end and which other negotiators may use, constitutes a fundamental pre-
mise. In this way, professionals can approach the problems that characterize these processes by anticipating conflicts that may arise and, consequently, adopt the type of behaviour suitable for each situation with a view to putting the negotiation back on the right track towards a successful conclusion. This work might also lead us to reflect on the importance of the choice of the negotiating team, as it should be made up of people with the ability to be flexible with regard to the choice of the type of behaviour to adopt in a given process.

6. References


