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MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„ The Development of Cultural Conflicts in Business
Contract Negotiations Between Austrian And Japanese
Business People “

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of

Master of Science (MSc)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 914

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Internationale Betriebswirtschaft

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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STATUTORY DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis, that I have not used other than the declared sources / resources, and that I have explicitly marked all material which has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources. This thesis was not used in the same or in a similar version to achieve an academic grading nor is it being published elsewhere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I take this opportunity to express gratitude for all of those who accompanied and supported me during the time of writing this thesis.

First of all, I would like to thank my research supervisor o. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Vetschera of the Department of Business Administration at the University of Vienna for his endeavours and sharing his expertise through his scientific guidance by steering me in the right direction through the process of researching and writing this thesis, but allowing me enough freedom to work independently on a topic that interests me.

I am very thankful for having been given the opportunity to conduct such enjoyable interviews with insightful business people who took the time to discuss this topic with me and share their experiences so openly. Without your deeply appreciated cooperation, this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my friends for providing their unconditional emotional support, as always, and especially my university colleague Verena Hörner for sharing many wonderful memories from university with me and for all those times we kept each other motivated during the process of writing our theses.

Finally, I must express my profound gratitude to my parents for always believing in me, supporting me financially, and providing continuous encouragement for me to strive towards my goals. I am beyond grateful that you made it possible for me to gather all those incredible experiences.

Thank you all.

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1. Introduction

Negotiations have one strong feature in common with every other communication between people: the outcome highly depends on who conducts the negotiation process. When people from different cultures like Austria and Japan come together to achieve their own goals, the communication process is complicated and needs understanding not only of the individual, but of their cultural background. This leads to many possible conflicts that could arise.

This master thesis is aimed to show the possible conflicts and to find their roots in the respective cultural background. What is typical Japanese negotiation behaviour and where does it come from? Why is the Japanese negotiation style seen as unique? How did the conflict behaviour in negotiations with Japanese business people evolve over time and can any change be observed? How can those insights benefit Austrian negotiators in their negotiation behaviour? To get to initial findings, the first part will consist of theoretical-descriptive approaches, by which the second part, consisting of qualitative interviews with Austrian negotiators on their experiences with Japanese business people, will be analysed and give new insights as to how Japanese business people conduct business with Austrians today. The main intention of showing how Japanese business people are perceived as acting during negotiations through the eyes of Austrian business partners today, will be achieved by not only asking the Austrian negotiators how Japanese negotiators behave now, but rather by asking them how the Japanese behaviour changed. Conclusions about the change in negotiation style and culture will then be drawn from the interviewees own experiences and from comparison to the master thesis's first, theoretical-descriptive part.

The first part will try to answer the question of why conflicts occur when Austrian business men/women negotiate with potential partners from Japan through research on academic literature that explains Japanese and Austrian negotiation culture. This part has the following substructure: First of all, an overview of the theory to Japanese culture and its history will be given. Main impressions of it, like moral concepts, group ideology, family concept, and harmony will be introduced and divide the theory into sections, which will also be used later on for other theoretical descriptions. After this, the culture in Japan will be tied to Japanese negotiation culture and this segment will try to make it understandable as to why Japanese business people have their own negotiation behaviour and why this behaviour occurs. To

understand the differences, Austrian business culture will also shortly be presented and why Austrian culture and environment had its effects on it. The next part, will deal with the core of the theoretical research: What conflicts are occurring when Austrian business men/women negotiate with potential partners from Japan? The possible reasons as to why those conflicts arise, have been given prior to that, but in that part, the actual conflicts themselves will be delved into. Here, the structure from before (moral concepts, group ideology, family concept, and harmony) will be maintained to ensure that a direct link to the Japanese culture, where the roots of such behaviours might come from, is readily visible. To lead to the rationale of the current study, the part following the description of current negotiations and the conflicts occurring Japanese and Austrian business people, will deal with possible changes in negotiation. The reason for researching those changes comes from a quick glance at the literature used for the previous parts of this master thesis. It will show works like: Kumayama, 1991; Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991; Luhmer, 1990; Anesaki, 1963; Van Zandt, 1970; Hofstede, 1984. From this brief overview only, it can be seen that many of the publications used are more than 30 years old. For the sake of keeping the description of Japanese (business) culture as current as possible, more recent academic literature has been used, but still, there are, it seems, some “outdated” pieces of literature included. To scrutinize whether this literature is justifiably still in use in academic research about Japan, or if it actually is outdated, change in culture and change in the behaviour in Japanese negotiations will be elaborated on theoretically to find a case against the literature previously used to describe what culture and business in Japan apparently looks like.

The second part will concern the formulation and rationale of the research matter. In order to do justice to the research, it will be argued, why using personal, qualitative interviews lead by the author of this thesis with a partly structured questionnaire based on the theory described in the first part, is the appropriate method for the research design to answer the research question. The exact procedure and details of every step taken towards the answering of how negotiation behaviour changed over the years between Austrians and Japanese will also be disclosed. This research matter will be divided into research hypotheses, where the method will lead to their verification or falsification, which are then presented in the next subsegment. Because of the qualitative nature of the research, a more detailed overview over the research participants is necessary and useful and therefore, will be given for better understanding of the analysis that will follow.

For segment four, the analysis will be organized in three respective parts: the case summaries to condense the main points given by each participant; the research hypotheses to answer them individually and have a deeper understanding of what stance each interviewed individual had concerning the respective hypotheses; the other categories with new categories in the category system built, as suggested from the method, which stem not from the categories taken from the literature, but solely from the interviewees opinion; and finally the conclusion to the analysis.

Segment four will be dealing with limitations and deductions to the study: what does it answer, what is it not able to answer and what can be deducted from the study. It will serve as a closure to the master thesis.

2. Theory on Cultural Conflicts with Japanese Business People in Negotiations

Cross-cultural communication skills are relevant when negotiating with other cultures, because they facilitate the process of reaching an agreement. This can especially be important when cultures as different as the Japanese and Austrian meet, as there is more room for misunderstandings and uncomfortable situations. In the worst case, those misunderstandings can lead to failure of negotiations (Kumayama, 1991, p. 51).

As every individual behaves differently, not everything can be explained through culture. Nevertheless, conflicts often do not only stem from differences from one individual to another, but can be derived from the different cultural backgrounds, Austrian and Japanese respective. Some examples can be found in academic literature which will be presented in more detail later on, like Kumayama (1991), Van Zandt (1970), Lee (1997). Therefore, it is advisable to educate negotiators about those differences and how to act correctly before they potentially endanger positive outcomes of cross-cultural negotiations.

There are different dimensions on which Austrian negotiators have a different cultural understanding than Japanese do. Those dimensions lead to the criteria used in this study to differentiate traditional Japanese behaviour in negotiations from the current Austrian negotiation behaviour. The used interview guide will be designed following those criteria in addition to the theses mentioned later in this master's thesis to obtain relevant information from the Austrian business partners for this study.

2.1. Short Introduction to Japanese Culture

Reoccurring negotiation behaviour that is perceived differently by foreigners to a country can be explained by the negotiators of that country being of a different cultural background than those who observe. To deduce where this behaviour comes from, we can have a look at a country's underlying cultural and sociological components, like its history, state system, religion, and so forth.

One example of how foreign negotiation partners characterize Japanese negotiators would be the following: The Japanese are seen to be hard and tedious counterparts, always striving for perfection and their rising share at the world market. They aspire long-term relationships with continuous milestones through unemotional and goal-oriented negotiation styles, still using cunning when needed. The negotiation is tough on the material, but courteous and harmonious on the emotional level (Lee, 1997, pp. 103-104).

To understand business behaviour in Asia, it is useful to understand the underlying social and cultural circumstances as well as constants like Asian environmental surrounding. History, politics, and other influencers can highly change the cultural behaviour of negotiation actors in a country. When comparing Japan to even its closest neighbours Korea and China, distinctive differences can be seen which make Japan a unique negotiation style culture (Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 39).

There are different names for avenues of research directed towards finding out Japanese uniqueness, such as “*nihonron*” (theory of Japan), “*nihonjinron*” (theory of the Japanese), and “*nihon bunkaron*” (theory of the Japanese culture) (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, p. 143).

This “uniqueness” stems originally from salient factors like Japan’s insular and mountainous geography, the density of population, and the agricultural perspectives on rice cultivation. Those elements, the roots of Japanese cultural development if you will, will be looked into further in this master thesis when discussing their cultural implications in Japanese society. Coming from those elements, history has another essential part in the cultural development of a nation and its population’s behaviour. The main aspect in this regard is Japan’s isolation throughout the years. This is linked back to one of the original factors: Japan as an island. Even when the sea as a natural barrier lost its importance due to Western European maritime power, the Tokugawa shogunate preserved Japan’s national impassivity through policies preventing foreigners to enter the country (Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 41 – 42). This system of foreign relations issued in 1635 was to be called “*sakoku*” now known as “closed country” (Laver, pp. ix, 14). Therein, edicts controlling Japanese travel outside the country, Catholicism, and foreign trade were implied. Nowadays, *sakoku* is portrait negatively as policies of isolation, even though they were mostly used by the shogun to maintain his power. Whatever *sakoku* was originally meant for, it led to a more secluded Japanese population that cultivated ethnicity and its behavioural norms in more concentrated form

than most other countries could. This evidently meant Japanese society was developing to be hugely homogenous. Obedience and cooperation was forced owing to the other original factor of Japan as an island: the mountains. They secluded social groups naturally and lessened the land that could be cultivated in addition to the highly dense population, making organization a must and acceptance of hierarchy a pillar of society. This need of cooperation was reinforced by the immense importance and spread of agriculture of rice with its influence on behaviours of the village population and therewith its values, because of rice's peculiarities being hydro-agriculture with aspects like flooding, which can be dangerous if not supervised correctly in a group, explained later in more detail. Family and small groups were the most important social units and harmony, loyalty, and consensus was pivotal to ensure survival in those groups. Translated to modern society, family and work groups form the central social groups of the Japanese (Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 41 – 42; Laver, 2011).

Those uniquely combined geographical influences leading to social consequences with their dominating Japanese systems, conflate to the following: Whatever approach is used to describe Japanese cultural behaviour and why it occurs in Japan as it does, some elements are widely recognized as relevant and distinctive enough to be considered as essential components of Japanese social culture and substantial elements of Japanese business life. The elements mentioned in Fig. 1 and their interconnection with each other have influence over every member of the Japanese society and therefore their negotiators (Rothlauf, 1997, p. 125). Following this figure are more precise assertions to the respective concepts.

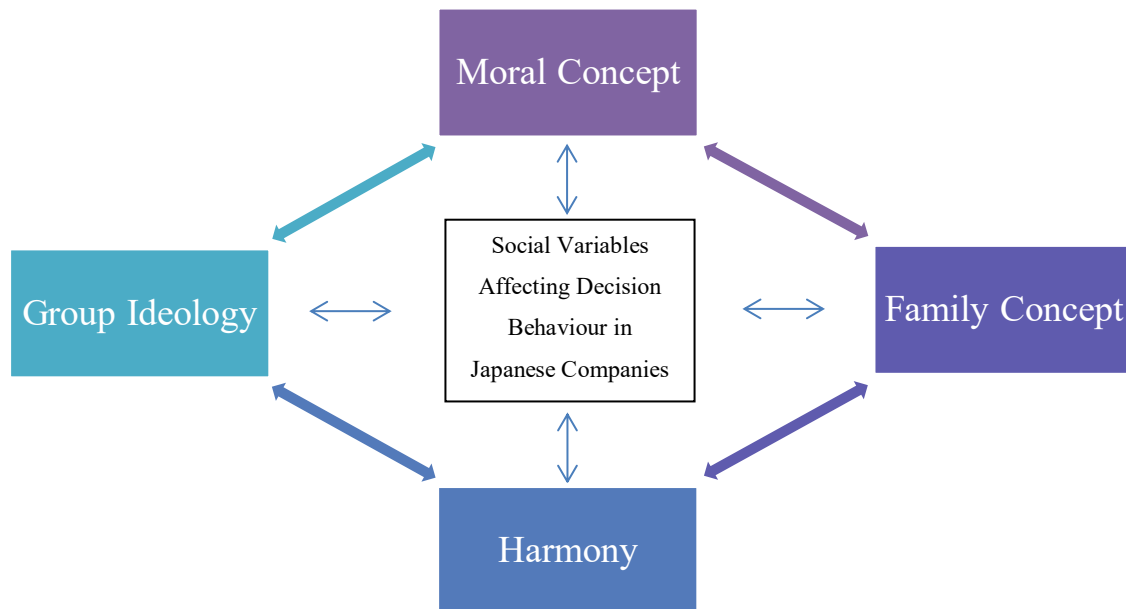


Fig. 1: *Social Variables Affecting Decision Behaviour in Japanese Companies*. Own fig. after Rothlauf (1997, p. 125)

After this short general introduction as to why Japan evolved to be unique, the fundamental Japanese cultural outlines of “Moral Concepts”, “Group Ideology”, “Family Concept”, and “Harmony”, as mentioned in Fig. 1, will be elaborated on now.

Moral Concepts

Although now officially being a secular state with religious freedom, as in most countries, moral in Japan is taught through religion, not only at home, but also in certain private schools. Through history it can be observed that during 1872-1945, the predominant teaching of Buddhist, Shinto and Confucian traditions were replaced by national “secular social studies or citizenship” to prepare for patriotic war spirit. Nowadays, education as well tries to teach some sense of international understanding (Luhmer, 1990, p. 172).

With a population of 126,451,398 (July 2017 est.), 79.2% practice Shintoism and 66.8% Buddhism (2012 est.). Those numbers add up to more than 100%, because both religions are followed simultaneously by many people. With no significant share, there are also Christian Japanese with 1.5% and other practised religions with 7.1% (CIA, 2017). No such percental figures can be given regarding Confucianism in Japan because Japanese culture incorporated its concepts, but population rather turned to Buddhism and Shintoism for religion. Still, modern social behaviour is influenced by Confucianism, as can be seen through characteristics like respect for elders, lifetime employment systems, showing loyalty and trust, and a strong education system, just to name a few examples that will also be discussed later (Schumacher, 2007).

Because of close living with nature and its disasters, the only indigenous religion dating back to prehistoric times in Japan, Shintoism (“Way of the Gods (or Spirits)”), is based on worshipping nature, family, and working together. To secure their position as the Emperor’s family spiritually and support their colonial thoughts, the imperial Yamato clan, around which merged tribes gathered with the rise of hydraulic rice agriculture, claimed to be descendants of their central deity “Amaterasu” (the Sun Goddess), represented on the Japanese flag as the simple circle. Shinto values can be seen in Japanese everyday life and therefore also in companies. Being hard working and thinking rationally and economically is very much appreciated. Shintoism is mostly used for big life event celebrations such as weddings, baptisms and so on (Kumagai, et al., 1996, p. 8; Luhmer, 1990, p. 172; Monaghan, 2004, p. 71; Rothlauf, 2012, pp. 521 – 522; Anesaki, 1963; Havens, 2006, p. 20).

Other religions which impact the Japanese society are Buddhism and Confucianism. Those also stem from worshipping of nature, but again focus on giving up the self which explains the huge value of loyalty in Japan (Rothlauf, 2012, pp. 521 – 522). Although Confucianism was introduced in the early fifth and Buddhism in the middle sixth century AD via China and Korea and both Buddhism and Confucianism are not indigenous religions, Japanese mostly have a stronger bond to Buddhism than to any other religion, because families have their burial ceremonies and yearly commemoration ceremonies (“*meinichi*”) performed by a Buddhist priest which ties them to a particular temple. Regardless, Confucianism, is often not regarded as a religion per se, like already mentioned above from Schumacher (2007), and described as a branch of ethics, or a school of philosophy, served as the official, public ethical code during the Tokugawa period (1600-1867) to maintain order by keeping harmony through respecting superiors, also known as a central value for the samurai. Hence, Shinto,

Buddhism, and Confucianism are the main moral influencers (Luhmer, 1990; Park et al., 2007, p. 296).

Nevertheless, Japan is a secular state which can be compared to the United States in the way that religion and state are absolutely separated. There never was merely one religion to be followed, even though in 593 Buddhism was established as the state religion, followed by the new state religion of Shintoism in 1868. Religious freedom was guaranteed through secularism after World War II in 1945, since the Allied Occupation dismantled State Shintō and the national legislative body of Japan (the Diet) then introduced Articles 20 and 89 to ban state support for religious organizations and religious education (Heuser, 1983; Van Winkle, 2012). After this introduction of secularism, public schools were and still are not allowed to teach religion based morality. Before this, policy makers were not able to agree on how to continue teaching moral education without any religious base, until moral education was set through the widely appraised 1890 “Imperial Rescript on Education”, which stated that Shinto was needed to consolidate the status of the Emperor and the Japanese identity, while Confucianism regulates human relations by setting authority. “Modern Western” ethical norms were used to clarify that the old samurai privilege of self-sacrifice was now the obligation of every citizen and they should also strive to “develop intellectual and moral powers”. Every school followed strictly the norms of the Rescript in the subject of moral education, “shushin”. When World War II was over and education had to be fundamentally changed after the unconditional surrender away from the nationalistic and militaristic ideology, education was to be designed democratically. The National Diet in 1949 replaced the Imperial Rescript by claiming that

“Education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual values, respect labour and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of the peaceful state and society”

(quoted in Passin, 1965, p. 302). This Law was written under the heavy influence of the United States and revised many times, but still following the main components of discipline, thrift, strong national identity preservation, but with awareness of international relations and inclusion to the group, balanced with self-esteem (Luhmer, 1990).

The moral aspect of life, as the samurai lived it, is still highly valued in Japan. The samurai formed a philosophy of self-mastery which is admired by all of society. From there also comes the belief, that individualism is not generally asked for in Japan and the complete classification into society can not only be led back to other concepts mentioned later in this theoretical approach to the Japanese culture, but also to the samurai cult. The roots of this philosophy can be found in Confucianism (Rothlauf, 2012, p. 521-523). Honour therefore is a very important concept in Japan and “losing one’s face” a terrible fate which in severe cases even is confronted with suicide, a remnant of the samurai time. In the Hagakure (Yamamoto, 2012) which describes the Way of the Samurai, it is, as mentioned before, a core ideology that death is imminent and that the samurai should be aware that he should choose to sacrifice his life whenever needed.

Group Ideology

Strong group identity always existed in Japan more predominantly than in other countries. Those groups are strongly built with hierarchy and differentiation from other groups and integrate every member as a part of the group rather than as an individual person. This also leads to complete integration of employees into the company they are working for. What is important to mention in this context is, that Japanese members of a group have an urge to devote themselves to that group, not because of compulsion from the group, but because their strong feeling of the need to be socially integrated and their low self-assertion. Because of this, Japanese employees need to be able to take pride from working at a certain company (Rothlauf, 2012, pp. 524-555; Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, p. 143, p. 154).

Historically seen, the Japanese collective behaviour could be explained through their hydro-agriculture (mainly rice agriculture), already mentioned as a vital part of Japan’s history, which called for mutual reciprocity and cooperation, for instance in flood control, to assure survival of the village. Groups of families formed as the most important social group in that society, so that generally small groups evolved as the salient social unit in Japan. Therefore, early on, rituals and ceremonies were used as enforcers to that inclusion into the group, in the village. This is how in Japan the instinct to survive in the group was developed and the belief that, what is best for the group also must be best for every member of the group. Still, even young school children are observed showing strong integration in the group by being

reinforced to behave collectively. Nowadays, modern Japanese society is aware of the fact that this sort of agricultural collectivism is not needed for actual survival anymore, but the same concept is used to argument for business survival, so that collectivism is seen as an ideal to be pursued by every patriotic member of Japanese society. This train of thought is often also used to support the “chosen”, selected, and entitled members of an organization with the help of every other member of that organization and even in Japanese society as a whole, to legitimize the superiority of men as opposing to women or other members of society who do not conform with this ideology (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, pp. 144 – 147, p. 157, Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 42).

Here, again, we can find roots in Confucianism which describes how to live in a group, through defining how to respect hierarchy on one hand and on the other hand the importance of groups for society in the teachings of Buddhism (Ralston et al., 1997, pp. 179-180). In Buddhism the teaching called “*shujo no on*” reminds the individual that one’s success is only possible through the obligation to the world and all living things and not to the individual’s attributes (Van Zandt, 1970). It is important to emphasize that Austria as a predominantly Christian country follows the Judeo-Christian teachings of personal achievement and individualism, especially in the Protestant Work Ethic (Ralston et al., 1997, pp. 179-180). As for individualism, Hofstede (1984, p. 148) describes how individualism, as one of his main defined cultural dimensions, influences national culture by showing how the individual is integrated in the collective. This manifests through the “size” of the family, how closely family member are related to the individual to be described as family. This can go as far as formation of clans or tribal units. Individualism also becomes apparent through how the individual perceives itself: as an individual with inwards directed perception, not putting as much value on strong emotional bonds with other individuals in the same organizations and striving for personal accomplishment. But not only the individual stirs into that direction: society only expects the individual in a country with high individualism to take care of himself and his immediate family (Hofstede, 1984, pp. 148 – 171).

Group ideology manifests in companies in the form of “*ringi*” and “*nemawashi*” systems. The *ringi* system ensures that every decision is made in a group, the more significant, the more specialists and high ranked employees are involved as decision makers. As every proposal outside of an employee’s competence needs to pass many different points in a company in form of a “*ringisho*” to be valuated and if modifications are requested, repass

the whole bottom-up approached process of evaluation on the different levels, this *ringi* system implies huge amounts of time needed to come to a conclusion, but then responsibility is shared with everyone involved. Over 90% of all large Japanese firms, as well as many small ones, were reported to have the *ringi* system implemented in 1970 (Haak et al., 2008, pp. 127 – 128; Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 48 – 51, Van Zandt, 1970). Although the *ringi* system is described in more recent papers, like Sagi (2015), no data could be found of how many Japanese companies are currently using this decision-making procedure.

Family Concept

As aforementioned, relationships in the Japanese society are regulated through Confucianism, therefore also respecting family and how hierarchy in family works are factors set by Confucianism, even though it was overshadowed by Buddhism early on (Luhmer, 1990; Nosco, 2000, p. 163). Confucianism not only gives insight on ethics, but gives guidelines to “the ideal of the good human life as a whole”, called “*dao*” (Cua, 2000, p.162).

Central themes of Confucianism that are most important in understanding Japanese family structure are identity, duty, and responsibility. To sustain peace in the community and the state as a whole, Confucianism focuses on respecting the individual’s place and responsibility in family and community as a foundation. Five cardinal virtues are named by Confucius that are deeply influencing Japanese society and family structure: benevolence (“*ren*”), integrity or sense of rightness (“*yi*”), rite and etiquette in a broader sense (“*li*”), moral understanding (“*chih*”), and trust (“*shin*”). Other than that, virtues connected to them, like filiality, loyalty, and respectfulness are to be followed (Park et al., 2007; Cua, 2000, pp. 162-163). The sense of identity, duty, and responsibility in Japan is shown in the different relationships that are named in Confucianism: government and citizen, parent and child, husband and wife, older sibling and younger sibling, and friend and friend (Park et al., 2007, pp. 303 - 305). Therefore not only families have strong ties, but also companies are managed as families since the Meiji period (1868-1912). In this sense, the employee sacrifices himself for the good of the company and the company in return helps their employees in every regard, even their private matters, like search for a home, spouse, and matters of death (Rothlauf, 2012, p. 527). This feeling of being in a family, rather than in a company is

encouraged through welcoming ceremonies for new, young employees, often taken into the company right after school or university, sometimes with their grateful families present. Those young employees are selected for vacant job positions for their character fitting into the company, rather than for their qualifications and in return are silently granted life employment. In the following years, they are completely incorporated into the company, so that the boundaries of private life and work become blurred (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, pp. 149 - 150).

This incorporation into the firm could also be the reason, why total quality management (TQM) in Japan is represented through “*kaizen*”. The nature of this key element of Japanese management stands for the continuous work on incremental improvement and enhancement of operations and environment towards better quality and efficiency in small groups in the manufacturing environments of Japanese organizations. Every member of the workforce is contributing to the company’s development through the embeddedness of *kaizen*. In the ideal sense of *kaizen*, it seems natural to managers and employees that it is deeply rooted into the organization and “invisible”, but still expected. It depends of the level of *kaizen*, if targets for certain groups are set and have to be reported and supervised or if *kaizen* is only used by employees to reach their expected performance by taking *kaizen* actions. Target setting and control have thereby to be adjusted to fit the *kaizen* activities and their autonomous units with wide-ranging responsibilities. It is often argued that the intrinsic motivation of Japanese workers makes *kaizen* possible in the form that it is applied in Japan and therefore is very challenging to reproduce in other Western companies, especially since *kaizen* did evolve and adapt over time in Japanese companies that use it today in their continuous planning systems. The long-term motivation of Japanese employees through their guaranteed lifetime employment, combined with gainsharing mechanisms in complex group compensation systems, and cultural reasoning with the feeling of belonging to that organization in this perspective seems relevant for *kaizen*. When implemented correctly it seems to be a very simple and general concept, but crucial to a company’s success (Brunet et al., 2003).

Combining structures, named “*keiretsu*”, is another strategy occurring in Japan, reminding of the family concept. *Keiretsu* is the strong support network affiliating suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors across a broad spectrum of markets (CIA, 2017; Kim et al., 2004, p. 613). Those business groups can only be found in Japan in that strict form, including sharing and trading resources in order to reduce agency cost and market forces and improve

efficiency and growth, the key strategic goal for most Japanese firms. They share their capital and obtain it from their lender - the main bank holding a substantial equity stake in the firm. This bank is the one being monitored and therefore has incentive to fulfil its responsibility and also monitors the *keiretsu* members, giving it the power to control them to the degree that it can change top managers of member companies in financial distress through the collective in the *keiretsu* and not through legal ownership in return for their stability and rescue mechanisms. The value created is then divided between the diversified companies depending on power relationships and influence in the *keiretsu*. The core members' presidents join each other in monthly meetings to symbolize their group identity and coordinate the members' decision-making in the sense of the mentioned Japanese group ideology. Being in a well-known *keiretsu* does not only allow valuable information flow, but also increases credibility through the *keiretsu* and by that leads the members to better reputation and status (Kim et al., 2004).

Harmony

Rothbaum et al. (2000) suggest that close Western relationships through their high individuality have the following in common: wanting to keep others close, but still be distant; primarily serving as a base for exploration; and conflicting needs of the different parties involved in a relationship. On the other hand, Japanese relationships are symbiotically harmonious, because their continuity is ensured through society's prescribed roles and values, like loyalty, permanence of relationships, and emphasis on the needs of the collective through respect of the Confucian rules to relationship structure rather than the needs of the individual party.

This dominance of harmony in relationships is linked to the public's awareness of Japan being an island which made group ideology, as already mentioned before, even more important and might be seen as somehow insulating. This group consciousness ("*kumi shiki*") that sometimes even comes at the expense of the individual, shows a very old tradition of harmony (Merviö, 1991, pp. 162 - 164).

The Japanese word for harmony "*wa*" literally means "circle" and stands for unity, peace, and wholeness in a social group, central concerns of the Japanese society's aim for tranquillity which must be kept as the ideal under all circumstances. So, to establish a

functioning group in Japan, there has to be a sense of harmony. In order to balance disparities, the Japanese hope that if *wa* is reached, quiet agreements, accord, and reaching the full potential of the group can be achieved. Hence, before any consensus can be thought of, *wa* must be aimed for. The opposite of this ideal state is direct confrontation which threatens *wa*, so open expression of opinions are avoided as best as possible by Japanese business parties. This mirrors directly into the general Japanese way of speaking, without open intolerance and criticism. Not acting in the spirit of *wa* is frowned upon by the general public. It is expected from the individual to either protect the group or to surrender to it. From a Western point of view, this negative attitude towards opinions casts a shadow over society as it might be seen as repressive and leading to conformism and conservatism, because it doesn't tolerate individualism in any form.. When negotiating with business people from other cultures like Austria, it can happen that some formulations that in Austria express asking for other opinions or deciding on the issue later, can be seen as a rejection in Japan, because those sentences in their culture would be used as a polite substitute for a "no". From the Japanese side, it is often more important what is left unsaid than what it is verbally pronounced which as a concept is utterly misunderstood in many other cultures (Genzberger et al., 1994, p. 155; Haak et al., 2008, pp. 127 - 129; Rothlauf, 2012, p. 526; Adair, 2001, p. 372, Merviö, 1991, p. 164; Foster, 1992, p. 19; Messner, 2008, p. 112).

Concepts related to *wa* are "*honne*" and "*tatemae*". Both are used to maintain interpersonal harmony and save each other's feelings. It can easily be seen, why those concepts are hard to grip for Westerners and lead to many disturbances and misunderstandings in Japanese and international negotiations. *Honne* stands for the individual's expression of his true feelings and intentions from his state of mind. *Tatemae* is the display of messages that are used to maintain the harmony between two people by avoiding criticism through the use of "lies" without conveying information, but good feeling. It is not meant as hypocrisy, but as a socially accepted tool to preserve *wa* (Takai et al., 1994; Alston et al., 2005, pp. 19 - 20).

The principle of *wa* can be historically traced back to the agricultural times, when some members of a village might have had different opinions on how to deal with certain movements during harvest, but with time followed what everyone else did in order not to destroy the village's *wa*. In that sense, they changed their behaviour to be conforming to the rest of the village, but did not change their opinion about the subject itself. The wish to be

part of the “collective mind” is stronger, than the will to act in integrity and consistency with the individual’s beliefs (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, p. 146).

Every member of an organization in Japan is aiming for *wa* by cooperating and sharing responsibility through loyalty. Another Japanese concept close to *wa* is *amae*. It is considered as the foundation of every relationship and the basis of harmony in *wa* through love or in business, through trust (Genzberger et al., 1994, p. 155; Haak et al., 2008, p. 129).

This long-term view of relationships and expected trust winning behaviour from the Japanese side can also be explained through one of the original factors determining Japanese social behaviour: Japan as an island. Their history of isolation, not only naturally, but also politically, make the Japanese tend to slowly enter new relationships and form them for life. The Japanese term for long-term relationships is “*nagai tsukiai*” (Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 44).

2.2. How does Japanese culture influence the negotiation behaviour of Japanese negotiators?

Now that the cultural characteristics of the Japanese are known, those will be tied back to Japanese behaviour in negotiations.

In the beginning of this master thesis it was mentioned that Japanese culture is determined by honour. This can also be seen in their negotiation: The Japanese care so much about honour that going to court is seen as the last instance and it is preferred to conciliate every business before the need to go to court and display power (Van Zandt, 1970).

Starting with the concept of group ideology that plays a very important part in describing Japanese culture, not only *ringi* is applied in businesses, but also “*nemawashi*”, which concerns the team opposing the Japanese more directly than *ringi* does. The word *nemawashi* (“preparing the roots”) originates from the old Japanese saying “Care to prepare the roots and the tree grows tall and strong” which accordingly describes the meaning of this business system. *Nemawashi* is used in business partnerships where there is trust and enough time has passed to be confident about each other’s fidelity, so that both partners want to speed up the lengthy process of decision making. *Nemawashi* then is the use of an intermediary person that is consulted when problematic subjects are of concern. This representative of the

Japanese company is met by the international side in informal meetings for instance for dinner and needs to be persuaded to act as an influencer for their cause, so that a harmonious agreement without disputes or impasses can be reached later in official meetings. Those following official negotiation meetings are merely seen as a ritual for the previously decided issues to be recognized as negotiated (Haak et al., 2008, pp. 127 – 128; Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 48 – 51, Van Zandt, 1970).

Another intermediary person's use is described in the phase of getting to know a new potential business partner. Here, Japanese companies sometimes use a "*shokai-sha*" whose purpose is solely to achieve getting in touch initially with the two parties and making the first connection as a mediator. This works both ways: the *shokai-sha* will be the first to introduce the Japanese to the other company and will approach both parties. Several institutions around Japan and over the world will provide *shokai-sha* services. The *shokai-sha* often also needs to act as a "*chukai-sha*" a mediator, keeping the later mentioned harmony "*wa*" during the negotiation by clearing any sort of conflict. This *chukai-sha* who is traditionally supplied by law firms is called for help when the parties feel a dispute emerging (De Mente, 2012, pp. 106-107; Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 76 - 79).

As group ideology might suggest, there is a strong group dynamic in Japanese negotiation teams and every team member has his own task. Here a short introduction to the different, well-defined team members' roles that are not only used for certain (international) purposes like the *shokai-sha*, but are seen as necessary in every negotiation: operational staff ("*sutaffu*"), middle managers ("*kacho/bucho*"), and the chief executive officer ("*shacho*"). Firstly, the negotiation will likely start with the operational staff meeting frequently to exchange information and come the concessions. Those meetings will also be attended by the middle managers whose only purpose is to give their confirmations, when needed. The chief executive officer, as the highest in hierarchy, would mostly be attending ceremonies concerning the negotiation process. Those might for instance be held after signed agreement or at the initial meeting. Against the Western opinion, the *shacho* does not have decision making authority or detail knowledge to help making the communication process easier for his team and should not even be tried to be persuaded, for this would leave a bad impression on the Japanese team side (Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 76 – 79).

One outstanding cultural fact that is easy to encounter in business partnerships, is the principle of seniority ("*nenko joretsu*") which also seems to result from the Confucian ideal

of hierarchy in society. When comparing this ideal, it strongly reminds of the concept of family in Japanese culture. Employees are often promoted only due to their age and remuneration follows the age of service of the employee. This reflects that more respect is to be owed to older business partners, which explains how you should behave towards your Japanese counterparts as an international business partner of Japanese companies when giving business cards, greeting and every other aspect of a negotiation (Lee, 1997, p. 88; Rothlauf, 2012, p. 543).

Demonstrating their high-context culture, the Japanese also convey information in negotiations, even if very seldom, in a non-explicit way and do not simply say “no”, when it is expected from low-context cultures. Instead of openly negating a subject in a “no”, they use more complex expressions and flowery circumlocutions which make sense for the Japanese side (Genzberger et al., 1994, p. 155; Haak et al., 2008, pp. 127 - 129; Rothlauf, 2012, p. 526; Adair, 2001, p. 372, Merviö, 1991, p. 164; Foster, 1992, p. 19; Messner, 2008, p. 112). To preserve harmony in Japanese society, it was mentioned that the Japanese have mechanism known to them that they apply. *Tatemae*, used to maintain interpersonal harmony and save each other’s feelings, is one of those and can be one way to explain certain behavioural aspects in negotiations with the Japanese. *Tatemae* is another strong cultural component that stands in the way when “no” would be used by Austrian and not by Japanese people. The Japanese tend to display messages that might be considered as “lies” from the Austrian side without conveying information, but good feeling, but for the Japanese is essential to maintain the harmony between people by avoiding criticism (Takai et al., 1994; Alston et al., 2005, pp. 19 - 20). Clearly the use of a “no” in a negotiation would exactly be disrupting this very carefully built up harmony. This, often seen as frustrating by Westerners, unwillingness to openly say “yes” or “no”, moreover, is not only due to the Japanese high-context culture or harmony preserving nature, but can also be linked to the above mentioned *ringi* system. As obtaining an agreement from consensus generally takes longer than having just one authorized decision-maker, no definitive answer could also drive to the presumption that simply no decision has been able to be made (Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 48 - 49).

Amae, the already mentioned foundation of every relationship and the basis of *wa* through trust, in a company is created by enforcing a feeling on inclusion in the group and company which can be seen in Japanese business people engaging in group activities every morning, strong company philosophies, and strong involvement of the company in the employee’s

personal life (Genzberger et al., 1994, p. 155; Haak et al., 2008, p. 129). This links the concept of harmony back to the concept of family and group ideology, where processes like *nemawashi* are rooted and also implement the success of harmony during business negotiations in Japan.

This also leads to the statement by Haak et al. (2008, p. 129) that international Japanese business relationships are based on trust, harmony and mutual obligations. Hence when entering negotiations with Japanese business people, trust needs to build up through a lengthy process of getting to know each other so that a partnership (“*shinyo*”) can be built. Even when the private and professional trust has been developed, partners must still invest time to maintain it. Lee (1997, pp. 3-47) suggests that in Asia, international partners should follow an 8:2-unit ratio which means that out of 10 time-units, 8 will be used to prepare everything for the actual deal. When knowing the culture itself, it becomes clear why Japanese business people don’t like to sign a contract as fast as Austrians would. There is a lot to be aware of before the actual meeting starts, like knowledge about your and your partner’s business, respecting the Japanese cultural behaviour, and how to communicate with the partners before the negotiation. Compliments, excuses, and confirmations follow other rules than they do in Austria. Even when meeting in person, the role of business cards, paperwork, and many other “little” variables can influence the beginning negotiation.

It was explained earlier why the Japanese expect to build long-term relationships, *nagai tsukiai*, due to their history of isolation. This also shows strongly in concrete negotiations: Baber et al. (2015) observed in their study that Japanese negotiators are not as prone as European ones to (counter)offer incremental concessions or recombined packages to the counterparty. The Japanese tend to want to develop an ally and do not care that much about efficiency during the deal. It is not easy to win a Japanese negotiation partner, but when a relationship is formed and invested in to be preserved, it is an asset most valuable (Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 44).

2.3. Short Introduction to Austrian Business Culture

Now, that the Japanese side was elaborated on with more detail, to see why Austrians can profit from the aforementioned aspects of Japanese culture, a short discussion of Austrian

negotiation habits will be given. Those will help to distinct their culture and give more concrete help for the emerging conflicts.

When business people decide that it is necessary to take an international step and enter the first meeting with people from foreign countries, whether that is through some sort of platform on the internet or face-to-face, recognizing that there will be cultural differences is the first step of a long process of cultural learning. The usual planning and developing of the negotiation contents and strategies have to be based on the cultural habits and customs of the negotiation partner and the principles of their etiquette. It should be guaranteed that every negotiator is prepared to enter the business meeting appropriately informed. Austrian negotiators in some sense have an advantage towards their Japanese counterparts, as Japanese culture is more homogenous than Austrian culture which can easily be seen through the many different dialects of the German language in Austria and every little difference Western Austrians see in Eastern Austrians and the other way around (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014; Baber et al., 2015).

Some facts to understand differences and similarities to Japan and why Austrian culture is, as it is: Austria is a Republic and a member of the European Union since 1995. Like Japan, Austria's terrain also is characterised by mountains, the Alps, but mainly in the west of Austria. As Austria joined the Eurozone in 2002, after the economy recovered from World War II thanks to the Marshall Plan, the Austrian currency is the Euro. What is remarkable about Austria is their ethnic make-up: 9.8% are from a non-German ethnic group; more than 90% make up the rest. The strongest religion in Austria is Roman Catholicism, which 74% of Austrians are belonging to, but Protestantism, Islam, and Judaism each constitute of 4% to 5%. Being a relatively small country with the same ethnic descent as their big German neighbour, it is essential to see that Austrians still have some differences in cultural behaviour. Austrians are proud of those differences as it makes up their distinct Austrian culture, in contrast to only being a relation of Germany. This feeling of needing to have an Austrian identity dates back to the time after World War II. Austrians showed signs of wanting to distance themselves from Germany and continuously tried for an Austrian identity. In a poll of the "Institut für Markt- und Meinungsforschung" in 1956, 49% of Austrians said they are people of their own, only 46% supporting the belief Austrians are part of German people, and 5% choosing that they do not know. Still, Austrians primarily see their culture as a result of the native region in Austria they come from; a strong determinant

to how the many dialects are still predominant in Austria (Gieler, 2017; Krejci, 2011, p. 235; Thaler, 2001, p. 167).

Passport to Trade 2.0 (2014), a project funded with support from the European Commission, states that Austrian business people are detail- and fact-loving, work precisely, and follow formal procedures. This relates directly to the Austrian expectancy of punctuality in business matters. Generally it can be said that they aim for concrete outcomes and precise results rather than linger on general issues. Communication-wise, the Austrian is not open for indirectness, nor does he behave directly enough to endanger his position in the very politically shaped business world that is dominating Austria. Business partners should therefore respect that Austrians are careful what they say to whom about whom, because of the political importance of relationships. Austrians care highly about stability of their economic partners; therefore it is advised to include a founding date on business cards from new partners. What can be related to the Japanese negotiation style, as mentioned before, is the Austrian strict hierarchy. Only some people very high in hierarchy hold most of the power and are highly respected, a fact which can also be seen in behaviour towards those certain authority-holding individuals. This also shows in how much Austrians care about their academic degrees and honours. Nevertheless, the Austrian business partners often tend to have informal business situation where those strict rules are not obeyed. As well as observed in Japan, Austrian business people also want to get to know their business partner more in depth to assess whether they trust him enough and do not appreciate confrontational behaviour or high-pressure tactics. Like in Japan, business is carried out slowly with accuracy, with protocol and without losing temper. Still, women are not seen as often in high positions of responsibility as men are.

Regarding Austria, Hofstede (1984, p. 157) specifies that it can mostly be called an “independent collectivist” country, for it shows personal dependence with the collectivity combined with low power distance.

To this day, a large number of companies are publicly-owned and regulation of the economy is strong, a remnant of the time shortly after World War II. Privatisations followed after becoming part of the European Union with its stability programme for the Euro. Since then, the economy remained steady (Krejci, 2011, pp. 235 – 236).

2.4. What conflicts are occurring when Austrian business men/women negotiate with potential partners from Japan?

After having a more in-depth insight into why Japanese business people behave as they do culturally and how this culture evolved, we need deeper understanding of what this behaviour translates to in daily business life with Austrian negotiators more concretely. This chapter shall give more precise examples of Japanese and Austrian negotiation conflicts and how existing academic research can help with resolution of those conflicts.

Academic research provides solutions for cultural conflicts between Austrians and Japanese negotiators and some conflicts will be shortly dealt with in this chapter with conflict resolution ideas that can be followed in structure, difference of non-verbal and verbal communication, and with carefully obtaining information from the Japanese side.

The subdivisions already used in the overview of Japanese culture, will again provide structure to the conflicts in order to see the underlying Japanese cultural concepts.

Moral Concepts

Japanese business people are very cautious when dealing with international partners, not to discuss money or strategic affairs, because other companies generally represent outsiders and competition. They use their high-context communication style to obscure the true meaning of their messages. This also has taken effect because of the high status samurai once had compared to merchants. Topics that merchants would discuss, like profits, are not topics that Japanese people like to talk about in conversation. In the light of this concern, money matters of negotiations tend to be discussed in later stages of negotiations (Kumayama, 1991, pp. 58 - 59).

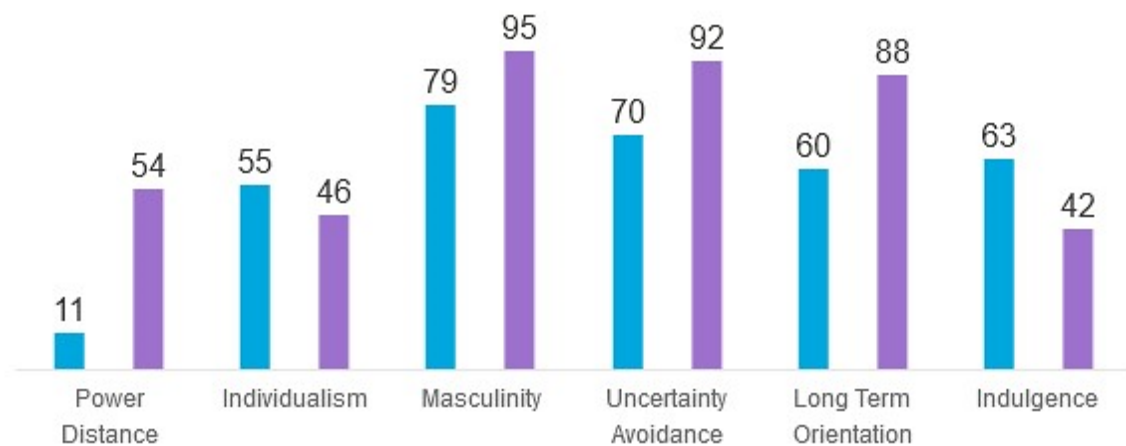
Even in general, it is known that the Japanese are not encouraging talking a lot culturally. In contrast to German culture where children are praised for their verbal explicitness, children in Japan are rather praised for their silence by their cultural norms (Enninger, 1991, p. 14).

The best way to get to know the Japanese partners is by taking part in their often offered out-of-office activities, like geisha parties, sumo matches, golf and so on. Showing interest in the Japanese culture and personal relationships can benefit the negotiation a great deal. It

will create what Japanese people refer to as “*naniwabushi*”, a term to describe mutual respect and personal goodwill, so that a favour will be returned (Van Zandt, 1970).

Group Ideology

In Fig. 2 the IDV (Individualism Index) of Japan and Austria can be seen in contrast, where Austria scores higher than Japan, meaning that Austria’s society is more individualistic than Japan, therefore the Japanese individual is seen as being alienated when acting individualistic and not entirely responsible for their own fate, as they have their family/clan to rely on. Scoring higher on individualism, like Austria does, also has implications on a company-level. From the employee’s side this leads to a tendency for emotional distance from the company she works in, preferring to work in a smaller company, showing individual initiative and leadership (Hofstede, 1984, pp. 148 - 171).



Austria, Japan

Fig. 2: *Comparison of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions: Austria & Japan.* Taken from Hofstede Insights (n. d.)

This strongly reminds of Austrian and Japanese preconceptions. Nevertheless, it seems that individualism in the case of comparing Japan and Austria marks the smallest cultural difference between the two regarding Hofstede’s dimensions. This could be explained through the notion that in Japan it is not totalitarianism in the sense of anti-individualism

that is aimed for, which is also perceived very negatively in Western society, but rather that the individual wants the “merge” with the organization or group that it feels part of while maintaining his individuality without presenting it as publicly (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, pp. 147 - 148).

This higher Individualism score on the Austrian side can easily be compared to all the cultural aspects dealt with before in this thesis, like group ideology or the family concept. The outcome in the cultural behaviour of Japanese in negotiations in general and also with Austrians have also been mentioned: For example decisions in Japan are not only made by the negotiation partners themselves, but are made separately with experts and then again approved by the higher management, see the above mentioned *ringi* system. It becomes essential for Austrian negotiation partners to absolutely convince the negotiation partners to come to a deal (Lee, 1997, pp. 100-101). The Austrian side not only needs to convince the “strongest” group member, all of the Japanese negotiation members are needed to win them over, with is deeply rooted in the Japanese group spirit (Van Zandt, 1970).

For the other dimensions, the situation is not as clear. Yeh (1998, pp. 151 - 156) remarks that the sole argument of Japanese ancestor worship cannot explain its high uncertainty avoidance score and contradicts Hofstede on the Japanese management style being formalised and standardised. Another disagreement is shown in the scoring of masculinity, as the Japanese striving for consensus through the *ringi* system, should lower their masculinity ranking which is very high and he contradicts Hofstede’s sight on Japanese economic focus causing environmental problems. He also comments on power distance that the Japan have the “one son” inheritance tradition which makes the value lower than the Chinese one (at 68), and its national wealth accounts for it, as well, but this doesn’t explain why in comparison, Austria as a Germanic Country has a so much lower power distance scoring. Here, the emperor in Japan makes the difference: his judgement was not to be questioned which leads to the higher Japanese score. Because of those different opinions, those dimensions will not be analysed further in this chapter, but the reoccurring theme of Japanese long-term orientation was elaborated before and will be mentioned later in more detail.

Family Concept

Another way to deal with those cultural differences in negotiations between Austrian and Japanese business people mentioned before, like high-context culture vs. low-context culture or the Austrian side preferring to work in smaller groups, while the Japanese implement the *ringi* system with a lot more people involved, is described by Lee (1997, pp. 47-58). It is advised to have a clear subdivision of functions with ideally the oldest negotiator being the team leader. Once he is defined as the team leader he should also have the respective decision-making authority, because having to call back the Austria will decrease his authority vis-à-vis the Japanese partners. The possibility is high that they request a more “powerful” negotiating partner from Austria.

Harmony

Harmony is one of pillars of Japanese communication, as aforementioned.

One main cultural conflict in negotiation between Japan and Austria lies in the communication itself: For low-context cultures like Austria, implicit, in-context communication is hard to decipher without the explicit, exact wording they are used to and this communication barrier might be one of the greatest between Austria and Japan, as they rank very differently on the context continuum. All the differences mentioned above like the Japanese side not wanting to say “no” clearly will lead to cultural conflict and possible troubles during the negotiation Genzberger et al., 1994, p. 155; Haak et al., 2008, pp. 127 - 129; Rothlauf, 2012, p. 526; Adair, 2001, p. 372, Merviö, 1991, p. 164; Foster, 1992, p. 19; Messner, 2008, p. 112).

Another point to verbal communication is the clear explanation of every point and idea. It is also advised to explain those issues not only verbally, but also with presentations of some sort and repeat the idea a few times in different notions to make the point clear. Sincerity is a highly valued virtue in Japan and Japanese business partners will even try to test their opponents sincerity, so the Austrian side should always have in mind use rather modest than extravagant language to not pressure them (Van Zandt, 1970).

Goals and interests must be clear to every member of the negotiating team. Then it is essential to agree on non-verbal signals for breaks or detecting incorrect statements whether

that is from the European or Asian side. By learning how to use silence instead of movement, which is sometimes considered improper in Japan when showing emotions, the Austrian side can keep up the good negotiation climate, but still communicate dissatisfaction amongst the Austrian side. Another point is also to have legal validation simultaneously, so that no time is wasted after the long-sought deal is made (Lee, 1997, pp. 50-55).

Wa also strongly reminds not only of the Japanese way of talking verbally, but also of the general attitude while talking, the non-verbal issue of Japanese communication. Therefore, also smiling has another status in Asia than it does in Europe. It conveys all sorts of emotions, tending to mislead Europeans that only understand smiling in a happy environment (Lee, 1997, pp. 91-92). Nevertheless, the Japanese will smile at the beginning of negotiations to create good atmosphere to relax, although they will maintain a strict posture throughout the conversation (Kumayama, 1991, p. 62).

As Japan is a high-context culture, a lot of business communication is based on non-verbal contact as well (Rothlauf, 2012, p. 528). The first step which is widely known, is to bow correctly. The lower you bow, the more respect you show the counterpart, so the older or higher in position he is. Another respect showing process is the exchanging of business cards, starting with the host being the highest in hierarchy giving his card to the guest being the highest in hierarchy and ending with the lowest in hierarchy. It is important to look at the business cards and to explain them and compliment them (Lee, 1997, pp. 61 - 64). This process of exchanging business cards is so formal that it even has its own name: it is called “*meishi*” in Japan (Kumayama, 1991, p. 52).

Often cited, Van Zandt (1970) explains that from non-verbal communication perspective, the Japanese do have great emotional sensitivity and care for the small things and gestures and expect the same treatment from foreigners, but do conceal their emotions more than foreigners might expect. They are likely to see behind the carefully placed “mask” a European might want to wear to hide his feelings towards the Japanese. Through their high-context culture, the Japanese are experienced in decoding messages (Takai et al., 1994, p. 225). It is very important to have a pleasant attitude towards the Japanese, to not endanger the long-sought deal (Van Zandt, 1970).

Other points like not directly aiming for continuous eye contact, are more in need of acknowledgement if the Japanese counterpart is not accustomed to international business relations (Kumayama, 1991, pp. 62 – 63).

Language-wise it is essential to know basic greetings and polite phrases to earn respect of the Japanese. Too much knowledge of the language on the other hand might scare the partners away, because they fear that their scheme might be detected. It is therefore advised to use the Japanese language cautiously or to hire a translator. It is far more important to the Japanese that the negotiator himself has the best knowledge of the interests of his side than to speak their language. They tend to engage a translator themselves even when they have enough mastery of the German language, because of their focus on competence in the negotiating interest (Lee, 1997, pp. 58-61). General misbehaviour like talking in German to each other, can lead to a Japanese partner understanding the language without the Austrian side not knowing that and the Austrian side being compromised, because they didn't know their partner could understand them as a result of not knowing that in Japan bragging about knowledge is not tolerate. If it is really needed to talk aloud to each other immediately, it should be done in some Austrian dialect to hide the content, but still is not advised (Lee, 1997, p. 54).

Obtaining information from the Japanese partner is closely related to be named communication aspects of negotiations. It is especially hard to get information from the Japanese party. Here the Austrian side has to learn to listen and get to know the counterpart, in order to know what it wants. Small gestures and bits of information might lead to more than pressing the Japanese to give away information or even try to force them. Therefore, it has been established by Europeans to memorize all the information or bits of information obtained as, even when the deal seems to be done, there might be renegotiations and the gained observations and information might prove useful. It also is custom to keep a protocol of the negotiation in Japan which should be done thoughtfully and accurately and can also serve as a scarce source of information to the Austrian side (Lee, 1997, pp. 92-100).

Overall it can be said that conflicts can be avoided with patience, endurance and time. This also means more money that will be needed due to the long procedure. But negotiations with Japanese people do not only take place at the negotiating table, but also at dinner and with any other interaction, which again leads to the overall cultural understanding that is needed

to persevere such negotiations. Overall, negotiations take over the daily life of negotiators when Japanese are involved (Lee, 1997, pp. 77-90).

Table 1 below shows the cultural differences between Austria and Japan known from academic literature that was elaborated on before, but in this way allows for a clearer view of the opposing styles in negotiations. These criteria are also used later for the enrolling of the method used for the research.

CRITERIA DIFFERENCES OF THE RESPECTIVE NEGOTIATION STYLES: AUSTRIA & JAPAN

<i>Category</i>	<i>Traditional Japanese Negotiation</i>	<i>Low-context Austrian</i>
<i>Negotiation</i>		
<i>Preparation</i>	8:2-unit ratio (Lee, 1997, pp. 3-47)	Appointments should be made 3-4 weeks in advance, be punctual (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
<i>Getting in touch</i>	Chukai-sha (De Mente, 2012, pp. 106-107)	
<i>Team</i>	Translator, managers, negotiators as experts (Lee, 1997)	
<i>Harmony</i>	Silence (Lee, 1997, pp. 50-55)	Silence only when not prepared or informed. Detail-oriented, data backed talking (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
	Not saying “no”, avoiding confrontation (Rothlauf, 2012, p. 526; Adair, 2001, p. 372)	Avoid confrontation, sometimes promising more than can deliver (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)

	Smiling more often (Lee, 1997, pp. 91-92)	Smiling when happy (Lee, 1997, pp. 91-92)
<i>Hierarchy</i>	Everything is started by the highest in hierarchy (Giving business card starting with the highest in hierarchy etc. (Lee, 1997, pp. 61-64))	Write proper business title, address the higher ranked for meeting (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
<i>Seniority</i>	The older the higher in hierarchy (Bowing lower the older the counterpart is, etc. (Lee, 1997, pp. 61-64))	
<i>Respect</i>	Bowing (Lee, 1997, pp. 61-64)	Shaking hands with everyone while eye contact (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
	Explain and compliment business cards (Lee, 1997, pp. 61-64)	No formal ritual for business cards, compliment rather rarely (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
<i>Negotiation placing</i>	Also in bars, during the whole stay, getting to know each other well (Lee, 1997)	Meetings are formal, initial meetings are used to get to know each other (time consuming), but never too personal (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
<i>Decision making</i>	Team leader should have authority, but approval from higher management needed (Lee, 1997, pp. 47-58)	Top of the company decides in private, negotiations often with decision maker (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014)
<i>Concession</i>	Taking longer	
<i>General interest</i>	Build relationship	

Table 1: *Criteria differences of the respective negotiation styles: Austria & Japan. Own illustration.*

2.5. How did negotiation behaviour in Japan change?

Change in Culture

The biggest shortcoming of *nihonjinron* which could be understood as the “study of Japanese people’s identity” and that was mostly used in this master thesis to describe Japanese general behaviour so far is that it doesn’t take into account society’s heterogeneity. In the last 70 years, Japan developed high diversity in opinions, education, occupations, urban and rural landscapes, wages, and internationalization which can be seen through politics, especially when seeing women taking a more notable stance with greater economic power. This might lead to greater changes in society’s structure, because conservative Japan until now organized women as caretakers of the elderly and children with the pretext of harmony in society and women having to know their place (Merviö, 1991, pp. 166 - 167).

Globalization and its opportunities became immensely important in the course of the second half of the 20th century and penetration of international market now is a main strategic concern for many companies. This led to many internationalisations of Western companies of different sectors, like consumer or investment goods markets, towards the Asian region and its key-actor Japan, because Japanese consumers are considered as prone to innovation, educated, and wealthy (Haak et al., 2008, pp. 1 - 2).

Change can also be seen in how the youth in Japan thinks. Values like group ideology now are trumped by individual freedom and privacy (Elashwami et al., 1993, p. 60). But even though the political freedom, peace and stable economy might suggest even stronger changes in their attitude, young people still are traditional. Japanese homogeneity has remained as contact with other cultures was relatively low, due to their differentiation to other, even Asian cultures, and still ongoing limitation of incoming foreigners (Kumagai et al., 1996, pp. 1-2).

Japan has advanced its economy rapidly in the last 70 years. Especially the cooperation with the Japanese government and the strong work ethic have been the main factors for Japan to be able to secure its place in international market places through competitive advantages, most notable in the high technology field. It is now a country with a GDP (purchasing power parity) estimated to have been \$ 5.238 trillion in 2016, ranking place 5. The main industry products are motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools and steel and nonferrous

metals, all with the prestige to be highly technologically advanced (Begin, 1997, p. 31; CIA, 2017).

The government of Japan decided in 2000 that Japan needs an IT revolution for its economy to succeed further. Even though Japan caught up a lot in comparison to the US and other Asian countries in terms of for example penetration ratio for households and e-commerce, the internet is still not used as broadly for business purposes, but like everywhere, tendencies can be seen that younger Japanese generations use the internet more (Noguchi, 2003, pp.67-70). Not only IT changed, but with it also financial perspectives for Japan did change, but to be observed better, still need to develop more. This includes challenges for the policy makers, as they need to come up with consistent applications of rules for the new, non-traditional market places and channels that come with IT change and its finance side. Information now is less asymmetrical than it was before technological development, which doesn't mean it becomes better in quality (Fuji, 2003, pp. 179-193). What is to be seen in companies is, that big companies dominate in Japan and those are reluctant to radical changes and decision making is slower than needed which made it hard for them to adapt IT fast (Noguchi, 2003, pp. 76-77). Software industry in Japan still uses their unique business approaches, like the ones mentioned throughout this thesis, while having lack of generalist managers, low pervasiveness of Agile management, and difficulties to internationalize their business. As well as in other industries, IT industry in Japan to this day is highly dependent on trust (Baber et al., 2015).

Change of Behaviour in Negotiations

With greater international points of reference, old traditional Japanese behaviour can be seen to slowly evolve. When contracts are made, Japanese negotiators prefer to make them verbally rather than in written form. This stems from the belief that traditionally a promise has to be kept to ensure one's honour. In the last few years this has changed a little due to economic development and the many negotiations with non-Japanese. Here, the fear of losing honour is not as high as with Japanese business partners, so often the interest lies more on personal gain than maintaining honour (Lee, 1997, p. 32).

Hodgson et al. (2008, p. 39) mention fast change of Japanese business culture in the last two decades due to world market integration. This was an especially hard shock to the Japanese

culture which always was extremely reclusive leading back to their ancient history of characteristic freedom of outside influencers. Foreign capital investments in the 1990s economic slowdown led to young business people being more interested in Western business and a trend of more and more Western behaviour in Japan was observed.

With the change in young Japanese people's minds, even the principle of seniority is now changing with time as companies think of not only taking age into consideration when deciding on remuneration of employees (Rothlauf, 2012, p. 543). With that shift away from seniority, the previously mentioned traditional negotiation roles of *sutaffu*, *kacho/bucho*, *shacho* that were seen to be strictly followed with all their according purposes, authorities, and tasks, seem to slowly have faded away over time (Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 76 -79).

This all leads to the expectation that Japanese business behaviour could have changed towards Austrians as well. As suggested by Baber (2016) which can also be seen in this master thesis's theoretical approach to Japanese culture: most sources that are used in academic work on the topic of Japanese culture are 20-30 years old, coming mostly from the Bubble Economy Era from 1986 to 1991. In this time period Japan's overheating economic activity expanded with rises in asset pricing and rising money supply and credit, until the bubble's burst which was mainly caused by aggressive bank behaviour, international policy coordination, weak disciplinary mechanisms and over-self-confidence in the Japanese management and economy. The burst lead to difficulties faced by financial institutions and recession (Okina et al., 2001). It even made many of the once crucial *keiretsu* affiliations break down by divestment due to the financial machinations associated with the 1990s economic downturn (Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 80). In the recent study from Baber (2016) of Japanese intracultural business negotiation behaviour, it was shown that after changes to the business environment through reforms of the Koizumi-era in the 1990s in bank lending, the postal system, and foreign affairs, followed by the Abe administration's expectation of growth (Abenomics), a few business scandals, and the nuclear power catastrophe of March 2011, the business community in Japan did change. Those very different conditions made Japanese business members more "Western", but only as individuals; the collective of an organization is still seen as acting in the expected Japanese way. What was shown as current behaviour of Japanese business people with each other, are unlikeliness of haggling, lies, surprises, and shocks (although haggling was considered as a part negotiations between Japanese parties in literature), with the emergence of direct logic, new value creation, and

displays of strong emotions. For international business people the mention of haggling and lies does not apply directly, because Japanese did not haggle with foreigners, nor does the disappearance of lies apply, because it could be a form of misinterpretation of the Japanese high-context cultural communication which the named *honne* and *tatemae* to maintain harmony by using verbal expression with little to no meaning (Alston et al., 2005, pp. 19 - 20). Baber et al. (2015) also observed changes in the negotiation behaviour of Japanese negotiators as they did not establish empathic fits, like academic literature presented in this master thesis suggests. This could on the other hand also be linked to their long-term orientation in business relationships, meaning that established relationships to not call that much for the establishing of strong empathetic fits and therefore the Japanese do not have to use this tactic as often as believed. Baber (2016) thereby identified that though these changes can be observed and existing literature appears to be outdated, still, most of the Japanese behaviour remained as it was. However, it shows a strong trend that might be proven in further research.

3. Rationale and Research Hypotheses of the Current Study

Existing research tells why Japanese behaviour is unique and how culture evolved from factors like it being an island and so forth, so that behaviour of Japanese business people came to be the way it is today. Research also helps European and Austrian business negotiators recognize differences in their culture from Japanese culture, how conflicts arise and how they can be resolved with knowledge of the respective culture. In this chapter it was presented what research identified as changes to the Japanese culture and behaviour through different changes in Japanese society and environment through business and other factors.

All this research still does not identify how Japanese behaviour changed towards European (or in this case Austrian) negotiators. This leads to the question: In the last 40 years, the world changed a lot and so did Japan. But can this also be seen from the negotiation side? How do Austrian negotiators experience changes in business contract negotiations with Japanese business people today?

Those trends lead to the formulation of the following thesis that will be verified or falsified in the enrolment of this master thesis's research:

NEGOTIATION BEHAVIOUR OF JAPANESE NEGOTIATORS CHANGED OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS.

The results gathered through the researched thesis will imply how Austrian negotiators can expect Japanese negotiators to behave and if existing literature is still relevant in learning how to prepare for negotiations with Japanese business people. It will probably mainly be of interest for Austrian negotiators who do not have regular contact with Japanese business people, but could also help Japanese negotiators learn how their negotiation behaviour is seen by Austrian negotiators.

3.1. Method and Procedure

A qualitative research design was chosen to research in more depth how Austrian negotiators feel about changes in negotiations with the Japanese and why they feel this way. To

understand the reality of Austrians in negotiations with the Japanese today, it was important to gather new primary data from the affected persons themselves. To get to new perspectives through new material, representatives of Austrian companies were interviewed about their experiences regarding negotiations with Japanese business partners. The qualitative design of the data collection allows for the individual Austrian negotiator to explain in more detail how they experienced the negotiation with Japanese and if behaviour changed over time. Through that design it is also possible to catch little innuendos about the perception of those changes and what is essential as a conclusion for the affected negotiators. The design consequently allows for a more inductive, rather than a deductive, quantitative approach. The questionnaire for the in-depth interviews was derived from the research theory as presented in the first part of this master thesis and the interviews were recorded by the author of this master thesis for later in-depth analysis with consent of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted personally through the use of a partially structured interview manual with specific questions derived from academic literature to ensure that the questions, obtaining the needed results to answer the research topic in general and its hypotheses, are always asked in the same way to have the same initial situation and so that the results are comparable, but have margin for the interviewed individual for more extensive narration on their subjective perspective and respective background. Through the more personal atmosphere of qualitative interviews in comparison to quantitative research, it was also possible to gather more personal, subjective views on how Japanese negotiators behave and how this was perceived by the Austrian counterpart (Dresing et al., 2013; Mayring, 2015, p. 19, p. 33). The recorded interviews were transcribed for easier access to the content for the analysis. This transcription was done in the original language used (German); for further use in this master thesis, the participants and their answers were also anonymized in this process as requested by the interviewed subjects and guaranteed to them at the beginning of the respective interviews. The simplified Dresing et al. (2013, pp. 21 - 22) transcription rules were used. The in-depth interviews were held in German, see Appendix 2, for all the interviewees are from Austria and agreed to have the interview done in their first language. For further reference, the analysis of the interviews is written in English as well as the thesis itself and a translated version of the questionnaire can be read in the Appendix 1.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews' content should follow the method of a systematic interpretation (Mayring, 2015, pp. 50 - 51). After having done the transcriptions of the

interviews, vital text parts and remarkable comments were marked, and summaries of every individual interviews written (CaseSummary as in Dresing et al., 2013, p. 40). The vital text parts were then put into a code system with inductive (sub)categories, all under the rules of abbreviation or “reductive processes” by Mayring (2015, pp. 45 - 49) to ensure content structuring (Mayring, 2015, pp. 103 - 104). Because the categories are built in an inductive approach, they will only be derived from the interviews themselves and not from the research questions and hypotheses. The process used to build the categories originates from Mayring (2015, pp. 85 – 87, pp. 103 - 104). These categories can be related back to the original hypotheses with the developed criteria from the literature and therefore to the research question. This method also is based on Dresing et al. (2013). It is essential to have preconceptions prior to the analysis of the interviews, like the research hypotheses, the theoretical background with its assumptions which was partly given in the parts afore and will be delved into in the following section, before turning to the analysis (Mayring, 2015, p. 32). The coding system will also be illustrated later on, but only with the categories and subcategories shown.

3.2. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were derived from literature and apparent changes to Japanese society to show some form of change in the Japanese negotiation style through the convergence with the Austrian negotiation style:

Hypotheses:

1. The more often Japanese negotiators meet their Austrian counterparts, the more they adapt their negotiation style to their Austrian partners’.
2. The more recent the negotiation, the more verbal and “low-context” cultural, Austrian negotiation styles are used by the Japanese part.
3. The younger the Japanese negotiator, the more “Western” his negotiation approach.

3.3. Participants

All participants were Austrian employees of companies based in Austria with first-hand experience of negotiations with Japanese business people.

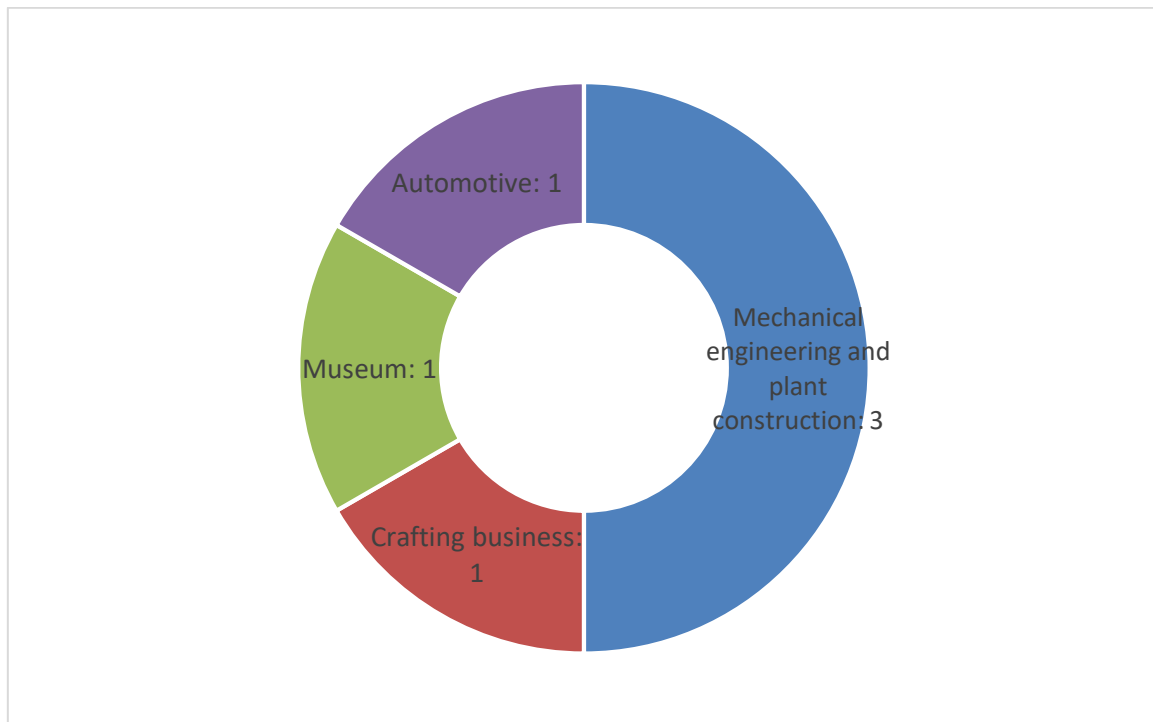


Fig. 3: *Number of interviewees from the different sectors.* Own illustration.

Because Japan offers great market opportunities and strategical importance in the cultivation of internationalization in the mechanical engineering and automotive sector (Haak et al., 2008, p. 2), three out of six representatives of companies acting in those industries were interviewed for the study, as can be seen from Fig. 3. To guarantee the spectrum of respondents to be as broad as possible, it was ensured that the interview partners were of different ages, position levels in their companies and in the conducted negotiations, sectors, and sexes, even though only one out of six interview partners was female and most of the interview partners were decision makers in the negotiation. Still, the selection was chosen to be broad, so that thereby, it could fathom the research question and what different changes occur from different points of view.

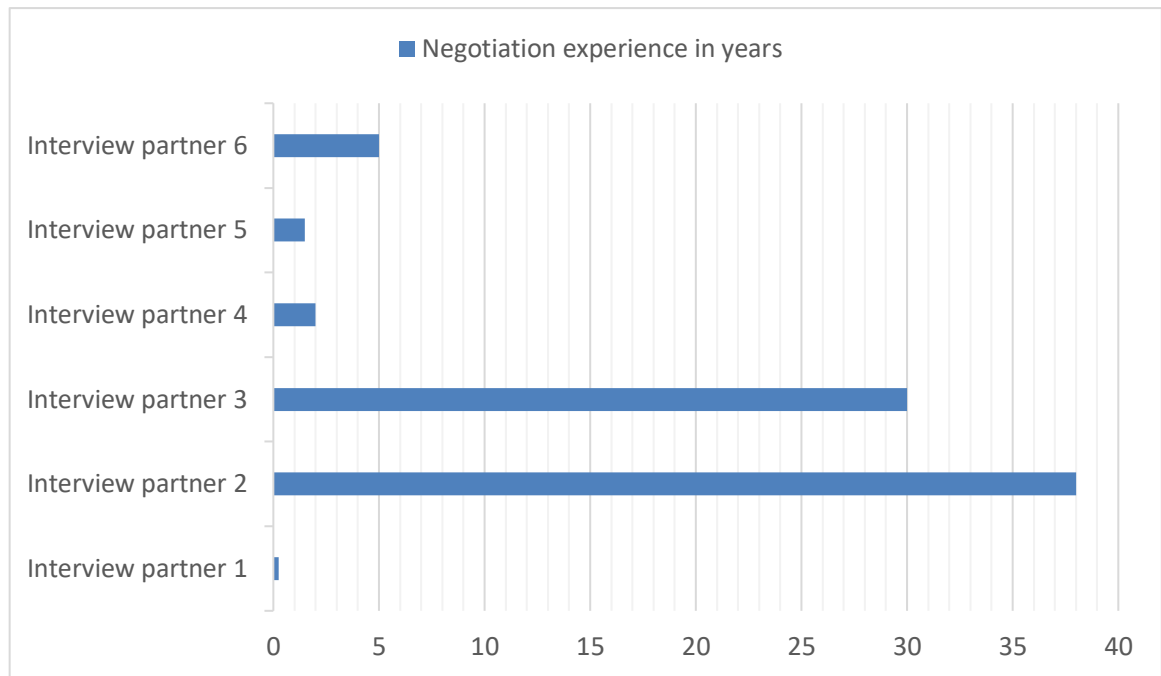


Fig. 4: *Interviewees' negotiation experience with Japanese business people in years.* Own illustration.

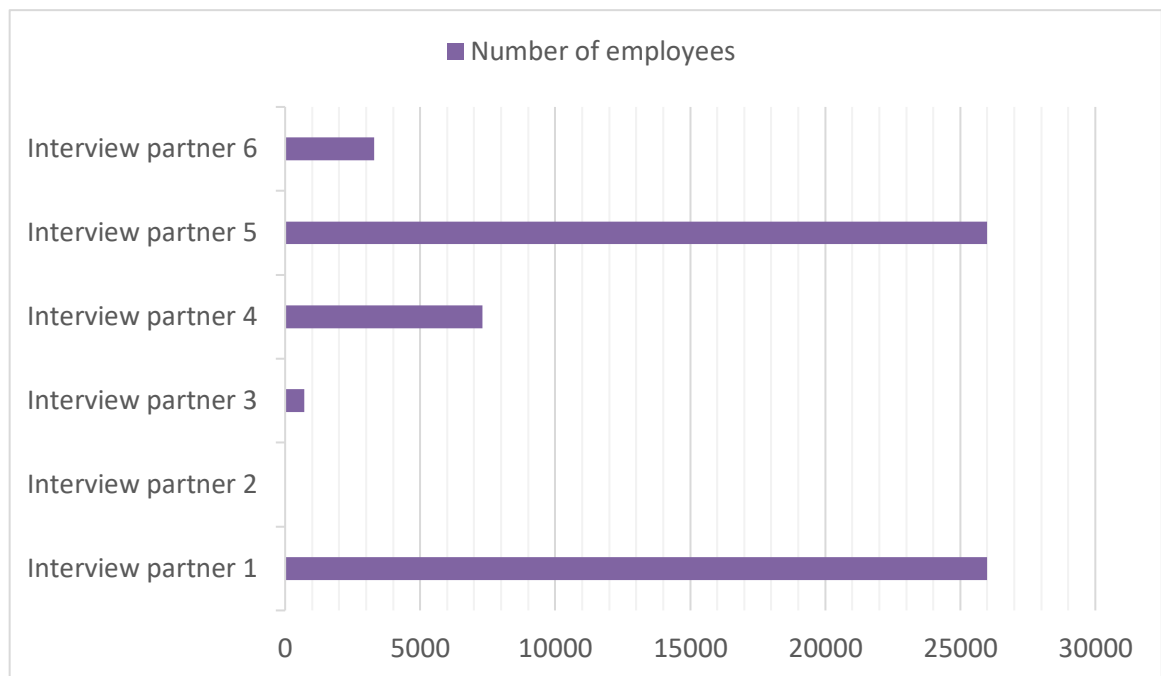


Fig. 5: *Employee count in the companies the interviewed persons work at.* Own illustration.



Fig. 6: *Negotiation position of the interviewed individuals during their negotiations with Japanese business people. Own illustration.*

Another strong difference between the individually asked persons, is their experience period with Japanese business people. Here the range goes from three months of negotiation experience (Interview 1, line 27) to almost 40 years of experience (Interview 2, line 21) with the Japanese negotiation style, to be seen in Fig. 4. Just as wide ranging is the employee count in the companies the interviewees work at which can be seen in Fig. 5. The highest number of employees in the company the negotiations were taken place at is 26.000 (Interview 1, line 10), the lowest 15 (Interview 2, line 12).

What was important in the selection of interviews used as primary material for all further research to be based on, too, was the fact, that the negotiation position of the interviewed individual allows or allowed them to follow the negotiation process with Japanese negotiators personally and directly. For the negotiation position the interviewees held during their negotiations with Japanese business people, the negotiation position definition from Baber (2016, p. 10) were used as measure. He describes the “Final Decision Maker” to be in charge of accepting or disapproving agreements, while the “Lead Negotiator” might be the “Final Decision Maker” as well, but with the difference that he is mostly responsible for leading the negotiation itself and organizing it, while guiding the “Team Members” which

directly interact with the Japanese counterparties and execute negotiation tasks. Baber (2016, p. 10) also mentions “Supporters” which do not interact with the other negotiation side directly and therefore do not affect this research. For this reason, it is essential that the main part of the interviewed negotiators should be team members, because they have the most contact with the counterparty, in this case the Japanese business people. Those team members, as well as the lead negotiator, can give the most detailed information about their meetings with Japanese negotiators and their behaviour, because they experience it first hand and can comprehend the Japanese process of decision-making from their own experience. Lead negotiators might have even more insight to the Japanese decision-making than the team members do, because they have more authority and organization tasks, which make them viable interview partners for this study. The interviews used in this research as primary material for analysis were all conducted with team members, of which two were lead negotiators. In this study, the only interviewee that acted as a final decision maker took part in negotiations with Japanese negotiators mostly as a lead negotiator as well, which signifies that he can report his experiences that he gathered directly from the negotiation himself, as well as the other do.

3.4. SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

Along with general questions about the company, which sometimes were already answered during casual non-recorded conversations before the official, recorded interview, the respondents were asked about their corporate position level and their negotiation position. The survey items that do not belong to the research hypotheses themselves, but rather try to decipher whether certain behaviour is considered as “Western”, so trending towards the Austrian side, or whether it is considered to be typical, traditional Japanese behaviour, were asked for in the interview, too, and were derived from the literature. The categories the items are part of, need to be asked directly to hear the interviewees’ answers about how negotiations proceed in Japan now, as opposed to how the literature used in this master thesis describes it. Their answers could then possibly be classified as belonging to a certain negotiation style. In addition, those criteria can help to “decode” the meaning of certain behaviours the interviewed persons might describe in the in-depth interviews through telling

stories for example, so that in the analysis it can be referred to as behaviour of more Austrian or Japanese character.

The criteria used to access whether the hypotheses are correct and what exactly changed about Japanese behaviour in negotiations, like possibly approaching a Austrian negotiation style, can be seen in Table 1.

Through the qualitative design, it was possible to gather information about how the Austrian negotiators saw new interrelations between the different cultural aspects of negotiations. New topics were brought up in the interviews, because of the inductive nature of such interviews. One part of the discussion of results will be devoted to those new categories that were found. Criteria that was then asked for in the individual interviews, but is neither represented in Table 1, nor in the questionnaire, originates from the interviews themselves where criteria mentioned in the interview as it happens or in an interview prior to the one currently conducted, can be asked for in later interviews for comparison. This leads to specific focal points being different for each interview.

4. Analysis

For the analysis of the interviews to show concordance with the research hypotheses or to falsify them and thereby, to find an answer to the research question, first an overview over the interviews will be given through case summaries, as mentioned in section 3.1 of this master thesis. The next part will consist of the detailed discussion of findings concerning the respective research hypotheses and the categories checked for in the interviews, that come from the literature used. The categories will be included whenever needed in the analysis of the answers in the interviews to the hypotheses to dive deeper into the meaning of those and explain certain notions given. Not only will those be treated separately, but the new categories that stem from the interviews only, as well. In the last part of the analysis, there will be an overview of which categories stem from theory and which ones from the interviews. All the passages used from the original material, in this case the transcripts of the interviews in German, will be cited from Appendix 2 using the numbered interviews to keep anonymity of the interviewed individuals, as declared in segment 3.1, and the line numbers of the respective interview in question.

4.1. Case Summaries

To have a better understanding of the analysis of this research, it is essential to understand the background of the individual interviewees and their key message. Through this understanding, the answers given by the individuals can be taken into account with further depth. The following case summaries give a short introduction to the interviewees themselves and their relation to the research question with their emphasis of certain opinions that could be extracted from the interviews with them.

Interview 1

The first interviewee was a woman working in the procurement department of a big Austrian company in the mechanical engineering and plant construction industry that came in contact with the Japanese business world three months prior to the interview. She outlined that in

Japan trust is more important than contracts. Due to the complicated procedures of reaching an agreement and mostly internal communication on all sides, negotiations take longer, especially since the Austrian company in these negotiations mostly takes the place of a counsellor while different local Japanese companies are in negotiations between each other for the big project. She experiences the negotiations to be tedious, because they often have to restart from the beginning, but still, the Japanese show great respect in their negotiation style.

Interview 2

The small-scale entrepreneur in the crafting business, interviewee 2, is in continuous contact with Japan since a fair in 1980. He emphasizes that though everything takes its time in Japan the outcome is worth the wait, with all its ceremonies and hierarchies, as Japanese partners are extremely faithful. He also states that times are changing, but Japanese negotiation behaviour mostly changes with the change in relationship.

Interview 3

The third interviewee is currently the superintendent of exhibitions and authorised officer of a well-known Viennese museum with connections to Japan reaching back a few decades. In this case the Japanese side approaches the Austrian side for exhibitions in Japan. He depicts Japanese negotiation behaviour as modest, reserved, and formal. The greatest barrier is language which makes it impossible to understand nuances in conversations which may be important in negotiations. Due to high courtesy levels, the Austrian side must decipher what information the Japanese want to convey. Every Japanese negotiation member has his role and sticks to it.

Interview 4

A sales project manager of a big plant construction company with 7 000 employees (as stated by the interviewee prior to the recorded interview) with two years of experience in negotiations with Japan was interviewed as well, as the fourth interviewee. He explains how

detail-loving and hard to read Japanese business partners are in negotiations. Their clear division of tasks, unemotional negotiation style, and market protection, make it necessary to meet in informality after the negotiations to have a stronger individual bond which translates to more trust and less exhausting negotiations when keeping one's promises and demonstrating professional competence.

Interview 5

The fifth interviewee is a project manager of a big Austrian company in the mechanical engineering and plant construction industry with negotiation experience with the Japanese negotiation style of 1.5 years. He emphasizes the „Japanese Business Culture“ which implies courtesy and trust and develops after time to a personal relationship, but takes time.

Interview 6

A young sales manager in the automotive industry and five years of negotiation experience in Japan was also willing to take part in this research and was interviewed as the sixth. He stresses out that the biggest difficulty of negotiating with the Japanese is the communication and the need of a personal relationship with the negotiators which everything surrounding negotiations and their outcome is based on. In his opinion it is indispensable to make one's stance clear. Decisions take a lot longer, compared to negotiations between two Austrian parties, because there are multiple decision makers on the Japanese side. Etiquette, trust, hierarchy, and respect are needed to not compromise the Japanese negotiator's status.

4.2. Research Hypotheses

To prove or negate the three individual hypotheses, firstly a close look into the questions asked in the questionnaire will be taken and subsequently the answers to those questions will be presented and analysed in their specific environment to get a comprehensive understanding of where those answers originate from and why the interviewed individual

feels that way. In this analysis of the answers to the research hypotheses themselves, codes from the interviews that have an impact on the statements the interviewees made and their respective categories, will also be delved into, to get the whole picture from other interviewees, as well. An overview of the category system is given in Fig. 7, which includes categories related to the theory and those not mentioned in the theoretical part. Apart from that, other inputs from the interviews, which are included in the coding system, as well, will then be taken into account separately and analysed in a subsection. This method ensures that all input in the interviews is used to its full potential and comments made “unwittingly” in the qualitative interview can verify the research question, as well as the answers given deliberately to the obvious question relating to the hypothesis.

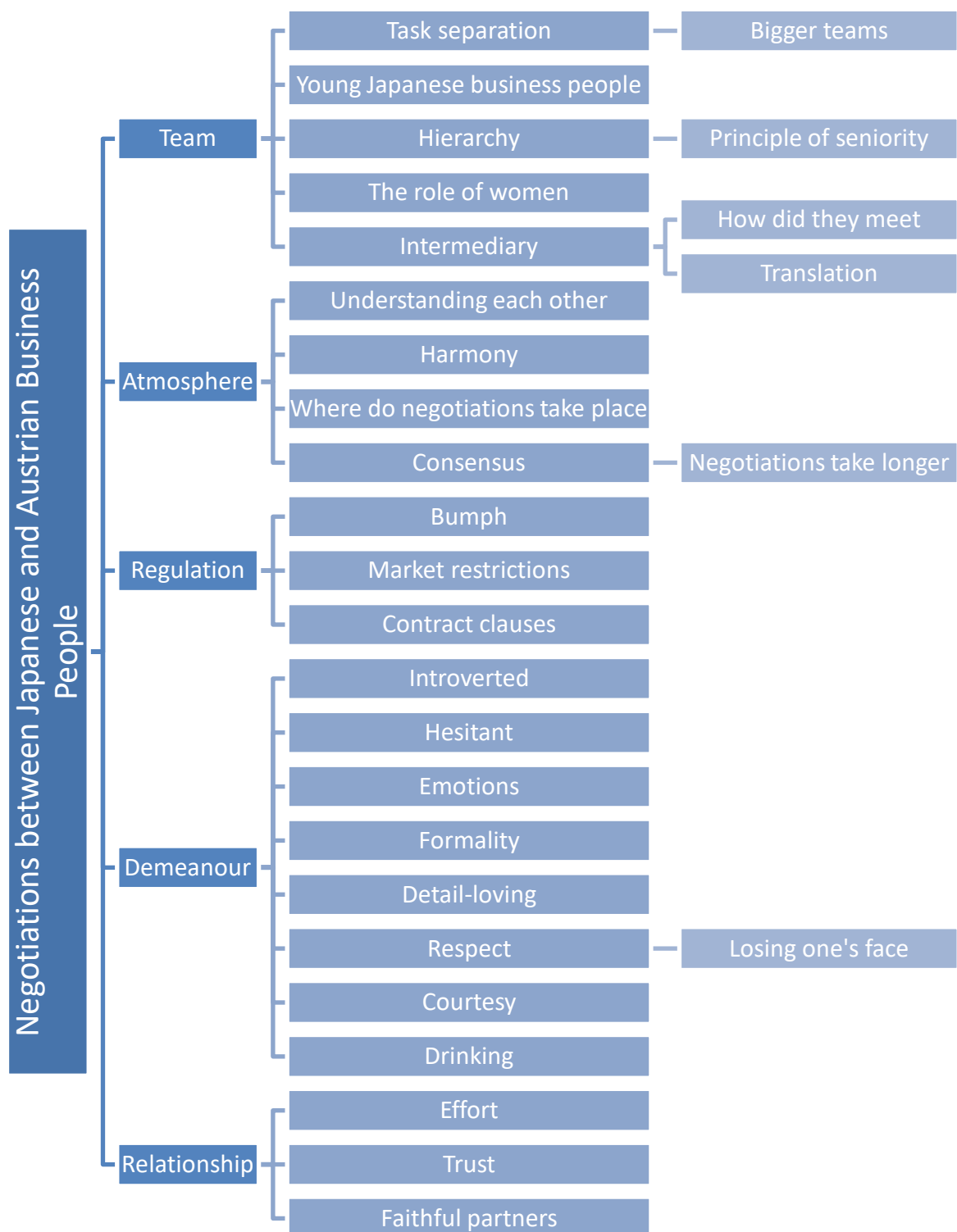


Fig. 7: Category system built from the codes taken from the interviews. Own illustration.

Research Hypothesis 1: The more often Japanese negotiators meet their Austrian counterparts, the more they adapt their negotiation style to their Austrian partners’.

This hypothesis would suggest that if proven right, Japanese partners tend to converge to their Austrian partners’ style after a while of negotiating with them. The differences between those styles will be discerned by using Table 1 and other comparable items from the literature used in this master thesis. The main questions asked to all individuals interviewed about the change of behaviour from the Japanese side were:

“How did you experience changes in the Japanese negotiation styles the more often you negotiated with them? To what extent did the Japanese negotiating side adapt to your negotiation style?”

The questions do not relate to the time per se, but rather to how many times negotiations have taken place. The answers to those questions, and other remarks made during the interviews that can be linked back to certain aspects mentioned in those answers, will now be elaborated on.

To refer to Fig. 7 and start with interview 1, a deeper look will be taken into why the interview partners suggested that interview take longer (this links back to the category “Atmosphere” with its subcategory “Consensus”), but overall, the main category to be taken into account more deeply including its subcategories will be “Relationship” as may evidently be suggested from the hypotheses directly relating to negotiating with the same partner over time.

The first interview partner said that the Japanese side’s style could mostly be described as “soft pressure”. They did try to come closer to the Austrian side, but only to push through their interest. This soft pressure is seen by their tenacity in always renegotiating documents that seemed to have been fully negotiated in the opinion of the Austrian side, which frustrates them. This soft pressure is seen as a form of tough persistence in the negotiation style of the Japanese (Interview 1, lines 113 - 120). In the introduction to the theory of this master thesis, it was cited that foreign negotiation partners characterize their Japanese counterparts as hard and tedious, striving for perfection by using goal-oriented, unemotional negotiation styles

(Lee, 1997, pp. 103 - 104). This common prejudice strongly sounds like the tactics interview partner 1 described, even though she stressed out that it is not pure pressure, but rather “soft” pressure, suggesting some form of emotional component. Concerning their “lack of showing emotion”, as often referred to in literature, about how to deal with the Japanese in negotiations, interview partner 1 said that the Austrian team agreed to try to hide their emotions in front of the Japanese partner, which they do not do in Austrian-Austrian negotiations at that scale. This was done through internal consensus at their side and agreeing when they, as a group, decided to react in a certain way that is more self-restraining (Interview 1, lines 143 - 149). As already mentioned in the theoretical part, Lee (1997, pp. 50 – 55) suggests this as well, in order to keep up the hopefully good negotiation climate.

This remark from interview partner 1 is interesting in the sense, that her negotiation experience with Japanese partners is very short, with only three months (Interview 1, line 27). This first Japanese project that is negotiated by interview partner 1 shows her first reaction to Japanese negotiation behaviour in the short-run and how the Japanese are perceived by Austrians in an international setting when no prior relationship is in existence. The interview also demonstrates that the interaction between the counterparties does not change in the first three months and that strong cultural differences do manifest during the negotiation. Now that the initial setting is understood and one case of very short time to accustom oneself to the counterpart is known, the other interviews should shed a light on how things can look in the long run, after dealing with these initial hurdles of different cultural settings and negotiation behaviour. It is also important to highlight that interview partner 1, not only negotiates with Japanese partners for a short time, but as well has multiple different Japanese partners that are included in the negotiation process, with multiple contractual relationships and constellations, also with partners from outside Austria or Japan. This makes forming a close bond, especially in such short time, more difficult.

Passport to Trade 2.0 (2014) described the Austrians to refrain from high-pressure tactics, so even the so called “soft pressure” mentioned in Interview 1 from the Japanese side was quickly recognized by the Austrians and seen as slightly confrontational, which is not seen as a good basis for negotiation in Austria. Here, it seems that harmony during negotiations might have even higher value for the Austrian side, than it does for the Japanese side, at least relatively to each other. Interview partner 2 underlines that statement by saying that apart from not clearly negating in negotiations, the Japanese negotiators did not show more

tendencies to harmony than Austrians do in intracultural negotiations (Interview 2, lines 168 - 169). This can be linked back to the theory discussed prior, where another possible reason for not saying “no”, apart from their low-context culture and wanting to preserve *wa*, was given: consensus makes it impossible to early on agree or definitely disagree in negotiations. Therefore, due to the longer duration of negotiations, “no” is circumvented to have internal consensus first (Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 48 – 49).

This leads to the next subcategory “Harmony” in the category “Atmosphere” from the category system presented in Fig. 7. Another interviewee agreed to what interviewee 2 suggested, as well, and added that the Japanese have a rather strict tone and are tough negotiators, just as suggested before in literature on how foreigners generally are known to see the Japanese (Interview 4, lines 71 - 74). When asked about harmony, the very much in this thesis elaborated on Japanese cultural concept of *wa*, the interviewed persons did refrain from using “no” in the negotiations to keep harmony (Interview 6, line 110). The Japanese phrasing and its different meaning and symbolisms (Interview 1, lines 43 - 45) needs interpretation from the Austrian side, which makes things more complicated (Interview 3, lines 179 - 182). One other example of striving for harmony from the Japanese side was given from interview partner 5 by claiming that they do so through their search for consensus. Because they reach for internal agreement, there is no decision coming from management, which helps with harmony being kept up (Interview 5, lines 53-54). Those statements from the interviewees suggest that the Austrian side is very much interested in keeping harmony during the negotiation and starts to adapt their language and negotiation style to their Japanese counterparts and not the other way around. The Japanese on the contrary stick to their negotiation style and keep their sense of harmony during the negotiation, which doesn’t seem that harmonious to the Austrian side.

Another interview partner mentioned that there were remarkable changes in the behaviour of Japanese negotiation partners the more he negotiated with them (Interview 2, lines 120 - 122). He stated that the longer he was in contact with his negotiation partners, the more they started to talk about personal issues, which in his opinion doesn’t happen with new partners. Therefore, in the category system, codes which included this forming of closer relationships, were condensed in the category “Relationship”. This category and its subcategories are now being discussed. With some of his partners, interview partner 2 now even considers calling it a friendship, rather than a business relationship (Interview 2, lines 59-60, 124 - 137). This

might also be due to him being the owner of the small business, whilst being in business with the Japanese personally for decades now and playing an important part in the negotiations as a final decision maker (Interview 2, line 14). Those factors might have benefitted the enrolment of more personal relationships since the partners were in contact that is more direct. Van Zandt (1970) elaborated on the concept of friendship in intercultural negotiations with the Japanese by stating that in Japan it is common to ask friends for help. This feeling of security that the Japanese also seem to long for in negotiations therefore is created by forming as many long-lasting friendships as possible. It is detailed that the principle of seniority is bound to that Japanese search of friendship, since being in the company longer, makes it possible to form deeper bonds to other individuals at the company and consequently establish security. This can also be applied to negotiations, where longer contact equals a relationship of greater value, or at least very frequent contact during a shorter stay. In this sense, it is clear why interview partner 2 with his long-term experience with Japanese business people and frequent contact, easily found his way to the Japanese market and is now established there with less effort to maintain the contact through old friendships. This intertwines with the literature study of this master thesis, where it was stated that the Japanese aim for long-term relationship even has a name: *nagai tsukiai* (Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 44). Interview partner 2 underlines that concept further, because he feels that the Japanese partners invest a lot of effort into keeping a good relationship (Interview 2, line 135) (see subcategory “Effort”) and are exceptionally faithful partners, because they keep their promises or inform their counterpart of problems, as soon as possible (see subcategory “Faithful partners”). This has to be reciprocated, which is why they appreciate showing interest and the partner standing by their side a lot. Interview partner 2 here showed a lot of personal endeavours towards the Japanese side, so that they access him as a reliable and close partner to this day (Interview 2, lines 61-62, 74 - 83). From the theory, it is known that building a partnership (*shinyo*) needs maintenance even after it is built in a lengthy process of mutual obligations and trust (Haak et al., 2008, p. 129; Lee, 1997, pp. 3 – 47). “Trust” was also added to the category “Relationship”, as most interview partners strongly linked the two concepts together and will not be delved more into.

This behaviour was also asserted by another interview partner who said that with time trust comes naturally and that after some negotiation period, the Japanese open up more privately and the negotiation tends to be less formal in the end. In his opinion, everything in Japan is

based on trust (Interview 5, lines 82 - 86). This informality that arises after some time was also mentioned in Interview 4 (lines 103 - 105) where the interviewee said that in Japan it is more custom to go out for dinner with your negotiation partner, as can be found in Lee (1997, pp. 70 – 90) and talk more privately than it is in Austria, even with alcohol involved, which actually helps with having a good reputation, which was put in subcategory “Drinking” (Interview 4, lines 109 - 111). In part 2 of this master thesis, this relationship-building on the basis of trust in business to preserve *wa* was called *amae* (Genzberger et al., 1994, p. 155; Haak et al., 2008, p. 129).

When talking about Japan and his experiences there, interview partner 2 always maintained a very positive attitude towards the Japanese culture and behavioural patterns, even when talking to the interviewer outside of the official interview. This reverberates some stories from the literature used in this thesis (Van Zandt, 1970). One of those would be about a trading company from Tokyo that advises its employees to first of all meet people in an informal setting when doing business abroad rather than wanting to negotiate immediately. Interview partner 2 mentioned in the interview that prior to getting a proper sales contract, he had to return to Japan several times, only to wait for new clients to drop by at a fair, but nothing of major business opportunity to happen. This he did for around three years, with a constantly rising number of people coming to his stand at the fair to take notes and photos of his products, asking many questions, until, in the end, he got a significant, major order from their superior in person (Interview 2, lines 20 - 43). Through his patience in always returning to the fair in Japan and letting the employees of the company that he finally got the order from ask him any question, his attitude might have impressed the Japanese from their cultural understanding in forming a long-lasting, trustworthy relationship. Another story from Van Zandt (1970), which could even more directly be linked to the interview partner’s experience and his great interest in Japanese culture and behaviour that he openly shows, would be of a mutually beneficial negotiation that was suddenly terminated, because the final decision maker from the Japanese side felt that his counterpart did not like, nor respect the Japanese culture he was dealing with over the course of the negotiation. This could vaguely suggest that the attitude used by interview partner 2 mattered in the negotiation in so far, as the Japanese side let their negotiation partner into their side more, because they felt appreciated, an, apparently according to Van Zandt, very important factor to beneficial negotiations with the Japanese.

Interview partner 3 suggests that the approach to one another happens from both negotiation sides, the Austrian, as well as the Japanese. The more the preferences and aims of the counterpart and individual partners becomes clear, the more it is possible to get closer together and work more easily (Interview 3, 147 - 167). As always, the partner has to be observed in the formal setting that is somewhat different in Japan and that the partner has then to be approached accordingly. The remarkable attribute that Japan has more than Austria, was mentioned to be the formality in hierarchy, on which the relationship in negotiations depends. In this sense, it seems that in general the interview partner did not see much difference in the behaviour of the Japanese in contrast to Austrian behaviour, apart from the strong feeling of hierarchy that needs to be maintained in all formality and makes it harder to form personal relationships with higher ranking negotiators. This stands in contrast to interview 2, where it was mentioned that relationships become more personal in Japan than they become in Austria and that being the main factor of negotiations going on for a longer period of time. This difference could be explained, though, as interview partner 2 is the final decision maker in negotiations with the Japanese negotiators and is the owner of the company, while interview partner 3 was merely a team member, thus not standing as high in hierarchy as interview partner 2. This confirms interview partner 3's point of view to be even stronger, because this would mean that team members only have the option to form a relationship with other team members from the other team, whilst higher hierarchy members have an open field to all negotiation participants to form a deeper relationship. Therefore, there could be an interlinkage between the categories "Relationship" and "Hierarchy", which needs to be held into account when observing the ongoing relationship which Japanese business partners.

Interview partner 4 was more hesitant in his answer to the question how the dynamics change with Japanese long-term partners and if different behaviour occurs. He mentioned, as well, the change in behaviour towards a more informal, personal relationship, where the negotiation partners start to talk about private matters like family (Interview 4, line 135). Apart from that, they, at a certain point in the negotiation, also reveal more information to their negotiation counterpart, information that is needed, but not directly asked for (Interview 4, lines 137 - 138). From his narrative, this opening up of the Japanese negotiators occurs due to them finding trust in their counterpart. He explained that the Japanese are prone to feeling that foreigners do not know their market, nor their business style, because of their

market restrictions. This leads to them referring to the “Japanese way” and believing that the negotiation partners have to accept their conditions, because foreigners are not as competent in Japanese affairs. This can only be overcome by showing professional competence, hard work, and meeting deadlines, which then leads to trust and therefore a more open negotiation where the Japanese counterparts put their cards on the table, or at least do it to some degree (Interview 4, lines 115 - 138). So it seems that “Regulation” also influences “Trust” and therefore category “Relationship” which is essential for the answering of this first hypothesis. Interview partner 4 interacts in a highly restrictive Japanese market, in mechanical engineering, where it might be very hard to negotiate openly and professional skills are the main component in winning trust of the Japanese counterpart. Interview partner 1, also working in the same mechanical engineering and plant construction company, but in another market, with another team, and other negotiation partners, also mentioned the many market restrictions and the need to accept their counterparts position because of these (Interview 1, lines 126 - 127). Those market restrictions might lead to another climate during the negotiation as the partners have to accept certain positions and cannot freely, by their will only, come to an accommodation with each other, which could consecutively lead to more conflicts, not only cultural ones.

Interview partner 6 also stated that the change in negotiation behaviour came with trust through knowing each other better, and that the change manifests in a more open and direct discussion about each other’s data. With time, it starts to resemble the European negotiation style, which the Austrian side prefers and tries to reach, because it leads to more efficiency (Interview 6, lines 185 - 190). While for the Austrian part, efficiency might be of more value, the Austrian negotiator recognized that in Japan the relationship is of utmost importance (Interview 6, lines 25 - 26) (which again falls back into the categories “Trust” and “Relationship”). This was also mentioned in the literature: The Japanese do not aim for efficiency and quick negotiations, but for an ally for the future (Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 44).

The main aspect of changes in the behaviour, which was referred to as the main component actually leading to the change in behaviour, mentioned in every interview, apart from the second, was trust. Even though it was not mentioned explicitly in the second interview, every other behaviour that the other interviewees recognized, was also mentioned by the second interviewee; This includes the forming of a relationship and private contact. Even though interviewee 1 did not say that she remarked a particular coming closer due to private contact,

and only spend 3 months so far in negotiations with Japanese business people, she mentioned that everything is built on trust, even business tasks like meeting delivery dates and so forth (Interview 1, lines 20 - 21). As already mentioned, this trust can be won through demonstrating technical knowledge, timeliness, and hard work, so that the Japanese part is willing to open up (Interview 4, lines 117, 126 - 133), in combination with time and endurance due to getting to know each other better (Interview 5, lines 82 - 83). This time that has to be put into negotiations for trust to build in order to work out in favour to the Austrian negotiators, makes negotiation with the Japanese take longer for Austrians, although, as expressed by interviewed individual 3, Austrian negotiators do appreciate how well they get to know their counterpart and know their preferences, as well (Interview 3, 147 - 150, 184 - 187).

In summary for research hypothesis 1, it can be said that still, Japanese partners nowadays come across as tedious, goal-oriented and unemotional negotiators, where the Austrian side has to come up with plans on how to react, so that they do not react too emotionally and with that endanger the negotiation climate that has to be upheld during the negotiation to ensure a good outcome. This contradicts the importance of *wa* in negotiations or the perception of it through the eyes of Austrian negotiators, who in the interviews told to be just as harmony-seeking as their counterparts. What instead the Japanese are eager to tend to in every negotiation, is not harmony, but long-lasting friendship between the negotiators through building trust and showing appreciation. Those personal endeavours they also require from the Austrian side. This strongly encourages the concept of *amae*, where appreciation and respect of the culture and its members is the base. Apparently, *amae* can only reach as far as the hierarchy allows, as seen from Interview 3. After building trust through time and professional competence and expertise, the Japanese side opens up as much, as market restrictions allows it to. Apart from interviewee 6, none of the interviewed individuals seemed to have seen a direct relation to the Japanese converging to the Austrian negotiation style. They preferred to refer to it as the Japanese side “opening up”. Therefore, results of research hypothesis 1 confirm that there is convergence of the Japanese style to the Austrian as a result of natural approximation through trust, rather than change in society and cultural behaviour and that an adaptation of the Austrian negotiation style might take place, as well. Literature from the 1970s still holds, which would be a sign that in general, building relationships individually through the better acquaintance of certain negotiation partners

makes sense. Therefore, the category “Relationship” with its subcategories “Faithful partners”, “Trust”, and “Effort” were mostly used to characterize if and why Japanese negotiators change their negotiation behaviour towards Austrian partners over time, the more they deal with them.

Research Hypothesis 2: The more recent the negotiation, the more verbal and “low-context” cultural, Austrian negotiation styles are used by the Japanese part.

This research hypothesis does not compare the behaviour of one individual Japanese business partner, but compares the behaviour of Japanese business partners negotiating a few years ago to the behaviour of business partners negotiating recently with the Austrians. Over the course of time, as the research question suggests, there might have been a change in negotiation behaviour in Japan which leads to business partners acting more low-context cultural nowadays, than partners a few years back behaved. The question used in the interviews to prove this hypothesis right or wrong was:

“How do you experience recent negotiations with new Japanese negotiation partners compared to your negotiations in the past?”

The complication with this question came very quickly to light, because only few negotiation partners actually had enough experience to compare new partners to old partners. Interview partner 1 only knows one partner, as she is only negotiating in Japan for three months, which makes her experience only valuable to describe negotiations in Japan as they are in 2018 for unexperienced Austrian negotiators in new Japanese negotiations. Interview 1 therefore can only be used as comparison in relation to literature or other interviewed persons. Her experiences with a new partner were already briefly discussed for research hypothesis 1 and used there for results.

Same goes for interviewed individual 6, but not because of short experience. In his case, he said that it is not possible to have more than one partner in Japan, because not being their exclusive representative would mean “losing his face” for the Japanese partner. In his

opinion, having different partners can not be done while having a good relationship with one partner, the only possible option would be to open an own new location in Japan (Interview 6, lines 192 – 198). This loss of face, which was shortly mentioned in the theory as a part of the Japanese strong sense of pride in honour, dating back to the samurai (Rothlauf, 2012, p. 521 - 523), a fact which was also recapitulated by interview partner 6 when he talked about the importance of etiquette and how intertwined it is with drastic measures such as suicide (Interview 6, line 116), was mentioned by interview partner 1, too (therefore the subcategory “losing one’s face” under “Respect”). She connected this fear of losing one’s face to having to build trust (Interview 1, line 20). In Interview 6 (lines 119 – 122), an example of how to avoid this uncomfortable situation for the Japanese side was presented: Whenever bad news must be told or confrontation is expected, those should be handled in a tête-à-tête to never expose the Japanese negotiator. In the theoretical part of this master thesis, it was originally cited that *shokai-sha* and *chukai-sha* are used as intermediaries or some form of *nemawashi* (De Mente, 2012, pp. 106 – 107; Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 76 -79), also to circumnavigate confrontation, but none of the interviewed persons mentioned any of those intermediaries. It was distinctively asked, how the interviewees came to their Japanese partners, in order to find out, if intermediaries were used for that purpose, as suggested by academic literature, but still, no intermediaries were mentioned. Interview partner 1 said that the customer approached them (Interview 1, lines 88 – 91); in another case, a Japanese business man approached the Austrian in the United States and suggested him to try to sell his products at the Japanese market, which he then did (Interview 2, lines 22 – 24); in the case of the Austrian museum, contacts already were in existence for a long time (Interview 3, line 66); in two cases, the company has a bureau in Japan, where contact was made first or where, in collaboration with their Japanese colleagues, an expansion to the Japanese market was undertaken (Interview 4, line 53; Interview 5, lines 41 – 44); the sixth interviewed negotiator told the interviewer that they met their first Japanese customer during a fair (Interview 6, line 100). Only in Interview 1 (lines 68 – 71), an intermediary or advisor is mentioned, whose task it is to translate the Austrian party’s concerns into the cultural environment of the Japanese counterpart, because the Austrian negotiators lack the language skills and the intercultural training needed. Interview partner 4 also stated that sometimes there is uncertainty about what the Japanese partners really expect from the Austrian side, because their negotiation behaviour is hard to decipher (Interview 4, lines 35 – 40). This gives an impression of how negotiations with the Japanese start nowadays, compared to some years

ago, where there are strong disagreements between the theory and the reality of Austrian negotiators for categories “How did they meet” and “Intermediary”. Directly linked to that is also the category “Translation” which will be explained in the later section “Other Categories”, because it does not give any new insights as to how negotiations now are different to earlier ones as there are no comparison tools.

Interview partner 2 on the contrary has lengthy experience with Japanese negotiators and also gained new Japanese partners over the years. In his experience, new partners are behaving similarly to partners he acquired at the beginning of his negotiation career in Japan. They are as restrained as partners he met for the first time in the 1980s. He also mentions that nowadays he does not have direct contact to new clients anymore, because his Japanese wholesale dealer is now responsible for such new negotiations, he as the owner is only there to show himself, because everything is negotiated in Japanese. With this wholesale dealer he has a friendly relationship, so that it opens new doors to new clients that he can acquire faster than the Austrian negotiator could (Interview 2, lines 151 – 162). This dealer could be seen as a form of usage of intermediaries, which were mentioned before.

Just like interview partner 2, other interviewees remarked as well that new partners and Japanese business people in general are very friendly and extremely courteous, but reserved with greater display for respect than is usual in Austria, which ties to categories such as “Respect”, “Courtesy”, “Introverted”, and “Hesitant” (Interview 2, lines 41 – 43; Interview 3, lines 43 – 44, 175 – 177). The Japanese themselves proudly refer to that as “Japanese Business Culture”, in combination with building trust, which was already mentioned before (Interview 5, lines 14 – 17). The Austrian negotiators therefore take great care in following this business culture when dealing with Japanese negotiators (Interview 3, lines 178 -179). Ways of declaring respect that the Austrian side uses, could be bowing often in front of the counterparts, which was also mentioned in the academic research when referring to formalities (Lee, 1997, pp. 61 - 64), especially if there are problems occurring, and refraining from coming across as unfriendly or fighting, because this “misbehaviour” is seen as a sign of incompetence or “lower class attitude” (Interview 6, lines 112 - 115). Van Zandt (1970) also describes that sort of attitude: Westerners are prone to retort and discuss their position, while the Japanese don’t like to enter arguments in negotiations. For that reason, Austrians take care to let their negotiation partners finish speaking, maintain respect towards age, and try not to use behaviour that might embarrass Japanese negotiators, even though this

behaviour is regarded as acceptable in Austria (Interview 1, lines 103 – 106). So, behaving according to the etiquette in Japan is essential, which in this context sums up the category “Demeanour” of the coding system (Interview 6, lines 111 – 114). Interview partner 4 not only underlined how important respect in negotiations in Japan is, but also that other market participants who are not included in the negotiation process, are very respectful to each other (Interview 6, lines 124 – 126). Here again, it seems that the Austrian side is trying more to adapt its mannerisms to the Japanese side, than the other way around.

Interview partner 3, as well as interview partner 2, has long experience to look upon for comparison. He stated that new Japanese partners have grown more accustomed to a Western style behaviour in negotiations in general, but this does not imply that new Japanese partners act differently than other negotiation partners did before. Their courtesy allows them to act appreciative towards European behaviour, but they still cherish their traditional ways. Still, Japanese negotiators have their strict attitude that did not change even though they are accustomed to Western behaviour. They still expect their counterparts to act accordingly, but might not show that due to their politeness. Austrian negotiators, in his opinion should still study Japanese behaviour to fully understand why the Japanese side acts the way it does (Interview 3, lines 91 – 115). The main aspect of new partners for interviewee 3, seems to be the longer duration of negotiations (Interview 3, lines 193-194). This could be also linked to the expressions interview partner 4 used, because he said that Japanese negotiators he met recently use the same strategies in negotiations as partners he has known for some longer time, but that it again takes as long as with the other Japanese partners in the beginning, as the new partner must learn to trust the Austrian negotiators (Interview 4, lines 154 – 156). In general, it was stated that beginning negotiations with Japanese business people takes very long. The duration of the negotiation process, generally speaking, is defined through the relationship between the negotiators, again bringing up all of the subcategories of “Relationship” and linking it to “Negotiations take longer”. The closer the relationship, the faster the concession-making (Interview 6, lines 42 – 47). New partners want to renegotiate contracts, which takes up a lot of time (Interview 1, lines 138 – 139; Interview 3, lines 118 - 120), but they do discuss the same topics mostly to protect themselves (Interview 6, lines 90 – 92). Therefore, trust must be built from the beginning with every negotiation partner, a very lengthy process (Interview 3, line 184, 193 – 194; Interview 4, lines 154 – 156; Interview 6, lines 23 - 24). The duration also increases, because every detail and item has to be decided

on by consensus of all parties involved without any direct decision (Interview 1, lines 38 – 39; Interview 4, lines 48 – 51; Interview 5, lines 57 - 58), which creates pressure on the Austrian side, because the Japanese are used to this and just endure until the consensus is found (Interview 1, lines 113 – 120). In the theoretical part of this master thesis, the academic research did report as well that finding consensus through the usage of *ringi* does take longer, but responsibility is shared between all the participants (Haak et al., 2008, pp. 127 – 128; Hodgson et al., 2008, pp. 48 – 51; Van Zandt, 1970). Only interview partner 2, who now acts almost 40 years in the Japanese market, said that new partners are now willing to offer him trust faster and aren't as hesitant as new partners usually are, because his company is currently better known on the market (Interview 2, lines 45 – 47). So apart from trust and relationship to the Austrian negotiator, if the company or the negotiator are known to be trustworthy on the market, the negotiation process, even with completely new Japanese partners, can be accelerated. Still, in Japan it, comparatively to Austria, takes longer to get to the core of issues, also because the Japanese negotiators are very reserved and introverted and like to take time to form relationships (Interview 2, lines 153; Interview 6, lines 20 – 23, 180 – 181). Interview partner 2 told that in Japanese business there is relatively less bump to be dealt with, which facilitates business once a deal is made (also part of the “Regulation” category) (Interview 2, lines 111 – 116).

Interview partner 5 made his answer dependant on what experiences the new negotiator made with other foreigners in prior negotiations or other business matters. Sometimes they are more open from the start on, but this could also go the other way around if the Japanese had bad experiences, like the “hire and fire” concept some foreign companies use with Japanese employees sometimes, a very contrary concept to their own mentality (Interview 5, lines 88 – 93). This mentality was described in this master thesis as being part of the family concept in Japan, because granting lifetime employment to new employees is seen as a way for long-term motivation, for it means that the employee belongs to the organization (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, pp. 149 - 150).

An important factor when dealing with new Japanese negotiators that only has changed slightly over the years, is formality. Still, to this day, respect in Japan is shown through formalities and ceremonies, for example during greetings, exchanging business cards and so on (Interview 2, lines 51 – 56). The exchange of business cards (*meishi*) was already discussed in this master thesis (Kumayama, 1991, p. 52), but is still taking place at

negotiations with Japanese partners (Interview 5, lines 64 – 67). Interview partner 6 argued that they are operating with government, so formalities and official ceremonies are more important (Interview 6, lines 126 – 129), while interview partner 4 experienced that ceremonies were not insisted on in international companies in Japan (Interview 4, lines 74 – 79). He alleged that formalities still are seen as being very important in Japan, but Japanese business people with international experience try to approach Austrians in a more Western fashion nowadays (Interview 4, lines 22 – 25). In Interview 3 (lines 44 – 46), it was stated that in general there is formality in manners from the Japanese side and also interviewee 2 told about how official invitations to reception leave a great impression on Japanese negotiators and are highly appreciated (Interview 2, lines 125 – 131). In the academic theory evaluated in this master thesis, it was also alluded that early on, rituals and ceremonies were used to enforce the feeling of inclusion in a certain group. Therefore, it still makes sense for the Japanese partners to want to invite their negotiation partner to participate in such ceremonies to have them feel more included in the negotiation and build a stronger relationship, which, as already mentioned before, is a vital component of doing business in Japan (Tsukaguchi-Le Grand, 1991, pp. 144 – 147, p. 157, Hodgson et al., 2008, p. 42). During dinner, going out, or getting coffee, the etiquette seems less formal in Japan, so here interview partner 6 perceived opportunities to get more information out of the Japanese party, just like Austria's more relaxed etiquette makes it easier to have more casual talk about important information (Interview 6, lines 165 – 173). So here also, "Formality" is related to "Relationship".

To summarize the results to this research hypothesis, the few interview partners that had the possibility to report about their experiences said that no intermediary was needed in finding a Japanese partner, nor during the negotiation process itself or after, contrary to theory. Generally speaking, there is no reported difference in negotiation behaviour from the Japanese side between the starting of negotiations from some time ago and those now. Every Japanese negotiation started and still does start with the negotiators being extremely courteous, as well as formal, and reserved, but respectful which they refer to as the "Japanese Business Culture". Though they still use the same style and traditional ways, there is a slight change in the behaviour of Japanese business people, because they are nowadays accustomed to Western behaviour and sometimes even try to approach their Austrian negotiation partners accordingly. Still, the duration of negotiations is remarkably longer than in Austria, because

consensus has to be found and Japanese business people are hesitant in their behaviour. One interviewed individual said that paperwork in Japan is less, which makes this aspect of negotiations faster. Because this hypothesis is strongly linked to hypothesis 1, behaviour of business people did change, when the Austrian negotiator was known to his Japanese counterparts, but apart from that and being used to Westerners, mostly Japanese behaviour towards Austrian business people stayed the same, not showing signs of “Western” negotiation style adaption, but still strong “traditional” Japanese negotiation behaviour with all the possible misunderstandings due to different cultural behaviours of Austrians and Japanese.

Research Hypothesis 3: The younger the Japanese negotiator, the more “Western” his negotiation approach.

This research hypothesis compares young Japanese negotiators to older ones. From changes in Japanese society, as described earlier, it could be that young Japanese business people have a different negotiation style. If they do, this would suggest that in the near future, negotiations in Japan as a whole might change, as soon as the young business people take over more responsibility. To find out, what Austrian negotiators experienced concerning young Japanese business people, they were asked:

“How different do young Japanese negotiators behave in negotiations compared to older negotiators?”

To answer this, codes from the category “Young Japanese business people” will be presented, as well as codes from “Principle of seniority”.

Starting with the latter one, Interview 1 (lines 52 – 65) gives the information that the Austrian team had younger negotiators compared to the Japanese team, where project managers were around 50 years old and showed very strong sense for seniority. She remarked that change in the regard of young Japanese business people having more freedom to act as they desire, will not happen soon, because young people in business in Japan don’t get the chance to further develop, as employees in Japan stay at one company for their whole life and do not

give their position to younger people. In this sense, employees in Japan are older in general and have all the decision-making power, because they tend to leave the company later than in Austria and therefore have more power through seniority. Despite the younger generation having an open mind for new ideas that go against the traditional Japanese behaviour, they don't have the possibility to act that way.

Similarly to that, interviewed individual 3 talked about young Japanese business people having a hard time to "break" out of the traditional ways, because their team members are older and observe their behaviour. He also mentioned that the youngest negotiation team member was around 40 (Interview 3, lines 211 – 215).

In Interview 4 (lines 158 – 169), it was expressed that young Japanese people speak better English, but have to show their superiors that they fit into the Japanese negotiating style. There is no room for individuality for the young business people, especially since seniority is so highly valued in Japan. In this case, he said that it is normal for the negotiators to be older than expected in other negotiations, because the mechanical engineering sector in general calls for strong personal network building and connections, which only works from a certain age on and very few young people, also in Austria, have negotiation power in that sector. Therefore, young people follow the "Japanese way". This was equally seen by another interviewed negotiator who found that young Japanese business people are in awe of their superiors (Interview 5, lines 76 - 77). Interviewed individual 6 stated as well that young business people in Japan are very shy and do not have any means of power or authority. The age coverage of Japanese negotiators goes from 35 years to 85 years, showing very high age in power execution (Interview 6, lines 149 - 153).

Contrary to those statements, Interview 2 (lines 139 – 145) gives the impression that the traditional, conservative generation is retiring and making space for the new generation to come. From his personal experience, interviewee 2 said that in Japan people are accustomed to new fashion styles and that young Japanese people are showing very different behaviour to elder negotiation partners. This would then mean, that in Japan a change in negotiation style might come sooner or later.

It seems that change in the behaviour of young Japanese negotiators can only come about with change in the perception of seniority. This principle of seniority was also linked to building trust by interviewee 6 who said that because him being relatively young, he had

problems with building trust. It took him a long time to gain the Japanese side's trust, longer in his opinion due to his age, which he badly needed, because he strived for efficiency and negotiating openly and more directly (Interview 6, lines 176 – 180, 185 – 190). Seniority was even connected to promotion and remuneration: Here, it was reported that not performance, but seniority is crucial. Lee (1997, p. 88) and Rothlauf (2012, p. 543), as aforementioned in the first part of this thesis, this principle of seniority, *nenko joretsu*, coming from the concept of family held up high in Japan, decides, through the age of service of the employee, upon remuneration and how respectful to behave to the counterpart. Interviewee 6 said exactly that: The higher in rank the counterpart, the friendlier the attitude from the Austrian negotiator is expected to be (Interview 6, lines 110 - 112). And as already heard, the higher the position, the higher the age seems to be. Hierarchy would then be quite similar to seniority and was addressed frequently by the interviewees. "Hierarchy" was therefore linked directly with "Principle of seniority" in the category system and will be explained more deeply, because it is relevant to understanding seniority and the role of young business people in Japan.

Hierarchy in Japan was reported to be strict and handled with great respect (Interview 2, lines 39 - 40, 47 – 50). To act accordingly to the hierarchy need of the Japanese, the Austrian negotiators try to match their negotiation team to the hierarchy levels in the negotiation team of the Japanese which are sometimes declared by the Japanese side in advance to the negotiation (Interview 4, lines 58 – 59; Interview 6, lines 131 - 134). As mentioned in the research hypothesis before, interviewee 3 also said that in general the behaviour of the team members has to be adapted to the difference in the hierarchy levels between them. It is mostly only possible to form relationships with negotiation members on the same hierarchy level (Interview 3, lines 151 – 157). In the negotiation team, as well, there must be clear hierarchy levels, there is no equality in authority in the Japanese team (Interview 4, lines 86 – 90). Therefore, the decision is made through consensus in the team, which takes a longer time than expected by the Austrian team, but still the manager is the one to declare it (Interview 1, lines 15, 34 – 36; Interview 5, lines 60 – 62) and is only involved in the most important issues (Interview 6, lines 84 – 87). Decision-makers in the sense Austrians know it, are not present during the meetings, because the Japanese are striving for consensus of all parties. This takes up a long time, but in combination with follow-up meetings, guarantees that all parties involved are happy and all influences concerning the contract are included in the

negotiation (Interview 5, lines 25 – 26, 49 – 50; Interview 6, lines 68 – 70, 72 – 74, 76 – 77). Interviewee 6 made a comment about a proverb that relates to the Japanese sense of seniority/hierarchy: “The nail that sticks up is hit” which means that everyone must be on the same level. If somebody would get promoted without it being due to their age, this could mean that another member of the team would care about “losing his face” (Interview 6, lines 141 – 146). In the academic research done before, the same proverb can be found in Van Zandt (1970). It is written that this proverb relates to the preference of group decision in Japan to minimize the threat of wrong decision made by one individual that would have to be struck down. In Japanese saying would be called: “*deru kugi wa utareru*”. Overall, it seems that in the case of the interviews conducted, seniority is not changing like it was suggested in the literature used to describe possible changes by Rothlauf (2012, p. 543) and Hodgson et al. (2008, pp. 76 – 79).

For a conclusion to research hypothesis 3, it can be deduced that all participants in the interviews apart from one, did not see change in the behaviour of young Japanese business negotiators. This results, in their opinion, from them strictly following the principle of seniority and hierarchy, to be also followed by the Austrian side, so that they cannot develop in their position only due to performance. The interviewees also said that “young” negotiators in Japan are, relatively seen, older, compared to Austria. The power still lies with older business people who stay in the company for a very long time, so that change can only happen slowly and they also apparently observe young negotiators and their behaviour. This leads to the young Japanese negotiators sticking to traditional negotiation behaviour, the “Japanese way”, and acting really shy in negotiations, because they have no authority. On the other hand, one interviewee said that the older generation is retiring and that young Japanese people show very different behaviour to older negotiators.

4.3. Other Categories

Here, categories which were not presented earlier in the discussion of the hypotheses will be alluded. During the interviews, criteria from Table 1 were taken as a basis for the building of the questionnaire, in which the questions to be asked for during the interviews were defined, as can be seen in Appendix 1. The table was derived from the academic literature

used to identify the two different negotiation styles: Austrian and Japanese, respectively. This segment will now also show which were identified as main items from the interviewees' narrations, but which were not mentioned or stressed out in the original literature. This finding of new categories was made possible due to the inductive nature of the interviews conducted, as presented in the methods in this master thesis.

Most of the criteria from Fig. 7 was anticipated in the ascertaining of the research hypothesis in segment 4.2, but will now be illustrated very shortly in the context of the negotiation criteria mentioned in the interviews concerning cultural changes in Japan, rather than used to further explain one of the hypothesis. For other items, not already included in the prior segments, this part of the thesis will now give more insights into those. The following Fig. 8 represents the categories aggregating the codes from the interviews only being highlighted in violet. This illustration also shows that about half of the codes taken into account were unexpected to be mentioned prior to the interviews by the author of the thesis.

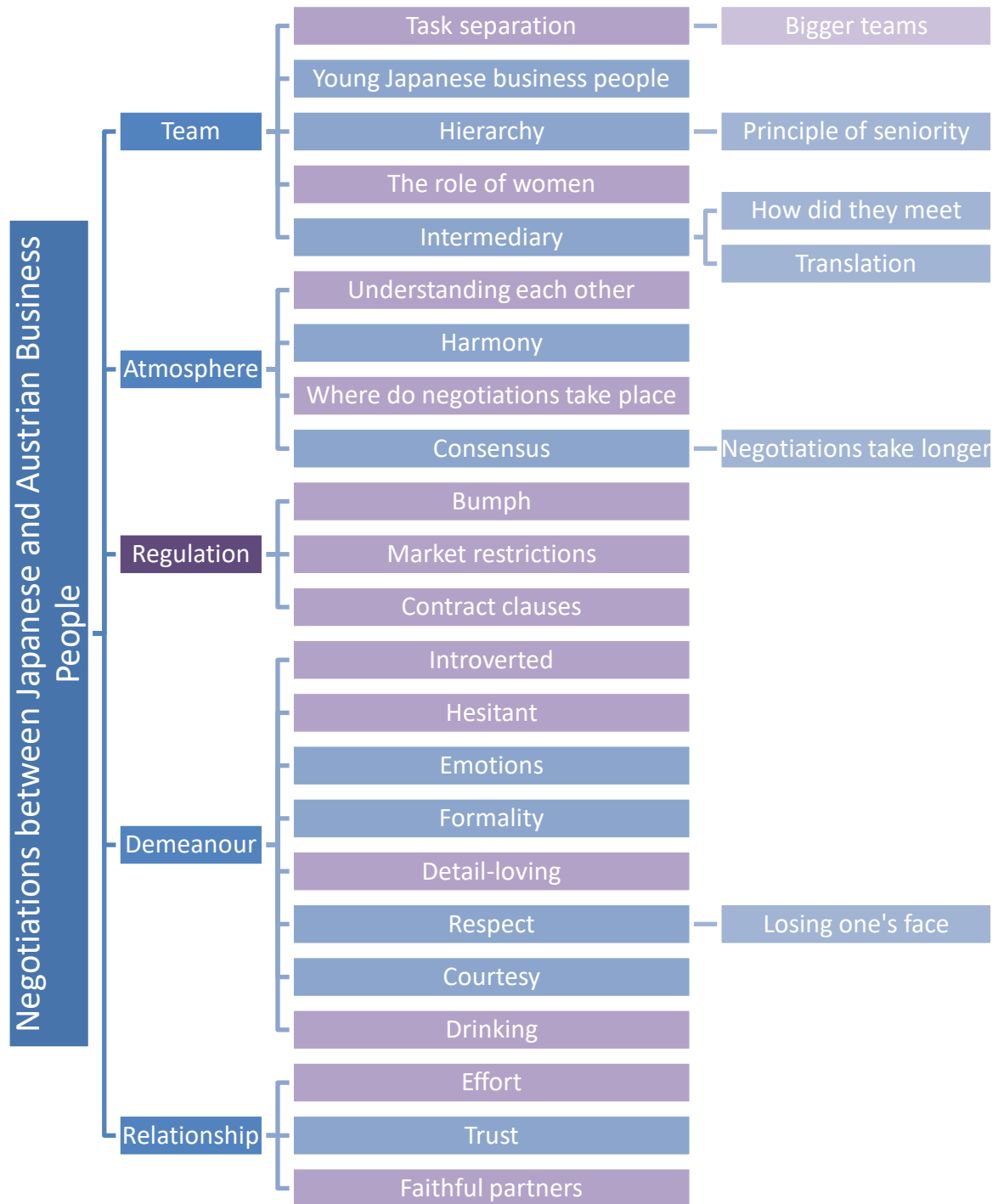


Fig. 8: *Category system with highlighted “new” categories.* Own illustration.

From the criteria deduced from the academic literature which lead to Table 1 most were mentioned in the interviews. It was suggested that longer preparation is needed before the actual negotiation, that negotiation teams have strictly divided tasks, that harmony is strived for from the Japanese side (for example by not saying “no”), that hierarchy is followed more strictly in formality, especially in seniority through showing respect, that negotiators are invited to bars as well, that concession making takes longer, and especially, that the general interest of going into negotiation from the Japanese side is to build a relationship. Concerning the already discussed harmony another interesting aspect was mentioned during the interviews: Interview partner 4 had experience with emotionless negotiations with Japanese partners and added as an example that the Japanese refrain from “soft concession making”, like just leaving something be for the sake of having better atmosphere or another possible deal with the Austrians (Interview 4, lines 143 - 149). This speaks clearly against the harmony seeking negotiation style that was described in the theoretical part of this master thesis and reminds more of the goal-oriented, tedious negotiation style defined by Lee which found its way into this master thesis coding system in the category “Emotions” (1997, pp. 130 - 104).

What was not verified by the interviews, nor mentioned explicitly, was that more smiling was involved, nor that approval from higher management is needed in decision-making, a fact that is definitely wrong, as consensus is aimed for to please all participants equally. Therefore, those here mentioned items are not included in the coding system.

Neither was it mentioned by the interviewed individuals that intermediaries like the *chukai-sha* are being used in the negotiation process with Austrians. As already mentioned in the analysis of hypothesis 2, the “Translation” category instead might fall in this grouping. The most important intermediary needed in negotiations with the Japanese for the Austrian seemed to be the translator. Most of the interviewed individuals brought up that there was some form of translation used. Interview 2 (lines 56 – 59) gives the example of an official translator hired from the Austrian “Wirtschaftskammer”, while Interview 6 (lines 17 – 19, 82 – 84, 88) agrees on the need of a translator due to the language barrier and the fact that English is not spoken well in Japan by most negotiators, but where apparently the secretary of higher management is the one translating the negotiation to Japanese for her team members or higher management. In Interview 4 (lines 81 – 82) on the other hand, no translator was used, the conversations happened in English only. A big concern of the

Austrian negotiators in relation with translation was the details and nuances that might get lost with it (Interview 1, lines 139 -142; Interview 3, lines 198 – 204). Still, in the case of Interview 3 (lines 122 – 125) the translation is agreed on by both parties, in spite of the missing nuancing. Lee (1997, pp. 58 – 61), as mentioned in the theory, alluded that the Japanese side in negotiations with foreigners prefers to engage a translator for easier communication, so that they can concentrate on the negotiation interest and not on the translation.

New categories that arose from the interviews and were not anticipated before, or rather not prepared to be asked for specifically at the development of the questionnaire, will now be delved further into. Those can be seen in Fig. 8 as being marked in violet.

The mention of the love for detail from the Japanese side was actually expected to be contrary, because the theory part pointed out that Austrians are very detail- and fact-loving while working precisely and expect punctuality (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014). Because the literature does not compare the Austrian negotiation style to the Japanese specifically, it can be said that in comparison, this does not seem to hold. An Austrian negotiator stated that commonly experts are sitting at the Japanese side of the negotiation and want to know more details in depth than anticipated. Everything is very detailed and exact in Japan, the Austrian side struggles to keep the Japanese side on track to get to the actual point (Interview 4, lines 16 - 29). Another negotiator claimed that the Austrian side tries to be as informed as possible and clearly present their stance on things and their position, to let everyone know what the discussion should be about (Interview 6, lines 57 - 61). This was also advised by Van Zandt (1970): a clear presentation of ideas and every point should be given to the Japanese, but while staying modest. So, in this sense, the Austrian side might be more driving into the core of the negotiation, striving for efficiency, while the Japanese side loses itself in details more, at least from the perspective of the Austrian negotiators. This love for details, is only made possible due to the higher task separation. Interview partner 3 told that in his perception, every Japanese business member has a “part to play”, a role even in negotiations (Interview 3, lines 215 - 219). The same was also affirmed by interviewee 4, by saying that not only the individual member has a certain role, but also that there is a clearer separation of what each business team must do during the negotiation phase (Interview 4, lines 40 - 43). This division of tasks in the negotiation on the Japanese part was described in the theory segment of this master thesis with academic research from Hodgson et al. (2008, pp. 76 – 79). This then also

leads to bigger teams on the Japanese side that partake in the negotiation (Interview 4, lines 12 – 16; Interview 6, lines 80 – 85).

Other negotiation behaviours that were mentioned by the interviewed persons, were the introverted and the hesitant behaviour of the Japanese negotiators and the effort long-term Japanese business partners put into the relationship with Austrian negotiators and their faithful behaviour. From one interviewee, the drinking behaviour of the Japanese negotiators was reported. From the literature it is known that negotiations also take place at bars in order for the negotiation partners to get to know each other better (Lee, 1997), but since the interviewee told more about that issue, it is quoted as its own category. The difficulties in understanding the Japanese side and what it wanted was taken into the category system, as well, because it was given as a statement from an interview partner. Those categories were elaborated on in the prior analysis.

The whole bullet point “Regulation” in general was not included in the literature. During the analysis, Japanese market restrictions and the little work related to bump were already dealt with, but contract clauses as another factor to Japanese negotiations will now be explained further.

Because contract standards are not accepted by Japanese negotiators and are not complied with (Interview 1, lines 16 – 18; Interview 6, lines 35 - 40), contractual demands are hard to implement (Interview 5, lines 24 – 25). This is another factor that weighs into negotiations between Austrians and Japanese business people taking longer, because, as aforementioned, this leads to every detail being negotiated and renegotiation on behalf of the Japanese business partners. Interview partner 5 also revealed that no monetary clauses are used in contracts with Japanese business people, unless the Japanese know they are acting internationally (Interview 5, lines 20 – 22). Interview partner 1 got into further detail: there is no written form or monetary clause in contracts, because the Japanese sense of honour and trust lets them keep their promise, as they are used to and also expect from their partner. Therefore, the contracts are not clearly defined and have leeway (Interview 1, lines 19 – 25, 129 - 130). According to Interview 6 (lines 48 – 52) contracts that are negotiated are mere guidelines, but, everything is based on relationships, as discussed before. An assertion that could be linked to those statement is from Van Zandt (1970) who was referred to in segment 2.2 of this master thesis by stating that the Japanese prefer not to go to court, because this would hurt their honour, but to conciliate every business before the need to do that. This

could be one reason, as to why contracts in Japan are designed the way they are, according to the interviewed Austrians.

Another information gathered “on the side” was, where the negotiations with the negotiations usually take place.

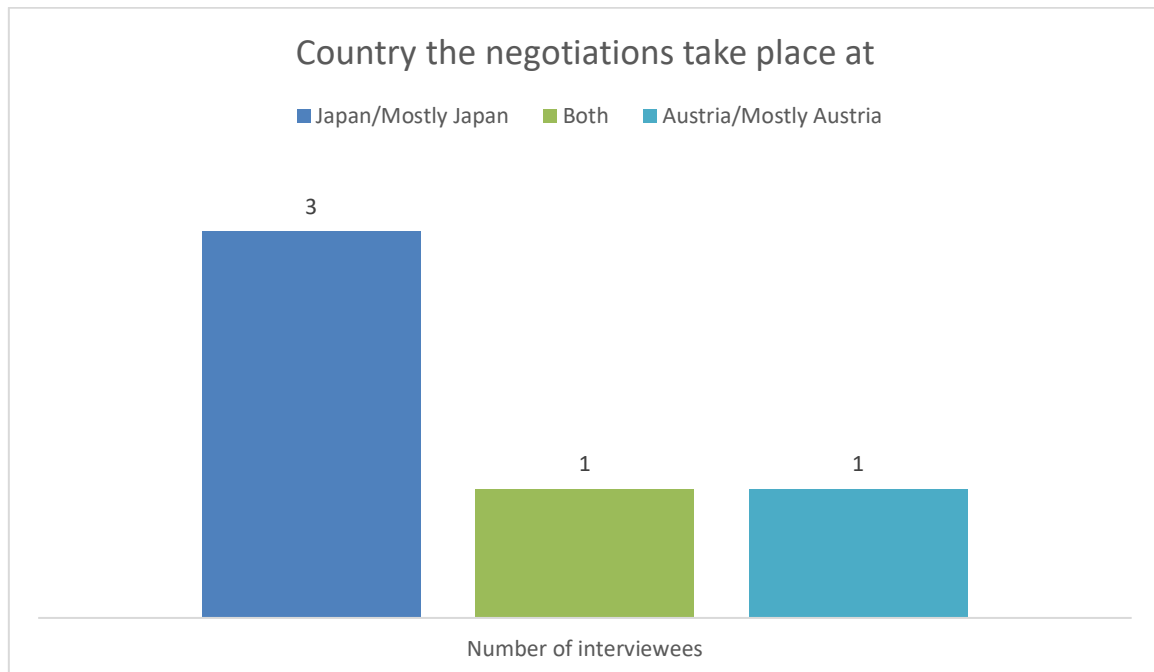


Fig. 9: *Number of interviewees stating they mostly negotiate in a certain country.* Own illustration.

Most of the interviewees reported having the negotiations taking place in Japan (Interview 1, line 108; Interview 4, line 97; Interview 5, lines 70 – 72), with only one negotiating mostly in Austria (Interview 3, line 127), and one interviewed individual saying that he negotiates just as frequently in Japan and as he does in Austria (Interview 6, lines 172 – 173). Interview partner 2 was not explicitly asked whether he negotiates in Japan or Austria, but in general during the interview and in casual conversation, he talked about meeting his negotiation counterparts in Japan, as well as in Austria, even though it seems that most of the face-to-face interactions take place in Japan. Due to this rather unclear information, the statement could fit into the category “both”, but was not included in Fig. 9.

The last category not anticipated by the interviewer was the role of women in Japanese negotiations. The first interviewee was a woman, who brought up the subject in her interview

and from there on, this subject was asked for in most of the following interviews by the interviewer. She told that women are not included in higher management position, just like young negotiators (Interview 1, lines 64 – 65). The other interviewees, all of them men, were of slightly different opinion or very reluctant to deciding on how they perceived the situation. Interview 2 (lines 93 – 95) and Interview 3 (lines 171 – 175) give the information that women do negotiate in Japan, but that there can be no definite answer as to how women are treated in higher positions or how in general women in Japan stand, but that they might experience a different treatment than men do. Interviewee 6 was more direct in saying that women do negotiate quite often on the commercial side, much rarer on the technical side, but that this situation is very similar to Austria (Interview 6, lines 158 – 161). In the second part of this master thesis, when describing the negotiation behaviour of Austrian negotiators, it was only briefly discussed that women in Austria are not as often seen in high positions of responsibility as men are (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2014). Therefore, it seems that Austria and Japan have the same rank in terms of gender equality in business. In 2015, Austria ranked 37 with a score of 0,733 on the Global Gender Gap Report while Japan's rank was 101 with 0,670 points. This report measures disparities between man and women in factors such as economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2016). So, in general, not in negotiations, women do experience being more disadvantaged in Japan, than they do in Austria.

4.4. Conclusion

To summarize the results to each hypothesis: it was supported in hypothesis 1 that Japanese negotiators change their negotiation style over time, the more they negotiate with one Austrian partner, because they build a relationship and through trust become more personal in their behaviour. For hypothesis 2 it can be said that mostly Japanese negotiators still use traditional, known Japanese negotiation behaviour, apart from them approaching trusted negotiation partners, as shown in hypothesis 1, and being used to Western behaviour. Concerning hypothesis 3 about young Japanese negotiators, general consensus is that they do not behave differently from their elders at the moment. This leads to the conclusion that only one of the three hypothesis could be proven to show change in negotiation behaviour of Japanese negotiators, meaning that Austrian perceive Japanese negotiation behaviour to

have remained unchanged over the years, apart from some minor changes or individual experiences and apart from their long-term partners in Japan.

5. Limitations and Deductions

This study has some limitations: being only limited to the comparison of Japan and Austria through the eyes of Austrian negotiators is obvious, but the sample is also rather small, even though it was tried to gather representative material through cautious selection of the participants. Like already mentioned, this was tried as best as can be, by paying attention to have different genders represented, selecting sectors that are strongly strategically significant in Japan, minding different company sizes, and negotiation positions.

Nevertheless, this master thesis might help some Austrian negotiators who are preparing for a negotiation with Japanese negotiators and see that most literature to be found seems outdated. It shows that, indeed, Japan has changed over the years, as suggested in the theory of this master thesis, but that negotiation behaviour in Japan overall hasn't. Therefore, even though there are some newer works on that topic, this master thesis can help to explain why recent literature on this topic only exists in low quantity, as there do not seem to be relevant changes in Japanese negotiation style over the last 40 years. Moreover, Austrian negotiators have all the newest information about changes in Japanese negotiation style up to 2018 in compact format to update them.

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Interviews

Interview 1, (2018), transcript to be found in Appendix 2

Interview 2, (2018), transcript to be found in Appendix 2

Interview 3, (2018), transcript to be found in Appendix 2

Interview 4, (2018), transcript to be found in Appendix 2

Interview 5, (2018), transcript to be found in Appendix 2

Interview 6, (2018), transcript to be found in Appendix 2

Abstract

Culture has big influence on international negotiations. This master thesis will elaborate on business contract negotiations between Austrian and Japanese business people and how cultural conflicts developed over the last 40 years due to cultural changes in Japan. Three dimensions were tested through hypotheses: change in Japanese negotiation behavior over time; recent negotiations compared to earlier ones; and behavior of young Japanese negotiators. The study was conducted through qualitative interviews with Austrian negotiators on their experiences through the use of a partly structured questionnaire based on the theory mentioned in the thesis. The interviews showed that over time trust plays a big part in forming a relationship with the Japanese negotiators and therefore leads to a more personal negotiation style. Apart from that, recent negotiations do not differ much from those going a few years back. Neither is it supported that young Japanese negotiators do behave differently from their elders at the moment.

Kultur spielt eine große Rolle in internationalen Verhandlungen. Diese Masterarbeit beschäftigt sich mit Vertragsverhandlungen zwischen österreichischen und japanischen Geschäftsleuten und wie sich kulturelle Konflikte in den letzten 40 Jahren aufgrund kultureller Veränderungen in Japan entwickelt haben. Drei Dimensionen wurden durch Hypothesen getestet: Veränderungen im japanischen Verhandlungsstil im Laufe der Zeit, jüngste Verhandlungen im Vergleich zu früheren und das Verhalten junger japanischer Verhandlungsführer. Die Studie wurde mittels qualitativer Interviews mit österreichischen Verhandlungsführern über deren Erfahrungen durch Benützen eines teilstrukturierten Fragebogens basierend auf die, in der Masterarbeit erwähnte, Theorie durchgeführt. Die Interviews zeigten auf, dass im Laufe der Zeit Vertrauen eine große Rolle im Aufbau einer Beziehung zu den japanischen Verhandlungsführern spielt und somit zu einem persönlicherem Verhandlungsstil führt. Abgesehen davon, differenzierten sich jüngere Verhandlungen nicht von denen, die ein paar Jahre zurückliegen. Es konnte nicht bestätigt werden, dass junge Japaner ein anderes Verhandlungsverhalten an den Tag legen als ihre älteren Kollegen.

APPENDIX 1

Interview: Questionnaire – Business negotiations with Japanese

For one interview partner (English)

Claudia Meszaros

Good morning/afternoon! Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. My name is Claudia Meszaros and I'd like to give you a short introduction into what I'm researching: I'm writing my master thesis at the international business administration faculty at the University of Vienna, showing how the dynamics between Japanese and Austrian business negotiators have changed over the last few decades.

I'd like to start an about 60-minute interview on the subject with you that will be tape recorded, transcribed and used in my research.

Please know that your anonymity is guaranteed.

Facts and Figures:

Industry the company is operating in:

Employee count (global):

Position in company:

- So, you did personally negotiate with Japanese business negotiators. What struck you as remarkable during those negotiations regarding the cultural differences between Austrian and Japanese negotiators?
- How long have you been negotiating with Japanese business people? What was your negotiation position during those negotiations?

Main research questions:

- *How did you experience changes in the Japanese negotiation styles the more often you negotiated with them? To what extent did the Japanese negotiating side adapt to your negotiation style?*
 - *How do you experience recent negotiations with new Japanese negotiation partners compared to your negotiations in the past?*
 - *How different do young Japanese negotiators behave in negotiations compared to older negotiators?*
- Did something stand out for you during the time of preparation of the negotiation?
 - How did you get your Japanese partners? Who approached the other partner first?
 - Where did you negotiate: In Japan or in Austria? What was different depending on location?
 - How was the Japanese team assembled in contrast to yours? Were decision-makers present from both sides?
 - It is known that Japanese negotiators strive for harmony during negotiations. What was your experience concerning this?
 - What did you notice in regard to hierarchy?
 - How about respect?
 - How fast did the Japanese negotiators react with concessions?

For the conclusion, I'm now giving a summary about what we talked, so that I get everything right. If you want to correct anything I understood, feel free to do so.

Do you have any questions for me to answer or any comments you want to make?

APPENDIX 2

I: Interviewerin, B: Befragter

Interview 1

Summary: Woman working in the procurement department of a big Austrian company in the mechanical engineering and plant construction industry that came in contact with the Japanese business world three months prior to the interview. She outlined that in Japan trust is more important than contracts. Due to the complicated procedures of reaching an agreement and mostly internal communication on all sides, negotiations take longer, especially since the Austrian company in these negotiations mostly takes the place of a counsellor while different local Japanese companies are in negotiations between each other for the big project. She experiences the negotiations to be tedious, because they often have to restart from the beginning, but still, the Japanese show great respect in their negotiation style.

1 I: Vielen Dank, dass Sie bereit sind, an diesem Interview teilzunehmen. Ich heiße Claudia
2 Meszaros und möchte Ihnen einen kurzen Einblick in meine Studie geben: Ich schreibe
3 meine Masterarbeit in Internationaler Betriebswirtschaftslehre an der Universität Wien,
4 die die Veränderungen in der Dynamik bei Verhandlungen zwischen japanischen und
5 österreichischen Geschäftspartnern aufzeigen soll. Dieses Interview wird aufgezeichnet,
6 transkribiert und in meiner Arbeit verwendet werden. Alle Ihre Angaben werden anonym
7 behandelt. Fangen wir mit kurzen Fragen an. In welcher Industrie sind Sie tätig?

8 B: Im Anlagenbau.

9 I: Wie viele Arbeitnehmer beschäftigt Ihr Unternehmen?

10 B: Circa 26.000.

11 I: Was ist Ihre derzeitige Position im Unternehmen?

12 B: Ich arbeite im Devision Procurement Management.

13 I: Sie verhandeln ja derzeit mit Japanern. Welche kulturellen Unterschiede sind Ihnen im
14 Zuge dieser Verhandlungen aufgefallen?

15 B: Naja, in Japan wird mehr an Konsenslösungen gearbeitet. In Österreich geht das alles
16 einfacher, da kommt man schneller zu Lösungen für den Einkauf. Auch werden oft
17 Vertragsbedingungen nicht eingehalten, weil Standardverträge allgemein nicht akzeptiert
18 werden. Man kann keine einzige europäische Vertragsklausel einfach übernehmen.
19 Termine werden eingehalten, weil man das aus Ehrgefühl macht, aber es gibt keine
20 schriftliche Form dazu. Gesichtsverlust ist da ein großes Thema, man baut ein

21 Vertrauensverhältnis auf, dadurch kommt es dann zur Termineinhaltung, aber hat keine
 22 monetäre Klausel dazu. Der Vertrag an sich schaut dann auch anders aus: In den Verträgen
 23 umschreibt man die Klauseln mit Begriffen wie „requires“ statt „shall“, damit der Vertrag
 24 nicht zu eng formuliert ist, das ist den Japanern wichtig. Da ist nichts zu genau festgelegt,
 25 man hat Spielraum.

26 I: Wie lange verhandeln Sie schon mit Japanern?

27 B: Naja, das ist erst mein erstes Projekt in Japan, also seit circa drei Monaten.

28 I: Was war Ihre persönliche Verhandlungsposition währenddessen? Waren Sie zum Beispiel
 29 als Entscheidungsträgerin dort oder zum Beispiel als Beraterin etc.?

30 B: Ich war im Team als Einkäuferin dabei, aber bei uns im Einkauf ist der Commercial
 31 Director der Verhandlungsführer.

32 I: Waren auf beiden Seiten Entscheidungsträger anwesend?

33 B.: Auf unserer Seite: ja. Aber auf japanischer Seite verhält man sich anders, da wird intern
 34 eine Konsenslösung gefunden und der Verantwortliche trägt die dann raus. Dadurch wird
 35 die allgemeine Entscheidungsfindung dann schwieriger. Nichts wird Vorort entschieden,
 36 die Abstimmungen sind dann intern.

37 I: Was war in der Vorbereitungszeit anders?

38 B: Alles allgemein dauert länger. Was in Österreich bei uns normal eine Woche benötigt,
 39 dauert in Japan teilweise Monate. Da wird alles nochmal neu aufgerollt und besprochen.

40 I: Was können Sie noch zum Harmoniebedürfnis der Japaner sagen? Man kennt ja die
 41 Beispiele mit dem häufigen Lächeln, dem eher Schweigen bevor man „Nein“ sagt und so
 42 weiter.

43 B: Ja, das ist absolut so. Ein „Ja“ bedeutet nicht, dass man einverstanden ist, sondern, dass
 44 man verstanden hat, worum es geht. Die Formulierungen sind eher als „Stop-Zeichen“
 45 gemeint, ein „Nein“ bekommt man nicht zu hören.

46 I: Haben Sie und Ihr Team auch stärker auf Hierarchie achten müssen?

47 B: Ja, man respektiert die jeweilige Position des anderen. Da gibt es kein „OVERRULEN“ von
 48 Stellungen. Es gilt da auch noch das Senioritätsprinzip. Da entscheiden vieles noch 70-
 49 Jährige.

50 I: Bezüglich dieses Senioritätsprinzips: Welches andersartige Verhalten zeigen junge
 51 Japaner im Vergleich zu Älteren?

52 B: Die Österreicher sind definitiv jünger. Der japanische Projektleiter ist immer so 50
53 aufwärts. Das Thema ist, dass immer noch dieselben Leute in der Position sind. Weil bei
54 uns ist es ja so, dass das Arbeitsleben so aussieht, dass man halt als junger Mensch einsteigt
55 und sich dann bis zu einem gewissen Grad entwickeln kann und dann mit, weiß ich nicht,
56 60 Jahren das Unternehmen verlässt oder beziehungsweise das Unternehmen wechselt.
57 Und zwar mehrmals. In Japan ist es nach wie vor so, du startest in einem Unternehmen und
58 du versuchst über 40, 50, 60 Jahre, kommt immer drauf an, wie lange sich die Leute halten
59 im Unternehmen, im Unternehmen zu verbleiben. Ich sag mal, dass aufgrund dessen, dass
60 halt viele Leute, die schon vor 20 Jahren im Geschäftsleben waren, die mittlerweile in
61 Europa aus dem Geschäft ausgeschieden wären, dadurch durch neue Generationen ersetzt
62 worden wären, haben noch immer die Entscheidungsmacht. Der Wandel ist noch sehr, sehr
63 langsam. Obwohl die jüngere Generation durchaus für neue Lösungen offen ist, leider
64 haben die jetzt noch nicht die Verhandlungsposition. Es werden auch Frauen nicht ohne
65 weiteres involviert, zumindest nicht in höheren Positionen.

66 I: Wie ist Ihr Team bei den Verhandlungen dann zusammengestellt?

67 B: Da gibt's grundsätzlich den Commercial Director, der Entscheidungsträger ist bei uns. Bei
68 den Japanern ist das anders: Die verhandeln das dann untereinander aus. Man muss immer
69 eine Schnittstelle einschalten, solange man kein interkulturelles Training erhält über
70 mehrere Jahre, wird sich das nicht ändern und aufgrund der mangelnden Spracherfahrung
71 ist das kaum anders möglich. Deshalb haben wir eine japanische Beratung dann, die halt
72 dann die Themen, die Inhalte in das kulturelle Umfeld des Verhandlungspartners pflanzt.

73 I: Und wie schaut dann das japanische Team im Gegensatz dazu aus?

74 B: Nein, wir sind ja dann Partner, also ein Mix daraus. Also ein Mixture aus Japanern und
75 Europäern.

76 I: Achso, ja, verstehe!

77 B: Kommuniziert wird über den japanischen Partner.

78 I: Ok, verstehe.

79 B: Nur, es wird wahrscheinlich anders aussehen, wenn die Vertragskonstellation eine
80 andere wäre, weil der Vertrag zwischen zwei japanischen Unternehmen abgeschlossen
81 wird. Also sprich wir Europäer sind jetzt da zwar in der Verantwortung, wir müssen
82 Verantwortung für das Gesamtprojekt übernehmen, aber wir sind da eher als beratende
83 Funktion. Wir sind dort, damit die Interessen vertreten werden, aber abgeschlossen wird
84 das von den lokalen Verantwortlichen.

85 I: Ok, und wie ist das Projekt dann überhaupt entstanden? Wer hat da den Kontakt zuerst
86 aufgenommen?

87 B: Bei dem Projekt ist es so, wir haben einen Kunden, der ist an uns herangetreten bezüglich
 88 dieser Anlage und dann hat es geheißen, es werden folgende Komponenten in Europa
 89 eingekauft, es werden folgende Komponenten in China eingekauft und der verbleibende
 90 Part wird in Japan eingekauft und aus diesem Verhältnis ergeben sich folgende
 91 Konstellationen: Vertragsabschlüsse zwischen Japan und Japan und Vertragsabschlüsse
 92 zwischen Österreich und Japan.

93 I: Verstehe. Genau, man hört ja auch immer, dass nicht nur das Harmoniebedürfnis,
 94 sondern auch das Respekt-Zeigen im Vordergrund steht. Was hat die österreichische Seite
 95 da getan, um dem entgegenzukommen?

96 B: Ja, es ist bei uns eigentlich so, respektvoll wird jeder behandelt. Wir haben uns einen
 97 Rahmen festgelegt. Zum Beispiel ist es in Europa oftmals üblich, dass man auf den Tisch
 98 haut und man wird auch laut oder man arbeitet mit solchen Taktiken, vom dem haben wir
 99 dann natürlich vollkommen Abstand genommen. Wir haben dann gesagt, wir werden uns
 100 darauf einstellen, wir werden versuchen Konsenslösungen herbeizuführen, ohne
 101 Emotionen zu zeigen, wenn wir Emotionen haben, dann werden wir das in internen
 102 Gesprächen abklären und sagen, damit können wir gar nicht leben. Nach außen hin wir der
 103 nötige Respekt dann immer dargeboten. Also dem Alter gegenüber und man lässt den
 104 Partner ausreden, man nutzt nicht die Taktiken, die man in unserem Geschäft grundsätzlich
 105 dafür verwendet.

106 I: Ok. Verhandeln Sie eher in Japan oder in Österreich?

107 B: Wir verhandeln ausschließlich in Japan.

108 I: Also jetzt im Hinblick auf diese drei Monate, das ist eine recht kurze Zeitspanne, aber
 109 trotzdem, sind Ihnen irgendwie Veränderungen aufgefallen, je öfter Sie mit der japanischen
 110 Seite verhandelt haben? Dass die sich Ihnen annähern oder sich anders benehmen dann?

111 B: Na, sie versuchen sich anzunähern. Aber ihre Interessen versuchen Sie peu à peu, also
 112 ich sag mal unter einer gewissen Zermürbungstaktik durchzusetzen, sprich, wir haben jetzt
 113 Vertragsdokumente durchbesprochen, dieses Verhandlungsdokument wird in jeder
 114 Verhandlung wieder besprochen. Bis wir die Konsenslösung herbeigeführt haben, können
 115 wir das immer wieder durchgehen. Es ist immer der sanfte Druck zu spüren.

116 I: Und die Taktiken in dem Sinn von der japanischen Seite bleiben mehr oder weniger
 117 gleich? Also der Stil?

118 B: Die sitzen das meistens aus.

119 I: Sie haben ja nur den einen Partner schätze ich, mit dem Sie immer wieder verhandeln?

120 B: Momentan, dadurch, dass wir erst am Anfang vom Projekt sind, haben wir erstmal die
121 größte Vergabe, die lokal zu tätigen ist, und wir haben in dem Fall auch einzelne
122 Vertragspartner. Uns bleibt keine Option, wir müssen uns an den Partner annähern, viele
123 Bedingungen akzeptieren, die wir sonst nicht akzeptieren würden unter freiem
124 Wettbewerb. In Japan gibt es viele Marktrestriktionen, da müssen wir den Partnern
125 entgegenkommen.

126 I: Eine Abschlussfrage: Gibt es Tricks, die die japanische Seite angewendet hat?

127 B: Naja Trick unter Anführungszeichen, ich weiß nicht, ob das ein Trick ist. Sie haben das
128 Angebot so formuliert, dass es viele Sachen offenlässt. Wenn sich das auf Preise bezieht,
129 dann gibt es einen Pauschalpreis, aber die Formulierungen in den japanischen Angeboten
130 sind so freibleibend, dass sie natürlich auch Preisanpassungen machen dürfen, und sie
131 sagen dann praktisch auch bei den Preisanpassungen ist die Voraussetzung, dass die
132 Gewichte gelichbleiben. Wenn ein Europäer davon redet, dann bis zu einer Gewichtigkeit
133 von 110% wir das über die Einheitspreise abgedeckt, da wird's kein Thema sein. Ist in Japan
134 so: Sie haben die Formulierung so weit gewählt, dass die Möglichkeit besteht, dass ab den
135 110% den gesamten Vertragspreis dieser speziellen Einheit anzupassen. Also nicht nur das
136 Gap, dass sich jetzt neu ergibt, preislich angepasst wird, sondern, dass einfach der Vertrag
137 neu ausverhandelt wird. Es sind andere Herangehensweisen. Es kann natürlich auch sein,
138 dass unter der mangelnden Übersetzungserfahrung unserer Kollegen viele Inhalte
139 verlorengegangen sind. Und wir kommen halt erst nach und nach darauf, wo die großen
140 Vertragslücken sind.

141 I: Ok, verstehe.

142 B: Sanfter Druck.

143 I: Gutes Stichwort, ja. Gut, haben Sie noch Fragen an mich? Oder Kommentare?

144 B: Momentan habe ich jetzt keine Fragen. Wenn Sie noch Fragen haben, können Sie gerne
145 noch herantreten an mich.

Interview 2

Summary: Small-scale entrepreneur in the crafting business who is in continuous contact with Japan since a fair in 1980. He emphasizes that though everything takes its time in Japan the outcome is worth the wait, with all its ceremonies and hierarchies, as Japanese partners are extremely faithful. He also states that times are changing, but Japanese negotiation behaviour mostly changes with the change in relationship.

1 I: Vielen Dank, dass Sie bereit sind, mit mir an diesem Interview teilzunehmen.

2 B: Ja, bitte gerne.

3 I: Ich heiße Claudia Meszaros und bin Studentin an der Universität Wien und studiere im
4 Master IBWL, also Internationale Betriebswirtschaftslehre, und im Zuge dessen schreibe
5 ich gerade an meiner Masterarbeit, die sich damit beschäftigt, in wie fern sich die Dynamik
6 zwischen österreichischen und japanischen Geschäftspartnern verändert hat bei
7 Verhandlungen. Im Zuge dessen wird auch dieses Interview aufgezeichnet, dann von mir
8 transkribiert und in meiner Arbeit verwendet. Alle Ihre Angaben werden anonym
9 behandelt. So, in welcher Industrie würden Sie sagen, dass Sie arbeiten?

10 B: Industrie überhaupt nicht. Wir sind ein Handwerk, also Gewerbe.

11 I: Und die Arbeitnehmerzahl im Moment in Ihrem Betrieb?

12 B: Wir haben jetzt 15 Mitarbeiter.

13 I: Und Ihre Position im Unternehmen?

14 B: Ich bin der Eigentümer.

15 I: Vielen Dank. Dann die erste Frage ist: Sie verhandeln ja wahrscheinlich auch derzeit mit
16 Japanern, schätze ich?

17 B: Ja, ja.

18 I: Welche kulturellen Unterschiede sind Ihnen da aufgefallen im Vergleich zu
19 österreichischen Verhandlungen?

20 B: Naja, zum Ersten haben wir mit Japan schon sehr, sehr lange Geschäftsbeziehungen, also
21 ich würde sagen seit dem Jahr 1980. Ich habe damals mit dem begonnen, weil mein Vater
22 hat ja hauptsächlich nach Amerika exportiert und ich war dort in Amerika und habe einen
23 Japaner kennengelernt und er hat eben gesagt, dass unsere Erzeugnisse ein perfektes
24 Produkt für Japan wären. Ich war dann ein paar Mal in Japan auf einer Messe –
25 Geschenkartikelmesse – und habe dort natürlich dann meine ersten Kontakte geknüpft. Die
26 ersten Kontakte waren wohl vielversprechend, aber Japaner haben ein äußerst zögerliches
27 Verhalten, das heißt das war so, ich bin drei Jahre immer nach Japan und habe keinen
28 einzigen Auftrag bekommen, ich habe immer nur meine Messermuster verkauft. Die ganze
29 Sache war aber so, wenn man schon so lange mit Japan in Geschäftsverbindung ist, dann
30 weiß man, die Gepflogenheiten und das heißt, das Ganze hat so begonnen, dass eigentlich
31 irgendjemand zum Stand gekommen ist, alles aufgenommen hat, alles aufgeschrieben hat
32 und so weiter und so fort und dann ist er wieder gegangen. Zwei Tage später oder am
33 nächsten Tag ist er wieder gekommen und hat wieder etwas nachgefragt und so weiter und
34 so ist das gegangen. Und im nächsten Jahr ist er wieder gekommen. Wieder alles
35 angeschaut, wieder alles aufgeschrieben. Aber geschehen ist nichts. Ich weiß jetzt nicht, ob

36 das gerade im dritten Jahr war, aber es war dann auf jeden Fall so, dass dann wieder der
37 gleiche gekommen ist am ersten Tag. Am zweiten oder dritten Tag ist dann ein ganzes
38 Konsortium gekommen und am letzten Tag sind dann wieder so zehn Leute
39 dahergekommen oder so und ein kleiner mit einem dunkelblauen Anzug. Und alle sind ganz
40 ehrfurchtsvoll vor ihm gestanden und er in der Mitte und er hat dann eins unserer Produkte
41 in die Hand genommen, hat sie geschüttelt und dann ist wieder nichts passiert. Es waren
42 alle äußerst freundlich und sehr zurückhaltend und auf einmal haben wir dann einen
43 Auftrag bekommen, der uns umgehauen hat. Und das war so quasi mein Einstieg in den
44 japanischen Markt vor 35, 40 Jahren und das setzt sich heute auch noch fort. Also diese
45 Taktik. Nur ist es eben so, dass wir mittlerweile am japanischen Markt ziemlich gut bekannt
46 sind und dieses zögerliche Verhalten von neuen Kunden so nicht mehr wirklich erkennbar
47 ist. Es haben sich auch die Zeiten etwas geändert. Es ist aber immer noch so, es gibt diese
48 Hierarchie in den Betrieben, das heißt, es werden irgendwelche Unterläufer ausgeschildet,
49 neue Produkte zu finden und dann kommen die Abteilungsleiter und dann kommen wieder
50 welche und bis zum Schluss, bis dann der Oberste sagt ja oder nein. Wobei die
51 Umgangsformen mit Japanern mir persönlich sehr, sehr gut gefallen. Man hat eine gewisse
52 Ehrerbietung, diese Begrüßungs- und Verabschiedungszeremonie, wenn man das sagen
53 kann, weil man kann da wirklich von einer Zeremonie sprechen, die hat sich bei uns
54 eigentlich schon noch, auch bei meiner Tochter, schon sehr verinnerlicht. Das heißt es ist
55 eben so, man gibt sich jetzt nicht unbedingt die Hand, aber man verbeugt sich voreinander
56 und überreicht die Visitenkarte mit zwei Händen. Ich spreche kein einziges Wort Japanisch,
57 wir haben auf den Messen aber immer Übersetzer, die uns von der Wirtschaftskammer zu
58 Verfügung gestellt werden. Das müssen wir natürlich zahlen, also zur Verfügung gestellt,
59 das hört sich so gut an, aber das muss man zahlen. Und wir haben ja mittlerweile fast schon
60 freundschaftliche Kontakte zu einigen unserer Kunden. Was ich vielleicht auch noch
61 erwähnen möchte ist, dass die Japaner äußerst treue Kunden sind. Wir haben ja
62 amerikanische Geschäftskontakte auch. Bei den Amerikanern ist das so, wenn jetzt der
63 Dollar gegenüber dem Euro zum Beispiel sich verändert oder irgendwas und der dann um
64 ein Prozent weniger verdienen kann, dann kauft er das ganz einfach nicht. Während ich
65 zum Beispiel erlebt habe, dass, als Fukushima passiert ist, wir uns trotzdem entschlossen
66 haben hinzufiegen, also meine Frau und ich waren dort, weil ich wollte meine Tochter nicht
67 hinschicken, wir haben uns das halt angeschaut und haben das auch überlebt, da sind wir
68 die einzigen Ausländer dort gewesen auf der Messe. Also es war nur ein Salzburger, mit
69 dem wir auch schon seit vielen Jahren dort ausstellen, und wir. Da waren die japanischen
70 Kunden damals bei uns und es haben sich viele beklagt, dass die Franzosen nicht
71 gekommen sind, die Italiener nicht, keine Deutschen, niemand war da. Nur wir und sonst
72 japanische Firmen. Die Messe war auch ziemlich leer. Und da haben die japanischen
73 Kunden zu uns gesagt: „In der Not sieht man wo die Freunde sind oder wer die Freunde
74 sind“. Das ist jetzt doch schon einige Jahre her, ich weiß nicht, 5 Jahre, 4 Jahre ist das schon
75 her, wie das passiert ist. Auch heute noch kommen die Kunden zum Messestand und reden

76 über das. Der erwähnt das, dass wir damals da waren. Die haben uns das ganz hoch
77 angerechnet. Wir haben mit japanischen Kunden eigentlich nur die besten Erfahrungen,
78 kann man sagen. Jetzt passiert zum Beispiel sehr oft, dass die Kunden die Zahlungsziele
79 nicht einhalten und solche Sachen. Das ist bei den Japanern fast überhaupt nicht. Ich mein,
80 es kann schon sein, dass irgendwann einer ein bisschen wirtschaftliche Schwierigkeiten hat,
81 weil irgendein großer Kunde nicht zahlt oder so, dann erhält man da aber Nachricht und
82 dann kann man sich darauf einstellen und weiß was da passiert. Ich verkaufe nach Japan
83 wie nach Österreich, weil in Österreich gibt's auch Schwierigkeiten. Mit den Japanern
84 haben wir eigentlich die besten Erfahrungen und meine Tochter hat ja jetzt den Betrieb
85 schon seit 4 oder 5 Jahren, zwar noch nicht offiziell übernommen, aber Sie leitet den
86 Betrieb und ich war ein einziges Mal mit ihr auf der Messe und habe ihr dieses
87 Messegeschehen gezeigt. Das Jahr darauf ist sie dann schon alleine gefahren und hat die
88 Messe ganz gut über die Bühne gebracht und unsere japanischen Kunden haben sie auch
89 schon als Chefin, mehr oder weniger, akzeptiert. Und ich frag ja auch immer wieder, wenn
90 ich auf der Messe bin, wie meine Kunden mit ihr zufrieden sind und ich muss eigentlich
91 sagen, dass ich zu meiner Schande gestehen muss, dass die Kunden mit meiner Tochter
92 zufriedener sind, als mit mir.

93 I: Ja, man hört aber doch oft, dass Frauen einen anderen Stellenwert haben als in
94 Österreich.

95 B: Das mag auch sein. Das ist ein eigenes Kapitel und ich muss schon sagen, ich habe das
96 auch bei meiner Mutter bemerkt. Unseren Betrieb gibt's ja schon sehr viele Jahre und als
97 meine Eltern den Betrieb gehabt haben, hat mein Vater sich immer um die technische Seite
98 gekümmert, also um die Produktion, und meine Mutter hat den ganzen Kundenverkehr
99 gemacht. Da wir hauptsächlich männliche Kunden gehabt haben, hat sich meine Mutter
100 sehr gut getan. Als ich noch ein kleiner Bub war, kann ich mich noch erinnern, da sind die
101 Kunden alle mit Blumen gekommen, weil meine Mutter auch sehr attraktiv war. Ich habe
102 ja den Betrieb dann auch übernommen und dann habe ich eine lange Zeit das gemacht und
103 ich bin da nicht sehr zufrieden gewesen. Ich habe halt einen anderen Kontakt zu
104 männlichen Kunden, als eine Frau. Seit meine Tochter das jetzt wieder macht, ist das
105 besser. Die Organisation macht meine Tochter besser aus dem einfachen Grund, dass, das
106 sage ich jetzt nicht, weil sie da ist, sondern, weil es stimmt. Als ich den Betrieb übernommen
107 habe, habe ich mich um die technische Seite und um den kaufmännischen Bereich
108 kümmern müssen. Ich war der Zerrissene. Jetzt ist es so, ich kümmere mich nur mehr um
109 diese Neujahrssachen, ich habe eine Dame, die mir da sehr, sehr unter die Arme greift. Wir
110 leben jetzt in einer ganz komischen Zeit. Es gibt so viele Vorschriften, an die man sich halten
111 muss, so viel Papierkram, den man erledigen muss, das nimmt zwei Tage in der Woche in
112 Anspruch.

113 I: Wie ist das in Japan? Wenn man in Japan zu tun hat, muss man sich da auch extra mit
114 solchen Sachen beschäftigen?

115 B: Nein, überhaupt nicht.

116 I: Nicht? Ok.

117 B: In Russland ist die Problematik am schlimmsten. Einmal ist eine Palette von uns drei
118 Wochen in Riga gestanden, wegen des russischen Zolls.

119 I: Weil Sie ja doch schon sehr lange mit den Japanern zu tun haben, sind Ihnen da
120 Veränderungen aufgefallen, je öfter Sie mit einem Partner zu tun haben?

121 B: Das ist richtig, ja.

122 I: Was wären das für Veränderungen?

123 B: Die Veränderungen sind so, dass man eben doch auch ins Private geht. Das heißt, man
124 trifft sich nach der Messe noch, geht miteinander essen. Das kommt bei einem neuen
125 Kunden überhaupt nicht in Frage. Dass der mit Ihnen essen geht, das gibt's nicht. Was ganz,
126 ganz großen Eindruck macht, das ist das, dass die Außenhandelsstelle in Tokio uns als
127 Austeller unterstützt. Die machen hin und wieder einen Empfang und da kriegen die
128 japanischen Kunden, die wir denen bekanntgeben, eine Einladung mit Siegel und was weiß
129 ich was alles, dass der österreichische Außenhandelsdelegierte zu einem Cocktail ladet
130 oder sonst irgendwas und das macht ganz, ganz großen Eindruck bei den japanischen
131 Kunden. Solche Sachen. Wir haben zum Beispiel einen Japaner, der schon viele Jahre von
132 uns kauft und das Jahr war er zwei Mal da. Also das Jahr war er im Sommer gekommen und
133 einmal im Winter, weil er wollte unbedingt die Weihnachtsmärkte sehen. Also ist er extra
134 wegen den zwei Tage nach Wien geflogen. Solche Sachen. Mit seiner Frau schicken wir uns
135 auch ständig über Instagram was, wenn was Neues passiert. Ich würde schon sagen, das ist
136 ein freundschaftliches Verhältnis.

137 I: Haben Sie auch mit jungen Japanern zu tun?

138 B: Ja, ja, freilich.

139 I: Und sind die anders in Ihrem Verhalten?

140 B: Es ist so, die alte absolut steif-konservative Generation, die stirbt weg oder geht in
141 Pension, also steigt aus dem Geschäftsleben aus und es gibt viele ausgeflippte Typen in
142 Japan. Bei meiner Tochter lachen sie alle wegen ihren Haaren, aber mittlerweile haben die
143 das schon akzeptiert, weil es rennen in Japan welche herum, die krasser sind. Die werden
144 genauso akzeptiert. Das sind dann die Jungen. Bei uns gibt's ja auch welche, die in den 60er,
145 70er hängen geblieben sind.

146 I: Ja, stimmt.

147 B: Aber wie gesagt, Japan ist ein gutes Geschäftsfeld bei uns.

148 I: Sind Ihre neuen Partner in Japan anders, als Ihre alten Partner? Laufen neuere
149 Verhandlungen anders, als die vor ein paar Jahren?

150 B: Würde ich jetzt nicht so sagen.

151 I: Also der erste Kontakt ist trotzdem sehr ähnlich?

152 B: Ja, schon. Sehr verhalten. Wir haben ja auch einen Großhändler in Japan, der dann
153 meistens diese kleinen Shops beliefert. Die beliefern dann nicht wir selber. Deswegen kann
154 man so nicht sagen, dass wir da so direkt einen Kontakt zu denen hätten. Also wir sehen
155 die Leute so auf der Messe schon, aber das rennt alles auf Japanisch, da verstehen wir
156 überhaupt nichts. Wir stehen da hauptsächlich zur Dekoration.

157 I: Das Team in Japan besteht dann eigentlich aus diesem einen Großhändler in Japan, der
158 die anderen beliefert?

159 B: Wir beliefern einige Großhändler in Japan. Der eine aber, mit dem wir diese
160 freundschaftliche Beziehung haben, der steht dann auch mit uns auf der Messe und betreut
161 da seine kleinen Kundschaften.

162 I: Das ist also schon ein bisschen wie ein Tor zu anderen Japanern, wenn man sich mit einem
163 Japaner zeigen kann?

164 B: Ja, genau.

165 I: Ok, verstehe. Zum Harmoniebedürfnis, haben Sie da noch etwas, was Sie dazu sagen
166 könnten, wie sich das äußert von japanischer Seite? Das sie zum Beispiel eher schweigen,
167 bevor sie „Nein“ sagen oder häufiger Lächeln als in Europa, merkt man da Unterschiede?

168 B: Ja, ich meine, er sagt nicht „Nein“. Ja. Aber das habe ich eigentlich noch nie so gemerkt.

169 I: Es äußert sich eigentlich eher durch diese Respektsbezeugungen, dass man die Treue
170 zeigt?

171 B: Ja, genau.

172 I: Dann vielen Dank für das Interview, dann sind wir schon fertig.

173 B: Super, das ist schnell über die Bühne gegangen!

174 I: Vielen Dank nochmal!

Interview 3

Summary: Superintendent of exhibitions and authorised officer of a well-known Viennese museum with connections to Japan reaching back a few decades. In this case the Japanese side approaches the Austrian side for exhibitions in Japan. He depicts Japanese negotiation behaviour as modest, reserved, and formal. The greatest barrier is language which makes it impossible to understand nuances in conversations which may be important in negotiations. Due to high courtesy levels, the Austrian side must decipher what information the Japanese want to convey. Every Japanese negotiation member has his role and sticks to it.

1 I: Vielen Dank, dass Sie bereit sind, an diesem Interview teilzunehmen. Ich bin Studentin
2 der Universität Wien und heiße Claudia Meszaros. Im Zuge meiner Masterarbeit für
3 Internationaler Betriebswirtschaftslehre möchte ich ergründen, in wie fern sich die
4 Dynamik bei Verhandlungen zwischen japanischen und österreichischen
5 Geschäftspartnern in den letzten Jahren verändert hat. Dieses Interview wird
6 aufgezeichnet, transkribiert und in meiner Arbeit verwendet werden. Alle Ihre Angaben
7 werden anonym behandelt.

8 B: Sehr freundlich, ja.

9 I: Dann würde ich Sie gleich fragen, wie hoch die Arbeitnehmeranzahl in Ihrem
10 Unternehmen ist.

11 B: Im gesamten Unternehmen sind das an die 700 Personen, aber ganz grundsätzlich sind
12 von diesen 700 Personen circa 400 vollzeitäquivalente, nur, dass man das in der Relation
13 auch erkennt.

14 I: Was ist Ihre derzeitige Position?

15 B: Ich bin der Leiter des Ausstellungsmanagements und des zentralen Registers und bin
16 auch Prokurist.

17 I: Vielen Dank. Dann die Einstiegsfrage ist: Verhandeln Sie derzeit mit Japanern?

18 B: Ja, wir stehen derzeit in Verhandlungen mit Japan.

19 I: Welche kulturellen Unterschiede zwischen Österreich und Japan sind Ihnen grundsätzlich
20 aufgefallen im Zuge dieser Verhandlungen?

21 B: Also wir sind seit vielen Jahren, wenn nicht seit Jahrzehnten mit Japan immer in
22 Verhandlungen. Wir sind ja nicht ein Wirtschaftsunternehmen per se, auch wenn wir
23 gelegentlich in gewisser Weise entsprechend wirtschaftlichen Bedingungen und
24 Gegebenheiten und Vorgaben auch arbeiten und eine gewisse ökonomische Komponente
25 auch im Kulturbetrieb natürlich zu berücksichtigen ist. Bei uns geht's ja bei den

Verhandlungen im Prinzip immer um Ausstellungen, um Leihgaben, um sozusagen auch einen Austausch bei unseren Dingen. Also es geht nicht um ein physisches, wirtschaftliches Produkt wie Stahl. Da ist schon ein bisschen anderer Aspekt dabei, glaube ich, dass es vielleicht ein bisschen interessanter macht. Das ist schon ein Unterschied, ob eine Voest irgendwo verhandelt. Ich meine, dass da zwischen Japan und, ich will jetzt nicht sagen Österreich, sondern dem europäischen Kulturraum, kulturelle Unterschiede sind, ist, glaube ich, allgemein bekannt und leicht ersichtlich. Das ist bei den afrikanischen Ländern dasselbe. Und es ist ja auch letztendlich in anderer Form auch zwischen den Ländern von Europa, dass da natürlich immer wieder kulturelle Unterschiede ereignen. Es sind ja Unterschiede da. Es hat jetzt keinen Sinn zu sagen „Japan ist anders“, sondern im Prinzip „Länder oder Gegenden oder Regionen sind einfach aufgrund ihrer historischen Entwicklung und kulturellen Erfahrungen unterschiedlich“ und es ist wohl auch klar, dass Japan aufgrund seiner historischen Gegebenheiten vielleicht, wie soll man denn sagen, es ist schwierig das auszudrücken, aber vielleicht konservativer geprägt. Aber das hängt ja eben auch mit der Geschichte zusammen, es ist ja im Prinzip ein Inselstaat mit gewissen Voraussetzungen: Buddhismus, Shintoismus und so weiter, das prägt ja die Gesellschaft genauso und jeder, der mal in Japan war oder mit Japanern zu tun hat, wird mal, sozusagen, relativ rasch die enorme Höflichkeit bemerken, natürlich auch in gewisser die Zurückhaltung auf japanischer Seite, auch ein gewisser Formalismus in den Umgangsformen, solche Dinge. Ich glaube das sind sehr schnell erkennbare Parameter oder Verhaltensweisen.

I: Dann ergründen wir das jetzt ein bisschen genauer. Wie lange verhandeln Sie jetzt schon mit Japanern?

B: Wie gesagt, wir verhandeln jetzt seit Jahren und Jahrzehnten, also wir haben gerade 2009 eine große Ausstellung gehabt und wir verhandeln auch jetzt wieder dort. Das ist ja fast, also man kann jetzt nicht sagen permanent, sondern immer wieder, alle paar Jahre. Auch das, was wir jetzt verhandeln ist eine Folgeverhandlung. Wir haben im Prinzip in Japan vor Jahren eine Art 10-Jahresvertrag abgeschlossen, das im Rahmen dessen drei Ausstellungsprojekte in Japan gemacht werden sollen und eines wurde bereits 2015 gemacht, das war eine Ausstellung in Tokio und in Osaka. Also, das heißt, es wurde zunächst ein Grundvertrag verhandelt, für diese 10 Jahre wurde dann die ganze Abwicklung und vertragliche Gestaltung für die erste Ausstellung gemacht und jetzt sind wir dabei, für 2019 die zweite Ausstellung zu machen. Da geht es darum, Verträge zu verhandeln, die schon mal zu verhandeln waren, und welche Objekte kommen dort hin.

I: Was ist Ihre persönliche Verhandlungsposition? Wie schaut allgemein das österreichische Team und japanische Team aus?

B: In Österreich leitet das natürlich der Generaldirektor oder der Stellvertreter. Und auf der japanischen Seite waren auch Kuratoren da.

64 I: Wie sind Sie überhaupt an den japanischen Kontakt gekommen? Haben Sie den Kontakt
65 aufgenommen oder gab es eine Person, die Sie vermittelt hat?

66 B: Wir sind ein weltweit agierendes Museum und haben Kontakte weltweit.

67 I: Das heißt die Kontakte haben schon längst bestanden?

68 B: Die Kontakte, mehr oder weniger, haben fast alle bestanden. Zumindest in Amerika,
69 Afrika und Asien, bestehen seit Jahren, wenn nicht Jahrzehnten.

70 I: Wie schaut das dann in der Vorbereitungszeit aus? Wenn Sie die Kontakte schon haben,
71 kennt man sich dann schon?

72 B: Naja, es wechseln natürlich auch die Leute, gerade über einen langen Zeitraum. Ich bin
73 seit 20 Jahren in diesem Haus und da kennen sich die Leute auch. Es ist ja dann auch nicht
74 immer mit einer Firma oder einer Institution, sondern auch mit verschiedenen
75 Institutionen. Es gibt dann natürlich auch in diesem Geschäft Leute, die solche Geschäfte
76 anbahnen. Also, es gibt ja generell, Firmen, die Ausstellungen vertreiben. Aber hier geht es
77 darum, dass das Museum selber auch initiativ ist, aber auch angefragt wird, natürlich, da
78 kommt man auch auf das Museum zu grundsätzlich und fragt: „Könnten wir nicht mal?“,
79 das geht über den Botschafter, über die Museen. Also wie gesagt, man ist ja nicht im
80 luftleeren Raum, sondern man agiert, man kann jetzt nicht sagen in einer geschlossenen
81 Gesellschaft, aber man agiert im Prinzip in einem sehr klaren kulturellen Umfeld. Japan
82 hatte immer Interesse auch Ausstellungen nach Japan zu holen, seit vielen Jahren schon,
83 auch diese Öffnung zu Europa hin und, dass gerade Österreich natürlich mit seiner
84 historischen Vergangenheit für Japan interessant ist, zeigt sich dadurch, dass wir, mit
85 verschiedensten Partnern, Ausstellungen auch in Japan haben. Wir sind nicht die einzigen,
86 die in Japan aktiv sind.

87 I: Zu den Verhandlungen selber: Man sagt ja, dass das Harmoniebedürfnis bei den Japanern
88 so stark ausgeprägt ist. Dass man vielleicht häufiger lächelt, dass man eher schweigt, dass
89 man nicht „Nein“ sagt. Sind Ihnen da Besonderheiten aufgefallen in den Verhandlungen
90 selber?

91 B: Also ganz grundsätzlich: das stimmt natürlich. Japaner haben eine gewisse Haltung,
92 Attitüde wie sie in den Verhandlungen hineingehen, sie haben eine gewisse Prägung. Jetzt
93 unabhängig von Japan, es ist wichtig, dass man sein Gegenüber respektiert und sich auch
94 ausreichend informiert. Dementsprechend passt man dann auch seine Techniken an.

95 I: Sie haben da schon den Respekt angesprochen. Da gibt es ja in Japan viele Beispiele, zum
96 Beispiel, wie man sich verbeugen soll, wie man die Visitenkarten überreicht, und so.

97 B: Ja, das ist auch so.

98 I: Das wird also nach wie vor so praktiziert?

99 B: Das hat sich auch nicht geändert. Was man schon vielleicht irgendwie sagen kann ist,
100 dass die Japaner heute nicht mehr so extrem vielleicht, wie soll man sagen: Sie haben sich
101 vielleicht ein bisschen mehr an eine, ich sag das jetzt mal so, eine westliche
102 Verhaltensweise gewöhnt. Aber das heißt nicht, dass sie, sozusagen, ihre Eigenarten über
103 Bord geworfen haben und, dass das alles so ist, sondern sie erwarten sich ja auch ein
104 gewisses Verhalten von ihrem Gegenüber und das hängt dann schon damit zusammen: was
105 heißt das in Europa zum Beispiel, was heißt das in Japan? In Europa sagt man auch: „Wenn
106 du unpünktlich kommst, das kommt nicht gerade förderlich“. Nur in Europa haben wir uns
107 daran gewöhnt, dass wir in einer schnelllebigen Welt sind, wir sind ständig auf Achse, also,
108 sagen wir’s mal so, wir nehmen’s nicht mehr so tragisch, wie wir es vor zehn Jahren noch
109 tragisch genommen hätten. In Japan ist das vielleicht noch ein bisschen anders. Trotzdem
110 die Höflichkeit der Japaner würde ja nie erkennen lassen, dass sie das jetzt nicht guthießen.
111 Das heißt, das muss man ja auch mal gehört haben, gelesen haben, man muss das schon
112 mal wissen. Sag ich ja, man muss sich mit dem Gegenüber beschäftigen. Man muss sich mit
113 dieser Kultur ein bisschen beschäftigen, man muss auch Spaß haben, sich auf diese Weise
114 auf diese Leute einzulassen. Es fällt ja auch nicht immer leicht.

115 I: Das glaube ich gerne, ja.

116 B: Aber das Verhalten, das kriegt man dann schon irgendwie hin. Das heißt ja nicht, dass
117 man dann ganz ident reagieren muss, aber man muss natürlich schon vorsichtig sein. Also
118 man darf nicht verrückt werden, nur weil Dinge zum hundertsten Mal hervorgebracht
119 werden.

120 I: Verhandeln Sie in Englisch oder haben Sie einen Übersetzer?

121 B: Im Normalfall schaut man schon, dass man jemanden hat, der da übersetzt, das ist auch,
122 soweit ich das in unseren Reihen mitkriege, von japanischer Seite so gewollt. Manches Mal
123 ist das dann auch eine Person, die dann auch kulturelle Austausche organisiert. Es wird
124 schon meistens eigentlich übersetzt.

125 I: Verhandeln Sie eher in Österreich oder eher in Japan?

126 B: Also wir verhandeln eher in Österreich.

127 I: Und ist das dann ein Unterschied, wenn man in Österreich sich befindet? Verhält man
128 sich dann anders? Passt man sich eher den Japanern an, wenn man in Japan ist?

129 B: Das würde ich jetzt so nicht sagen. Ich kann mir schon vorstellen, dass man sich anders
130 verhält, wenn man in Österreich statt in Japan ist, vom kulturellen Austausch. Es ist ja auch
131 ein Unterschied, ob ich in meinem Büro verhandle. Das sind dann ja auch subtile
132 Unterschiede. Insofern, könnte ein Außenstehender schon sagen, man verhält sich in

133 Tendenzen anders, wenn man in Japan ist, aber es ergibt sich dann meistens so, dass, wenn
134 die Verhandlungen mit Japan starten, dass wir etwas nach Japan geben, das heißt die
135 Japaner haben das Interesse, etwas von uns zu bekommen, nämlich eine Ausstellung, und
136 dann kommen sie meistens auf uns zu. Wenn dann noch einige Fragen offen sind und man
137 kommt etwas in Zeitdruck, weil Sachen finalisiert werden müssen, dann kommt man mit
138 der Elektronik nicht mehr weiter, weil E-Mail schreiben zwar nett ist, und dann wird mit
139 einigen Kollegen nach Japan geflogen und dort werden die offenen Punkte geklärt. Da
140 geht's dann nicht so sehr um rein Vertragliches, da geht's um Transporte, weil wir ja schon
141 mit sehr hochpreislichen Gemälden zu tun haben. Da geht es auch nicht um eines, sondern
142 meisten so 50 bis 100 Gemälde, die man da verschickt.

143 I: Weil Sie ja jetzt doch schon länger mit Japanern verhandeln: Merken Sie, dass je länger
144 man mit einem Partner verhandelt, dass der sich dann eher annähert an die österreichische
145 Seite?

146 B: Die Frage ist, ob das wirklich eine einseitige Annäherung ist, weil sich ja beide annähern.
147 Natürlich, wenn man da länger zu tun hat miteinander, dass man sich leichter tut, weil man
148 sich dann besser kennenlernt und natürlich auch ein bisschen die Befindlichkeiten sich ein
149 bisschen herauskristallisieren. Wie gesagt, man muss das Gegenüber auch beobachten.
150 Aber es bleibt schon immer auch in einem formalen Rahmen, aber das ist auch so, aber das
151 ist in Europa genauso. Die Rahmen sind vielleicht etwas anders geschnitzt. Aber ganz
152 grundsätzlich, wenn ich natürlich mit Leuten verhandle und doch im Wesentlichen mit den
153 gleichen Leuten, dann ändert sich im Laufe von längerfristigen Verhandlungen natürlich
154 schon der Zugang, dann merkt man auch, auf welchen Ebenen man verhandelt. Es ist ein
155 Unterschied, ob ich den Präsident vor mir habe oder wen, der direkt darunter ist oder ein
156 Kurator. Auf welcher Ebene wird hier dann gesprochen? Bei diesen Ausstellungen arbeiten
157 ja dann auch Mitarbeiter von mir und die haben ja dann auch ihre Pendants. Da lösen sich
158 die Barrieren dann schon auch sehr gut auf. Also normal, wenn jetzt fünf Japaner kommen
159 und verhandeln und man denen jetzt zu fünft gegenüber sitzt, dann ist das anders, als wenn
160 man mit einer Person permanent in Kontakt steht und kleine Richtungsfragen abklären
161 muss und schreibt sich am Tag zehn Mails hin und her, dass man da nach drei Monaten
162 vielleicht einen anderen Kontakt hat, ist doch klar. Da muss man schon auch sagen auf
163 welcher Ebene, in welcher Umgebung, in welcher Situation verhandelt man. Es ist ein
164 Unterschied, ob die Generaldirektorin gegenüber sitzt als autorisierte Person, als
165 Chefverhandler, oder ich auf meiner Ebene verhandle. Das muss man schon auch klar
166 sehen.

167 I: Und wie ist das mit dem Hierarchieverhalten? Da hört man ja auch, dass sie viel strenger
168 sind und dass vor allem ältere, männliche Japaner Entscheidungsträger sind und höher in
169 der Hierarchie sind. Können Sie das so bestätigen?

170 B: Ja, das wird so sein. Jedenfalls waren bei uns in letzter Zeit auch Frauen dabei, es haben
171 auch Frauen verhandelt. Das hängt auch davon ab, in welcher Position sie sich befindet.
172 Wenn sie für das Kulturprogramm zuständig ist, dann verhandelt die. Wer da an der Spitze
173 der Unternehmen als President oder Vicepresident sitzt, ist eine andere Frage, aber es ist
174 sind grundsätzlich schon Frauen dabei. Diese formaleren Strukturen, die ändern sich jetzt
175 auch nicht, ob Mann oder Frau. Die Höflichkeit und auch Ehrerbietung, das muss man schon
176 auch innehaben, dass das stärker ausgeprägt ist, als jetzt bei uns. Wahrscheinlich, wenn ich
177 einen Brief nach Japan schreibe, überlege ich mir vielleicht länger, wie ich ihn schreibe, als
178 wenn ich das nach Europa mache oder Amerika. Man weiß ja, dass das irgendwie formeller
179 ist, diese Höflichkeit, dass man da nicht „Nein“ sagt. Dass man auch mehr interpretieren
180 muss, „was heißt das jetzt?“, das fällt uns manchmal auch sehr schwer. Aber irgendwann
181 muss man auch mal was klar sagen.

182 I: Wie äußert sich das dann beim Konzessionsverhalten? Dauert das dann länger?

183 B: Ja, definitiv. Bis man dann mal zum Punkt kommt, beziehungsweise, ich frag mich
184 manchmal auch, ob das nicht vielleicht so ist, dass das auch länger dauert, weil man sich,
185 von japanischer Seite, auch besser kennenlernt. Würde ich schon sagen, dass das schon so
186 ist. Da geht's glaub ich stärker ums Vertrauen. Im arabischen Raum ist das ja noch
187 ausgeprägter, in Japan vielleicht nicht so schlimm, aber wenn man da jetzt ein bisschen
188 darüber reflektiert, dann würde man sagen, bei uns ist es ja auch so: Man ist ja auch
189 schneller bereit, irgendwo, wenn man sich schon kennt, wenn man weiß, ich würde da jetzt
190 nicht irgendwo hineinfallen. Ist es auch, es ist nur aufgrund dieser kulturellen Unterschiede
191 überall ein bisschen anders ausgeprägt.

192 I: Bei ganz neuen Partnern, wenn man da Kontakt aufnimmt, ...

193 B: Dann dauert's länger.

194 I: Aber sind neue Partner anders, als...

195 B: Es sind nicht nur neue Partner, es sind andere Kulturen. Das Wesentliche ist, es sind neue
196 Sprachen. Wir wissen, auch wenn wir Englisch reden, dass wir bei der Nuancierung auch
197 ein Problem haben. Wenn ich nicht wirklich eine Sprache komplett beherrsche, dann habe
198 ich ein Problem mit der Nuancierung. Das was ich vielleicht hineininterpretieren könnte,
199 das auch zu realisieren. Das sagt ja jeder, Englisch ist so leicht und das kann ja jeder, aber
200 nicht so, dass der andere wirklich versteht, was ich da sage. Das kommt ja noch dazu, wenn
201 ich eine Sprache habe, wo mich zwar jemand übersetzt, wo ich dann aber oft nicht weiß,
202 versteht der, das was ich sage so, wie ich das meine und was übersetzt der dann. Und das
203 Ganze geht retour genauso. Das ist auch ein Aspekt, glaube ich. Man tut sich da schon
204 leichter, wenn ich jetzt bei Englisch oder Französisch sagen kann, ok, ich verstehe
205 zumindest einen Teil davon, auch wenn ich es nicht in der nuancierten Ausformung wäre,

206 aber grundsätzlich wenn man jemanden nimmt, der das übersetzt, dann sind das alles
 207 Dinge, die da mitspielen.

208 I: Haben Sie auch junge Japaner kennengelernt? Verhalten die sich anders als Alte? Dass es
 209 da Generationenunterschiede gibt?

210 B: Das jüngste Verhandlungsmitglied dürfte so um die 40 sein und alle anderen so zwischen
 211 40 und 60.

212 I: Das hängt dann natürlich auch wieder von der Person ab.

213 B: Von der Person, von der Situation. Wenn der junge Japaner auch mit drei anderen da ist,
 214 dann kann der da auch nicht raus. Also es ist in Japan schon sehr stark ausgeprägt, dass ein
 215 Jeder, auch in der Verhandlung, eine Rolle hat.

216 I: Und aus der kommt er dann nicht raus? Oder darf er nicht raus?

217 B: Er würde da nicht sagen: „Nein, das stimmt nicht“ oder ähnliches. Ich glaube, die sind da
 218 noch stärker in den Rollen verhaftet, das ist wieder gesellschaftlich. Aber auch da ist es so,
 219 wenn man da von einer anderen Kultur überhaupt keine Ahnung hat, dann ist das alles
 220 fremder, aber das ist ja so nicht. Sie haben ja im Studium auch kein Problem, wenn Sie
 221 jemanden aus Nigeria oder Kuala Lumpur haben oder eine aus Korea ist. Das sind ja keine
 222 Barrieren, aber jeder ist anders. Man versucht sich ja dann schon auch an
 223 Verhaltensweisen, ich würde nicht sagen anzugleichen, aber Verhaltensweisen zu
 224 akzeptieren und sich sozusagen auch entsprechend zu verhalten. Gerade im
 225 Museumsbereich, ist es ja oft so, dass man da viel damit zu tun hat, aber da lernt man, dass
 226 Japaner ein bisschen eigen sind und durch das Kulturelle lernt man das zu akzeptieren. Das
 227 ist einfach so.

228 I: Vielen Dank für das Interview!

Interview 4

Summary: A sales project manager of a big plant construction company with 7 000 employees (as stated by the interviewee prior to the recorded interview) with two years of experience in negotiations with Japan was interviewed as well, as the fourth interviewee. He explains how detail-loving and hard to read Japanese business partners are in negotiations. Their clear division of tasks, unemotional negotiation style, and market protection, make it necessary to meet in informality after the negotiations to have a stronger individual bond which translates to more trust and less exhausting negotiations when keeping one's promises and demonstrating professional competence.

1 I: Vielen Dank, dass Sie bereit sind, an diesem Interview teilzunehmen. Ich heiße Claudia
2 Meszaros, bin derzeit Studentin an der Universität Wien und möchte Ihnen einen kurzen
3 Einblick in meine Studie geben: Ich schreibe meine Masterarbeit in Internationaler
4 Betriebswirtschaftslehre, in der ich die Veränderungen in der Dynamik bei Verhandlungen
5 zwischen japanischen und österreichischen Geschäftspartnern aufzeigen will. Dieses
6 Interview wird aufgezeichnet, transkribiert und in meiner Arbeit verwendet werden. Alle
7 Ihre Angaben werden anonym behandelt. Fangen wir mit Faktenfragen an. Was ist Ihre
8 derzeitige Position im Unternehmen?

9 B: Ich bin Sales Project Manager und bearbeite japanische Angebote.

10 I: Sie verhandeln ja derzeit mit Japan. Welche groben kulturellen Unterschiede sind Ihnen
11 im Zuge dieser Verhandlungen aufgefallen?

12 B: Naja, es sind von japanischer Seite immer mehr Leute, die in den Verhandlungen sitzen,
13 was dann oft dazu führt, dass man eben alleine oder zu zweit, zu dritt, zehn Leuten
14 gegenüber sitzt. Wobei ich das in Europa aber auch schon beobachtet habe, speziell in
15 Angebotsphasen ist es so, wenn man zum Kunden kommt, der Projektleiter dort sitzt mit
16 seinen Fachexperten und in Japan ist das ein bisschen extremer. Der Fachexperte ist dann
17 wirklich Experte in seinem Fach und er kennt jedes Detail. Der möchte das dann ganz genau
18 wissen. Das ist vielleicht spezieller in Japan. Aber generell passiert das in Europa auch,
19 insofern ist das jetzt kein großartiger Unterschied. Ansonsten, was aufgefallen ist, es ist
20 generell alles sehr genau in Japan. Das beginnt damit, dass wenn der Termin um 9:30
21 beginnt, dann beginnt der um 9:30. 9:29 ist genauso unpünktlich wie 9:45. Was gibt es
22 sonst? Man kommt in die Besprechung, man wird sich vorgestellt, jeder legt Wert darauf,
23 seine Visitenkarte zu übergeben. Man merkt dann, wenn ein Japaner schon mit Europäern
24 zu tun hatte, dann gibt er einem die Hand, aber an und für sich, gibt man sich nicht die
25 Hände in Japan. Dann geht's eigentlich los und dann verstrickt sich der gemeine Japaner in
26 Details. Also sobald sich die Möglichkeit ergibt irgendwo abzubiegen ins Detail, dann ist
27 man dort. Da ist es wichtig, dass man den dann irgendwie wieder zurückholt. Wichtig ist es,
28 dass man einen genauen Fahrplan hat: was möchte ich alles erledigt haben? Den muss man
29 dann immer irgendwie zurückholen dann.

30 I: Wirkt sich das dann schon auf die Vorbereitungszeit aus? Dass man sagt, man weiß, dass
31 bald etwas ansteht mit Japanern, dass man sich dann genauer damit beschäftigt oder
32 anders?

33 B: Die Frage ist gemein. Nein, die Frage ist insofern gemein, man bereitet sich immer super
34 vor Besprechungen vor, man macht immer alles ganz genau und toll. Ich bin noch nicht
35 richtig schlau geworden aus den Japanern. Auf der einen Seite freut der sich irrsinnig, wenn
36 man dem eine Präsentation zeigt. Die zeige ich in Europa fünf Mal im Jahr und der Japaner
37 freut sich darüber irrsinnig und ich habe das Gefühl, ja, jetzt habe ich ihm was gezeigt, was

38 er noch gar nicht kennt. Und während der Abwicklung, wie mir mein Kollege jetzt gerade
39 erklärt hat, komme ich jetzt dann drauf, ja, die wollen ja eigentlich viel, viel mehr und sind
40 wesentlich mehr gewohnt. Ein Teil in den Firmen ist vielleicht auch so, dass die sehr strikte
41 Trennungen haben zwischen was macht der der Einkauf und was macht das Projektteam
42 während der Verhandlungsphase, was macht das Entwicklungsteam. Das ist auch
43 wesentlich getrennter, kommt mir vor.

44 I: Wie lange verhandeln Sie schon in Japan?

45 B: Seit 2016.

46 I: Und was war Ihre Verhandlungsposition währenddessen? Sind Sie als
47 Entscheidungsträger dort oder in einer anderen Position?

48 B: Ich bin dort Entscheidungsträger. In den Verhandlungen, in denen ich war, ist es so, dass
49 ein Punkt auf den Tisch gebracht wird, der Japaner bringt seine Position und dann wird
50 diskutiert, ob ja oder nein. Da bekommt man keine Entscheidung sofort auf den Tisch.

51 I: Haben Sie zuerst Kontakt mit Ihren Kunden aufgenommen? Wie sind Sie zu Ihren Partnern
52 in Japan gekommen?

53 B: Wir haben ein Büro in Japan über das dann läuft.

54 I: Und wie war Ihr Team oder das japanische Team zusammengestellt bei den
55 Verhandlungen? Sie haben ja schon erwähnt, dass das japanische Team immer größer ist
56 und Fachexperten dabeisitzen, was gibt es noch zu sagen?

57 B: Sie hatten ihren Chef bei den Verhandlungen dabei, also musste unser Chef auch dabei
58 sein. Das dauert dann so eine Woche.

59 I: Das Harmoniebedürfnis und die Respektsbekundungen sind ja auch ein bekannt großes
60 Thema in Japan. Man liest ja immer wieder, dass Japaner nicht „Nein“ sagen, dass sie
61 häufiger Lächeln und sich verbeugen, um die Harmonie zu behalten und Respekt zu zollen.
62 Wie haben Sie das erlebt?

63 B: Ich weiß nicht, ob man das so sagen kann. Das kommt dort auch wie bei uns auf die
64 Person an. Auch in Europa muss man auf jeden persönlich eingehen, da ist jeder anders. In
65 Japan ist das natürlich auch so. Aber wir haben eine Firma, mit der wir drei Projekte
66 verhandeln, und jedes Projekt hat einen eigenen Projektleiter gehabt. Wir haben das erste
67 Projekt verhandelt und erledigt und dann haben wir das zweite Projekt verhandelt und
68 dann war auch wieder der Projektleiter dabei und der hat gesagt, das ist für ihn klar und er
69 kann das akzeptieren und dann ist eben der Projektleiter vom vorigen Projekt gekommen
70 und hat gemeint: „Nein, das können wir nicht akzeptieren!“ Also die haben keine Probleme,
71 dass sie den anderen überfahren und sie haben auch kein Problem damit zu sagen: „Nein,

72 will ich nicht“. Also die sagen dann nicht: „Nein“, sondern bringen die Frage zum fünften
73 Mal vor, ohne „Nein“ zu sagen. Was noch dazu kommt ist, wir haben ja meistens mit
74 internationalen Firmen zu tun. Und der ist jetzt schon fast 20 Jahre außerhalb von Japan.
75 Mit fast allen, mit denen ich zu tun hatte, die haben in Russland Jahre lang gelebt oder in
76 Amerika und haben dort Projekterfahrungen gemacht. Also ich habe es zumindest in Japan
77 nicht kennengelernt, dass man jemanden trifft, der strikt auf japanisches Zeremoniell
78 besteht.

79 I: Wie ist das dann auch mit Übersetzern: Wird auch in Englisch verhandelt?

80 B: Es wird in Englisch gesprochen, mal schlechter, mal besser. Aber grundsätzlich haben die
81 immer jemanden dabei, der relativ gut Englisch kann.

82 I: Ok, gut. Und mit der Hierarchie? Weil Sie ja auch gemeint haben, dann kommt immer der
83 nächste Projektleiter und so weiter: Ist das strenger als bei uns? Muss man da mehr drauf
84 achten?

85 B: Generell spricht man eh immer mit der höchsten Instanz, die vor Ort ist, der hat generell
86 immer das Wort. Also, es ist nicht wie bei uns, wo man quasi gleichberechtigt am Tisch sitzt
87 und jeder sich einbringt, sondern da sitzen 15 Leute am Tisch und einer spricht. Wenn der
88 dann eine Frage hat, dann fragt der einfach seine 15 Leute. Das gibt's ja nicht, dass da
89 irgendjemand hereinredet. Das ist vielleicht anders. Es ist nicht so drastisch wie in Korea.
90 In Korea war's wirklich so, dass der Mann, der spricht, sitzt vorne. Das ist aber noch immer
91 nicht der Projektleiter oder die wichtigste Person am Tisch, sondern die sitzt daneben und
92 die Leute, die dann zuhören oder zuarbeiten, die sitzen dahinter. Das ist in Japan nicht der
93 Fall.

94 I: Haben Sie in Japan und in Österreich verhandelt mit den Partnern? Wo finden die Treffen
95 statt?

96 B: In Japan immer. Eben, weil das so viele Leute sind, kommen die nicht nach Österreich.

97 I: Und läuft das dann anders ab? Man hört ja auch oft, dass die eigentliche Besprechung
98 über den Besprechungsraum hinausgeht, dass dieses ganze Umfeld auch wichtig ist und
99 letztendlich entscheidungsführend ist. Würden Sie das auch so unterschreiben?

100 B: Was mir aufgefallen ist, was es in Europa nicht mehr gibt, dass man mit dem Kunden am
101 Abend essen geht, da gibt es die ganzen Compliance-Richtlinien mittlerweile, die das
102 unterbinden. In Japan ist das ganz normal, da werden wir auch regelmäßig eingeladen vom
103 Kunden, um dann nach der Besprechung noch die Sachen zu diskutieren und da wird dann
104 auch Privates und Persönliches besprochen, da fließt der Alkohol. Das ist in Japan schon ein
105 Thema. Die Jungs trinken dann sehr viel und da schämt sich dann aber auch niemand dafür.
106 Wenn bei uns jemand drei Bier trinkt und dann sagt jemand: „Very strong drinker!“, dann

107 denkt man sich: „Ups!“. Das ist in Japan ehrlich gemeint. Also Komplimente diesbezüglich
108 sind dann von Herzen und ohne Zynismus. Wenn da jemand sagt: „He is a bottomless
109 drinker!“, dann ist das ein ehrliches Kompliment. „Very strong“ sagt man da.

110 I: Dann kommen wir eh schon mehr oder weniger zu den Hauptfragen und zwar über die
111 Dynamik, wie sich die verändert. Je öfter Sie mit den gleichen Kunden verhandeln, merken
112 Sie da Veränderungen? Dass er sich annähert? Im Verhandlungsstil zum Beispiel?

113 B: Puh.

114 I: Oder irgendeine Art der Veränderung?

115 B: Generell muss man mal das Vertrauen gewinnen in Japan. Das ist vielleicht ein
116 Unterschied in Europa: Wenn man in Europa einen Kunden hat, dann geht der davon aus,
117 dass eine österreichische Firma das genauso gut kann, wie eine deutsche Firma oder wie
118 auch immer. Oder zumindest ist in unserem Fall das so, dass man anerkannt ist als
119 namhafter Lieferant. In Japan geht man davon aus, dass ein Nicht-Japaner das nicht kann.
120 Das hat auch damit zu tun, dass sie einen sehr geschützten Markt haben, speziell in
121 unserem Segment. Die haben ihre eigenen Normen. Bei uns öffnet man sich da immer
122 mehr. In Japan geht man davon aus, dass eine Firma, die aus Europa kommt, grundsätzlich
123 einmal nicht weiß: „They do not know the Japanese way“, das hört man sehr oft, „but you
124 have to accept, that is the Japanese way“. Und wenn man dann mal bewiesen hat und zeigt,
125 dass man weiß, wovon man spricht, dann öffnet sich der auch. Was ganz, ganz, ganz wichtig
126 ist, ist einmal fachlich den Eindruck zu hinterlassen, man weiß wovon man spricht, und
127 wenn man dann einmal das Vertrauen gewonnen hat, das ist schon total wichtig. Ich hab
128 so das Gefühl, die Termintreue, wenn der eine Frage stellt oder was wissen will zu einem
129 gewissen Zeitpunkt und man liefert das und man zeigt, dass man hart arbeitet für etwas,
130 dann gewinnt man das Vertrauen und dann öffnet sich das Gegenüber auch mehr. Das ist
131 zumindest meine Erfahrung.

132 I: Inwiefern merkt man dann, dass er sich öffnet?

133 B: Das fängt dann damit an, dass er auch erzählt, dass seine Tochter das und das macht.

134 I: Ah, also privat?

135 B: Genau, oder irgendwelche Informationen zurückkommen, wo man sich denkt: „Ach, das
136 habe ich gar nicht gefragt, aber danke!“

137 I: Wie schnell antworten Japaner mit Konzessionen in Vergleich zu Europäern? Sind die
138 „härter“ im Verhandeln?

139 B: Ja, sehr strikt. Also eben das mit harmoniebedürftig, das ist mir nämlich gar nicht so
140 aufgefallen, dass die so besonders harmoniebedürftig sind. Sie sind sehr, sehr, sehr hart

141 und sehr strikt. Das Interessante ist, eben auf dieser emotionslosen Basis. Dieses „Nein“
142 und da fährt die Eisenbahn drüber. Da gibt es auch überhaupt gar keinen Grund dafür, das
143 ist so und aus. Entschuldigt wird das dann auch immer mit: „That’s the Japanese way. You
144 have to accept that“ und später stellt sich dann heraus, das ist seine ganz persönliche
145 Meinung, aber da gibt es kein Abweichen davon. Aber die sind schon sehr strikt, die kennen
146 ihre Positionen. „Gut, dann lassen wir’s mal gut sein“, das gibt es in Japan nicht. Das ist fast
147 digital, möchte ich sagen, entweder oder.

148 I: Haben Sie verschiedene Partner erlebt, verschiedene Kunden in Japan?

149 B: Ja, also wir haben drei Firmen.

150 I: Ist das anders, wenn man mit neuen Partnern verhandelt? Sind die anders, als die Partner,
151 die man doch schon länger kennt?

152 B: Ja, von der Strategie würde ich jetzt sagen: Nein, weil das bleibt die gleiche. Nur, es ist
153 langwieriger mit neuen Partnern. Man muss wieder beginnen, das Vertrauen zu gewinnen.
154 Aber die Punkte als solche ändern sich jetzt nicht.

155 I: Junge Japaner waren auch anwesend? Wie schaut das dann aus mit der Altersstruktur?

156 B: Generell gibt es schon ein gewisses Senioritätsthema in Japan. Es ist auch so, in unserer
157 Branche zumindest, kennen sich viele Leute über persönliche Bekanntschaften und das
158 geht eben nur ab einem gewissen Alter. Aber das gilt in der Branche generell, da gibt es
159 ganz wenig Junge, die das in der Hand haben und „Alles mir nach!“, das ist in so einer
160 Branche nicht so möglich.

161 I: Und sind junge Japaner anders als ältere?

162 B: Naja, sie sprechen schon mal viel besser Englisch.

163 I: Und im Verhandlungsstil? Dass sie sich anders einbringen?

164 B: Generell glaube ich nicht. Also, die Erfahrung habe ich nicht gemacht. Vor allem sitzen
165 die Alten eh immer neben uns. Der muss dann dem Vorgesetzten zeigen, dass er es wert
166 ist in seine Fußstapfen zu treten, von dem her, kann er gar keinen eigenen Stil entwickeln.
167 Der folgt strikt dem „Japanese way“.

168 I: Ja, dann vielen Dank für das Gespräch!

169 B: Bitte!

Interview 5

Summary: Project manager of a big Austrian company in the mechanical engineering and plant construction industry with negotiation experience with the Japanese negotiation style of 1.5 years. He emphasizes the „Japanese Business Culture“ which implies courtesy and trust and develops after time to a personal relationship, but takes time.

1 I: Vielen Dank nochmals, dass Sie bereit sind, an diesem Interview teilzunehmen und sich
2 ein wenig Ihrer wertvollen Zeit nehmen konnten. Ich heiße Claudia Meszaros und möchte
3 Ihnen einen kurzen Einblick in meine Studie geben: Ich schreibe meine Masterarbeit in
4 Internationaler Betriebswirtschaftslehre an der Universität Wien, welche die
5 Veränderungen in der Dynamik bei Verhandlungen zwischen japanischen und
6 österreichischen Geschäftspartnern aufzeigen soll. Alle Ihre Angaben werden anonym
7 behandelt. Dieses Interview wird von mir aufgezeichnet, transkribiert und in meiner Arbeit
8 verwendet. Lassen Sie mich mit einer kurzen Frage anfangen: Welche Position haben Sie
9 derzeit im Unternehmen inne?

10 B: Ja, ich helfe Ihnen gerne! Ich bin Projektleiter in unserer Abteilung.

11 I: Vielen Dank. Als Einstieg würde ich Sie gerne fragen, weil Sie ja gerade erst in Japan
12 verhandelt haben, welche kulturellen Unterschiede Ihnen im Zuge Ihrer Verhandlungen
13 dort aufgefallen sind?

14 B: Ich fasse Ihnen das natürlich gerne aus meiner Sicht zusammen. Da gibt es ja den Begriff
15 „Japanese Business Culture“, so wird dies dort bezeichnet und unsere Kollegen in Japan
16 sind auch stolz darauf. Bei dieser japanischen Business Culture, welche extrem auf
17 Höflichkeit und Vertrauen aufgebaut ist, ist es auch der Fall, dass sie bei japanischen
18 Verhandlungspartnern, welche zum Beispiel über Jahre bei schwierigen Projekten im
19 Ausland zu tun hatten, auch oft vergessen wird. Prinzipiell sind in Japan die
20 Geschäftsbeziehungen, wie schon gesagt, auf Vertrauen aufgebaut. Anforderungen wie
21 Bankgarantien, wie es in unserem Geschäftsleben üblich ist, gibt es hier praktisch nur mit
22 Geschäftspartner aus dem Ausland oder wo der Mutterkonzern den Sitz im Ausland hat.
23 Bei den Verhandlungen selbst ist immer extreme Höflichkeit angesagt, um den
24 Geschäftspartner nicht zu verärgern. Hier ist es natürlich nicht leicht, vertragliche
25 Forderungen anzubringen, wenn es nicht üblich ist und man versucht dann auf
26 gemeinsamen Weg einen Konsens zu finden.

27 I: Wie lange verhandeln Sie schon insgesamt mit Japanern?

28 B: Das sind jetzt circa ein und halb Jahre.

29 I: Was war Ihre Verhandlungsposition während dieser Verhandlungen? Sind Sie dort als
30 Entscheidungsträger beispielsweise anwesend?

31 B: Die Verhandlungen laufen ja derzeit eigentlich noch. Ich nehme dort an Verhandlungen
32 mit dem Salesteam vor der Auftragsinkraftsetzung teil und bei Verhandlungen im
33 Auftragsfall mit dem Projektteam als Projektleiter.

34 I: Was ist Ihnen in der Vorbereitungszeit als etwas Besonderes aufgefallen? Worauf
35 mussten Sie und Ihr Team mehr Acht geben, als bei anderen Verhandlungen?

36 B: Prinzipiell sind die Grundprinzipien überall gleich. Hier vielleicht noch ein wenig
37 ausgeprägter, Höflichkeit gegenüber den Verhandlungspartnern, der Kunde muss ein
38 Vertrauen aufbauen.

39 I: Und wie sind Sie damals an Ihre japanischen Partner gekommen? Wer hat den Kontakt
40 aufgenommen?

41 B: Unsere Kollegen vom Sales Team hatten mit unseren japanischen Kollegen beschlossen,
42 es auch mit unserem Geschäftsfeld in Japan zu versuchen, und da die japanischen Kollegen
43 in ihrem Hauptgeschäftsfeld eine kleine Flaute hatten, war dies sehr willkommen.

44 I: Wie schaut das dann mit dem Team aus? Wie war Ihr Team oder das japanische Team
45 zusammengestellt?

46 B: Naja, es ist ja immer ein Verhandlungsteam oder Projektteam.

47 I: Aber sind dann die Entscheidungsträger auf beiden Seiten anwesend?

48 B: Es ist oft so, dass die wirklichen Entscheidungsträger nicht anwesend sind und dann
49 später im Team entschieden wird.

50 I: Man sagt ja, das Harmoniebedürfnis der Japaner sei besonders hoch. Was ist Ihnen da
51 aufgefallen?

52 B: Zur Konfliktvermeidung sieht man, dass zum Beispiel die Entscheidungen nicht von oben
53 oder von Einzelnen getroffen werden, sie werden im Team getroffen.

54 I: Wie kann man sich das dann zeitlich vorstellen? Wie schnell hat die japanische Seite mit
55 Konzessionen geantwortet?

56 B: Generell sind die Japaner bei Zusagen, Konzessionen eher zurückhaltend. Das kann dann
57 schon länger dauern insgesamt.

58 I: Haben Sie und Ihr Team stärker auf Hierarchie achten müssen?

59 B: Ja, auf jeden Fall. Es ist überall wichtig auf die dortigen Hierarchien zu achten. Zum
60 Beispiel gibt ja dann der Verhandlungsleiter oder der Chef die Entscheidung bekannt,
61 getroffen werden diese jedoch, wie gerade erwähnt, im Team.

62 I: Respekt ist ein anderer bekannter Faktor. Wie sieht's da aus?

63 B: Naja, man sieht das an den Visitenkarten ganz gut. Man nimmt dankend eine
 64 Visitenkarte, wiederholt ehrfürchtig den Namen und schüttelt seinem
 65 Verhandlungspartner die Hand zur Begrüßung, dann gibt man seine Visitenkarte und es
 66 wiederholt sich.

67 I: Verhandeln Sie in Japan oder in Österreich? Was ist dann ortsgebunden anders? Wird in
 68 Japan dann nur in Verhandlungsräumen verhandelt oder auch an anderen Orten?

69 B: Wir sind eigentlich immer in Japan bei unseren Kollegen. Das findet dann praktisch
 70 immer in Verhandlungsräumen statt, sehr selten gibt es Konferenzen über unser online
 71 Kommunikationssystem.

72 I: Wir haben ja schon die Hierarchie in Japan angesprochen, das führt mich zu meiner
 73 nächsten Frage und zwar: Welches andersartige Verhalten zeigen junge Japaner im
 74 Vergleich zu Älteren?

75 B: Die jungen Japaner sind schon anders, als bei uns. Sie zeigen da ein sehr ehrfurchtsvolles
 76 Verhalten. Ist aber zum Beispiel in China ident, da weiß ich, dass zum Beispiel dasselbe
 77 Wort wie „der Alte“ für „der Weise“ gilt.

78 I: Nun zu den eher dynamischen Fragen, was sich über die Jahre verändert hat. Welche
 79 Veränderungen sind Ihnen auf der japanischen Seite aufgefallen, je öfter Sie mit ihnen
 80 verhandelt haben?

81 B: In Japan ist das Vertrauen ja sehr wichtig und alles wird darauf aufgebaut und dann
 82 kommt es natürlich so, dass, je länger man sich kennt, desto mehr kommt das Vertrauen.

83 I: Inwiefern haben sich die Japaner an Ihren Verhandlungsstil angenähert?

84 B: Da gilt auch etwas, was mit dem Vertrauen zusammenhängt, es wird schon ein wenig
 85 freundschaftlich und weniger förmlich.

86 I: Und wie verhalten sich dann neue Partner im Vergleich zu Partnern vor einigen Jahren?

87 B: Wenn es um Partner geht, welche schon mehr Auslandskontakt hatten, kann es sein das
 88 diese schon aufgeschlossener sind. Es kann aber auch sein, wenn diese schlechte
 89 Erfahrungen gemacht haben, dass dies genau das Gegenteil ist. Zum Beispiel ist es für eine
 90 Firma mit ausländischem Ursprung schwer, gute Kräfte zu bekommen, denn die Japaner
 91 sind aus der Vergangenheit von Ausländern speziell das amerikanische Prinzip „hire and
 92 fire“ gewohnt, welches genau das Gegenteil Ihrer eigenen Mentalität ist.

93 I: Ja, das war dann eigentlich auch schon alles. Vielen, vielen Dank nochmals für Ihre
 94 Partizipation!

95 B: Ja, gerne. Ich hoffe, ich konnte Ihnen ein wenig helfen.

Interview 6

Summary: A young sales manager in the automotive industry and five years of negotiation experience in Japan. He stresses out that the biggest difficulty of negotiating with the Japanese is the communication and the need of a personal relationship with the negotiators which everything surrounding negotiations and their outcome is based on. In his opinion it is indispensable to make one's stance clear. Decisions take a lot longer, compared to negotiations between two Austrian parties, because there are multiple decision makers on the Japanese side. Etiquette, trust, hierarchy, and respect are needed to not compromise the Japanese negotiator's status.

1 I: Vielen Dank, dass Sie bereit sind, an diesem Interview teilzunehmen. Mein Name ist
2 Claudia Meszaros und ich bin Studentin an der an der Universität Wien in Internationaler
3 Betriebswirtschaftslehre und im Zuge dessen schreibe ich meine Masterarbeit in
4 Verhandlungen, wo ich ergründe, in wie fern sich die Dynamik bei Verhandlungen zwischen
5 japanischen und österreichischen Geschäftspartnern verändert hat über die Jahre. Dieses
6 Interview wird aufgezeichnet, transkribiert und in meiner Arbeit verwendet werden. Ihre
7 Angaben werden außerdem alle anonym verwendet werden. Gut dann, in welcher
8 Industrie sind Sie tätig?

9 B: In der Fahrzeugindustrie, speziell Feuerwehrtechnik.

10 I: Was ist die Arbeitnehmerzahl in Ihrem Unternehmen?

11 B: Weltweit sind wir jetzt so circa bei 3300 Mitarbeitern.

12 I: Und Ihre Position im Unternehmen?

13 B: Ich bin Gebietsverkaufsleiter, beziehungsweise Länderverantwortlicher für die Länder
14 Japan, Thailand und Vietnam.

15 I: Danke. Sie waren ja gerade erst in Japan und hatten auch Besucher aus Japan da, welche
16 grundsätzlichen kulturellen Unterschiede sind Ihnen da aufgefallen?

17 B: Alles. Also grundsätzlich würde ich mal sagen die schwerste Barriere in Japan ist schon
18 mal die Sprache, weil, würde ich sagen, zwischen 95 und 99 Prozent der Japaner sprechen
19 kein Englisch und auch keine andere Fremdsprache. Das macht wirklich die Kommunikation
20 sehr, sehr schwierig. Generell sind Japaner, würde ich sagen, sehr introvertiert. Sie öffnen
21 sich eigentlich sehr, sehr wenig und eine Beziehung in Japan aufzubauen ist definitiv um
22 einiges schwieriger als in anderen Länder, auch in anderen asiatischen Ländern. Das dauert
23 wirklich einige Jahre, bis man ein Basisvertrauen geschaffen hat und über die Jahre dauert

24 das dann einfach länger und länger und länger. Das ist wirklich auch sehr, sehr wichtig, die
25 persönliche Beziehung und das persönliche Partnerships ist in diesen Ländern auch sehr
26 wichtig.

27 I: Wie lange verhandeln Sie schon mit Japanern jetzt?

28 B: Seit fünf Jahren.

29 I: Ok, seit fünf Jahren.

30 B: Seit gut fünf Jahren, ja.

31 I: Und was ist Ihre Verhandlungsposition während dieser Verhandlungen in Japan? Sind Sie
32 Entscheidungsträger?

33 B: Ich bin Entscheidungsträger bezüglich unserem Preis, auch bezüglich Lieferkonditionen,
34 bezüglich anderen Konditionen, im Endeffekt verhandle ich die Verträge aus, die wir
35 brauchen. Generell verwenden wir natürlich Standardverträge, wir verwenden
36 Erfahrungswerte. Ich muss zum Beispiel meine gewissen Gewinne und Profits erzielen, ich
37 muss meine Umsätze schaffen, die Vorgaben habe ich. Ich habe eben, wie gesagt, gewisse
38 Randbedingungen, wie zum Beispiel Basisverträge, von dort an arbeite ich weg.

39 I: Bezüglich dieser Standardverträge, werden die akzeptiert?

40 B: Nein.

41 I: Wie lange dauert das, bis Konzessionen von japanischer Seite kommen?

42 B: Eigentlich hängt das nicht wirklich vom Vertrag ab, eigentlich hängt das von der
43 persönlichen Beziehung ab. Im Endeffekte, in all meinen Verträgen, die ich bis jetzt in Japan
44 hatte, war es eigentlich so, dass der Vertrag zwar aufgesetzt wird, der Vertrag wird, wenn
45 die persönliche Beziehung nicht so gut ist oder wenn man sich nicht so gut kennt, dann
46 kann das Jahre dauern, bis der unterschrieben wird. Wenn die persönliche Beziehung gut
47 ist, dann kann das in ein bis zwei Wochen passieren. Es ist aber auch so, dass generell in
48 meinen Verträgen: Wir halten uns nicht wirklich an die Verträge. Das sind so Richtlinien für
49 uns, aber weder wir, noch die Japaner halten sie zu hundert Prozent, sondern das ist mehr
50 so ein Geben und Nehmen oder eine Hand wäscht die andere. Also, das funktioniert viel
51 mehr auf Basis von Beziehungen, als auf Basis von wirklichen Verträgen.

52 I: Wie läuft das dann in der Vorbereitungszeit ab. Verhält man sich dann anders, als wenn
53 man weiß, dass man mit Österreichern verhandelt?

54 B: Natürlich!

55 I: Inwiefern?

56 B: Also, generell ist es so, dass ich mich sehr, sehr gut vorbereite und eigentlich in dem
57 Meeting, wenn ich nach Japan komme, versuche, meine Position und meine Ideen
58 möglichst klar darzulegen. Das ist eigentlich mehr oder weniger nur eine grobe
59 Präsentation und ich versuche, dass so verständlich rüber zu bringen, dass jeder das
60 verstanden hat, damit sie einfach meinen Standpunkt kennen, worüber wir diskutieren.
61 Denn der große Unterschied ist, dass die Vorbereitung eine komplett andere ist, als bei
62 einem österreichischen Meeting. Beim österreichischen Meeting, ist es eigentlich so, ich
63 persönlich bereite mich nicht so gut vor, weil normalerweise gehen wir in das Meeting und
64 diskutieren über alles und im Endeffekt erarbeiten wir dann den Contract Draft zum
65 Beispiel dann gemeinsam und finden dann auch oft relativ schnell eine gemeinsame
66 Lösung. In Japan ist der Unterschied, ich präsentiere das Ganze, schau, dass ich möglichst
67 verständlich präsentiere und versuche, dass das jeder versteht und die Entscheidung wird
68 in Japan nie direkt im Meeting getroffen, sondern immer danach in der Gruppe. Das dauert.
69 Es gibt eigentlich nicht wie bei uns einen Entscheidungsträger, das ist der Chef und der sagt:
70 „So machen wir’s!“, in Japan wird die Entscheidung immer in der Gruppe getroffen. Das
71 heißt, alle involvierten Personen, werden im Endeffekt befragt nach dem Meeting und dann
72 gibt es oft Follow-Up Meeting, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, je nach dem und die ganzen Einflüsse
73 werden dann natürlich auch in den Vertrag miteinbezogen. Es ist zwar so, der Vorteil
74 gegenüber Österreich ist, dass der Vertrag am Ende wirklich so aussieht, dass alle zufrieden
75 sind, auf der anderen Seite dauert das natürlich x-fach länger, als bei uns, weil einfach so
76 viele Entscheidungsträger mitwirken. Das ist auch der Grund, warum dort in einem Meeting
77 nie eine Entscheidung getroffen wird.

78 I: Wie sieht das Team allgemein aus auf beiden Seiten?

79 B: Generell ist es so, dass ich meistens alleine bin, maximal zu zweit, dass von mir zum
80 Beispiel ein Mitarbeiter dabei ist oder mein Chef, das kommt ein bisschen auf die Größe
81 des Auftrags an. Aber grundsätzlich bin ich meistens alleine und auf der anderen Seite ist
82 es meistens so, dass auch der Chef dabei ist und eine Sekretärin, die kann dann auch von
83 uns übersetzen. Der japanische Chef hört eigentlich die meiste Zeit nur zu und der
84 Verkäufer ist derjenige, der dann redet. Die sind dann so zu dritt oder zu viert. Bei
85 Entscheidungen und dergleichen, da schaltet sich dann meistens auch der Chef ein, wenn
86 es um die wichtigsten Dinge geht.

87 I: Und das läuft dann auf Englisch ab?

88 B: Von unserer Seite auf Englisch, ja. Die übersetzen dann auf Japanisch, aber grundsätzlich
89 kann man sagen, das dauert meistens relativ lange und am Anfang dreht sich ziemlich vieles
90 im Kreis, man bespricht vieles doppelt, dreifach, vierfach. Für uns teilweise ein bisschen
91 unverständlich, auf der anderen Seite einfach zur Absicherung.

92 I: Eine interessante Frage wäre noch: Wie sind Sie überhaupt an den Partner gekommen,
93 an den japanischen?

94 B: Wir haben diese Partner nun seit 1991, das heißt seit 27 Jahren und ehrlich gesagt, kann
95 ich gar nicht sagen, wie wir an diesen Partner gekommen sind. Jetzt muss ich kurz
96 überlegen.

97 I: Hat es eine Zwischenposition gegeben, die das vermittelt hat am Anfang?

98 B: Nicht wirklich. Ich weiß nur, dass den Partner mein Vorgänger, dass die die
99 Korporation... Ach, ich weiß wieder! Es gibt alle fünf Jahre eine große Feuerwehrmesse, die
100 größte weltweit. Diese Feuerwehrmesse ist immer in Hannover, alle fünf Jahre, die heißt
101 Interschutz, das ist die größte weltweit und ich glaube das war 1991 oder 90. Unser
102 Händler, die importieren nicht nur Feuerwehrfahrzeuge, sondern auch andere Dinge, zum
103 Beispiel Röntgengeräte für Flughäfen. Die haben als Importfirma gestartet. Es gibt immer
104 wieder Produkte, die in Japan am Markt nicht so erhältlich sind. Die haben auf dieser Messe
105 nach Suppliern gesucht. Auf dieser Messe sind wir dann zum ersten Mal mit unserem
106 Partner in Kontakt gekommen.

107 I: Jetzt noch zum Verhalten an sich. Man sagt ja, das Harmoniebedürfnis soll so groß sein
108 bei Japaner.

109 B: Ja, definitiv. Generell ist es so: Man sollte ein „Nein“ vermeiden. Es kommt immer darauf
110 an, wem man gegenübersteht. Je höher die Position, umso mehr Lachen, umso freundlicher.
111 Natürlich, man verneigt sich sehr viel, sehr, sehr viel. Vor allem, wenn es Probleme gibt,
112 dann verneigt man sich noch viel mehr. Wirklich auch immer freundlich bleiben! Also
113 generell streiten ist in Japan verpönt. Wird eigentlich wirklich nur in der unteren Schicht
114 gemacht. Streiten heißt für Japaner Inkompetenz, der ist inkompetent. Das gehört einfach
115 zur Etikette, die japanische Etikette, die ist sehr wichtig. Das Schlimmste in Japan wäre,
116 aber das kommt auch aus der Historie mit den Samurai, wenn die was falsch gemacht
117 haben, die haben sich auch das Messer in den Bauch gerammt. Der Gesichtsverlust wäre
118 das Schlimmste für einen Japaner. Wenn es wirklich negative Nachrichten gibt, dann
119 bespricht man das zu zweit unter vier Augen, aber das ist wirklich das Schlimmste, was man
120 in Japan machen kann: Jemand vor jemandem anderen bloßstellen.

121 I: Das hängt ja dann auch mit dem Respekt zusammen?

122 B: Ja, genau, das ist dann der Respekt. Der Respekt ist um einiges höher dort, als bei uns.
123 Respekt ist sehr, sehr wichtig. Auch die anderen Partner in der Branche verhalten sich
124 untereinander respektvoll. Man muss ja auch dazu sagen, dass wir ein bisschen einen
125 besonderen Fall haben, weil wir viel mit Ministerien und den Kommunen zu tun haben,
126 wenn der Staat eingeschaltet wird, dann läuft das ja auch bei uns alles etwas offizieller ab.

127 I: Was ist mit Hierarchie, inwiefern nimmt man da mehr Rücksicht darauf?

128 B: Schon vor der Reise erklären die japanischen Kunden, welche Teilnehmer von ihrer Seite
129 kommen. Wir passen unsere Gegenüber dann dementsprechend an. Das ist ganz klar, die
130 Hierarchie muss zusammenpassen, da müssen die richtigen Teilnehmer von der richtigen
131 Position dann mitkommen. Was sehr wichtig zu erwähnen ist, das gehört auch zum Respekt
132 und Gesichtsverlust: es kommen ja auch keinen neuen Entwicklungen, Ideen oder
133 Innovationen aus Japan, ganz egal ob's die Dampflokomotive ist oder die Glühbirne, denn
134 in Japan ist es so, dass der Erfolg immer der Gruppe zugeschrieben wird. Wenn einer ein
135 Erfinder ist oder Ideen hat, der kommt nicht weiter, es muss immer in der Gruppe bleiben.
136 Da gibt's auch ein Sprichwort dazu, weil sonst würden ja die anderen das Gesicht verlieren,
137 weil er ja so viel besser wäre, als die anderen und da gibt es ein japanisches Sprichwort
138 dazu und das geht: „Ein Nagel, der heraussteht, der wird eingeschlagen.“ Das ist im
139 Endeffekt genau das, dass alle Nägel auf der gleichen Höhe sind. Das ist sehr, sehr wichtig
140 für die Japaner. Bei uns ist es so, dass in den meisten Firmen Entlohnung nach Leistung
141 erfolgt und auch Beförderung erfolgt nach Leistung. In Japan ist es anders, in Japan ist es
142 so: Entlohnung folgt nach Alter und nicht nach Leistung und das gleiche auch für die
143 Beförderung.

144 I: Das führt dann eigentlich eh gleich zur nächsten Frage: In wie fern sind die jungen Japaner
145 anders, als die älteren?

146 B: Sehr schüchtern, sehr zurückhaltend. Trauen sich wirklich fast nichts zu sagen, weil die
147 Hierarchie so wichtig ist in dem Land und je jünger du bist, desto mehr wirst du unterstellt.
148 Ja, speziell die Uniabsolventen, die tun sich wirklich schwer am Anfang im Job, bis sie da
149 einmal ein bisschen reinfinden, weil sie es einfach gewohnt sind, dass sie nicht wirklich viel
150 zu sagen haben, auf gut Deutsch gesagt.

151 I: Das heißt, bei den Verhandlungen ...

152 B: Da sind keine jungen dabei. Der Junior, das ist der neue Junior dort, der ist 35. Mein
153 Gegenüber auf meiner Höhe, der ist jetzt 67. Der Chef von der Firma, der ist 85.

154 I: Wie ist das mit Frauen?

155 B: Da gibt es Frauen, gar nicht so wenige. Gerade vom Kunden, die kürzlich da waren, da ist
156 auch die Einkaufschefin eine Frau, so an die 40. Bei unserem Händler, die ist auch so um
157 die 40. Also das gibt es schon, aber eher auf der kaufmännischen Seite, weniger von der
158 technischen. Das ist bei uns aber auch so.

159 I: Was ist anders, weil sie waren ja in Japan und in Österreich in Verhandlungen, wenn die
160 Japaner in Österreich verhandeln, als wenn sie zu Hause in Japan verhandeln? Gibt es
161 Unterschiede?

162 B: Ja, gibt es schon. Also generell, ist das Umfeld da sehr wichtig. Oft kann man wertvolle
163 Informationen gewinnen, speziell in Österreich, wenn sie bisschen weg sind auch von der
164 ganzen Etikette und wenn alles ein bisschen lockerer abläuft, wie bei uns. Und in lockeren
165 Gesprächen ist es oft so, nicht im Meeting, da nicht, weil das ist offiziell, aber alles was so
166 inoffiziell ist, beim Abendessen, nach ein paar Bier, Schnaps oder beim Kaffeeautomaten,
167 diese Zeitpunkte muss man nützen, um wirklich wichtige Dinge anzusprechen, die man hier
168 zum Beispiel erfährt, die trotzdem eher confidential sind, die man in Japan nicht erfahren
169 würde. Oder auch Abnahmen, Prüfungen, Zertifizierungen, tut man sich in Österreich
170 leichter als in Japan.

171 I: Welche Veränderungen sind Ihnen aufgefallen, weil Sie den Partner ja doch schon recht
172 lange haben, wie es sich verhält nach einiger Zeit, wenn man öfter mit ihm verhandelt?

173 B: Wie ich vorher schon gesagt habe: Vertrauen. Dadurch, dass ich extrem jung gestartet
174 habe und speziell Japan war's die ersten zwei, drei Jahre wirklich schwierig, bis ich das
175 Vertrauen gewonnen habe und dann ist es eigentlich auf Basis des Vertrauens und die
176 Entwicklung der letzten Jahre ist es einfacher geworden, man kann dort auch offener
177 miteinander sprechen. Weil es ist ja doch so in Japan, man spricht im Endeffekt doch viel
178 um den heißen Brei und kommt nicht wirklich zum Punkt, also der kommt nie wirklich zum
179 Punkt.

180 I: In wie fern hat sich der Verhandlungsstil geändert? Ist der jetzt näher am europäischen
181 Verhandlungsstil?

182 B: Es ist schon so, seitdem wir uns mehr vertrauen und seitdem wir uns besser kennen, ist
183 der Verhandlungsstil offener. Wir öffnen gegenseitig unsere Zahlen mehr, vertrauen uns
184 mehr, reden auch hier auf einer direkteren Basis. Es ist dann schon ein bisschen mehr der
185 europäische Stil, um auch etwas effizienter zu werden. Das war mir aber auch wichtig in
186 der Entwicklung, dass wir ein bisschen einblenden, dass das Ganze ein bisschen effizienter
187 wird.

188 I: Haben Sie auch neue Partner oder nur den einen?

189 B: In Japan haben wir nur den einen. In Japan ist es fast nicht möglich zwei Partner zu haben.
190 Das wichtigste für den Händler dort ist, dass er exklusiv unsere Firma vertritt. Das ist auch
191 wirklich so. Das ist, wie wenn der Honda-Autohändler auch Suzuki haben würde, das gibt
192 es nicht. Wenn es da mehrere gibt, das wäre der Gesichtsverlust für den einen. Das ist von
193 der zwischenmenschlichen Ebene fast unmöglich, dass man zwei- oder dreigleisig fährt, das
194 wäre zumindest für uns keine gute Lösung. Wenn, dann würden wir wirklich selber einen
195 Standort eröffnen in Japan.

196 I: Gut, dann danke ich!