

I'm not a bot





































[illegible]



The three-stage preparation-negotiation-act model does not precisely distinguish between the activities and events in each stage in a situation of complex negotiation process.In the negotiation literature, the problem of boundaries is not just the definitional issue. It has several practical implications in the ways in which one thinks and acts during business negotiations. The purpose of this study was to explore how negotiators prepare before entering into a negotiation process. This chapter presents an analysis of the preparatory processes of good research in social psychology, and offers some prescriptions to the negotiators. The three-stage model, while useful, also points out that the preparatory stages are often neglected or given less attention than they deserve. The model also draws attention away from the need to continue to acquire information and continue planning over the entire course of a negotiation process. The separation of thinking from acting leads one to a position where there is too much emphasis on information gathering, analyzing and planning preceding the stage of negotiation and too little on learning any new information and adapting to such new information while coming to the negotiating table.Limits of PreparationThe review of negotiation literature indicates that more preparation, which precedes the actual process of negotiation, is likely to yield better results and therefore it is advisable to invest as many resources as possible in preparation. Nevertheless, there is no indication in the literature as to the point where preparation is enough or is too much. Just as the boundaries, problems deal with the meaning of preparing to negotiate, the second issue of limits to preparation deals with what it means to prepare enough to negotiate.Limits on ResourcesOne of the most fundamental limits confronted by a party to a negotiation is the limitation imposed by the finite resources available for negotiation. Even the best-prepared negotiating team might have been subjected to the constraints on time, expertise, money, data, access to documents (Watkins, 2002) and other tangible resources. Limitations on available resources act as a restriction on the magnitude of the overall preparation efforts of the parties to the negotiation. It is not always possible for the negotiators to prepare as much as they would like to because of these limitations and this fact is often overlooked by the negotiation literature.The limitations on various resources also force the negotiators to undertake a change in their strategy at different times during the negotiation process. In addition, the limited availability of resources may lead them to make decisions about whether to give up certain goals or objectives if they cannot obtain the needed amount of information as to whether such additional information to be gathered through more research is really worth the cost or whether it is worth the while to spend the additional time on analyzing the already gathered information. The need to make these types of decisions forces negotiators make a careful analysis of the different priorities and to decide in advance which types of preparatory activities are likely to give them greater benefits during the process of actual negotiation.Limitation on Information AvailabilityEven when the parties have infinite resources available to them, they may not be in a position alone to get what they want while preparing for the negotiation. Negotiations represent games of incomplete information. There are some fundamental reasons, which lead to this incompleteness in the information available. They are:negotiations are characterized by a high degree of complexity, involving a number of variables, which interact with each other in mostly unforeseeable ways;negotiators suffer from high uncertainty because of an inherent lack of knowledge about the future state of the world;negotiations also possess the character of high ambiguity, which restricts the chances of getting complete information about ones own interests and alternatives or those of the opponents and in addition there would always be shifts in the interests and alternatives;uncertainty also suffers from the limitation that parties to a negotiation engage in various deceptive activities of deliberately concealing information from the opposite side or providing misleading or inaccurate information on the partys interests and alternatives;negotiations are basically indeterminate, in that it is the interaction of the parties during the process of negotiation which determines the specific agreement within the range of all possible agreements that are possible. It is to be noted that no amount of information gathered would be able to predict the course of that particular interaction which decides the specific agreement;negotiations represent a strong non-linear phenomenon, in which minor changes in inputs can result in large variations in outputs. Thus, small differences in the size of an offer made by one of the parties could result in a disproportionately large response either in terms of acceptance or rejection of the offer. These are other factors, even though they do not directly affect the outcome of the press of negotiation. For instance, the simple event of whether the negotiators shake hands when they enter the negotiating room first may influence the course of the negotiation. This will happen irrespective of the issues involved and the interests of the parties at stake. There are other factors like the chance of discovering common acquaintances, factors of gender and age of the negotiators or even the choice of the office building, which is used for negotiation, which might affect the outcome of the process, just as it happens with many other non-linear systems, the important aspects of negotiation may become irreversible.For example, a lost temper at an early stage of negotiation is likely to impair the relations between the negotiators throughout the process of negotiation until the end and it may not be possible to repair any damage once done. It is also not possible that negotiators could prepare for the impacts of non-linearity in the process of negotiation. At best, they can only recognize and adapt to the effects as and when the incidents occur during the course of negotiating process.These reasons prevent the negotiators from knowing every piece of information they would like to know and any amount of preparation cannot equip them to know the extent they went to know. For example, one of the principal actions in the process of preparing is to gather information on the interests and alternatives of the other party.Nevertheless, irrespective of whatever time, efforts, and other resources the negotiators apply in this activity, they may not be in a position to gain a complete understanding of the other partys interests and alternatives because of the reasons listed above. It may not be possible for the negotiators to perceive the interests of the other party even if they apply infinite resources. In addition, the resources invested in the activity will provide only diminishing returns, as it is often difficult to obtain more and more information even on applying additional resources. While the value of devoting some effortand perhaps considerable effortto this activity is undeniable, it is equally clear that there is a limit beyond which further increase shows very low marginal utility.Chapter ObjectivesThis chapter discusses the importance of sharing cognitive cognitions, beliefs, attitudes, values, assumptions, etc., among the participants in the negotiation process. Although the cognitive limits are less obvious than the limitations emanating from finite resources and incomplete information, the cognitive limits may be important in deciding the possible extent of the preparation. Unlike the limitations of resources and information, the cognitive limits not only restrict the magnitude and efficacy of the preparation process but also actually weaken the process by reducing the ability of the negotiator to achieve a desirable outcome of the negotiation.The nature of human perception and reasoning can affect some basic elements of preparation. To illustrate, analyzing ones own interests being one of the activities of preparation, although crucial, carries with its own set of dangers. One of the fundamental assumptions underlying the analysis of interests is the stability of the interests and preferences of the negotiators. If the interests and preferences are stable, then it becomes easier to analyze, evaluate and solidify in advance, which acts to reduce the risk of the negotiators being sidetracked or losing sight of the original objectives.The potential cost of this activity also needs to be recognized. However, interests and preferences, which are considered as stable and known cannot be expected to evolve or change during the process of negotiation, with the new opportunities arising or new information becoming available. These changes in preferences often become an important component in the dynamics of negotiation, which allows the negotiators to take into account new information, adapt to changes in their relationship and expand the possibilities of arriving at agreeable solutions.However, considering the interests and preferences as stable becomes additionally problematic in the cases where complex internal negotiations are expected to establish a position covering the external negotiations. Once an internal coalition has coalesced around an apparently stable set of interests, participants in the external rounds may have lost virtually all flexibility in responding to new proposals and concessions.(Watkins & Rosen, 2001). Similarly, the role of emotions in decision making is another factor that influences the process of negotiation. Emotions play a significant role in determining the outcomes of negotiations. On the one hand, negative emotions tend to hinder the progress of negotiations and thus, the complete resolution of conflict. On the other hand, positive emotions help in achieving mutual satisfaction in resolving conflicts. Therefore, managing emotions plays a significant amount of work has been done on the process of quantifying interests and alternatives and in assigning values to the issues and possible outcomes so that negotiators could arrive at the negotiating table with a precise understanding of their preferences and the ability to score the other partys offers and proposals. This process actually facilitates the negotiators in developing elaborate scoring systems and in investing significant time in assigning values for the likely offers and proposals. There is one danger associated with the negotiators putting too much effort in analyzing the interests and alternatives in that they become committed to the systems they have developed. Such commitment encourages them to expect to obtain a predetermined score. This makes them judge the options and outcomes purely in terms of scores or points. Consequently, there may occur a loss of flexibility, creativity and receptivity to compromise which are essential qualities for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.The risks, which are inherent in analyzing ones own interests and preferences, are even more apparent in the process of analyzing the interests of other parties. This prescription applies only to those who undertake the process of preparation preceding the negotiation process and one cannot dispute the value of such analysis. However, there is a high probability of stereotyping in which one party assumes its interests would match with those of whatever large group the party is associated with and this probability cannot be ruled out. This situation is most likely to arise in the case international negotiations. There is also the probability of making wrong guesses about the things which matter, to the other party. Such mistaken beliefs and assumptions about the interests and alternatives of the other party have the effect of narrowing the range of options generated and considered in the course of the process of negotiation and they reduce the chances of arriving at an efficient agreement. If one of the parties becomes confident about his/her understanding of the other party's interests and alternatives, he/she may stop trying to learn anything else about the other party. On the contrary, if one suspects that the other party is hiding something, he/she may start looking for signs of deception. Both these situations may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies and opportunities for sabotaging likely agreements (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994).The effect of these cognitive limits is that as and when the deliberations in the negotiating table proceeds and there is an exchange of views and proposals among the parties, the negotiators may have to unlearn many of the things that they presume they have learnt before arriving at the negotiating table. The analysis and planning that might take place before the parties meet at the negotiating table might have been based on information, which was incomplete. In order to avoid becoming stuck to initial assessments which may not be accurate, the negotiators must be willing to amend or even discard the beliefs formed earlier in the face of conflicting evidence. Thus, because of the effect of the cognitive limits the negotiators who have spent considerable time and efforts in gathering information, analyzing it and devising detailed plans may not be willing or able to amend their beliefs and adapt them to the course of the actual process of negotiation, which contain face-to-face discussions.Resource, informational and cognitive limits inflict major constraints on the process of preparing to negotiate. These limitations suggest that there is a duty for negotiators to think carefully about the goals of preparing. They also advise that the negotiators must consider setting priorities as a crucial first step and that unlearning is as important as learning and it is even possible that they might get too prepared for the negotiations. Even though preparation is an important step in the negotiation process, it has some potential drawbacks. Even the most basic prescriptions, such as those about analyzing interests, entail caveats that a prospective negotiator must recognize and address.(Watkins & Rosen, 2001).It is a fact that the existing literature has ignored the limits to preparing greatly and one cannot expect much help from the literature on the extent to which one should prepare to continue with the negotiation process and identify key areas to understand both sides' positions prior to the negotiation. On the other hand, the complete reliance on information gathering and analysis to develop strategies and plan for the negotiation process seems to be flawed. When we look at the history of negotiation theory, we find that the traditional view of bargaining saw information gathering, preparing and negotiation are not entirely different. Therefore, it is difficult and often not useful to distinguish one chronological stage from the other. It is problematic particularly with the preparation stage to deem it as a distinct stage because it is ambiguous because of the fact that all the three activities associated with preparation namely information gathering, analyzing and planning happen to take place through the negotiating process. It is not possible to separate thinking from acting.Similarly, the existence of resource, informational and cognitive limits force the negotiators to make a cost-benefit analysis through the entire process of negotiation. Because of the fact that the activities connected with information gathering, analyzing and planning entail cost and are subject to diminishing returns, the negotiators must compare the costs of undertaking the activities with the benefits likely to occur from such activities. Based on such cost-benefit analysis the negotiators should make the allocation of the available resources. More particularly the negotiators have to make their decisions from three different perspectives the amount of time and resources to be invested in information gathering, analyses and planning away from the negotiating table,the time and resources to be invested in acting to adapt to the circumstances away from the negotiating table and planned way at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and at the table.The characteristics and context of the situation facing the negotiators will have to be taken into account by the negotiators in making these decisions.An alternative to the three-stage preparation model, which advises more preparation, a model of repeated cycles of learning and planning will be of more use. In this model, learning implies gathering and analyzing information available from whatever sources both away from the table and during the course of negotiations at the negotiating table.Planning encompasses using the gathered information to devise plans for possible future action and to identify key areas to understand both sides' positions prior to the negotiation. On the other hand, the complete reliance on information gathering and analysis to develop strategies and plan for the negotiation process seems to be flawed. When we look at the history of negotiation theory, we find that the traditional view of bargaining saw information gathering, preparing and negotiation are not entirely different. Therefore, it is difficult and often not useful to distinguish one chronological stage from the other. It is problematic particularly with the preparation stage to deem it as a distinct stage because it is ambiguous because of the fact that all the three activities associated with preparation namely information gathering, analyzing and planning happen to take place through the negotiating process. It is not possible to separate thinking from acting.Similarly, the existence of resource, informational and cognitive limits force the negotiators to make a cost-benefit analysis through the entire process of negotiation. Because of the fact that the activities connected with information gathering, analyzing and planning entail cost and are subject to diminishing returns, the negotiators must compare the costs of undertaking the activities with the benefits likely to occur from such activities. Based on such cost-benefit analysis the negotiators should make the allocation of the available resources. More particularly the negotiators have to make their decisions from three different perspectives the amount of time and resources to be invested in information gathering, analyses and planning away from the negotiating table,the time and resources to be invested in acting to adapt to the circumstances away from the negotiating table and planned way at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and during the course of negotiations at the negotiating table.Planning encompasses using the gathered information to devise plans for possible future action and to identify key areas to understand both sides' positions prior to the negotiation. On the other hand, the complete reliance on information gathering and analysis to develop strategies and plan for the negotiation process seems to be flawed. When we look at the history of negotiation theory, we find that the traditional view of bargaining saw information gathering, preparing and negotiation are not entirely different. Therefore, it is difficult and often not useful to distinguish one chronological stage from the other. It is problematic particularly with the preparation stage to deem it as a distinct stage because it is ambiguous because of the fact that all the three activities associated with preparation namely information gathering, analyzing and planning happen to take place through the negotiating process. It is not possible to separate thinking from acting.Similarly, the existence of resource, informational and cognitive limits force the negotiators to make a cost-benefit analysis through the entire process of negotiation. Because of the fact that the activities connected with information gathering, analyzing and planning entail cost and are subject to diminishing returns, the negotiators must compare the costs of undertaking the activities with the benefits likely to occur from such activities. Based on such cost-benefit analysis the negotiators should make the allocation of the available resources. More particularly the negotiators have to make their decisions from three different perspectives the amount of time and resources to be invested in information gathering, analyses and planning away from the negotiating table,the time and resources to be invested in acting to adapt to the circumstances away from the negotiating table and planned way at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and during the course of negotiations at the negotiating table.Planning encompasses using the gathered information to devise plans for possible future action and to identify key areas to understand both sides' positions prior to the negotiation. On the other hand, the complete reliance on information gathering and analysis to develop strategies and plan for the negotiation process seems to be flawed. When we look at the history of negotiation theory, we find that the traditional view of bargaining saw information gathering, preparing and negotiation are not entirely different. Therefore, it is difficult and often not useful to distinguish one chronological stage from the other. It is problematic particularly with the preparation stage to deem it as a distinct stage because it is ambiguous because of the fact that all the three activities associated with preparation namely information gathering, analyzing and planning happen to take place through the negotiating process. It is not possible to separate thinking from acting.Similarly, the existence of resource, informational and cognitive limits force the negotiators to make a cost-benefit analysis through the entire process of negotiation. Because of the fact that the activities connected with information gathering, analyzing and planning entail cost and are subject to diminishing returns, the negotiators must compare the costs of undertaking the activities with the benefits likely to occur from such activities. Based on such cost-benefit analysis the negotiators should make the allocation of the available resources. More particularly the negotiators have to make their decisions from three different perspectives the amount of time and resources to be invested in information gathering, analyses and planning away from the negotiating table,the time and resources to be invested in acting to adapt to the circumstances away from the negotiating table and planned way at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and at the tabletople ways of learning both away from and during the course of negotiations at the negotiating table.

This chapter presents an analysis of the preparatory processes of good research in social psychology, and offers some prescriptions to the negotiators. The three-stage model, while useful, also points out that the preparatory stages are often neglected or given less attention than they deserve. The model also draws attention away from the need to continue to acquire information and continue planning over the entire

