

# Chinese Official Negotiators Mindset and Practice

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# **Chinese Official Negotiators Mindset and Practice**

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## **Executive Summary**

Four types of Chinese official negotiators are identified in terms of their negotiating mindset and practice: the avoiding negotiator, the accommodative negotiator, the persuading negotiator and the problem-solving negotiator. The evolution of the mindset and practice of Chinese official negotiators is explained from four perspectives: traditional Confucian culture, revolutionary culture, Chinese bureaucracy and international conventions. It is shown that with the fading of revolutionary culture, the resurgence of traditional culture and the deepening of the course of opening up, Chinese negotiators will tend to be more of the problem-solving type, who conduct negotiation in order to advance both China's national interests and the interests of international community.





# Introduction

With the rapid and consistent increase in its economic development over the past 30 years, China has become an increasingly important global actor involved in both bilateral and multilateral negotiations on topics such as trade disputes and climate change, as well as regional and global security cooperation, all of which are pressing issues in the international community. However, Chinese official negotiators have developed a distinctive approach to conducting negotiation that is different to that of their Western counterparts. Why are Chinese official negotiators sometimes insistent or confrontational, while at other times collaborative and even accommodative? Terms such as arrogant, sincere, deceptive, *guanxi* (relationships) and *mianzi* (face) have often been used to describe and explain Chinese negotiators, but are not sufficient to give a complete picture of Chinese official negotiators from 1949 up to now. This paper deals with four perspectives: traditional culture, revolutionary culture, Chinese bureaucracy and international norms.

## Who Are Chinese Official Negotiators?

Since the era of reform and opening up began in 1978, the Chinese negotiation style has been a hot topic in the international community. However, current research on negotiation deals mainly with Chinese negotiators active in international business negotiations,<sup>1</sup> which makes the focus on the Chinese official negotiators, who conduct the negotiation of issues of high politics inadequately.<sup>2</sup> Unlike previous studies, this paper focuses on Chinese offi-

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Rajesh Kumar and Verner Worm, *International Negotiation in China and India: A Comparison of the Emerging Business Giants* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Robert M. March and Su-hwa Wu, *The Chinese Negotiator: How to Succeed in the World's Largest Market* (Tokyo: New York: Kodansha International, 2007); Tony Fang, *Chinese Business Negotiating Style* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999); and Maria Lai-Ling Lam *Working with Chinese Expatriates in Business Negotiations: Portraits, Issues, and Applications* (Westport, Conn.: Quorum, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests through "Old Friends"* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace, 1999) was one of the first books that focused on the Chinese officials' negotiating behavior. This book dealt with the negotiating behavior of high-ranking Chinese officials such as Zhou Enlai, Huang Hua, Deng

cial negotiators, whose work is supposed to serve national interests, rather than the interests of a single company or their own individual interests. Specifically, they include: (1) Officials from the *si tao banzi* (four sections)<sup>3</sup> of the Chinese political system, i.e., Party Committees, the government, the National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the commissions, offices and bureaus affiliated with the four sections. Such officials include, for example, Zhu Weiqun, the executive vice minister of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and other members of the delegation who are engaging with and talking to the private representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama; Ouyang Yujing, vice director general of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and his colleagues who are involved in negotiations on boundaries and territories; Long Yongtu, the chief negotiator for China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and former vice minister of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation; Xie Zhenhua, the head of the Chinese delegation in climate negotiations, the vice minister of the National Development and Reform Committee (NDRC), other members of negotiation delegations, etc.

(2) Employees from state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and industrial associations, like the Wuhan Iron and Steel (Group) Corporation and the China Iron and Steel Association, who are conducting negotiations on iron ore with foreign iron and steel companies. The reason to include employees of SOEs engaging in international business negotiations among Chinese official negotiators is that SOE employees, like government officials, also serve national interests when they negotiate.

Any stereotypical idea about Chinese official negotiators would be wrong, as both their negotiation mindsets and their negotiation behaviors vary greatly from one time to another and from one person to another. In general, the performance of government officials during the Deng era was

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Xiaoping, Qiao Guanhua, Huang Zhen, and Ji Chaozhu, who conducted most negotiating encounters with U.S. officials in the 1970s.

<sup>3</sup> Differing from the U.S. system of "checks and balances," which consists of three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch and the judicial branch, in which each of the three branches "checks" the power of the other two branches in order to make sure that power is balanced between them, the political system of the People's Republic of China (PRC) consists of four branches: the Chinese Communist Party, the government, the National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference, with the party possessing dominating power over the other three branches.

quite different to that of those in the Mao era; moreover, the negotiating mindsets and practices of central and local officials also differ from each other. Among the central government organizations, officials from governmental agencies dealing with external affairs such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce (formerly Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation) also have negotiating mindsets and practices that differ from officials from departments for domestic affairs. What are the differences? Why are there differences? These questions will now be discussed.

## Four Types of Chinese Official Negotiators

Western negotiation scholars classify negotiators by different mindsets and practices. The U.S. historian Gordon A. Craig divides negotiators into optimizing negotiators and accommodative negotiators,<sup>4</sup> while Brigid Starkey, a negotiation researcher from the University of Maryland, classifies them as belonging to two types, competitive and collaborative.<sup>5</sup> Other classifications are: (1) distributive negotiator vs. integrative negotiator, as proposed by Dr. Roy J. Lewicki of Ohio State University,<sup>6</sup> (2) position-based and interest-based negotiators as proposed by Professor Roger Fisher of the Harvard Negotiation Institute,<sup>7</sup> (3) backward-looking and forward-looking negotiators as proposed by Professor I. William Zartman of Johns Hopkins University.<sup>8</sup> Although different categories and words are applied, in general, the negotiators can be seen as belonging to two types: the competitive and the cooperative negotiator. The former regards negotiations as a zero-sum game, and fails to consider the other parties' interests in the negotiation. He does not trust his counterparts, tries to hide information, uncompromisingly sticks to firm positions and may even cheat or use pressure to pursue his interests. Negotiators who are optimizing, competitive, distributive, position-based and backward-looking can be regarded as belonging to this category. However, negotiators who are accommodative, collaborative, integrative, interest-based or forward-looking treat the negotiation as a win-win game. They not only pursue their own interests in the negotiation, but also consider the requirements of the other side's reasonable interests. The goal of their negotiation is to address the issues faced by both parties. They will

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2004), 239.

<sup>5</sup> Brigid Starkey, Mark A. Boyer, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, *Negotiating a Complex World: An Introduction to International Negotiation* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005), 120–22.

<sup>6</sup> Roy J. Lewicki et al., *Negotiation: Readings, Exercises, and Cases*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 35; *The Essentials of Negotiation* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press; Alexandria, Va.: Society for Human Resource Management, 2005), 48–57.

<sup>7</sup> Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving in* (New York: Penguin Group [USA], 1991), 41–55.

<sup>8</sup> *Peace Versus Justice: Negotiating Forward- and Backward-looking Outcomes*, ed. I. William Zartman, Victor Kremenyuk (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 2.

have basic trust in their counterparts, release information, understand the importance of compromise, and not take actions such as cheating, which harm bilateral relations.

The above dichotomy is however over-simplified. The situation in China is special and complex, so a simple dichotomy of the above type cannot include all types of negotiators. There are also more refined schemes. Professor Dean Pruitt, a psychologist at the State University of New York, has devised three categories: the contending, the problem-solving and the yielding negotiator. The contending negotiator tries to persuade their counterpart to make concessions to achieve their own goals, much like the competitive negotiators discussed above. The problem-solving negotiator tries to put forward plans that can satisfy the goals of all parties involved, much like the cooperative negotiators discussed above. The yielding negotiator lowers his objective to ensure that the agreement is reached.<sup>9</sup> However, this analysis cannot easily be applied to the situation in China. Contending negotiators, problem-solving negotiators and yielding negotiators will all treat the negotiation seriously as an effective mechanism for problem solving. There is, however, still a group of negotiators in China that lack knowledge of negotiations, who do not regard a negotiation as a mechanism for problem solving, but only take advantage of the negotiation mechanism, which makes it difficult to include them in any of the above-mentioned categories. In summary, it would be very difficult to apply the current Western negotiation categories on negotiations to analyze the behavior of Chinese official negotiators.

This paper will identify four types of Chinese official negotiators based on their mindset and practice. A negotiator can be: (1) avoiding: a confrontational negotiator without awareness of the value of negotiation per se and avoiding agreement; (2) persuading: a confrontational negotiator with awareness of the value of negotiation per se and trying to persuade his counterpart to give in; (3) accommodative: a cooperative negotiator without awareness of the value of negotiation per se and ready to be accommodative to his counterparty; and (4) problem solving: a collaborative negotiator with awareness of the value of negotiation per se and aiming to solve all parties' problems. The reason to take into account whether the negotiator has

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<sup>9</sup> Dean G. Pruitt, "Strategy in Negotiation," in *International Negotiation: Analysis, Approaches, Issues*, ed. Victor A. Kremenjuk (Beijing: Huaxia Publishing House, 2004), 87–88.

awareness of the value of negotiation per se or not as a criterion for assessing negotiators is because there are quite a few Chinese official negotiators who are unaware of the value of negotiation per se and only use certain negotiations as a weapon or means to achieve goals beyond the negotiation, which has had a negative influence on the negotiation process and outcome.

**Fig. 1. Four Types of Chinese Official Negotiators**

		MINDSET	
		Underestimating the value of negotiation	Aware of the value of negotiation
PRAC-TICE	Confrontational	I. AVOIDING	III. PERSUADING
	Cooperative	II. ACCOMMODATIVE	IV. PROBLEM SOLVING

Source: Author

### **Type I. Avoiding Negotiators: Confrontational and Underestimating the Value of Negotiation Per Se**

This type was quite common<sup>10</sup> among Chinese official negotiators during the Mao era.<sup>11</sup> For them, negotiation is not a tool to address problems for both parties involved, but an extension of anti-imperialist warfare; the goal of negotiation is not to get any agreement, but to impute to foreign adversaries

<sup>10</sup> Prime Minister Zhou Enlai was an exception. In an interpretive essay by Chas W. Freeman, Jr. in Solomon's book, Zhou is described as "a man universally regarded as remarkable for his leadership skills, diplomatic craft, and urbane cosmopolitanism." See Chas W. Freeman, Jr., "Chinese Negotiating Behavior Revisited," in Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 181.

<sup>11</sup> The Mao Zedong era refers to the years from 1949 to 1978, when China was isolated from the Western world, while the Deng Xiaoping era refers to the period after 1978, when China began to reform and open up.

motives and objectives and to show the Chinese people's courage and determination to fight against U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism.

The armistice negotiation in the Korean War is an illustrative case. After the third campaign, DPRK troops and Chinese People's volunteers (CPV) crossed the 38th Parallel and captured Seoul. On January 13, 1951, the three-member UN ceasefire committee adopted a five-step proposal to address the Korean issue. What merits attention is that the Taiwan issue and the PRC's seat in the UN (both of which are core interests for China) were also listed on the proposed agenda, which was seen as a great opportunity for China to stop the war and start a negotiation.<sup>12</sup> However, this mediation plan, which was favorable for China, was turned down by the Chinese rather than the U.S. side. The two parties returned to the battlefield, and both suffered heavy losses. As shown in the declassified archive, 80 percent of China's casualties in this war came after the third campaign.<sup>13</sup> Why did China miss a really good chance for armistice negotiation? According to the recollections of the CPV's Chief of Staff Xie Fang, "China believed that the U.S. was playing tricks and attempting to manipulate China by using the UN."<sup>14</sup> Commander-in-Chief Peng Dehuai of the CPV said: "We should never count on the enemies to drop their weapons, and become a Buddha." They doubted the feasibility of addressing the issues through negotiations. They did not realize that negotiation is a far more effective and lower-cost way to resolve disputes than war.

The PRC-USSR border negotiation during the Mao era is another example that shows the avoiding negotiators' negative attitude toward negotiation and their confrontational behavior at the negotiation table. The border negotiation started in 1964, and lasted for as long as 40 years until the border issue was finally resolved with an agreement in 2004 signed by the foreign ministers of Russia and China, the "Supplementary Agreement on the Eastern Section of the China-Russia Boundary Line." As recalled by Zhou Xiaopei, who witnessed the PRC-USSR border negotiation from the 1960s

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<sup>12</sup> Yafeng Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 46.

<sup>13</sup> Shen Zhihua, "The gains and losses of the decision of China's entering the Korean War, an examination and introspection on the Korean War 50 years later," *The 21 Century* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong), No. 10, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Xie Fang, "Recollections of the Armistice Negotiation in the Korean War," in *Record on the Panmunjom Negotiations*, ed. Chai Chengwen (Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2000), 22.

to the 2000s, the negotiation between China and the USSR in 1960s was just an all-out “fight with words,” *wendou*,<sup>15</sup> during which each side often used acrimonious words to bitterly attack the other in the negotiations.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, China set “preconditions” for the negotiations, which prevented them from making any progress for a long time. Fortunately, since the end of the Mao era in China, many changes have taken place in the domestic political environment; there are no longer any of the above-mentioned avoiding negotiators sitting at the international negotiation table, although some traits of their confrontational style have been passed on to their successors.

## **Type II. Accommodative Negotiators: Cooperative and Underestimating the Value of Negotiation Per Se**

As mentioned above, due to underestimating the value of negotiation per se, the negotiators of the avoiding type usually treated the negotiation as a tool that could be used to fight the enemy, and therefore behaved competitively and even confrontationally at the negotiation table. Likewise, during the Mao era, this approach was often used as a tool to solidify friendship, and negotiators were, accordingly, cooperative and even accommodative. The compromises that the Chinese side made in some important negotiations went beyond their counterparts’ expectations.

The Sino-Japanese negotiation on rapprochement in 1972 is one example. Before Japan’s prime minister, Tanaka Kakuei, visited China, he sent a special emissary to Beijing, Takeiri Yoshikatsu, the chairman of the Komeito Party, for a meeting with Zhou Enlai. The gap between the two parties’ positions was initially so large that the negotiation was at one time suspended. When Takeiri was feeling depressed, Zhou met with him again and informed him that China would attempt to compromise. Subsequently, Takeiri reported to Foreign Minister Ōhira Masayoshi that the outcome “is better than I expected.” After being informed of the Chinese position, Tanaka commented: “Zhou Enlai is really kind and accommodative.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Wendou* (文斗), nonviolent struggle, was a term created in and popular in China from 1966 to 1976, when Mao was launching the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution all around China. It was later often used to describe a situation in which two parties whose opinions were at odds debate fiercely and quarrel bitterly.

<sup>16</sup> Zhou Xiaopei, “Witnessing Sino-Russia Relations Get Back on Track,” in *Stories from Ambassadors*, ed. Niu Li (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2010), 178–79.

<sup>17</sup> Chen Dunde, *Diplomatic Negotiation Cases of Contemporary China* (Beijing: China



Why did China, a confrontational player with the U.S. and USSR, appear to be so cooperative in its negotiation with Japan? The reason was that, under China's "one-line strategy,"<sup>18</sup> the Soviet Union was identified as the strategic target. In order to achieve this strategic goal, it was very important to unite all potential allies, of whom Japan was one. As a result, establishing China–Japan diplomatic relations was basically a tool against the Soviet Union. In this situation, issues such as war reparations were secondary. If drawn into a tangle of quarrels on reparations, China could lose its opportunity to gain a friend in the fight against the Soviet Union. Considering this situation, making a compromise was helpful to achieving a more important strategic goal.

A similar case of the accommodative type of negotiation occurred in 1960 between China and Burma, when China signed the border treaty with Burma. Through this treaty, China took back Panhung and Panlao, which were in fact under the control of China, and Kpimaw (Bhamo), which was originally recognized by the UK and Burma, while at the same time accepting a line of actual control (including a portion of the so-called McMahon Line)<sup>19</sup> and the 1941 Line<sup>20</sup> as the borderline. This settlement plan was also well debated on the Chinese side.<sup>21</sup>

Why did China, a comparatively powerful party in the negotiation, make such a substantial compromise as accepting the McMahon Line and the 1941 Line as the borderline? The reasons were the same as those which

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Youth Publishing House, 2005), 510.

<sup>18</sup> The "one line strategy," put forth by Mao Zedong in the early 1970s, implied coordinating the strategy of the United States, Japan, China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Western Europe to form an anti-Soviet Union geopolitical line. The strategy played a leading role in developing Chinese foreign policy during the 1970s.

<sup>19</sup> The McMahon Line, named after Sir Henry McMahon, foreign secretary of British India, was negotiated between Tibet and Britain at the 1914 Shimla Conference as the borderline to demarcate British India (Burma being one part of it) and Tibet. However, successive Chinese governments refused to accept the McMahon Line as the borderline.

<sup>20</sup> In 1941, the government of the Republic of China, facing the crisis of the Japanese invasion and British threat, exchanged a note with Britain on the China–Burma border. The borderline reached in the note is called the "1941 line." The People's Republic of China accepted the 1941 line, even though it was supposed to reject it under one of its three foreign policies, "cleaning the house and then inviting the guest," meaning the new government would not recognize all the treaties signed with the West in the past, and cancel all the privileges and rights of the West acquired from those treaties.

<sup>21</sup> Bei Chun, "Reflection on the Sino–Burma Border Negotiation," *Xinhua*, November 9, 2009, accessed August 28, 2012, [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_4c66ef480100g5yr.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4c66ef480100g5yr.html)

lay behind the China–Burma negotiations. In order to break the U.S. blockade, China had to unite with Burma, a country that is of great importance for China in geopolitical terms. Therefore, the partition of the disputed territory was not a major issue, as the major interest of China was to maintain friendly relations with Burma. These two negotiation cases prove that the importance of the negotiations per se was not fully appreciated by the Chinese officials, and the negotiations were used as a tool in furthering China's grand diplomatic strategy.

Compared to the official negotiators of the Mao era, the official negotiators of the Deng era, particularly those who worked in the ministries related to external affairs, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, began to learn more about negotiations and how to behave more professionally at the negotiation table. However, it was common to see that the officials working mainly on domestic affairs continued to fail to fully understand the value of negotiation and also lacked knowledge of negotiation. One major Chinese SOE was trying to conduct negotiations over an iron ore mine with a company in a neighboring country.<sup>22</sup> The only interpreter in the Chinese delegation was a fresh university graduate. She thought that she was not good enough to deal with such an important negotiation and talked to her manager. However, the reply from the manager was simple: "Do not worry, we are an SOE."

What is the logic behind such an answer? One guess would be that negotiation is just symbolic, as most deals are made under the table. The other hypothesis would be: we are a rich SOE and are not worried about losing money. Either of these would indicate that the manager did not treat the negotiation seriously. Underestimating the importance of negotiation and lacking knowledge of how to pursue negotiations, China engages in many international negotiations without being fully prepared. As a result, Chinese official negotiators, without being equipped with options, criteria and alternatives, have had to accept the options, criteria and drafts of agreement proposed by their counterparts, and turned out to be quite accommodative to them. In other words, this kind of accommodative negotiator made concessions because they underestimated the value of negotiation per se and did not prepare adequately for the negotiation.

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<sup>22</sup> This case is collected from a private conversation between the writer and the interpreter, Beijing, April 16, 2011.

Moreover, Chinese negotiators of the accommodative type nowadays usually make concessions for personal interests. Official negotiators are supposed to serve collective interests or national interests when they participate in international negotiations on behalf of their corporation or country. However, they sometimes put personal interests first. One study shows that, in order to get contracts signed with negotiators from mainland China, 73.5 percent of Hong Kong businessmen treat their counterparts to dinner, 67.9 percent buy them gifts and 27.4 percent offer them sightseeing trips.<sup>23</sup> The U.S. Avery Dennison bribery case<sup>24</sup> and the Rio Tinto spy case<sup>25</sup> are just the two latest cases to raise the alarm that there are always Chinese negotiators serving their own personal interests, when they conduct negotiations on behalf of their company or country.

Both during the Mao era, when negotiation was utilized as a tool to realize diplomatic strategic objectives, and during the Deng era, when negotiations were treated as a method to pursue personal interests, interest in negotiation per se was overlooked. This blind spot has brought tremendous harm to China's national interests. Therefore, for China, accommodative negotiators who are cooperative but lacking knowledge of negotiation should be carefully watched for.

### **Type III. Persuading Negotiators: Confrontational and Aware of the Value of Negotiation**

Enormous changes have taken place both in China and in its international relations since 1978, when the country began to reform and open up. China has been adapting to these changes, accepting the institutionalized international mechanisms and norms. The Chinese government has gradually realized that in an era of global interdependence, negotiation is both an important mechanism for conflict solving, and an effective approach for economic cooperation. During the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' regular press conferences, its spokesperson always emphasizes the need to address

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<sup>23</sup> Vasily Kashin, "The Characteristics of the Chinese Negotiation Strategy," *Trade in Military Goods*, No. 1, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> "American Company Admits Bribery Case in China," chinaCSR.com, August 12, 2009, accessed August 12, 2012, <http://www.chinacsr.com/en/2009/08/12/5895-american-company-admits-bribery-case-in-china/>

<sup>25</sup> "Rio Tinto 'spy' case not finished yet," *Global Times*, August 13, 2009, accessed August 17, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/business/comment/2009-08/457370.html>

international hotspot issues, such as the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and in Iran, through negotiation.<sup>26</sup> Even on sensitive issues concerning China's core national interests such as the South China Sea, the mainstream opinion in China remains that "disputes over the sovereignty of some reef islands in the South China Sea should be solved by the parties involved through peaceful means such as dialogue and negotiation. The countries involved should follow the principle of 'shelving disputes and seeking joint development' until the disputes have been resolved'."<sup>27</sup>

Despite Chinese official negotiators already having become aware of the value of negotiations, they still, for various reasons, have occasionally approached the negotiation with quite strong competitive features. Some scholars observe that "at international summits, Beijing has been largely focused on pursuing its interests in a fairly narrow sense."<sup>28</sup> In the Copenhagen climate change talks, for instance, Chinese negotiators were criticized for being "arrogant."<sup>29</sup> A series of surveys and interviews that I have conducted also suggest that some Chinese official negotiators are beset by a competitive mindset. Among the interviewees were Chinese government officials, undergraduate and graduate students from China Foreign Affairs University and Beijing Foreign Studies University (many of them are recruited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), public servants in Hong Kong and Macau, and diplomats and officials from African and Caribbean countries who participated in training courses at the China Foreign Affairs University. The results indicate that two groups, the Chinese officials and the Chinese students, act more competitively than the other groups. Moreover, many participants who picked a competitive strategy in a negotiation simulation at China Foreign Affairs University turned out to be recruited later by government agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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<sup>26</sup> For example, asked to comment on a delay in the signing of the first military pact between Japan and the Republic of Korea, Hong Lei, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, made a remark during the daily news briefing on June 19, 2012: "China has always maintained that dialogue and consultations are the only effective way to solve disputes regarding the peninsula," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China homepage, June 29, 2012, accessed July 30, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/gxh/tyb/fyrbt/jzhsl/t946403.htm>

<sup>27</sup> Deng Yongsheng, "The Theme in East Asia is Cooperation and Development," *People's Daily*, July 6, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Fareed Zakaria, "U.S.—China growing pains," *The Washington Post*, February 8, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> William Choong, "China arrogant? Maybe, but that's not the point," *The Straits Times*, March 16, 2010.

If some Chinese official negotiators are sometimes competitive, then the question is when are they competitive at the negotiation table? Generally speaking, in the negotiation of issues relating to territory and sovereignty, i.e., belonging to high politics, such as the South China Sea, the China–India border dispute, human rights, and the talks between the Chinese central government and the Dalai Lama’s private envoy, etc., Chinese official negotiators are often competitive, and are criticized for holding to their original positions and being unwilling to make concessions in order to reach a compromise. Take the human rights issue, for example. In China, human rights is an extremely sensitive issue that is seen as a matter of China’s internal affairs; any pressure from the international community would be regarded as an attempt to intervene in China’s internal affairs and would be strictly resisted by the Chinese government. The issue of human rights has often been listed on the agenda of some high level meetings, such as the Sino–U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogues (S&ED) and the China–EU summits, but has basically generated no outcome. As for the contacts and talks between the Chinese central government and the Dalai Lama’s special envoys, the Tibetan side complained that “each time the talk was going like this: we were listening to the instructions from the central government officials, nothing except but criticism and education.”<sup>30</sup>

The attributes of this type of negotiator are, on the one hand, that the negotiators are aware of the value of negotiation per se, treat negotiations seriously and prepare well. As the issues of high politics with which they are dealing are sensitive and extremely important for China, Chinese official negotiators, on the other hand, usually take a firm stance, make no compromises and appear to be fairly competitive. For them, the goal of the negotiation is to try to persuade or press their counterpart to give in, while they stick to the original position.

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<sup>30</sup> Liao Wen-yu, “Interview with the Dalai Lama,” *Liberty Daily* [Taiwan], August 30, 2009.

#### **Type IV. Problem-Solving Negotiators: Cooperative and Aware of the Value of Negotiation**

There are many criteria by which a professional negotiator may be evaluated. From my point of view, a professional negotiator should be well aware of the importance of negotiation, and take it seriously as a mechanism to address the problems of both parties; he endeavors to come up with a solution that will satisfy his own party's interests but also considers the concerns of the other party; he does not make concessions readily at the negotiation table, but does not stick to the original position inflexibly either; he tries his best to find solutions to the problems through cooperation and to honor the commitment to the agreement assigned. Professional negotiators of this type are unusual in China.

Long Yongtu is one example of this type of negotiator. He was the vice minister of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation of China and the Chief Negotiator in the process of China rejoining GATT and entering the WTO. At that time, many Chinese expressed their concern about the negative effect that WTO membership would have on China's agriculture, commerce, auto industry, telecommunications, finance and insurance. He was one of the few in China who firmly believed that the advantages for China of joining the WTO would outweigh the disadvantages and that global competition would be helpful for Chinese national industry in the long term. He was regarded as a professional negotiator not only in term of his negotiating mindset, but also his negotiating practice. Acknowledging Chinese negotiators' shortcomings in negotiating skills, he conducted simulated negotiations with his team over and over again.<sup>31</sup>

Vice Director General Ouyang Yujing of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is largely a problem-solving negotiator. He participates in negotiations in the ministry. In one meeting, I listened to him lecturing on his negotiating experience. He has not taken any systematic or professional training course on negotiation, but the lessons he had learnt from his extensive negotiating experience are the same as the golden rules of negotiation formulated by Western negotiation experts. Therefore, any Chinese official who is equipped with the

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<sup>31</sup> Yu Wei, Wu Zhifei, "Long Yongtu practices his negotiation skills hard," *Party and Government Forum*, no. 2 (2007).

right mindset for negotiation and rich negotiating experience can grow into a skilled negotiator.

## Explanation from a Traditional Confucian Perspective

Chinese official negotiators are placed in the above four categories on the basis of their mindset and practice. Why do the four types of negotiators behave so dramatically differently? Which factors influence their mindset and practice? I will try to answer this question by bringing in four perspectives: traditional Confucianism, revolutionary culture, the Chinese bureaucratic system and international norms.

Scholars who have studied Chinese negotiating behavior or Western negotiators who have conducted negotiations with Chinese counterparts tend to use traditional Confucianism to explain the Chinese negotiation style. For example, Richard H. Solomon writes that the Chinese approach to negotiation, “the game of *guanxi*,” is shaped by China’s Confucian political tradition.<sup>32</sup> However, in this paper, traditional Confucianism will be used to explain why some Chinese official negotiators lack knowledge of negotiation, which is a process of equal parties trying to address the disputed issues through talks. The equality of the parties is a precondition for negotiation. However, Confucianism emphasizes order and sequence, and this order is maintained by social hierarchy. The core ethical values in Confucianism are *san gang* (the three cardinal guides), which means that the subject should follow the emperor’s advice, the son should follow the father’s advice, and the wife should follow her husband’s advice. Influenced by this thinking, on the one side, the strong party, such as the king, father or husband, makes decisions arbitrarily without taking into account the proposals of the weaker party, such as the subject, son or wife; on the other side, the weak mostly lose their initiative to negotiate with the strong on the issues with which they are involved. They either keep silent, or resort to violence when the injustice is beyond tolerance. At present, lacking equality between the parties and failing to address social disputes through negotiation remain common in current Chinese domestic politics.

It also works when Confucianism is used to explain why Chinese official negotiators are sometimes very confrontational and sometimes cooperative even yielding. *Mianzi*, or face, has been widely referred to in order to

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<sup>32</sup> Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior*, 4.



understand Chinese negotiating style. However, unlike Arab or Japanese interlocutors, who value face as a result of their “shame” culture, Chinese official negotiators taking *mianzi* seriously derive it from their “honor” culture. In Chinese society, *san gang* is the social norm, and it is an honor for the strong party, such as the emperor, father or husband to have their authority respected by the weak party, such as the subject, son or wife. If their authority is challenged, it is quite embarrassing and a cause of loss of face. In addition, in Chinese traditional culture, businessmen who were seeking profit have always been regarded as inferior in the hierarchy of social status and occupations. There is a saying of Confucius in the classic *Analects*, “The gentleman seeks righteousness, the mean people care about profits,”<sup>33</sup> which was a common view in traditional China. The tribute system is a good example of this value. When the vassal states, which were inferior under the tribute system, paid well-prepared tributes to the Chinese emperor to show their respect, the emperor, their superior in the tribute system, was very pleased to reward them with more wealth in return. Through this tribute system, the emperor won face and respect, and the vassal states received substantive gains. This is also the reason why Emperor Qianlong did not care about the 590 birthday gifts brought by George Macartney, the envoy of King George III, but rather felt “quite unpleasant,” as Macartney refused to perform the “three kneels and nine kowtows.”<sup>34</sup> From the traditional Chinese point of view, *mianzi* is much more important than substantive gains.

Despite the substantial impact in China of the May Fourth Movement in the 1910s and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, the “face” culture, deeply rooted in Chinese traditions, remains a key to understanding the Chinese and in particular the way Chinese government officials act. This is because in contemporary China government officials possess political power and social authority, and ask for respect from civilians in the same way as the emperor, the father and the husband did in traditional China.

In December 2008, French President Nicolas Sarkozy met with the Dalai Lama in spite of the protests of the Chinese government, which resulted in a temporary stalemate in China–France bilateral relations. On January 26,

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<sup>33</sup> *Analects of Confucius*, ed. Liu Shengli (Beijing: Chunghua Book Company, 2006), 28.

<sup>34</sup> George Macartney, *Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 2008), 73.

2009, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao flew to Europe for a visit to Switzerland, Germany, Spain, UK, and the EU, but bypassed France. On February 24, at the China–EU Ambassador’s Forum at the Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Ambassador Michael Schaefer of Germany questioned Prime Minister Wen’s bypassing of France on his tour: “As the bilateral relations of China and France have encountered some problems, what is the meaning of traveling around France, but not to France, when a trip directly to Paris is exactly what is needed?”<sup>35</sup> This behavior, unimaginable from the perspective of Germany, is actually very understandable from the point of view of China’s “face”-oriented culture: Sarkozy’s meeting with the Dalai Lama was an embarrassment for China. In Chinese eyes, to take the initiative to improve bilateral ties with France before France made an apology would mean that China would lose face.

In international negotiations, many Western negotiators gradually come to understand the Chinese face culture, and thus become quite comfortable and skillful in negotiations with China. As a Swedish scholar who has dealt with a great many Chinese officials and scholars commented, “so long as you show your respect to Chinese officials, you will build good relations with them; and so long as the relations are good, everything else will be easy and smooth.”<sup>36</sup> Once a senior Chinese official encountered a question from a foreign politician: “Why did we only have a small number of cases of arrests in the ‘3.14’ Incident?” He answered: “You are offered some cases because we have quite good bilateral relations, not because we have the obligations and responsibility to do so.”<sup>37</sup> This exemplifies a typical mindset for Chinese government officials, but I argue that it is possible for those negotiating with Chinese official negotiators to take advantage at the negotiation table of the fact that their Chinese counterpart care too much about face and relations.

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<sup>35</sup> China-EU Ambassadors’ Forum, February 24, 2009, Beijing, Chinese Academy of Social Science.

<sup>36</sup> Personal talk with ISDP Director Niklas Swanström in early June 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Zhu Weiqun, executive vice minister of the CPC Central Committee of United Front Work Department, interviewed by Ms. Dometite, a journalist from Focus, September 22, 2009, accessed May 22, 2012, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2009-10/15/content-12239817.htm>

## Explanation from a Revolutionary Culture Perspective

Traditional culture is referred to in almost every discussion of how Chinese negotiators behave, but discussion of Chinese negotiation from the perspective of revolutionary culture is less common. Gordon Craig mentions “revolutionary culture” in his book and asserts that “negotiators who grew up in the revolutionary culture often conduct optimizing strategies while those who grew up in the business culture usually carry out accommodative strategies,”<sup>38</sup> but does not go deep into the argument. China during the Mao era was a typical revolutionary country and even though the revolutionary culture was diluted after the policy of reform and opening up was introduced, its influence on the former state leaders and current senior leaders remains profound. Revolutionary culture can be used to explain why Chinese official negotiators have been criticized for being tough and arrogant.

“Struggle” is a key word in revolutionary culture. In his early years Mao Zedong wrote a quite well-known poem in which he states: “What fun to fight against the heaven, what fun to fight against the earth, and what fun to fight against man.”<sup>39</sup> In a speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties in 1957, Mao said: “There is a Chinese saying, ‘Either the East Wind prevails over the West Wind or the West Wind prevails over the East Wind.’ I believe it is characteristic of the situation today that the East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism have become overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism.”<sup>40</sup> It is a statement that exemplifies the black or white, enemy or friend fighting thought in the revolutionary culture. This revolutionary philosophy of absolutism is different from that in Chinese traditional philosophy. *The Book of Changes*, widely acknowledged as the origin of Chinese philosophy, suggests that the world consists of *yin* and *yang*, with *yin* and *yang*

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<sup>38</sup> Craig and George, *Force and Statecraft*, 239.

<sup>39</sup> Some readers have argued that the poem has been misinterpreted and the original connotations of the poet should be interpreted as “what fun to fight with the heavens, what fun to fight with the earth, and what fun to fight with man.”

<sup>40</sup> *Selected Speeches on Diplomacy from Mao Zedong*, ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC and CCPC Party Literature Research Office (Beijing: CCPC Party Literature Press and World Affairs Press, 1994), 291.

mutually dependent on each other – a state of affairs that is referred to as *dao*.<sup>41</sup> The doctrine of the *Zhongyong* is seen as the popular philosophy of life. The Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi explained *Zhongyong* during the Song Dynasty as “impartial and unbiased, no more no less.”<sup>42</sup> However, the fighting philosophy from revolutionary culture is against the “mean” and “tolerance” found in *The Book of Changes*, and simply puts the things in absolute opposition against each other. This fighting philosophy is also against the spirit of negotiation. The only way to reach agreement in negotiation is for all parties to make compromises. However, in the dictionary of the revolutionary, compromise is a synonym for surrender and betrayal that should be totally rejected. Therefore, we can see during the Mao era that Chinese government officials with a strong sense of fighting in negotiation with the U.S. and Soviet Union always took a firm stance and did not compromise at all.

The bureaucratic culture of “political correctness,” which has had a great influence on Chinese official negotiators, takes its orientation from revolutionary culture. The connotations of “political correctness” in China are completely different from those in the West. In the West, “political correctness” is opposition to words or deeds that discriminate against a weak group or minority, while in China, it is opposition to any words or deeds dissenting from the policy or rules of the central government. It is a legacy of the revolutionary culture, which regards the member’s loyalty to the organization as a more important qualification than their ability to solve problems. In China few officials have been dismissed for weak performance, or insufficient capability, but “political incorrectness” can be a fault for a politician, as the stepping down of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang prove.<sup>43</sup> Having grown up in this bureaucratic culture, Chinese officials realize that on the issues related to topics of high politics such as territorial sovereignty,

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<sup>41</sup> *The Book of Changes in Simplified Chinese*, trans. by Nan Huaijin and Xu Qinting (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 2011), 409.

<sup>42</sup> Zhu Xi, *Explanation Notes on Sishu* (Beijing: Chunghua Book Company, 2011), 19.

<sup>43</sup> Hu Yaobang began to serve as secretary general of the CPC Central Committee since February 1980 and resigned in January 1987. His death on April 15, 1989 was the direct cause of the political turbulence that took place in the late spring and early summer of 1989. Zhao Ziyang served as secretary of the CPC Central Committee from January 1987 to June 1989 and was removed from his position for serious mistakes during the political turbulence in 1989. For the latter, see Zhao Ziyang, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

failure to reach an agreement or solution will not be a serious mistake, while making an unauthorized compromise could be dangerous. Therefore a safe choice would be to be tougher instead of to compromise.

Moreover, revolutionary culture encourages the development of a social culture based on "nationalism." There is a natural connection between revolution and nationalism, as they both emerge due to a lack of dignity and a sense of security. The humiliation suffered over the past hundred years and the honor and confidence recovered over the last 30 years has cultivated nationalism in China. The nationalists advocate toughness and refusal to make any compromise on issues related to territorial sovereignty. Therefore, any concession by Chinese officials on issues of high politics might be strongly criticized by nationalists at home. That is why Long Yongtu, a quite professional and sincere Chinese official negotiator, was criticized as a "traitor" by Chinese netizens,<sup>44</sup> while negotiators who are viewed as arrogant abroad, such as Sha Zukang, win applause at home.<sup>45</sup> As Metternich, the most outstanding diplomat of the 19th century asserted, "foreign affairs has nothing to do with the mob," while in contemporary China, foreign affairs appears to be an important area for the government to seek legitimacy from citizens and netizens. Nationalism thus indisputably has a bearing on Chinese official negotiators.

In addition, revolutionary culture may be one of the factors preventing Chinese officials from honoring their commitments. To fulfill commitment is the last, but not the least phase in terms of the negotiation process. From the perspective of Western countries, China has a weak sense of the need to honor its commitments. When China signed the agreement on the entry to the WTO, the United States worried about whether China would live up to its commitments. This phenomenon may also be traced to the influence of revolutionary culture. The aim of China's revolution in recent history is to fight against the pressure and unfair treaties imposed by Western countries. China can only embrace a new life after overthrowing these treaties through revolution. Therefore, after the founding of New China, the

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<sup>44</sup> Long Yongtu, "I was neither a hero nor a traitor," *Southern Weekly*, December 1, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> "Sha Zukang, a fighter on the diplomatic stage," *Xinhua*, February 11, 2007, accessed July 22, 2012, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-02/11/content\\_5726663.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-02/11/content_5726663.htm); for comments on Sha's behavior, see, e.g., Joe Lauria and Jay Solomon, "U.N. Scrambles Over Remarks: Senior Official from China Voiced Dislike for Americans and Ban Ki-moon," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 12, 2010.

Chinese government formulated three major policies, one of which is *dasao ganjin wuzi zai qingke*, or “cleaning the house and then inviting the guest,” which means that the new government would not recognize all of the treaties signed with the West in the past, and would cancel all of the privileges and rights the West acquired from those treaties. The logic behind this is that there is no responsibility to honor agreements that are unfair. Considering the specific historical background, New China’s defaulting on treaties seems understandable from the perspective of revolutionary culture. However, it remains the case that some Chinese negotiators fail to honor treaties that have been signed between China, as an equal actor, and other countries, which could be explained as a subconscious behavior to which they became accustomed to from revolutionary culture.

## Explanation from a Bureaucratic System Perspective

The tough and unyielding manner that Chinese official negotiators sometimes display can also be explained from the perspective of the bureaucratic system. Under the current bureaucratic system, the authorization given to the negotiators is limited. This results in many of the practices of Chinese official negotiators at the negotiation table that are criticized internationally. For example, when the Chinese representatives left their seats and started making phone calls in the corridor during the critical stage of the climate talks in Copenhagen, this seemed to many other participants to be quite impolite and uncooperative, but the Chinese negotiators had to leave in order to receive authorization from Beijing. Another case is when a delegation of China's State Intellectual Property Office conducted a negotiation on the categorization of intellectual property documents with the United States, Japan and the European Union. As they had received instruction in advance to decline the other parties' proposals, the negotiators could say nothing but "no," which the delegates from the EU and the U.S. found incredibly stubborn.<sup>46</sup> On November 14, 1999, during a key stage in the negotiation on China's entry to the WTO, over the remaining seven issues, Long Yongtu, who was the chief negotiator for China's entry into the WTO, refused to make a concession and the negotiation was locked in stalemate. After a request from the U.S. side, Premier Zhu Rongji came to the negotiation table and made a compromise and an agreement could be reached.<sup>47</sup> From U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky's point of view, Long was too tough a negotiator, but as the authorization was not with Long, what else could he do except protect the bottom line? When Zhu came to talk with Barshefsky in person, Long kept sending notes to Zhu, and reminded him of the issues on which he lacked authorization.<sup>48</sup> As recalled by the then Vice Prime

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<sup>46</sup> The author interviewed one member of the delegation in Beijing on October 27, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Charlene Barshefsky, interview with Jim Lehrer, Online Newshour, a Newshour with Jim Lehrer Transcript, October 18, 1999, accessed June 10, 2012, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white\\_house/july-dec99/Barshefsky\\_11-18.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/july-dec99/Barshefsky_11-18.html)

<sup>48</sup> Zhao Yining, "Long Yongtu recollected how Premier Zhu Rongji made a decision in the negotiation of China joining the WTO," *21 Century Business Herald*, November 9, 2011.

Minister Li Lanqing, even the concession made by Zhu was given only after authorization from President Jiang Zemin.<sup>49</sup> All of these cases proved that Chinese negotiators' apparently "stubborn" and "uncooperative" behavior was actually a result of the limited authorization they had.

The bureaucratic system can also explain why sometimes Chinese official negotiators have to make some concessions. In the current political system in China, the initiation, process and outcome of some negotiations are decided by the top leader. If the top leader sets a deadline for the negotiation in advance, negotiators would bear the psychological pressure of the deadline and attempt to make a compromise as the deadline approach. At the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975, for instance, the Soviet Union was pressed to get the agreement to present a gift to the 25th National Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union. This time constraint imposed by the Soviet Union itself was favorable to its Western counterparts, who bode their time and waited for the Soviet Union to compromise.<sup>50</sup> A similar situation occurred in the China-Vietnam border negotiation in 1999. As President Jiang Zemin and the leader of Vietnam agreed that the two countries would address their border disputes before the new century, both parties were under time pressure.<sup>51</sup> As Ouyang Yujing, the deputy director-general of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has pointed out, a negotiator having a deadline usually finds himself forced to be passive, resulting in that the counterpart can easily take advantage of the time pressure and eagerness to reach an agreement. Fortunately, China has realized the disadvantage of a self-set deadline, and the ministry proposed to the central leadership not to set a deadline for major negotiations, and the suggestion was accepted.

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<sup>49</sup> Li Lanqing, *Breaking Through: The birth of China's Opening Up Policy* (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2008), 339.

<sup>50</sup> Craig and George, *Force and Statecraft*, 245.

<sup>51</sup> The head of the Chinese delegation to the Sino-Vietnam border negotiation, China's former ambassador to Vietnam, Qi Jianguo, gave a speech on Sino-Vietnam border negotiation at CFAU, November, 2009.



## Explanation from the Perspective of International Norms

Compared to the perspectives of traditional Confucianism, revolutionary culture and the bureaucratic system, the perspective of international norms have the smallest but fastest growing influence on Chinese official negotiators. It can be used to explain why Chinese official negotiators in the Deng era started to develop a more international mindset and practice of negotiation, why officials from big cities like Beijing and Shanghai conduct negotiations more professionally than those from hinterland cities and why officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce are more cooperative than those in the domestic-focused departments in terms of negotiation strategies and skills. Over the 30 years of reform and opening up, China has gradually learned more about international rules and norms. After its accession to the WTO, the depth and breadth of China's involvement in the international community has been developed. In the process of interacting with the international community, China is accepting many ideas widely acknowledged internationally, and is gradually adjusting its behavior and thinking to fit them. Long Yongtu has commented that "we were used to circumventing rules and took a pragmatic attitude toward rules. All Chinese need to cultivate the consciousness of rules, and learn how to keep to rules and honor commitments."<sup>52</sup>

The Chinese government makes great efforts to equip government officials who deal with international affairs with knowledge of international law, international economics, comparative politics, cross-cultural communication, negotiation skills, etc.<sup>53</sup> The Organization Department of the Chinese Communist Party has a long-term training agreement with the Har-

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<sup>52</sup> Long Yongtu, "On China joining the WTO," Xinhua net, accessed November 2, 2012, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2003-05/23/content\\_884270.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2003-05/23/content_884270.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Taking myself as an example, I have been invited to give lectures or training courses on international negotiations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Water Resources, State Intellectual Property Office, General Administration of Sport of China, The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, People's Bank of China, local foreign affairs offices, large SOEs and private enterprises.

vard Kennedy School; under this program, hundreds of Chinese officials above the general-director and department head level have received overseas training. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also sponsors cooperation programs together with the London School of Economics and Political Science; many diplomats from the ministry, including Minister Yang Jiechi, received their master's degree from LSE. As the only affiliated college and training base for young diplomats of the ministry, China Foreign Affairs University launched a course on diplomatic negotiation in 2006, which is now one of the most popular courses among the young diplomats undergoing training at this university.

## Concluding Remarks

The above analysis focuses on four types of Chinese official negotiators in terms of their negotiating mindsets and practices. The first type is the avoiding negotiator who underestimates the value of negotiation per se and regards his counterparts as rivals with whom to compete. Accordingly, this type appears to be confrontational at the negotiation table and is not in a hurry to get an agreement. The second type is the accommodative negotiator who also fails to acknowledge the value of negotiation per se but treats the counterpart as a friend to be accommodated. Accordingly, this type often attempts to make a compromise without reciprocal concession. The third type is the persuading negotiator, who realizes the importance of the negotiation and treats his counterpart as a competitor. He prepares elaborately before the negotiation, sticks to his original position at the negotiating table, and tries his best to persuade his counterpart to give in, which makes him look confrontational in his counterpart's eyes. The fourth type is the problem-solver, who acknowledges the significance of negotiation as a tool for solving the problems that the parties are facing and believes his counterparts are partners with whom to collaborate in order to figure out a wise resolution. He prepares for the negotiation very well and attempts to get an agreement that satisfies all parties' interests.

The mindsets and practices of Chinese official negotiators have evolved over time and in changing circumstances in response to four major factors: traditional Confucian culture, revolutionary culture, Chinese bureaucracy and international conventions. A particular mixture of these factors makes up the traits of a particular negotiator. It seems that Chinese official negotiators locate themselves on three-dimensional coordinates of past and present, traditional and modern, indigenous and international and struggle to find a way forward. Where they will go depends on the interaction of the four factors. Many expect that in the coming decades, with the fading of revolutionary culture, the resurgence of traditional culture and the deepening of the course of opening up, more Chinese negotiators will be of the problem-solving type, conducting negotiation in a way that advances both China's national interests and the interests of the international community.

## About the Author

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