

SPECIFICS OF CHINESE BUSINESS NEGOTIATION PRACTICES

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Abstract

The new century is a turning point to the People's Republic of China (further just China), home to one fifth of the world population. This "golden age" is uniquely characterized by a fast growing, internationalized market for products and services. An increasing number of Western companies engage in negotiations with their Asian business partners. These companies need to become familiar with the process of building and maintaining good relations with their Asian business partners. How to understand the Chinese way of negotiation? What are the key elements of the Chinese business culture? What are the philosophical roots of the Chinese negotiation strategy? What should managers and other businessmen know in order to be successful? This paper is discussing to the basic cultural determinants influencing the Chinese approach to business negotiations. This article reviews and summarizes the existing research in the field of international business negotiation with Chinese enterprises and suggests topics for further research, in the hope that this knowledge will be found useful by scholars and practitioners alike.

Keywords: •Culture, •Negotiation, •Cross-Cultural Negotiation, •Confucianism, •Buddhism, •Taoism, •Chinese Stratagems

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Rezumat

Noul secol în care am intrat reprezintă un punct de cotitură pentru Republica Populară Chineză, care înglobează aproximativ o cincime din populația globului. Această "epocă de aur" este caracterizată prin creștere economică rapidă și internaționalizarea piețelor produselor și ale serviciilor. Internaționalizarea presupune negocieri între agenți economici foarte diferiți din punct de vedere cultural. Din ce în ce mai multe companii din Vestul industrializat negociază cu cele din Extremul Orient și este important pentru succesul acestor negocieri ca ambele părți să înțeleagă semnificația legăturilor de lungă durată între partenerii de afaceri. Care sunt elementele definitorii ale culturii chineze? Care este filozofia chineză în privința relațiilor de afaceri? Care este strategia chineză în contextul negocierilor? Ce trebuie să știm pentru ca negocierile să reprezinte un succes pentru ambele părți? În acest articol dezbatem filozofia și valorile culturale care definesc strategia chineză a negocierilor. Recapitulăm lucrările de referință în domeniu, teoriile cele mai importante și sugerăm noi direcții de cercetare pe această temă. Sperăm ca aceste cunoștințe prezentate în articol să fie de folos oamenilor de afaceri care se pregătesc pentru astfel de negocieri.

Cuvinte cheie: •Cultură •Negocieri •Confucianism •Budism •Taoism •Strategie chineză
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Introduction

The People's Republic of China opened its market to the rest of the world at the end of 70ties. This fast growing market with more than one milliard consumers represents nowadays an extremely interesting destination for activities of international trade companies. That is why more and more authors try to get to understand deeper Chinese business environment, business practices and negotiation style of Chinese partners within B2B.

Key factors which must never be mixed with each other but have to be taken into account while doing business with Chinese counterparts (further using counterpart, he or she instead) are following:

- international trade environment in China – Chinese political system, economic planning system, which is connected to the central decision making and bureaucracy, legal environment, geographical conditions, huge technology development, simultaneously backwardness of particular parts and not unified development accompanied by rash changes,

- Chinese culture, philosophy, social psychology and Chinese way of thinking which is fundamentally different from “western” conception.

This paper is to shed light on particular specifics of behaviour and ways of thinking of Chinese businessmen – negotiators and their cultural and philosophical connections. This paper issue deals with the interconnectedness among Chinese national culture, Chinese trade environment background and Chinese negotiation culture. It offers a great number of theoretical frameworks that seek to clarify the main aspects of above defined topic and analyzes the implication for the critique points of business negotiation.

1. Culture and negotiation

Culture and negotiation are very complex terms, hardly describable in detail by one definition. However it is important to define them as they are understood within this article. Culture is a set of learned behaviour and its results, particular parts of which are shared and handed over by members of a concrete society. (Linton, 1945) Negotiation is a process when two or more parties try to solve seemingly contradictory aims. (Carnevale and Pruitt, 1992) We negotiate continuously with customers, suppliers, trade unions, family members, actually with everyone we meet. Negotiation can be divided into eight following phases: 1) preparation, 2) argumentation, 3) sending signals, 4) proposal, 5) offer, 6) bargaining, 7) conclusion and 8) agreement. At the moment of negotiation the negotiator must be perfectly aware of his maximal and minimal goals. Key role plays the ability to solve conflicts, to find a compromise and to deal with cultural differences in case of a cross-cultural negotiation. Negotiation always includes the risk and probability of a conflict therefore it is necessary to protect friendly relationships consciously. (Kharbanda and Stallworthy, 1991)

2. Roots of the Chinese negotiation research

Research concerning culture and negotiation has its roots in the work of the cultural studies of scientists E. T. Hall (Hall, 1959, 1966) and G. Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980) who created a method to categorize cultures according to basic indexes of deviation of habits, values and ideas which are in general judged as being good and suitable or inaccurate and bad within a nation. Within 80ties and 90ties two basic research approaches concerning the

interaction of culture and negotiation could have been observed: 1) practically oriented description of negotiation techniques in individual countries and cultural differences' definition which are to be controlled, leading in creating practical advice concerning the cross-cultural negotiation: "How to negotiate with members of specific cultures?" and 2) the explanation of the cultural influence on the negotiation process, negotiation results and its interaction. (Gelfand and Dyer, 2000) Models defining conditions under which culture influences negotiation were developed. (Gelfand and Dyer, 2000; Morris and Gelfand, 2004) Culture can influence not only the process of negotiation including the personal behaviour of negotiators and their understanding, but also the forms of negotiation conditions and results. (Faure and Rubin, 1993; Ting-Toomey, 2000; Brett, 2001; Lewicki et al. 2001; Faure, 2002; Cellich and Jain, 2004) Culture influences negotiation interactively and dynamically. (Ruane, 2006; Gelfand and Dyer, 2000) Negotiators from different countries can 1) be used to different closer situational conditions, 2) implement different theoretical and judging prejudices, 3) work differently with information, 4) set different goals, modify them and use various tactics and 5) react differently to different conditions, perceptions, aims and behaviours, all those can influence the negotiation results.

Existing results of the research on Chinese negotiation specifics could be divided into five areas: (Faure, 1998) 1) description of Chinese negotiation behaviour which very often does not include the Chinese point of view (Boarman, 1974; Chen, 1993; Deslandres and Deschandol, 1986; Galard, 1986; Lubman, 1983; Plasseraud, 1986; Seligman, 1989; Tung, 1982), 2) case studies introducing examples of

behaviour which are considered to be typical (Chen and Faure, 1995; Hakam and Chan, 1990; Mann, 1989; Shapiro et al., 1991; Webber, 1989), 3) studies based on observations focusing on cognitive aspects representing basic characteristic of Chinese negotiators (Faure, 1995; Knutsson, 1986; Weiss and Stripp, 1985), 4) analytical description of most frequently used Chinese negotiators' techniques and strategies and finally 5) specific aspects of negotiation, e. g. "loss of face", the importance of connections and time perception. (Brunner and Wang, 1988; Campbell, 1989; Chen and Faure, 1995; De Paw, 1981; Frankenstein, 1986; Kirkbride and Tang, 1980; Kirkbride et al., 1991; Murray, 1983; Redding, 1980; Solomon, 1987)

Even though China gains more and more importance worldwide, China oriented B2B studies are relatively behind. The lack on a deeper understanding of Chinese negotiation style and knowledge how to do business with Chinese counterparts causes continuous errors in building business relationships on the Chinese market. (Fang, 2006) The number of negotiations in China has increased a lot recently however they are often unsatisfactory. One of the reasons is the fact that Chinese negotiation conception is fundamentally different from the "western conception". (Faure, 1998)

3. The influence of Chinese philosophies on the nowadays' Chinese population behaviour, value patterns

While considering Chinese philosophies influencing nowadays' Chinese behaviour, following three have to be mentioned: Confucianism, Taoism – both of them originally Chinese and Buddhism – with its origin in India.

(Audrey, 1974; Boorman, 1972; Kircher, 1991; Ping and Bloodworth, 1976; Senger, 1991 and Yang, 1957) Confucianism focuses on interpersonal relations, Taoism on living in harmony with nature and Buddhism faces the human immortal life. Chinese do understand those philosophies more as doctrines than religions, which enables them to follow all three. In better words, depending on a concrete situation Chinese are able to behave according to that one of them which fits best. Such an approach gives to Chinese an exceptional ability to use all aspects, which are good and profitable without considering the original connection to a specific doctrine (religion). (Lee, 1995) Especially Confucian and Taoist influence are to be observed in the process of Chinese business negotiation. To complete the list of the key cultural aspects influencing the Chinese business negotiation among Confucianism and Taoism the WenWu model of masculinity and Chinese stratagems are to be introduced as well.

3.1 Confucianism

Confucian thoughts influenced the way of thinking and forms of behaviour not only of the Chinese but of the whole eastern-Asian population. It is a moral, ethical and practical teaching, which is based on the belief in the moral base of human population and is basically a set of instructions telling how to be a good and an honourable person. It considers interpersonal relations and human behaviour. (Tu, 1984) Goodness, propriety, gentleness, honesty, humanity are fundamental virtues. Confucian thoughts consist of six following pillars:

- moral education,
- interpersonal relations,
- family organization,
- hierarchy and age respect,
- conflict avoiding and the necessity of harmony,

- concept of “face”.

Moral education based on ethic and long-life education highlights honesty and trust as important human characteristics. Interpersonal relations can work properly just on the basis of principle of trust, respect and further rules. Confucius defines five following basic relationships in a human society: superior – subordinate, father – son, husband – wife, older brother – younger brother, older friends – younger friends. Relations are basically hierarchical, reciprocal and group oriented. Duties arising from those relationships are mutual and reciprocal. One must respect and follow socially higher positioned people simultaneously those have to take care of their followers. “Within the four sees all people are brothers.” Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.” Those are example formulations of Confucian thoughts.

The family organization as further pillar of Confucian thoughts tells family is the fundamental and most important social unit. As an analogy to the family work as well further wider units as companies while on the top is situated state. The link between family (jia) and state or country (guo) is significant and clear. It is documented for example by using the term *guojia*, which is often used for the same meaning: country – state. That signifies that family and state stand always side by side. All that is pointed out by following Confucian motto: “If you want to lead a country, first your family is to be in the best order.” Respect to the age and hierarchy goes as a red line across the whole Confucian doctrine. Age represents wisdom and that is why it is worth respect. Hierarchy is a way of organizing people within a society concerning their duties. It is an organization of assigned relationships, where everyone has his or her specific

position and specific duties to reach a mutual harmony and stability. The never ending trial to avoid conflicts and explicit concurrence of opinions and necessity of harmony has deep roots in Chinese culture. Highlighted is the necessity to reach harmony thanks moral behaviour within all forms of interpersonal relations. The real gentleman does not argue and never loses temper. That is what a concept of “face” is connected to. However an open stultification of people or open criticizing is undue anywhere in the world, in the Chinese culture is the “loss of face” – dishonour, direct arguing, criticizing or inability of an individual considered above all as a process of damaging a harmonic relationship and so as absolutely unacceptable. A strong importance of the phenomenon of “loss of face” is supported by the Confucian perception of shame. The principle of loss of face should work as a self-regulating system leading people in the society to behave according to moral standards. The influence of this concept could be observed in all aspects of the Chinese life.

To sum up the basic Confucian thoughts it is important to mention following fundamentals. According to the feudal ethical code people should follow five constant virtues - benevolence, righteousness, prosperity, wisdom and fidelity. The age respect principle is the key aspect of human lives. Young should respect the older. The whole is more important than a part. To be loyal to the state and proper to your parents is the key factor of success. To maintain the society work well everyone should understand his or her role in the society. The three cardinal guides are - ruler guides subject, father guides son and husband guides wife. The aim is to reach a great harmony under the heaven. Confucius defined also three

obedience and four virtues for women. A woman should be obedient to her father before marriage, to her husband after marriage and to her son after her husband's death. Four fundamental virtues which a woman should know and maintain are morality, proper language, modest manner and diligent work for a woman. From the historical point of view is the role of a woman understood as a role of an “inner helper”, whose intention is to be a manager of the family, mediator aiming to make the life of her husband and his family easier. (Ebrey, 1993) To answer the question, why the wife's family is not taken into account is obvious. After her marriage a Chinese girl leaves her family, moves to her husband family's and becomes its member.

3.2 Taoism

Taoism upgraded Chinese culture and arts by perfection and unique aspects as well as by ethical beauty, while highlighting the inner spirit and than external appearance. People should behave as water. Water directs forward, when there are no obstructions and stops when meets a mole. Water tries to find a way to continue flowing constantly and once a slot is found water flows on. Water becomes square in a square environment and round in a round one which makes it more significant and more powerful than all other elements.

Within Taoism two following principles are to mention:

- YinYang principle,
- WuWei principle.

YinYang represents a concept of dualism, symbol of a fundamental unity and harmony. Yin stands for feminine characteristics as moon, night, water, weakness, darkness, mystery, softness and passivity. Yang stands for masculine aspects as sun, day, fire, power, brightness, light, hardness and

activity. YinYang principle is based on the belief that there is nothing absolutely good or bad, pure masculine or feminine, black or white. Everywhere every time the opposites appear together. Opposites are dependant on each other, are complementary in all situations and create a dynamic unity together. (Chen 2001, Fang 2006) Both of them are important, Yin and Yang, to create and maintain harmony in life. They are opposites but both of them are of the same importance, they are even needed balanced completing each other standing side by side. This approach is reflected by a Chinese proverb “sai weng shi ma an zhi fei fu“, which talks about an old man who lost his horse. It seemed bad, but nobody knows if it was a bad or a good luck. The story continued that thanks the loss of his horse the old man’s family avoided a much worse misfortune finally.

Its roots in Taoism has also the so called WuWei principle of behaviour and management – not to push but avoid conflicts. WuWei principle also known as a “do nothing” principle points out the superiority of using wisdom and non-direct tools to overplay the partner in comparison with a direct fight.

3.3 WenWu model of masculinity

WenWu is a Chinese model of masculinity – a model – an imagination about the ideal man who embodies both the Wen hero and Wu hero characteristics. Wu hero’s features are his physical power (body structure, martial arts, brutality) as well as the ability to withstand feminine charm. He appreciates the ideology of brotherhood as an efficient tool to avoid competition among men. Wen is characteristic by its cultural elegance, good educational background and by a competitive spirit. Both Wu and Wen heroes search for

“junzi – heaven of rest” to become exemplary human beings, so called “real men” rather than “xiaoren” basic (imperfect, spiritually poor) men, which requires by both Wu and Wen a strong self-control. (Ruane, 2006)

4 Chinese business negotiation culture

Chinese idiom “The market is a battlefield.” reflects a Chinese belief, that the wisdom needed to win a battle is the same as the one to overplay a business partner. “SunTzu” methods of leading a war and “Thirty six stratagems” are the best links to the Chinese thinking. (Senger, 1991). Strategic thinking has roots in YinYang and WuWei principles. It is believed that better than winning one hundred of wars it is not to start a war at all. It means to make the enemy give up or change his or her mind without fighting. A natural part of “fighting techniques” is the usage of stratagems. Within the business behaviour this can be observed when Chinese counterparts rather than trying to force you to change the contract conditions directly just by the way mention that there are other potential partners with much better offer waiting behind the door willing to overtake your place.

Negotiation is based on a reciprocal respect, trust and mutual profit and it is fundamental to follow the Chinese etiquette. Simultaneously Chinese are ready to use any stratagems suitable and necessary to reach the goals.

It seems, that sometimes Chinese negotiators behave honestly and fair while sometimes they try to mislead and confuse their counterparts. The behaviour can change from one extreme to another one very quickly even within one negotiation. The approach of the Chinese negotiator is not possible to be defined as a single sided either as an honest or as tricky one. There is some

paradoxical inner connection between the above mentioned tendencies. That clearly reflects the philosophy of YinYang. While concerning the ability Chinese are thanks their cultural background able to realize honest negotiations as well as negotiations full of stratagems. Chinese negotiation strategies are based on the interconnection of cooperation and competition, while trust is the key factor in the process of choosing the negotiation procedure. Chinese negotiator is ready to change his or her attitude and behaviour according to concrete situations. Quick changes in behaviour are typical. Fang (Fang, 2006) categorizes those changes into three different roles which can a Chinese negotiator adopt:

- „Maoist bureaucrat in learning”,
- „Confucian gentleman“,
- „SunTzu-like strategist”.

The main priority for “Maoist bureaucrat in learning” are the national interests, he never distinguishes between politics and business, will not initiate anything and tries to avoid responsibility, is afraid of criticism and does not promise anything. For the “Confucian gentleman” the main values are mutual trust and profit, he tries to avoid conflicts in any case and every time he aims the “win-win” solution with a result profitable for all bodies involved. “SunTzu-like strategist” does not hesitate to lead the negotiation as a war and implement Chinese stratagems.

The form of stratagems used within negotiation comes from YinYang and WuWei principles. If the mutual trust is high, the negotiation is very smooth, is creative and very often results in the win-win solution. On the contrary if the mutual trust is broken, manipulative techniques can be implemented and the whole negotiation changes into a low unstable haggling.

According to the situation Chinese negotiator can lead the negotiation either as a “mobile warfare” or as a “joint quest”. Chinese messages expressed just as insinuations and their ability to hide the real negotiation purpose put their foreign partner to a weak position – such as a fisherman who is trying to catch the moon according to its reflection on the water surface. Foreign negotiators leave China mostly with mixed feelings and more questions than answers. (Faure, 1998).

Mobile warfare consists of very power oriented tactics and strategies, while the aim is to weaken the counterpart. Examples of tactics follow. Chinese negotiators may try:

- to weaken the counterpart, confuse, ensnare and at the end show mercy,
- to cut the counterpart off his or her basis, “elicit the tiger from the mountains” (such a typical situation can occur when a foreigner comes to unknown China and does not have sufficient connection to his or her colleagues in his country of origin.),
- to get the counterpart into the demanding position, when he or she has to make first adjustment “the necessity to pay the tax to the emperor while asking for something”,
- to remind the counterpart’s wrong and evil did by him or his ancestors off China, the aim is to make them feel guilty and cause them inconvenient feelings as a consequence,
- to discourage the counterpart by an excessive behaviour while discussing contract details, “to warn the monkey by killing a chicken”,
- to arrange the situation, so that it seems the counterpart is not consistent in his or her statements, that there exist discrepancies among team members, thanks “erosions” of individuals within

private dialogues, “to use the fire to realize a big robbery”,

- to obscure the negotiation context “to mud the water to catch a fish”,
- to offer so called „quazi“ adjustments, “to give up a brick in order to get a piece of jade“,
- to make the counterpart lose manoeuvrability by disabling him or her to realize his or her habits and customs by forcing him or her to follow the Chinese negotiating customs, get the person to the position of gratitude,
- time pressure – deadlines, limited time for negotiations, absence by negotiations, detailed questions repeated again and again, pretended lack of interest to sign the contract.

To sum up the mobile warfare could be characterized by following words: abusing, destabilization, exhaustion and frustration. Still the aim is not to destroy the enemy, but just to get more points.

Negotiation can be led in two ways – as with a civilized partner or as with a barbarian. Just a foreigner who is aware of Chinese culture and is able to follow “good” standard practices will be considered as a civilized individual. Such an individual deserves the form of “joint quest” negotiation.

The term „joint quest“, describes the way of negotiation when the aim is to find a certain stabilizing harmony. This conception comes from Taoism and is characteristic by the tendency to find a harmonic dynamic between elements, which direct against each other but simultaneously complete each other. Such a negotiation is usually fulfilled by empathy, a lot of observation, listening and questioning (without common aims nothing is worth negotiating – Confucius XL, Faure, 1998). Typical are indirect expressions and obscurity in order to avoid a direct confrontation and to “loss of face”.

According to the Chinese proverb just the devil is moving straight.

In general the “mobile warfare” tactics lead to a negotiation which is conceived as a war or a chess game, while the only goal is to win or at least gain more points than the enemy. The approach “joint quest” is a harmonizing approach which is suitable just for civilized human individuals, human beings with good manners according to the Chinese cultural tradition as it comes from the Taoist trial to find a harmony and solve problems very guardedly while using an implicit and very cautious tongue which helps to develop a discussion and judgement. This approach requires not revealing the negotiators’ positions. To assure harmony also the “loss of face” must be avoided. Simultaneously the holistic conception of negotiation which requires a lot of time available and highlights the importance of responsibility to wider groups is fundamental.

Chinese could be defined as inscrutable, versatile, harsh, stubborn and opinionated negotiators with a specific negotiation style. (Ghauri, 1999) They are capable to lead a “win-win” negotiation which has roots in Confucian thoughts as well as a “win loss” negotiation, which reflects a competitive spirit and the Chinese stratagems usage.

5. How to make a negotiation with Chinese counterparts easier

While considering above mentioned elements influencing the culture of Chinese business negotiation (international trade environment in China: Chinese political system, economic planning system, decision making strategies, bureaucracy, legal environment, geographical position, specific technology development and Chinese culture: philosophies, social

psychology and Chinese way of thinking) a number of good practises follows.

- **Interpersonal relations**

Mutual trust, keeping face and developing interpersonal relationships are fundamental. It is very useful to communicate through a mediator – a third party. The right choice of a mediator can be often more important than the pure negotiation. Long negotiations and ambiguity while signing a contract are typical. A signed contract plays mostly just a symbolic role rather than a document representing a detailed description of future actions. (Movius, 2006)

- **Asuitable negotiation team**

Negotiation team is the basic connection to the Chinese negotiator. The role of every individual team member and his or her behaviour is observed and judged while forming the Chinese negotiator's attitude and trust. The team leader should be credited and endowed with personal leader's charisma including an appropriate age as well as formal decision making responsibility. Team should consist of a technology and a financial expert, as Chinese are very sensitive to technical and financial parameters.

- **An evident political support**

The most important authority, which takes decisions concerning business activities, is in China the state. According to the proverb: "I judge you comparing to myself" Chinese have the same imagination about other countries. To make the Chinese feel safe showing the counterpart's country support is of high importance.

- **The real decision makers' identification**

The real decision makers do often not take physically part in negotiations. It is necessary to identify

them and be in contact directly with them.

- **People oriented approach**

Social relations and the system of contacts are in China of a great importance. So called "pre-negotiations" and "social abilities and skills" are a powerful gun in hands of a skilled negotiator. Those are very often more important than a formal "face to face" negotiation.

- **Communication through a Chinese mediator**

Thanks their contacts and good relationships local Chinese can fundamentally help while communicating with a Chinese counterpart, especially in the beginning while trying to gain the counterpart's trust. Local Chinese also know the local administrative system very well, they are able to recognize pushing tactics and stratagems and know how to react in order to avoid any cross-cultural "faux pas" and misunderstandings.

- **The importance of a stable negotiation team**

Every company should avoid the risk to loose trust and long time built good relationship to a Chinese counterpart by changing the structure of its negotiation team.

- **Inflated prices**

Chinese negotiator perceives all prices as they were inflated - first offer is considered to be fulfilled by water which is to be screwed. By decreasing the price negotiated Chinese negotiators gain respect, face and winner position in their boss' eyes.

- **Help towards the Chinese partner**

To help a Chinese negotiator reach the agreement of his superiors and get the authorization to sign the contract it is of a great importance to provide him with suitable materials. To overcome administrative restrictions, right

language written and properly formulated documents are required. A good way to gain trust in a contract and avoid the negotiator's fear is to mention that such a contract or a similar contract was already agreed and signed by another Chinese negotiator.

- **Negotiation abroad**

A Chinese negotiator who is invited to realize one of the phases of negotiation abroad will remember the generosity of his host and will be ready to pay off later according to the „guanxi“ principle.

- **Lucky and unlucky numbers**

Whereas the number eight is loved by Chinese, number four is a kind of taboo. Respect to significant meaningful number combinations, colours and other culturally specific unique rarities, is worth.

- **Be patient**

Patience, tolerance, calm and balance, stubbornness and honesty welt the journey to reach the trust of Chinese counterparts.

- **Misuse of the myth of the “loss of face”**

Chinese can “walk long miles” not to have to express disagreement explicitly as the word “NO”. While negotiating with a Confucian gentleman a foreign negotiator can gain a lot when he helps his Chinese partner to avoid saying the word “NO”, and so keep his or her face. While negotiating with a strategist a foreign negotiator must be ready to detect his Chinese partner's trials to argument that the contract was agreed on while the foreign negotiator was just trying to follow Chinese cultural behavioural manners while not expressing a clear and explicit “NO”.

- **“United states of China”**

China is not a monolithic compact state, individual regions have common characteristics but

simultaneously each of them is unique. A regional approach is of significance.

- **Additional interesting points**

Negotiations are very often confusing and complicated, because the Chinese culturally based approaches are often directing against the “western”. Chinese start from the whole and continue with details. Western practises are oriented the other way round, starting with specifics one by one till closing the whole contract. Chinese negotiators, who appear as collectivistic, distinguish strictly between negotiation within one culture and negotiation crossing the border of cultures. While negotiating with foreigners they are ready to make significantly less adjustments. Time is not limited. There is no hurry. Time is not considered as a valuable asset. Negotiations are long while impatience is considered as a weakness and loss of self-control which leads to the loss of face. Be careful while waiting for a clear explicitly expressed word “NO” (Adler et al., 1992), such a formulation would be rather replaced by more implicit expressions: “I will think it over, maybe, we will see.”

Conclusions

The characteristics of the “ideal” Chinese man are reflected also in the perception of the right characteristics of the ideal Chinese negotiator. Both of them are masculine heroes, who can perfectly control their relations with others and can use them within the “relations' game guanxi” and within the wen/joint quest or wu/mobile warfare negotiation perfectly to reach their goals. (Ruane, 2000)

The western win-win form of negotiation is close to the joint quest Chinese way of negotiation (negotiation with a civilized partner) and on the other hand the win-loss negotiation could be

recognized in above mentioned so called mobile warfare way of negotiation (negotiation wit a barbarian).

When negotiating with a civilized partner the Chinese negotiator will try to discuss the issue without unnecessary exchange of information and changing positions, which could cause any harm to the negotiation harmony, by loosing face of any person involved. To be considered as a civilized person rather than a barbarian the foreign negotiator must highlight the harmony of interpersonal relations and its defence. On the contrary while negotiating with a barbarian the negotiator would not hesitate using stratagems and pushing tactics and leading the negotiation as a war.

As China is becoming more and more important within the area of international business, good knowledge about the Chinese negotiating strategies and behaviour is one of the key factors of success. So far research has described the

roots and philosophical background of Chinese negotiation behaviour. Simultaneously there is a huge space for further research work which would be of a great significance especially in elaborating case studies which would even more brighten up good practices.

There is now a wealth of academic literature concerning the cultural issue in China, from general introductions to detailed analysis of specific issues. This article aimed to organize all the published knowledge in order to offer a well structured scientific overview of results while serving a starting point for further future research concerning the detailed relationship between Chinese cultural values and negotiation values reflected in negotiation behaviour. Simultaneously the findings provide useful input for managers and businessmen who are seeking to develop effective working relationships with Chinese counterparts.

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