The Influence of Chinese Traditional Culture
on China’s Diplomacy

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Statement of originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role of culture in the practice of Chinese Diplomacy. The existing literature on this subject tends to fall into two opposing camps. On the one hand, there are those who consider the culture underpinning China’s Diplomacy to be a form of realpolitik, similar to and drawn primarily from western sources. On the other hand, there are scholars, principally Chinese, who argue that China’s diplomatic culture is embedded within distinctive Chinese philosophical traditions that are not reducible to Western accounts of Diplomacy. The thesis attempts to find a via media between these two accounts by developing an original theoretical framework that combines both Chinese strategic culture (realpolitik) and Chinese philosophical ideas that date back centuries. The thesis identifies five motifs that form the basis of Chinese diplomatic culture: dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony. The thesis uses an intensive case studies research design to examine the role played by these five philosophical motifs. Three cases are selected: the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the negotiation between the United Kingdom and China on the Hong Kong issue, and the Taiwan Strait Crisis from 1995 to 1996 between the United States and China. The thesis uses primary and secondary sources, process tracing and interviews to analyze the case studies to explore how China handles relations with other countries and resolves disputes. The central argument of the thesis is that China pursues its aims in a manner that is constructed with and framed by a unique cultural and philosophical culture that can be best understood using the framework developed in this thesis. Culture does not determine the practice or outcome of diplomatic practice, but no explanation is complete without understanding its role. As such, the thesis contributes to an expanded, non-Western understanding of China’s diplomatic culture. Given the continued emergence of China as
a significant global power, understanding the culture of Chinese diplomatic practice is an important aspect of pursuing a non-confrontational form of foreign policy.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

China is committed to peaceful, open, cooperative and common development... We have no intention to fight either a cold war or a hot war with any country. We will continue to narrow differences and resolve disputes with others through dialogue and negotiation.

President Xi Jinping, 2020

China’s foreign policy tradition is rooted in its 5,000-year civilization... We Chinese value peace, harmony, sincerity and integrity. We never pick a fight or bully others, but we have principles and guts.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, 2020

Introduction

Diplomacy has been seen “as a state practice” in the international community (Constantinou & Sharp, 2016, p. 17). Its chief aim “is to enable states to secure” their diplomatic objectives and interests “without resort to law, propaganda, or force” (Berridge, 2005, p. 1; also see Holsti, 1967; Jönsson, 2011, p. 189; Constantinou, & Sharp, 2016, p. 16). As a rising great power, China’s diplomacy has gained wide attention. The current literature on China’s diplomacy has emphasized the study of Chinese diplomacy in terms of material factors and structural elements.

Everyone grows up under a specific cultural background, making a person have a certain cultural imprint. People with specific cultural characteristics establish the theory, so the theory
also has a cultural birthmark (Qin, 2015). Roland Bleiker argues that “cultural homogeneity characterizes theories of international relations”; the key concept and major insights of international relations were developed by Western scholars largely based on analyzing interactions among Western countries (Bleiker, 1993). Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Hans Morgenthau derived their theories largely from the study of European conflict (Bleiker, 1993). Western diplomacy began under the Westphalian system of 1648, but Chinese diplomacy began many centuries earlier. China’s diplomatic practice can be traced to the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BCE). It is necessary to study Chinese diplomacy in the Chinese cultural framework.

The current literature on this subject tends to fall into two opposing camps. One camp is based on western sources and considers China’s diplomatic culture as Realpolitik. According to John Vasquez, “realpolitik is a set of strategic practice, which is characterized by “perceptions of insecurity,” power struggles, attempts to balance power, the presence of coercion, and the use of war to settle disputes” (Vasquez, 1983, p. 216; 1987, p. 369; 1993, p. 114). Alastair Iain Johnston believes that Realpolitik characterizes Chinese strategic culture. That means “war is extremely frequent or inevitable; the enemy is dispositioned to challenge one’s security and interests; and the use of force is the best method to deal with this threat” (Johnston, 1995, p. 106). Thus, Johnston states that China preemptively use forces against its adversaries (Johnston, 1995). In the other camp are scholars, principally Chinese, such as Qin Yaqing, Ye Zicheng, Yan Xuetong, and Zhang Qinmin, who argue that China’s diplomatic culture is embedded in distinctive Chinese philosophical traditions that are not reducible to Western accounts of diplomacy (Qin 2005, 2018, 2019; Ye, 2007; Yan 2011; Zhang 2013, 2016). According to Qin, “background knowledge of a cultural community nurtures and shapes a theory” (Qin, 2016, p. 34). These two accounts of
diplomacy are limited to a specific historical and cultural realm. “[T]olerance towards alternative discourses could aid academics and policymakers alike in avoiding armed conflicts and eventually lead to the construction of a global order that is more just and less prone to violence than the present anarchical self-help system” (Bleiker, 1993, pp. 401-402). Hence, this thesis attempts to find a path between these two accounts by developing an original theoretical framework that combines Chinese strategic culture (Realpolitik) and Chinese philosophical ideas that date back centuries.

Diplomacy has usually been theorized by focusing on material factors rather than ideological and cultural factors. According to realists, nations strive for realizing their goals by obtaining power in international politics (Kennan, 1951; Carr, 1962; Waltz, 1979; Grieco, 1988; Morgenthau, 2006). Hence, national interests usually mean material and objective interests, comprising elements such as population size, geography, history, economic capability, resources and security. Realists stress the importance of viewing the nation-state as the preferred unit of analysis, emphasizing that a critical driver of national behaviours is the overriding primacy of state self-interest. According to James N. Rosenau, the concept of national interest can be used to depict, explain, and access states’ diplomacy (Rosenau, 1964, p. 35). Alfred T. Mahan believes that national interest is the primary factor to be considered when making diplomacy (Mahan, 1898, p. 97). Hence, the concept of the national interest has long been central to the analysis and the conduct of state behaviours, particularly of diplomacy (Burchill, 2005, p. 1; Weldes, 2011, p. 1651).

Morgenthau suggests that the concept of national interest consists of two elements, “one that is logically required and necessity, and one that is variable and determined by circumstances” (Morgenthau, 1952, p. 287). He continues, “all the material and ideal factors that make up the content must at least subordinate the requirements on which the country depends for survival and
maintaining its identity” (Morgenthau, 1952, p. 287). According to Joseph Frankel, national interests are material objective interests and idea or subjective national interests. Objective national interests are permanent interests and a nation’s ultimate diplomatic goals; subjective national interests refer to ideology, religion, and class identity (Frankel, 1970, pp. 15-17).

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, Chinese international relations scholars were mainly influenced by the Soviet Union’s international relations theory. They adopted a negative attitude towards Western international relations theories. As a socialist country with the same ideology, the Chinese government accepted the Soviet Union’s usage. Western diplomatic approaches are accustomed to using national interest, while Soviet officials and scholars preferred to use ethnic interest (Yan, 1996, pp. 9-10). At the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1982, China declared that it would adopt diplomacy according to its national interests. Since then, the term of national interest and the principles of political realism has gradually become the dominant explanation of diplomacy and the starting point in making diplomacy in China. Yan Xuetong states that national interest has already become the mantra of politicians and political scientists (Yan, 1996, p. 3). Politicians and scholars with different views treat national interest as the support of their policies when discussing the adjustment of diplomatic policies (Yan, 1996, p. 3).

However, the analysts’ ignorance of cultural factors does not mean that it is unimportant in setting diplomatic goals (Wiarda, 2017, pp. 9-12). Culture is the DNA of a nation. Culture is embedded in the way of thinking and acting of a nation. Yan defines national interest as everything that meets the material and spiritual needs of people in a nation-state; materially, the country needs security and development, and spiritually, the country needs the recognition and respect of the international community (Yan, 1996, pp. 10-11). Furthermore, subjective national interests greatly
impact diplomacy, for example, maintaining ideological security in international communication and conflicts or even war caused by religion. It is, therefore, necessary for politicians and researchers to consider cultural factors when formulating and analyzing diplomacy.

As a country with a long history and rich cultural traditions, Chinese culture has a significant impact on the thinking and behaviour of the Chinese people. In recent years, the Chinese government has addressed the role of Chinese culture in China’s diplomatic policy (Zhang, 2016). The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China [TSCIO] issued a white paper titled “China’s National Defence in the New Era” in July 2019. It states that

China’s social system, the strategic decision to follow peaceful development’s path, the independent foreign policy of peace, and the best of cultural traditions-considering harmony and peace as fundamentals-determine that China will pursue a national defence policy that is defensive in nature (TSCIO, 2019).

The White paper claims that “the Chinese people have always loved peace”; that “though a country may become strong, bellicosity will lead to its ruin” and so stands for resolving international conflicts through equal negotiation, dialogue, and consultation (TSCIO, 2019).

The Chinese school of international relations emphasizes the influence of Chinese culture on China’s diplomacy. Some scholars, such as Xiao Xi, Niu Yong, and Zhang Hongshi, have explored the relationship between some connotations of Chinese culture and contemporary Chinese diplomacy, such as the influence of Chinese traditional culture “harmony” on China’s diplomacy (Xiao & Niu, 2010; Zhang 2003), and Chinese views of righteousness and beneficial impact on China’s diplomacy (Ye 2007; Wang 2006). Some scholars, such as Yan Xuetong and Qin Yaqing, claim that traditional Chinese thought will become the mainstream thinking in China’s diplomacy, and the ideological source of Chinese behaviour. Yan Xuetong explores the effect of ancient Chinese thought on Chinese conduct (Yan, 2011). Qin Yaqing explores the implications of Chinese culture for diplomatic policymaking (Qin, 2011). Qin’s research on the influence of culture and
Johnston’s study of strategic culture significantly influences the study of China’s diplomacy. Their theories are based on their respective cultural backgrounds. According to Bleiker, a great awareness of these biases could substantially refine and improve explanations (Bleiker, 1993, p. 401). The thesis explores the role of culture in China’s diplomacy within an original theoretical framework that combines Chinese strategic culture and Chinese philosophy. This thesis identifies five motifs that form the basis of Chinese diplomatic culture: dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony.

**What is diplomacy?**

Diplomacy was theorized long before the development of the branch of the diplomatic theory that we presently associate with the field of international relations (Constantinou & Sharp, 2016, p. 13). The founder of the diplomacy discipline Ernest Satow’s definition of diplomacy, “the use of intelligence and tact to conduct official relations between independent countries” (Satow, 1922, p. 1), is still widely used. This definition suggests that diplomacy is a skillful tool for sovereign states to manage relations with other countries. In the thesis, the definition of *diplomacy* draws upon Satow, Jönsson Christer and Hall Martin. Diplomacy here is the institution of states that use intelligence and tact to conduct relations with other states by negotiating agreements rather than exercising force (Jönsson & Hall, 2005; Satow, 1992).

The primary purpose of diplomacy is to achieve the states’ diplomatic objectives and safeguard their national interests through peaceful ways. The three essential dimensions of diplomacy are “representation, communication, and reproduction” (Jönsson & Hall, 2005, p. 37). *Representation* means that diplomats are “principal representatives of their states”, and they are “acting on behalf of their states” (Jönsson & Hall, 2005, p. 38). “[C]ommunication is one of the logical prerequisites for the existence of international relations” (Jönsson, 2016, p. 79). The
reproduction of diplomacy can “contribute to the process of shaping and reproducing of particular societies” (Jönsson & Hall, 2005, p. 38).

The relationship between foreign policy and diplomacy is “intimate but sometimes confused” (Hocking, 2016, p. 67). Diplomacy is often “used as a synonym for foreign policy” in general, especially in the United States (James, 1993). When diplomacy and foreign policy employ a range of institutionalized strategies and techniques as well as a set of existing rules, norms, and structures to transform the process of the policy objectives aimed at managing the relationships to the outcomes, the two terms are commonly seen as interrelated components (Hocking, 2016). Diplomacy concentrates on interactions among actors, while foreign policy focuses on the actors themselves. In mainstream international relations theory, “diplomacy is presented as a tool for foreign policy,” along with propaganda, punishments, economic rewards, and the threat or use of force to suppress or punish (Holsti, 1967; Zhang, 2016, p. 4). Diplomacy is one aspect of foreign policy. The thesis mainly discusses China’s diplomacy by investigating China’s interactions with the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan.

Most diplomacy scholars believe that their colleagues in international relations unwisely and unjustly neglect the subject of diplomacy (Cohen, 1998; Jönsson & Hall, 2005; Murray, Sharp, Wiseman & Crieckemans, 2011). This claim is valid to some extent. The current study of diplomacy in international relations theory is “marginal and almost disconnect from the rest of international relations scholarship” (Sharp, 1999, p. 34). However, it is worth noting that it is easy to find diplomacy arguments in some major international relations works. Morgenthau sees “diplomacy as an undervalued instrument of foreign policy and one which, if used properly, confers the advantages of a force multiplier, and a morally significant one at that” (cited in Constantinou & Sharp, 2016, p. 17). Most scholars of diplomacy and international relations have
recognized the importance of diplomacy (Avenhaus & Zartman, 2007; Constantinou & Sharp, 2016; Morgenthau, 2006). Hence, the status of diplomacy in international relations theory is a complicated and exciting issue.

Although countries use diplomacy to conduct their relations with other countries, each state has its own diplomatic features and goals due to its historical cultures, political systems, and international status (Zhang, 2019, p. 113). The U.S. Department of State defines diplomacy in the U.S.’s relations with international organizations, foreign governments, and the people of other nations. U.S. diplomacy requires a group of highly motivated people to accomplish its foreign policy goals (Bureau of Public Affairs, 2008). The U.S. Department of State (https://www.state.gov/) shows that the purpose of the U.S.’s diplomacy is “to advance the interests and security of the American people.” The Bureau of Public Affairs notes that the main diplomatic goals of the United States are protecting America and the American people; advancing “democracy, human rights, and other global interests”; promoting international understanding of American policies and values; supporting the American people at home and abroad to make these goals a reality” (Bureau of Public Affairs, 2008). According to Richard Ned Lebow, the United States proclaims that its “leadership is necessary for world order.” One of its missions is to “encourage democracy in other states” (Lebow, 2020, pp. 6-10).

The government of Japan claims that the purpose of its diplomacy is “to promote its national interests, contribute to the prosperity and peace of the international community and further consolidate Japanese position as a peace-loving state” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2020). Japan also has strived to “realize its ‘normal Japan’ through diplomatic means” (Cooney, 2015, p. 7; Rozman, 2018, p. 9).
The responsibilities of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of U.K. Government (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office) are to pursue their national interests and “promote the interests of British people, defend their values, safeguard the security of the United Kingdom, reduce poverty and deal with global challenges with their international partners, and project the UK as a force in good in the world.”

In conducting diplomatic affairs, China safeguards its sovereignty and national security, promotes its development, “actively participate in the reform of the global governance system, enhance their network of global partnerships, and strive for breaking new ground in pursuing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics” (Xi, 2020, p. 495). China has been striving to “rejuvenat[e] the Chinese nation, advance[e] the progress of humanity, and [endeavor] to build a community of shared future for mankind” (Xi, 2020, p. 495). In conclusion, each country’s diplomatic objectives and priorities are different.

**What is culture?**

The purpose of the U.S.’s diplomacy is to protect and advance its national interests, while “the national interests reflect the subjective values and the interests of people” (Lebow, 2020, pp. 3-4). Diplomacy needs to take cultural values into account because “they play a key role in shaping perceptions” (Ninkwich, 1990, p. 103). Therefore, my framework demonstrates that cultural factors play a role in diplomacy. Williams Raymond claims that history has bequeathed us two or three most complex vocabulary in the English language, and the word “culture” is one of them because the culture has a broad breadth (Raymond, 1983, p. 87); it can “refer to so many different phenomena” (Walker, 1990, p. 4). Researchers who specialize in cultural studies will not hesitate
to admit that culture is such a complicated issue that it is difficult to define, identify and describe in a way that everyone is satisfied with (Michalowska & Schreiber, 2017, pp. 8-9).

John Glenn and his colleagues describe culture as “the total knowledge existing within a society” (Glenn et al., 1970, p. 41). Aaron Wildavsky defines culture as “codes enabling individuals to make much out of little; thus, cultures may be conceived of as grand theories, programs, and paradigms, which can be applied to a wide variety of circumstances” (Wildavsky, 1985, p. 95). Edgar Schein calls culture “a pattern of basic assumptions--discovered, invented or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of internal integration and external adaptation—that has worked well enough in the past to be considered valid and, thus, to be taught to new members as the correct way to feel, think and perceive concerning these problems” (cited in Barnes, 1986, p. 4). Clifford Geertz suggests culture is “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms utilizing which men develop, communicate and perpetuate their attitude towards and knowledge about life” (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). Johnston sees culture as shared decision rules, decision routines, and standard operating procedures, something that is learned, dynamic, and evolutionary (Johnston, 1995). It is, therefore, clear that culture’s scholarly definitions are “knowledge-related and ideationally oriented” (Johnston, 1995, p. 35). All of these definitions indicate that the common “core of culture is shared knowledge about the way of life of a society and the way of thinking and doing of its members” (Qin, 2018, p. 43).

According to the logic of cultural definitions in the East and the West, groups in the particular historical development process will create different cultures. In other words, culture is “the accumulation of a nation in the course of its historical development, which ultimately reflects the nation’s unique discourse, thinking and practice, and is relatively stable” (Wiarda, 2017, pp. 7-8). It is passed down from generation to generation, as dynasties and regimes are constantly changing.
However, the basic connotation and values of a nation’s culture or way of life, thinking, and behaviour closely linked to cultural factors remain stable (Zhang, 2003). Culture can be seen as a framework in which people can have a deep understanding of “who they are, how they should act, and where they are going” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 186). Culture has played “a crucial role in the process of identification and integration of social groups, including nations” (Michalowska & Schreiber, 2017, p. 12). This thesis defines culture as the ways of life, literature, art, customs, beliefs, and perceptions created by a particular society, reflecting the nation’s thinking and practice and passing down from generation to generation. As Leszek Kolakowski has stated, “a culture is a form of the current lasting of the nation” (Kolakowski, 1983, p. 303).

**The role of culture in international relations**

After the end of the Cold War, neorealists and neoliberals “debated which method would better explain international phenomena” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 28). According to Kenneth Waltz and other realists, structural realism means that “the country’s domestic characteristics, including its cultural factors, are not important when studying international politics” (Waltz, 1979). They hold that state actors behaviour is determined by national interests and is restricted by the system structure, although state actors may have individual cultural differences. Hence, political realists have marginalized the role of culture in international relations and maintain a cautious attitude to the trend of focusing on the study of culture in international relations (Lapid, 1996, p. 3). Although realists ignored the cultural factors, they recognize that a country’s diplomacy is formulated in a specific political and cultural context (Kennan, 1956; Kissinger, 1994; Morgenthau, 2006). That is to say; realists see that the cultural elements shape a country’s diplomacy.
Liberals and neoliberals have studied international relations from the state and non-state level, such as international organizations, societies, and individuals. They establish an excellent international system to promote cooperation among actors, thereby realizing the interests of actors. Although they also ignore cultural factors, they regard international institutions, norms and other non-material factors as essential variables in international relations, which is already a breakthrough in realist material power (Qin, 2003). Both neorealism and neoliberalism assume that actors are rational and “have similar interests and that these interests do not change considerably in space and time” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 29). However, neorealists and neoliberals have a different understanding of interest. Neorealists perceive interests as “relative power and security,” while neoliberals define interests in terms of “absolute political and economic gains” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 29). When “the fundamental interests of all actors are similar” in the international society, then from the perspective of international relations, the cultural differences between them are not significant (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 29).

Mainstream international relations theory relies heavily on anarchy, power, and interest as its explanatory framework, while the cultural dimension of international relations is easily overlooked (Caporaso, 1992). Moreover, there are several reasons to ignore the cultural dimension. One reason is that the content of culture is too broad, but its boundaries are vague (Chay, 1990). Therefore, researchers often find that they spend a lot of time and energy with little to show. The imbalance between input and output is demoralizing. As Joseph Nye puts it, “many of the cultural resources are out of the control of governments, and their effects depend heavily on acceptance by the receiving audience (Nye, 2004, p. 99).

Moreover, cultural resources often work indirectly by shaping the environment for diplomacy, and sometimes take years to produce the desired outcomes” (Nye, 2004, p. 99). Culture
often requires decades, even centuries, to change, making rapid changes in international relations difficult to explain. According to Huntington, culture plays an important role in international relations because cultural differences may cause conflicts (Huntington, 1993). Huntington believes that the sources of conflicts after the Cold War were more cultural than ideological or economic (Huntington, 1993). Moreover, different civilizations will clash because of irreconcilable political values.

However, it is possible to “cope with cultural differences by learning to respond economically, politically, or technologically to cooperate within a culture of modernity” (Walker, 1990, p. 11). The culture of modernity has “parochial Western or European or Capitalist roots”. Hence, culture is insignificant because there are “ways to live together in a states-system” (Walker, 1990, p. 11).

Since the 1990s, there has been a phenomenon of “culture turn” in the study of international relations. “[T]he explanatory role of culture in international relations has received increasing attention” (Haližak, 2017, p. 79). Nye’s concept of “soft power” has aroused widespread concern and debate. Nye believes that the pursuit of power seems to be the goal of all states and some non-state actors, but in addition to traditional power, state power can be “soft”. Soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than payment or coercion” (Nye, 2004, p. x). Culture is a significant part of soft power because it can construct “the preferences of other participants” in international relations (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 36). Nye regards culture as a combination of values and practices which are crucial for society. Therefore, when cultural values are universal, culture has the best opportunity to produce a country’s soft power. The term “soft power” itself is not an independent theoretical method; rather, it is “an element of a liberal approach to international relations” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 36). However, Nye gives culture a
significant position “in the development of soft power in international relations”, which the fact itself has tremendous significance (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 36).

Alexander Wendt believes that the identity of states is the decisive factor in states’ behaviour. Wendt notes that “the international system is not inherently anarchic,” as anarchy itself is constructed by the major countries of the international community in the course of their practical activities (Wendt, 1992). Wendt argues that culture is one determinant of a state’s identity. Identity does not determine actors’ political choices on the international stage but instead provides actors “with a ‘menu’ of selections and references for assessing the different variants” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 37). By emphasizing the significance of ideas and identity, “constructivism is a form of idea-ism” (Wendt, 1996, p. 48). Wendt, John Gerard Ruggie, another founder of the constructivist paradigm, and other constructivists suggest considering “the immanently intersubjective nature of social reality which distinguishes it from the natural reality” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 37).

According to constructivists, social reality, including the international one between inter-subjects, contains material and ideational elements. When the participants in international relations act according to “the meaning they ascribe to material elements they possess or other behaviours” in the system, the ideational elements are even more critical (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 39). That is to say, the practical activities among subjects form a shared concept, which creates a culture; then, the culture determines the actors’ identity, interests and behaviour. Wendt and other constructivists, therefore, understand culture as “the intersubjective knowledge shared by a group of people” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 39). When participants in international relations “share their understanding of certain concepts, such as peace and war, friends and enemies, the structure has a cultural dimension” (Wendt, 1996b, p. 158). Constructivists think that international laws, rules, norms, customs,
ideologies, conventions, and institutions are all cultural formations, and these cultural factors play an essential role in international relations.

Neorealists and neoliberals focus on “the significance of material factors and assume that they explain the entirety of the international life” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 39). Ruggie states that neo-utilitarianism adopted by neorealism and neoliberalism treats ideational factors as instruments useless or useful for “individuals maximizing their own and always striving after realization of their materialist interests” (Ruggie, 1998). Constructivists argue that “the ideational factors are the most important” because people understand the material world through these ideas (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 39). To constructivists, all concepts described in the materialistic language in the study of international relations, such as the balance of power and the cold war, have cultural backgrounds; “however, these notions cannot be reducible to ideational factors” (Wendt, 1996, p. 49). With attention to cultural factors, culture as an important factor in international relations became an important agenda for academic research after the Cold War. Analyzing international relations and state behaviour from a cultural perspective has received continuous attention, resulting in books such as Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations?* Yoseph Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil’s *Return of Culture and Identity in International Relations Theory*, and Peter J. Katzenstein’s *Civilizations in World Politics* (Huntington, 1993; Katzenstein, 1996; Lapid & Kratochwil, 1996).

There are several reasons for scholars’ growing interested in the role of cultural factors in international relations. The first reason is that the integration of cultural perspectives, cultural processes and “the dynamic concept of culture into the analysis of international relations” is in line with observed changes (Michalowska & Schreiber, 2017, p. 21). In addition, the inclusion of other disciplines, including cultural anthropology, into the knowledge spectrum can make the discipline of international relations interdisciplinary, which is necessary for the development of international
relations. It also indicates the weakening of the earlier prevailing perceptions of international relations and provides a new and attractive viewpoint. Finally, international relations scholars are actively reclaiming the role of culture in international relations to resolve the increasing difficulties created by the growth of global heterogeneity and diversity (Michalowska & Schreiber, 2017, p. 21).

However, there is an interesting phenomenon in the theory of international relations when studying cultural issues. Lebow notes that culture is a significant element in describing international relations (Lebow, 2018). Although the term ‘culture’ appears in the title of the book, Lebow also uses other terms such as “norms,” “values,” “ideas,” and “identity.” Still, he does not explicitly explain why he calls his international relations theory “cultural” (Wojciuk, 2017).

Realism ignores the role of culture in international relations, but culture has played a big role in international relations since constructivism. Since the Cold War, cultural factors in account in international relations have become a vital element of “the dynamics of this discipline’s development.” However, Lebow and Wendt “exhibit a puzzling restraint in using the word ‘culture’” (Wojciuk, 2017, p. 46).

The role of culture in China’s diplomacy

China has a 2000-year history of foreign relations, which is the longest record of any organized country, then China’s attitude, behaviour, customs and actual policies have shown uniformities (Fairbank, 1969). Although China’s diplomacy reflects its culture, there are many controversies about how and to what extent culture affects diplomacy. Therefore, it is impossible to ignore the influence of historical and cultural factors (Harris, 2014, p. 22). The study of a state’s diplomacy from the cultural perspective is often inseparable from studying its history and tradition. According to Chiu-yu Shih, traditional belief systems, such as Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, remain
the primary sources of China’s diplomacy despite the changing environment (Shih, 1990). Confucianism constitutes the core content of Chinese culture and has profoundly influenced the Chinese way of thinking and even its diplomatic behaviour (Zhang, 2003).

Confucianism, created by Confucius in ancient China, is a belief system that emphasizes respect for all people and universal love. Although China’s history and practice did not meet Confucian standards, those norms “provided a ready critique of trends and events” of China’s history, thus serving as China’s main cultural traditions (Haas, 1990, p. 173). China’s diplomatic culture is embedded in Chinese cultural traditions, such as the thought of grand unification. The grand unification is one of Confucianism’s most important thoughts, influencing Chinese thinking and behaviour throughout China’s history. The unification contains three aspects: the unification of territory, the unification of the political system, and ideology unification. The unification of territory requires realizing the unification of the Chinese world and protecting the Chinese territory from attack or invasion.

The thought of unification has significantly impacted China’s identity as a state and a nation; the thought “invisible cohesion unites all the Chinese people in the same land” (Yang, 2017, p. 197). Whether ancient China was in a separate period or an integrated period, each feudal regime adopted the thought of unification as a guide to ruling the country and took national reunification as its primary task (Bislev & Li, 2014, p. 23). In other words, from the perspective of actual national interest and the national pride and self-esteem of the Chinese people, national reunification is important to the Chinese people. Grand unification has still a significant influence on today’s Chinese thinking, diplomatic behaviour and strategic culture. China still regards national unity as its core interest and strive for it (Xi, 2021). So, when dealing with issues related to unification and sovereignty, the Chinese government has a tough attitude and a firm stance.
Under the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949, China’s diplomacy reflected both ideology and pragmatism. At first, the Cold War had split the world into two opposing camps. China’s diplomacy prioritized consolidating the new regime. During this period, ideology was central to the formulation of China’s diplomacy. China adopted a “one-sided” diplomatic policy that leaned to the socialist camp (Zhou, 2009). Zhou Enlai, China’s premier (1949-1967) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1949-1958), insisted that “we must establish China’s own diplomacy, systematic and scientific diplomacy” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China & Party Literature Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, 1990, p. 1). However, China’s relations with the world during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) severely affected and restricted China’s international exchanges. The Cultural Revolution was wrong launched by the Chinese leaders and had a catastrophic effect on the country and the Chinese people.

The main tasks of the PRC were to protect itself, reconstruct and build China’s economy, and establish diplomatic relations with other nations. During the Cold War, China joined the socialist camp and was blocked by the Western camp led by the United States (Kokubun, Soeya, Takahara, & Kawashima, 2017, p. 44). In this tough time, China’s diplomatic work was difficult. An important tradition in Chinese culture is to cherish peace and pursue harmony (Xie, 2009, pp. 3-4). China needed a peaceful environment to develop its economy. For these reasons, China presented the principle of peaceful coexistence with other countries. During the Cold War, “economic, political, or ideological conflicts could explain diplomacy or international relations”, so cultural relations were rarely mentioned (Zhang, 2003, p. 38). Hence, the role of Chinese cultural elements in China’s diplomacy had not been received much attention from researchers and analysts.
After the end of the Cold War, the failure of mainstream international relations theories to predict the Cold War situation led international relations scholars, such as Huntington, Lapid, and Wendt, to explore the importance of other factors (Huntington, 1993; Lapid, 1996; Wendt, 1996). The role of culture in international relations has become increasingly significant. Simultaneously, the theme of studying Chinese diplomacy from the perspective of traditional culture has also begun to emerge. This method of understanding Chinese diplomacy is related to Johnston’s research on Chinese strategic culture. Johnston posits that “Chinese strategic culture is offensive and preemptive to use forces against the enemy” (Johnston, 1995, p. 109).

At that time, the Chinese threat theory was on the rise. Johnston’s study aroused widespread concern and response among Chinese scholars such as Feng Huiyun and Li Xiaoyan, who tried to find the elements of peace in Chinese culture and examples of its positive impact on China’s diplomacy (Feng, 2005; Li, 2006). During this period, the importance of cultural elements in diplomacy and international relations received more attention.

After becoming an emerging power in the 21st century, China’s diplomacy and actions gain significant attention. Scholars such as Chiu-yu Shih and Samuel Kim have studied China’s diplomatic behaviour by investigating China’s history and culture. Shih writes that traditional belief systems are still the main cultural sources of China’s foreign policy (Shih, 1990). Kim stated that in the early 1990s that “China’s current military expansion policy has little to do with the upcoming military threat; what it reflects is a strategic culture formed by a century of national humiliation” (Kim, 1994, p. 14). Qin Yaqing believes that the existing international relations theories mainly based on Western culture cannot explain some Chinese issues well (Qin, 2005). He proposes to build China’s international relations theory. With the development of Chinese international relations, Chinese scholars have the consciousness to construct the “Chinese school.”
According to Qin, a basic characteristic of the Chinese school is that the theory should rely on Chinese culture, practice experience, and historical tradition (Qin, 2005). Yan Xuetong and Ye Zicheng argue that the root of Chinese diplomacy can be found in Chinese cultural traditions (Yan, 2011b; Ye, 2007; Zi, 1998, p. 311). They realize the significance of cultural elements in diplomacy. Thereby, the study of the relations between Chinese culture and China’s diplomacy began to expand.

Under President Xi Jinping’s leadership, China’s diplomacy has highlighted the cultural characteristics and guiding role of culture, emphasizing the importance of enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture. At home, Chinese leaders emphasized the role of the Chinese culture as the guiding thought in contemporary China’s diplomacy. In November 2013, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held its second foreign affairs work conference. At the meeting, Xi Jinping emphasized that China must have its own characteristics of major power diplomacy (Xi, 2014). Chinese leaders abroad frequently mentioned Chinese culture and introduced Chinese traditions in their visits and speeches. Xi often praises Chinese traditional culture such as Chinese writing, painting, Peking opera and medicine on his visits. He frequently participates in cultural activities and tells Chinese stories (Zhang & Tian, 2016). Given the rapid rise of China’s status, China’s diplomacy attracts growing concerns worldwide. In this context, research on the role of Chinese culture in Chinese diplomacy is flourishing.

The increase of cultural elements in China’s foreign relations is an inevitable requirement for maintaining self-awareness and self-identity and is a manifestation of cultural consciousness in globalization (Zhang & Tian, 2016). In other words, in the process of China’s internationalization, Chinese people must understand their self-awareness and identity as Chinese (Zhang & Tian, 2016). Culture can tell people who they are, where are they from, and where are
they going. New and complex problems have emerged in the international community, making the world full of uncertainty. The current international relations theory cannot explain and predict these problems and situations. Then, scholars, such as Astrid Nordin, Graham Smith, William Callahan, Howard Wiarda and Qin Yaqing, are studying international relations and national diplomacy from the perspective of comparative culture, seeking a new theoretical analysis model (Callahan, 2010; Nordin & Smith, 2018; Qin 2019; Wiarda, 2017). By studying a country’s culture, it is possible to understand its diplomacy. Learning the culture of other countries does not mean identifying with it. The emphasis here is on the importance of understanding, which is crucial for solving international problems.

The original contribution to the literature

This thesis makes an original contribution to the literature on the role of culture in China’s diplomacy. In terms of theory, the thesis combines an innovative framework with Chinese strategic culture and Chinese philosophy to examine the role of cultural factors in China’s diplomacy. Since the establishment of the discipline of international relations in Great Britain in 1919, theories of international relations have been marked by Western culture. Europeans and North Americans have developed the major paradigms and insights; even today, cultural homogeneity is still a characteristic of international relations theory (Bleiker, 1993). According to Kalevi Jaakko Holsti, “scholars of anglophone countries, particularly Great Britain and the United States, dominated the international relations field” in the 1980s (Holsti, 1985, p. 10). Constructivists such as Nicolas Greenwood Onuf, Martha Finnemore, Alexander Wendt (born in West Germany), and Peter J. Katzenstein (born in Germany) are all Americans. They live in the Western culture environment and are deeply influenced by it. Hence, their theories are Eurocentric and largely derived from evaluating Western historical cases, especially from “the post-Westphalian European state system
Both Western and Chinese cultures are intellectual cultures created by human beings, but as Roland Bleiker pointed out, “they are entirely different” (Bleiker, 1993). In Western culture, rationality is the core concept obtained through long-term practice. The ontology with the individual as the basic unit and the epistemology with the rationality have conceived the theoretical core of the international relations theory to a considerable extent (Qin, 2019). As Robert Keohane notes, “individual rationality is the core assumption of neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism; it is individual rationality that connects the elements of the system and individual behaviour casually” (Keohane, 1989, p. 40). Constructivism shows substantial similarity in the crystallization of western background knowledge--individual rationality; this convergence is most obviously manifested in the dominant research agenda of constructivism-international norms (Qin, 2019).

Chinese culture is based on long-term farming social practice. It emphasizes the whole, harmonious relations between people and harmony between people and nature; therefore, the relationship is the core content of Chinese culture (Qin, 2015). In general, “Western conceptualizing and international theory has traditionally been based on the juxtaposition of antagonistic bipolar opposites,” such as war/peace, just/unjust, good/evil, order/chaos, rational/non-rational; and the relationship between polarities usually “expresses the dominance, superiority, or normative desirability of one party (for example, peace) relative to the other (for example, war)” (Bleiker, 1993). In Chinese culture, people use the opposite term “Yin” and “Yang” to explain the world. “Yin” and “Yang” are “a pair of contradictive objects (Feng, 2009, p.311). The relationship between opposites is complementary and interdependent because the existence of one party depends on the presence of the other party. Opposite parties in a harmonious state are
the ideal states (Qin, 2016). Based on these two kinds of culture, researchers might have a different understanding of natural and social phenomena.

Although Johnston has made significant research on Chinese strategic culture, his western cultural background and English language might force him to impose alien concepts on Chinese thoughts because he interprets and understands these thinking through references to terminologies, values and experiences that possess identity and meaning within the tradition of Western culture. In other words, Johnston interprets and understands Chinese thought within the framework of western culture and tradition. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the influence of Chinese traditional culture on China’s diplomacy from the Chinese perspective. Qin Yaqing, Yan Xuetong, and Zhang Qinmin have also studied the effect of traditional culture on China’s diplomacy and have achieved important results. Yan is concerned with the political thoughts among countries in ancient China (Yan, 2011). Zhang treats culture as a whole concept rather than specific content (Zhang, 2003, 2006). Qin is interested in using the “relationality” in traditional Chinese culture to construct an international relations theory (Qin 2011, 2018, 2019). This thesis establishes the framework that combines Chinese philosophical thought and Chinese strategic culture in explaining Chinese diplomatic behaviour. It is an alternative way to analyze China’s diplomacy and an approach to understanding China’s thinking and diplomatic behaviour.

This thesis identifies five motifs that form the basis of Chinese diplomatic culture: dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony. The motif of dichotomy attributes the complex phenomena in social science to the corresponding interaction between “Yin” and “Yang.” The two parts cannot exist without each other, and they are interacting and mutual changing. The motif of change means that all the things in the world are continually changing. The motif of relationality suggests that Chinese society is a relation-based society. Guanxi is crucial in Chinese society and
daily life. The motif of benevolence refers to loving, respecting others and not forcing others to do something. The motif of harmony means that Chinese people have attached great significance to peace and pursued harmony between people, society, and nature.

These five motifs have significant positions in Chinese diplomacy. Take the concept of relationality as an example. Chinese politicians “are good at distinguishing among the self, enemy, and friend in different periods and on different issues” (Wang, J., 2006, p. 2). China has initiated “partnership diplomacy.” China has respectively established “partnership,” “strategic partnership,” “comprehensive partnership,” and “comprehensive cooperative partnership” relations with other countries. It is easy to understand the degree of intimate relations between China and other nations. The partnership relation is the most distant relations between China and other states, while “comprehensive strategic partnership” is the closest relations. Besides, China and Pakistan are “all-weather strategic partners” (Qin, 2018, p. 215), showing a high degree of their intimate relations. All-weather strategic partners mean that “China and Pakistan share political mutual trust and cooperation in various areas, with mutual support on issues concerning their respective core interests” (Li, 2018). China’s Premier Li Keqiang stated that “China always puts Pakistan as a priority of its diplomatic strategy” (Li, 2018).

The empirical literature on China’s diplomacy has been concerned with China’s diplomatic policy and its relationships with other major and important states and regions such as the United States, Japan, Asia, and Russia (Wang, Tan, Lang & Jiang, 2016, pp. 275-281). Given the rapid rise of China’s status, it is understandable that the relations with the major powers, especially the relationships with the United States, given their capabilities and influence, would occupy a crucial position in China’s diplomacy. It has great significance to investigate China’s specific diplomacy and its relations with other major powers.
In addition, there is a misunderstanding of China’s diplomacy between China’s own perception and the perceptions of other countries. Nowadays, the relationship between the United States and China has suffered severe damage; the United States thinks that “China craves world hegemony while China believes that the United States is trying to block China’s way forward” and hindering its people from pursuing a better life” (Fu, 2020). Both sides believe the other side is wrong and try to persuade the other party to correct the mistakes. Another misunderstanding between China and other countries pertains to military strength. The Chinese government insists that the purpose of their military buildup is solely for defence (TSCIO, 2019). While from the perspectives of other countries, such as Japan and the United States, these states question Chinese intentions and increase their military capabilities in response (U.S. Department of Defence, 2018).

In the international community, misunderstandings have the probability of causing conflicts. Thus, this thesis presents culture as a possible and reasonable way to reduce misunderstanding on China’s diplomacy. However, it does not mean that the conflict is caused by culture or can be resolved by understanding culture alone. Rather, cultural factors have contributed to the understanding of diplomacy.

**Overview of the thesis**

This thesis regards Chinese traditional culture as an independent variable and examines its concern with China’s diplomacy. As shown in the thesis title, it investigates the role of culture in China’s diplomacy. Chinese leaders, diplomats and scholars always emphasize that Chinese culture influences Chinese thinking, behaviour and diplomacy. Scholars such as John Fairbank, Peter Gries and Stuart Harris have also noted the influence of Chinese culture on Chinese diplomacy (Fairbank, 1969; Gries, 2004; Harris, 2014). This thesis identifies five motifs that form the basis
of Chinese diplomatic culture: dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony. Then
the thesis primarily focuses on how these aspects of culture affect China’s diplomacy.

This dissertation is organized as follows. This chapter summarizes the objectives of this
thesis. Chapter 2 reviews the extant literature on the two key terms related to this dissertation:
diplomacy and China’s diplomacy. The first part of this chapter suggests that diplomacy is centred
on Europe by examining the evolution of diplomacy and diplomatic culture. However, Chinese
diplomatic theory practice is older than Europe’s. The next part is the literature review on China’s
diplomacy. It is possible to learn about China’s contemporary diplomacy by explaining diplomatic
policies since the People’s Republic of China’s founding in 1949. The diplomatic themes of peace
and development are constants. Johnston and Qin believe that this consistency is influenced by
Chinese traditional culture (Johnston, 1995; Qin, 2018). Then, they want to understand how
traditional culture affects China’s diplomacy. However, the existing literature is fragmented;
Johnston focuses on the strategic culture, and Qin primarily focuses on relationality (Johnston,
1995; Qin, 2018).

After the literature review, Chapter 3 establishes the theoretical framework. This theoretical
framework is based on Chinese strategic culture and Chinese philosophy. The first part explores
Chinese strategic culture through Chinese philosophers’ perceptions of war and conflict. The
second part mainly discusses dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony.
Subsequently, the thesis examines these cultural motifs in China’s diplomacy through three case
studies.

Chapter 4 is devoted to research design and the selection of case studies. This thesis depends
on an intensive research design that attempts to find the role of culture in China’s diplomacy within
specific cases. This chapter rationalizes the need for in-depth research and justifies the choices of
states and the events that constitute the case studies. The three selected case studies are the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the negotiation between the United Kingdom and China on the Hong Kong issue, and the Taiwan Strait Crisis from 1995 to 1996 between the United States and China. Using primary and secondary sources, process tracing, and interviews, the thesis uses case studies to explore how China manages relations with other countries and resolves international disputes.

Chapter 5 explores the case study of the normalization of Sino-Japan relations. This chapter first introduces the Second Sino-Japanese War (known in China as the war of resistance against Japan) from 1931 to 1945. This war has inflicted huge losses on Chinese people. Then, the thesis analyzes how China tried to normalize its relations with Japan within the cultural framework established in Chapter 3. This chapter explores the role of Chinese strategic culture and the five motifs of China’s diplomatic culture for promoting its relations with Japan.

Chapter 6 focuses on the case study of Sino-British negotiations on the Hong Kong issue. The negotiations show how China resolved disputes that related to its core interests in national sovereignty and unification. As discussed in chapter 3, the Chinese strategic culture is cautious about war. The Chinese government prefer to resolve disputes by peaceful methods. This chapter tries to find whether this thinking embodies this in this case. This case demonstrates that the two countries’ first choice is negotiations. The Chinese government do not believe in rushing into war. However, Chinese leaders at that period thought that the resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong was crucial. Hence, China claimed that they would take Hong Kong by force if the return could not be negotiated.

Chapter 7 discusses the case of the Taiwan Strait crisis between China and the United States from 1995 to 1996. The current state and future direction of China-U.S. attract growing concerns
worldwide. Many issues affect the relations between the United States and China; one of the most important of these issues is the Taiwan issue. This chapter introduces the Taiwan issue and the Taiwan Strait crisis from 1995 to 1996. Then it investigates the process of the crisis and the methods of resolution in the framework of cultural factors. This chapter analyzes why China first chose diplomatic means, then used military means, and the influence of cultural factors on China’s diplomatic actions.

Chapter 8 makes a conclusion of this thesis. It reiterates the importance of taking cultural factors into account in diplomacy and the significance of Chinese cultural factors in China’s diplomacy. It also reiterates the argument of the thesis; China pursues its aims in a manner constructed with and framed by a unique cultural and philosophical culture that can be best understood using the framework developed in this thesis. Johnston believes that China’s strategic culture is realistic, while Qin focuses on the influence of relationality (Johnston 1995; Qin, 2018). This thesis suggests that China’s diplomacy should be understood from both perspectives. This chapter then points out several weaknesses of this thesis. The importance of cultural factors is not the same as cultural determinism. Diplomacy is determined by several factors, one of which is culture. Finally, the chapter suggests several possible research directions for the future.
Chapter 2

Literature Review:
Diplomacy and China’s diplomacy

Introduction

The focus of the chapter is historical and theoretical. It summarizes the current research on diplomacy and China’s diplomacy. Through the study of Western diplomacy, we find that the evolution of diplomacy and diplomatic culture has received considerable attention. The study of China’s diplomacy presents that the history of China’s diplomacy is longer than that of European diplomacy, thus challenging Eurocentrism or Western centrism. Then, the study of China’s diplomacy within the context of Chinese culture is necessary. The literature on the role of cultural factors in China’s diplomacy demonstrates that the cultural framework of this thesis complements the existing literature. The next section of this chapter reviews the literature on diplomacy by studying the evolution of diplomacy and diplomatic culture. The next section examines the history of and the literature on China’s diplomacy. The final part concludes the findings.

The study of diplomacy

According to the literature review on diplomacy, such as Amnon Altman, Christer Jönsson, Martin Hall, James Der Derian, Jeremy Black, Raymond Cohen investigated two aspects of diplomacy: the evolution of diplomacy and the diplomatic culture (Altman, 2004; Black, 2010; Cohen, 1991; Der Derian, 1996; Jönsson & Hall, 2005). The evolution of diplomacy shows the development of diplomacy. The diplomatic culture regulates the activity of diplomats.
The evolution of diplomacy

Diplomacy can be traced back some 4,500 years to the city-state of Southern Mesopotamia, now modern Iraq (Cohen, 1996). Archaeologists have found diplomatic messages and treaties in the Middle East dating back to 2500 BCE. A third party could resolve armed struggle, border disputes, coalitions, and negotiate arbitration awards. At that time, the main function of diplomacy was the customary exchange of letters and gifts carried by royal envoys. Kings used diplomacy to promote personal relations and the interests of their city-states (Altman, 2004). This period’s diplomacy could be regarded as a relationship between the King’s, the exchange of gifts, the ethic of negotiation and communication, and a bureaucracy that received and dispatched envoys (Kerr & Wiseman, 2013). Although ancient Near Eastern diplomacy’s outward appearance may be rudimentary, its assumptions about the world of interstate relations prefigure our today’s international system. The diplomatic principles of this period were so well adapted that they lasted for 2,000 years (Cohen, 1996).

The ancient Greeks conducted diplomacy among the Greek polities (Leira & Neumann, 2005). Greek diplomacy anticipated modern Western diplomacy through evolving accepted principles, such as neutrality, arbitration, the exchange of ambassadors, the ratification of the treaties, the conclusion of peace, and the declaration of the war (Cohen, 1996). In 432 BCE, the Spartans held a conference with the Athenians to discuss or not to go to war; this has been described as the first diplomatic meeting (Nicolson, 1954, pp. 7-8). It is sometimes argued that the Greeks were the first to establish international organizations in the form of the Olympic Games. During the games, a truce was declared so that people could “conduct a period of deliberately international relations and make the arrangement of cooperation” (Hamilton & Langhorne, 2011, p. 11).
By the fifth century BCE, the Greeks had obtained “elaborate institutions of international intercourse” (Nicolson, 1954, pp. 8-9). In practice, they had their councils, their alliances and their leagues. They had developed accepted principles such as the conclusion of peace and the rules of war (Cohen, 1996). Greece also had enacted regulations regulating the status of foreigners, the right to asylum, the grant of naturalization, extradition, and maritime conduct. Greek diplomacy is a link between the Mesopotamian and European traditions.

Roman diplomacy drew from Greek diplomatic practice. Under the Republic, Roman paid much attention to the ceremony (Lee, 2009). Visiting ambassadors were entitled to safe conduct and respectful treatment. The Romans did much to establish “the principle of the sanctity of contract” and bring “order into international relations” (Nicolson, 1954, p. 23). Roman imperial diplomacy was based on the control of client states at the height of empire (Cohen, 2013, p. 23). A powerful individual or oligarchy often conducted diplomacy and negotiated with others on their own behalf. Treaties should be carefully documented and respected. In other words, “diplomacy had an elaborate context” (Campbell, 2001). Furthermore, the Romans had an intelligence system by spies and scouts who served both military and diplomatic purposes. As the empire declined, Roman rulers used diplomatic methods, such as conciliation and negotiation, instead of force to achieve their imperialistic goals (Lee, 1991, p. 369).

Over the next thousand years, the Byzantine Empire, located between Europe and Asia, brought diplomatic traditions from “the classical to the modern worlds” (Nicolson, 1954, p. 24). The Byzantine emperors were the first to train professional negotiators that they sent to foreign courts and establish a special department of external affairs (Nicolson, 1954, p. 25). This department’s main purpose was to conduct the empire's relations with its neighbours through
negotiation rather than war. Byzantine diplomats created written reports, now a mainstay of European diplomacy (Queller, 1967, p. 141).

Renaissance Italy is often treated as the birthplace of modern European diplomacy (Nicolson, 1954). As Garrett Mattingly demonstrates, Western diplomatic institutions, including a body of regulations managing diplomatic relations, negotiations, immunities and treaties, were highly developed by 1400 (Mattingly, 1955, pp. 17-25). During the 15th century, European diplomatic institutions had a nascent foreign ministry and a resident ambassador. The resident ambassador's main duty was to convey the residential nation’s reports to chanceries at home. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the negotiation approach developed took the forms of conference diplomacy, the negotiation of treaties, and the issue of precedence (Nicolson, 1954, pp. 26-30).

In 1626, Cardinal Armand Richelieu, Louis XIII’s chief minister, set up a foreign affairs ministry to unify French foreign policy (Nicolson, 1954, p. 53). It was also Richelieu who first created the art of negotiation. He suggested that negotiation was not just a hurried effort but permanent activity (Nicolson, 1954, p. 53). The French system’s great merit was establishing a centralized authority for foreign policymaking and providing a professional service for an expert to carry out the procedure (Nicolson, 1954, p. 93). The most significant innovation of European diplomacy was the introduction of the international conference. Under this system, national delegations gathered in a formal environment to negotiate (Cohen, 2013, p. 28). The 1815 Congress of Vienna was a watershed. After the Vienna Congress, the great powers’ representatives managed international affairs and relations at continuous conferences, progressing in diplomacy’s development. The world had adopted European-style diplomacy by the end of the 19th century (Roberts, 2006). However, it was not until the great empires’ disintegration at the end of the 20th
century that “diplomacy began to overcome its old cultural-bound habits and attitudes and developed into a truly global system” (Cohen, 2013, p. 28).

World War I significantly changed modern diplomacy. The world war break showed that diplomacy failed to stop the war, making diplomacy suffer a huge reputation blow (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2013, p. 29). After World War I, people thought it was time to seek a new diplomatic method. Some people believed that diplomacy’s failure in the world war was attributed to “secret diplomacy”. In this case, Woodrow Wilson proposed new collective diplomacy to promoting self-determination, transparency and universal values. He postulated that in future, there should be nothing but “open covenants of peace, openly arrived at,” and that “diplomacy should always proceed in public frankly” (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2013, p. 29). Wilson and his generation of diplomats inherited the major innovation was the League of Nations, which was the basis for establishing a permanent diplomatic conference (Nicolson, 1939, pp. 172-173). The Charter of the United Nations made a crucial improvement to the League; at the same time, it made diplomacy reassert itself after 1945. The United Nations has become the central stage for promoting international cooperation and mitigating international conflicts. It is widely seen as a major experiment in “multilateral diplomacy” in the 20th century. It continues to develop as an intergovernmental organization and a key component of contemporary global governance (Wisemen & Basu, 2013).

In summary, ancient imperials powers conducted diplomatic interactions on an *ad hoc* basis. They mainly used diplomacy to establish and keep their religious, military and political “superiority over neighbours or any other groups with which they interacted” (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2013, p. 26). After the Westphalia Peace in 1648, sovereign states established “the modern institution of the resident ambassador.” And then, “continuous and confidential” negotiation was
used as a method to prevent “dangerous diplomatic escalations among the great powers” (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2013, p. 26). According to Nicolson, the diplomatic patterns engagement among European nations from the 18th to 19th centuries could be described as “the old diplomacy” (Nicolson, 1954, p. 72). He also pointed out the five characteristics of the old diplomacy:

1. Europe was the most important continent.
2. The great powers were more significant than the small powers.
3. The great powers have a common responsibility for the small powers’ conduct and the maintaining of peace. The intervention was accepted as a principle.
4. European powers should establish a professional diplomatic service.
5. States’ essential method to manage their relations was “continuous and confidential” negotiations (Nicolson, 1954, pp. 73-74).

After World War I, diplomacy gradually transformed from the “old diplomacy” to the “new diplomacy”. The proponents of new diplomacy advocated three basic principles of conducting diplomacy that has remained valid now. The first guiding principles were that public accountability was a way to ensure that diplomacy was based on popular consent. That is to say, the making of diplomacy should take the public’s opinion into account. The second one was that self-termination was “an extension at the level of states of the liberal principle of individual rights.” The third one was that collective security was regarded as “a mechanism to eliminate the arbitrary use of force” (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2013, p. 30).

As discussed above, diplomatic historians and practitioners have written the bulk of the massive literature on diplomacy. The study characteristic of diplomatic historians may be “their immersion in a particular past,” rather than “their dedication to the past in general” (Cohen, 1998). That is to say, historians have made great achievements in diplomatic practice in a specific period.
Hence, they usually explore diplomacy in a particular era. Practitioners have taken advantage of their own experience to discuss some issues, such as the characteristics of diplomacy and how to conduct diplomacy. Neither diplomatic historians nor practitioners have been prone to compare different historical experiences and insights and have been interested in theory-building (Der Derian, 1987). They did not pay much attention to the role of culture in diplomacy.

The diplomatic culture

Diplomacy consists of the negotiations conducted by representatives of distinct states who must safeguard their national interests and maintain peace. Negotiation among states can take the form of cultural exchange, the promotion of particular values, ideas, and political priorities. Milton E. Cummings has defined cultural diplomacy as “the exchange of values, ideas, beliefs, systems, traditions, information, and other elements of culture, to foster mutual understanding” (Cummings, 2003). Michael David-Fox regards “cultural diplomacy as the systematic inclusion of a cultural dimension to foreign relations, or the formal allocation of attention and resources to culture within foreign policy.” (David-Fox, 2011, p. 14). Paul Sharp argues that “a diplomatic culture arises out of the experience of conducting relations between peoples who regard themselves as distinctive and separate from one another.” (Sharp, 2004, p. 361).

In diplomatic studies, the concept of diplomatic culture can be “dated back to the cultural turn in the social sciences in the 1990s” (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 105). The previous ignore of culture question has been “attributed to a perceived ‘thinness’ of cultural context between politics, and a skepticism towards the idea of culture within the positivist approaches of North American International Relations.” (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 105). As discussed in Chapter 1, culture is broad and vague (Chay, 1990). A similar view is that “diplomatic culture is
too ambiguous, vague or unverifiable, which makes it not attract serious intellectual attention.” (Der Derian, 1996, p. 87; Sharp, 2004).

When discussing the diplomatic culture in different schools of thought in international relations, “it has had a contested uptake” (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 105). In reviewing this discussion of the idea of diplomatic culture, Geoffrey Wiseman divided the responses into four perspectives of the English school, negotiation theorists, neo-conservative policy think tanks and the constructivist critique of neorealism (Wiseman, 2005). The English school believes that “diplomatic culture exists and its significance is underestimated” (Bull, 2002). The negotiation theorists agree that the diplomatic culture exists, but they argue that it is not important. Neo-conservative policy think tanks assert that “diplomacy culture exists but damages the national interest” (Wiseman, 2005). A constructivist critique of neorealism suggests that “the existence of diplomatic culture is either taken for granted or ignored” (Wiseman, 2005). Although the four perspectives have different views on the importance of diplomatic culture, they agree that diplomatic culture does exist.

Of these four perspectives, “the most important impact on the debate is the English school’s view on diplomatic culture, especially Hedley Bull’s ideas” (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 105). Bull believes that diplomatic culture underpins and constitutes the international society of countries in many ways (Bull, 2002). James Der Derian read Bull’s view on diplomatic culture “through the perspective of critical theory” (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, pp. 105-106), then he suggests that diplomatic culture “plays a ‘meta-theoretical’ role in his work on international society.” (Der Derian, 1996, p. 85). Bull states that diplomatic culture is “the common stock of values and ideas possessed by the official representatives of states” (Bull, 2002, p. 304). According to Wiseman, diplomatic culture is “the accumulated representational and communicative rules,
norms and institutions designed to avoid war and improve relations between mutually recognizing and interacting political entities” (Wiseman, 2005, pp. 409-410). A comparison of Bull’s and Wiseman’s definitions of diplomatic culture can reveal key elements, including “common values, institutionalized norms, a common intellectual culture, a presumption of equivalent diplomatic actors, and a legacy accumulated over a long period and passed down to the day” (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 106).

In a world of estranged polities, diplomacy provides a middle ground where representatives can meet. Thus, diplomatic culture is the mechanism used to “mediate the estrangement and facilitate the movement of ideas and people across alien boundaries” (Der Derian, 1996, p. 85; McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 106). Alienation - refers to something made foreign and separate - is “the core of diplomatic culture in the English School” (Wight, 1979; Watson 1984; Bull 2002). In this view, diplomacy” manages the consequences of separateness, in doing so, it reproduces the conditions out of which those consequences arise” (Sharp, 2004, p. 370). Der Derian points out, “when the ideas of values of one community are alienated from another, the existence of a diplomatic culture becomes self-evident and subject to inquiry” (Der Derian, 1996, p. 92). Therefore, “the idea of a common intellectual culture underpinning diplomatic culture” plays a key role in promoting communications between actors alienated from international society (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 107). These common intellectual cultures share a language, notions, techniques, beliefs and understanding of the world (Bull, 2002, p. 305). A universal diplomatic culture built on such broad cultural values is patchy at best; nevertheless, it is promoted as an ideal desire for people to achieve (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 107). However, the extent to which a universal diplomatic culture generates the best international relations is debatable (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 107).
From the perspective of diplomatic culture, “diplomacy is composed of procedural values that demonstrate the defining characteristics of the objects” represented by diplomats: territorial and sovereign units with different interests (Sending, 2011, p. 644). Diplomatic culture aims to recognize the differences, manage friction, and maintain communications channels (Sending, 2011). Diplomatic culture can be understood as “the label pasted to the overall structure” that restricts the actions of countries and their diplomats (McConnell & Dittemer, 2016, p. 106). People establish and develop diplomatic culture, which can help improve their foreign relations. Some scholars pay attention to the influence of particular cultures on specific countries’ diplomacy, such as Henry Kissinger, John K. Fairbank, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Frank Ninkovich (Fairbank, 1969; Johnston, 1995; Kissinger, 2012; Ninkovich, 1990). However, the literature on the specific diplomatic culture is fragmented and non-systematic.

Diplomacy involves “the management of international relations and relations between states and other actors” (Barston, 2019, p. 1). As Nicolson pointed out, “diplomacy is the application of tact and intelligence to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states by negotiation” (Nicolson, 1939, p. 15). Diplomacy is generally considered to be related to peaceful activities (Barston, 2019, p. 1). Satow believed that “diplomacy is the use of peaceful means to regulate and handle the relationship between states” (Satow, 1992, p. 1). Henry Kissinger, a realist, defines diplomacy as “the art of relating nations to each other by agreement rather than by the exercise of force” (Kissinger, 1957, p. 326). The functions of diplomacy can be grouped into six categories: “ceremonial, management, international negotiation, information and communication, the duty of protection, contribution to international order” (Barston, 2019, p. 2).

The “ceremonial function, including presentation, protocol, visits, has associated with diplomacy” (Barston, 2019, p. 3). So far, “the function of international negotiations is the core of
many substantive functions” (Barston, 2019, p. 4). The management function of diplomacy refers to threat management, solving day-to-day problems, “promoting interests (political, military, financial, scientific, trade, tourism)”, explaining and defending the policy, bilateral coordination, and multilateral cooperation (Barston, 2019, p. 4). The task of diplomatic information and communication involves monitoring, cybersecurity, image projection, “counter-information (presentation and defence)”, assessment and reporting, and web operation and development (Barston, 2019, p. 4). The function of protection is a traditional task of diplomacy that is increasingly important because of “the growing mobility of citizens, international conflicts, and international sporting events” (Barston, 2019, p. 5). The contribution to international order pertains to the resolution of disputes and conflicts and international order. From the multilateralist perspective, a significant role of diplomacy is “to create, draft, and amend a wide variety of international rules of a regulatory and normative kind that provide structure in the international system” (Barston, 2019, p. 4).

Since 1648, when the Treaty of Westphalia established the principle of sovereign equality, the basic norms and forms of modern diplomacy have been exported to all countries and regions in the world, including China. Europe is therefore considered the birthplace of modern diplomacy. Academic discussions of the evolution of diplomacy usually mention the history of diplomatic development in Europe. Grotius, Richelieu, François de Calières, Abraham de Wicquefort, Satow, and Nicholson, are not only famous European diplomats, but also contributors to the theory of diplomacy. Based on their practice of European diplomacy, they helped to shape the field of diplomacy. Europe has been at the center of the discipline of diplomacy.

In China, however, the origins of diplomacy can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (770-221 BCE). Although Western diplomatic principles and theories...
have spread to China, China’s diplomacy is based on its own culture. Thus, it is meaningful to review the evolution of China’s diplomacy.

**China’s diplomacy**

China’s diplomatic history is more than four thousand years old. In ancient times, there were many states on the Chinese land. The states were not in an isolated condition while in a state of frequent contact. Early diplomacy consisted of frequent exchanges among states.

*China’s diplomacy in ancient time*

The Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BCE) exerted continuous cultural and political influence on the dynasties that followed (Ye, 2005). The Zhou dynasty was the central government and ruled many vassal states (Wang, 1991, pp. 1-2). The dukes of the vassal states accepted the authority of the king of Zhou as the son of Heaven (*Tianzi*) (Ye, 2001). The “*Rites of Zhou*” (*Zhouli; officers of Zhou*) written by Zhou Gongdan, a famous politician and military strategist in the Western Zhou Dynasty, is a classic of Confucianism. This treatise on organizational and bureaucratic theory profoundly affected the ritual system of later dynasties (Lin, 1985). According to records in this book, the Western Zhou dynasty had appointed ritual officials in charge of diplomatic ceremonies; this was the start of diplomatic protocol (Lin, 1985, p. 183).

With the decline of the Western Zhou dynasty, the previous hierarchy but harmonious order between the Zhou dynasty and the vassal states collapsed. China entered the era of Spring and Autumn (770-476 BCE) and Warring States (476-221 BCE), a violent and chaotic period. This “complex political configuration era created ample space” for philosophers to devise their own theories of statecraft and diplomacy. (Yang, 2017, p. 56). Therefore, this period is also known as “the golden age of Chinese philosophy” and “the period of philosophers” (Liang, 2001, p. 28). At
that time, thoughts were more prosperous than ever before, and these thoughts fell into schools, such as Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism. Some thoughts and traditions formulated in this period continue to influence China.

The Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods were times of social transition and diplomatic activity. During this time, the exchanges between states were frequent. Ethnic groups were becoming integrated, and the society had a trend of convergence. Inter-states consensus was easy to achieve. In this historical period, “the diplomatic principles of rite, righteousness, respect, and trust were formulated” (Lu, Huang, Wang, Zhou, Yang & Xie, 2004, p. 20). In this period, the ceremonies had a wide range, such as alliance, meeting, military, and bride-price, and ceremonies and rituals became diplomatic practices (Lu et al., 2004, p. 20). These diplomatic practices were identical to today’s unwritten rule observed by people without a legal text. “If a country violated the principles of the rituals, although no actual punishment, it would be condemned by other countries” (Lu et al., 2004, p. 20), which would damage the national prestige and the country’s international status.

In ancient China, there were several kinds of diplomatic officials. The emperors and the feudal lords appointed diplomatic officials visited some other states to handle diplomatic affairs through a wide range of diplomatic practices, including frequent diplomatic messengers, regular visits, attending conferences, and signing treaties (Lu et al., pp. 19-20). In ancient China, Hui (equivalent to today’s international conference) and Meng (similar to today’s treaties) were used to maintaining the stable relationship between vassal states (Lu et al., p. 21). In the record of the Spring and Autumn Annals and Zuo’s Commentary (an ancient chronological history written between 453-386 BCE) alone, there are 160 examples of Meng and 156 instances of Hui (Xu, 2004).
At that time, Meng consisted of “the introduction, the text, and the oath” (Lu et al., 2004, p. 21). The Warring States period followed the traditions of the Spring and Autumn Period (Lu et al., 2004, p. 21). It was customary that the authorities attended conferences and signed treaties committing their states (Zhang, 2011). In the Spring and Autumn period, the first hegemon, Duke Huan Qi, presided over 21 covenant meetings with the vassal states, comparable to “today’s multilateral summit meetings” (Yang, 2017, p. 55). The world’s first multilateral disarmament conference was arguably held in 546 BCE (Walker, 1953).

Taking Hostages was a common practice (He, 2017). Allied countries took the sons of other monarchs or blood relatives as hostages to ensure that the terms of a covenant or other promises would be kept (He, 2017). Although there were no resident diplomatic missions, there were regular diplomatic communication and contacts (Zhang, 2001). The diplomatic envoys would be sent to friendly states to deliver their congratulations or convey condolences on important occasions, such as the authority’s birth, marriage, the assumption of throne, death, and burial (Hong, 1975, pp. 164-212).

China’s feudal society lasted from 221 BCE to 1921, and many dynasties came and went. Regardless of whether they were in a divided or a combined state, states in China had frequent diplomatic activities and mutual exchanges. With the opening of the Silk Road in 138 BCE, trade relations had opened with Asia, Europe and Africa (Lu et al., 2004, pp. 30-31). Chinese feudal rulers often used diplomatic and military means in foreign relations. They maintained good relations with China's surrounding countries and ethnic minority regimes with trade, gifts, marriages, and military alliances (He, 2017). At the same time, they used force to maintain national unity (He, 2017). China’s feudal regimes did not have “permanent diplomatic representatives with
other countries,” but “temporarily assigned envoys to complete certain missions” (Lu et al., 2004, p. 31).

Chin’s diplomacy from 1840 to 1949

In the First Opium War in 1840, the United Kingdom defeated the Qing China and forced Qing to sign the humiliating Treaty of Nanking. This treaty is regarded as the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 33). The First Opium War was the beginning of modern Chinese history. Before the Opium War, the Qing court’s handling of foreign relations was fundamentally based on the tribute system. “The tribute system was formalized in two key institutions: recognition by the superior state, known as the investiture, and the sending of embassy envoys to the superior state” (Kang, 2010, p. 56). China was “recognized as hegemon” (Kang, 2010, p. 54). During this time, the Qing dynasty did not establish functional departments for foreign relations.

After the Opium War, the Western countries “instituted a roll of rules and institutions designed in particular to govern their relations with the Qing government” (Zhang, 2001). The old institutions of the Qing were no longer suitable for the needs of diplomacy. Therefore, following the requirements of the Western powers, the Qing government established a special position for foreign affairs (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 81). After the Second Opium War, China opened more ports. Foreign ministers would be stationed in Beijing; hence the Qing government needed a special agency and a group of officials to handle foreign affairs (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 81). Therefore, in 1861, the Qing government established its Department of Foreign Affairs (Zongli geguo shiwu yamen) (Xiong & Su, 2005, pp. 81-82). Since then, Chinese society and foreign relations had been transformed.
Before the Opium War, China sent envoys to other states only on important occasions, such as imperial birthdays, marriage and funerals. After signing a series of unfair treaties, China was forced to accept envoys from the Western countries stationed in Beijing and send envoys to the Western countries’ residents (Lu et al., 2004, p. 31, 38). In 1875, Guo Songtao, the first residential minister of China, was appointed to carry on the diplomatic mission to the United Kingdom, the residential embassy in China (Lu et al., 2004, p. 38). During this process, China’s diplomacy had gradually changed from passive to active, completing the transformation from the traditional model featuring Imperial Clan to the modern model centered on the treaty system (Zhang, 2011).

The revolution of 1911 (Xinhai revolution) brought significant changes to China’s society. The revolution overthrew the autocratic monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years and established a republican political system. On January 1, 1912, the Republic of China was declared, and Sun Yat-sen, the pioneer of China’s democratic revolution, became its interim president in Nanjing (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 229). Sun noted that “after the establishment of the Republic of China, the government should maintain pacifism, strengthen friendly relations with friendly countries so that China will be valued by the international community” (cited in Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 229). Sun proposed some ideas that had previously been unfamiliar to China, such as democracy, nationalism and sovereign equality. These ideas and his desire to rescind unfair treaties greatly influenced China’s theory of diplomacy. In the 1930s, the Nanjing government under Chiang Kai-shek valued multilateral diplomacy, the role of the international organizations, and China’s entry on the international stage (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 337, 342).

Since its founding in 1921, the Communist Party of China has presented its views on the international situation and China’s foreign relations. In December 1935, the Communist Party of China proposed to “establish diplomatic relations and conclude alliance treaties with necessary
understandings and compromises based on not giving up all possible victories against Japanese imperialism and Chinese traitors” (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 445). During this period, China, known as “the sick man of Asia”, was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society under the imperialist powers’ control (Wang, Tan, Qin, Yuan, Bai, Zhao, J. Wang, Xue, & Cheng, 2016, p. 4). The Chinese Communists led the fight against imperialism, feudalism, and capitalism. At the same time, they also learned “how to deal with the outside world” (Wang et al., 2016, p. 4). It should be noted that “[I]n the early days of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, China’s revolution and revolutionary thought had made a deep mark on China’s internal and external affairs” (Wang et al., 2016, p. 4).

*China’s diplomacy from 1949 to 1978*

The People’s Republic of China was established in a political situation where the number of socialist countries increased, oppressed nations fought for and won their independence. The United States and the Soviet Union were in a cold war (Xie, 2002, pp. 1-4). This socialist revolutionary period inherited the practices and ideas of Mao’s revolution (Wang et al., 2016, p. 5). The Chinese Communist revolution depended on class struggle and class conflict (Yang, 2019). The ideology determined how China saw itself and the world. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union suggested that the main international contradiction was between capitalism and socialism. Mao Zedong claimed that the conflict between the United States and the oppressed nations in Asia and Africa would be the main conflict in the international community after World War II (Xie, 2002, pp. 5-6). Hence, the diplomatic theme of this period was to “oppose imperialism, colonialism, hegemonism” and to support oppressed nations in their demands for independence and liberation (Xie, 2002, p. 9).
Proceeding from the interests of the revolution and the nation, the Communist leaders put forward the two diplomatic concepts - independence and peace - which embodied the basic demand of China in diplomacy for a long time and reflected the accumulation of historical experience and the determination of the Communists to rescind humiliating treaties (Zhang, 2009). After World War II and Mao’s victory, China adopted a “foreign policy that leaned towards the socialist camp (Xu, 1998). Under this foreign policy, China met its initial diplomatic goals: gaining international recognition, consolidating national security and obtaining foreign aid. China established diplomatic relations with various states in the primary stage, such as the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Vietnam and North Korea (Xie, 2009, p. 6). Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland also established diplomatic relations with China in the early 1950s (Xie, 2009, p. 8). The United Kingdom established its diplomatic relations with China due to the Hong Kong issue. The United States and Japan did not develop normal relations with China. At that time. China adapted itself to the current international system to protect its new regime.

China also made some efforts to promote “the principle of peaceful coexistence” and establish formal relations with developing countries that had just gained their independence (Wang et al., 2016, p. 5). For example, Indonesia was recognized by China immediately after the end of Dutch colonial rule. The two sides established diplomatic relations on April 13, 1950 (Xie, 2005, p. 102). In 1953, China and India negotiated on the issue of Tibet’s defence (Xie, 2005, p. 93). On the first day of the negotiations, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai presented the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. He stated that “the two countries should develop friendly relations based on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and reciprocity, and peaceful coexistence” (cited in Xie, 2002, p. 93). India agreed to use these five principles to guide the negotiation. After negotiation, the two sides reached an
agreement. The agreement stipulated that India would withdraw all armed forces stationed in Tibet and handed over its postal and telecommunication enterprises and twelve post stations in Tibet to China. It also noted to promote trade and commerce between Tibet and India following equality and mutual benefit. The issue of the former British colonial privileges enjoyed by India in Tibet was properly resolved.

The catastrophic Cultural Revolution of 1966 to 1976 was launched by Mao Zedong and exploited by counterrevolutionary cliques. The turmoil interfered with China’s diplomatic work (Wang et al., 2016, p. 13). After the start of the Cultural Revolution, the anti-party cliques used their power to control the mass media and meddled in the diplomatic work. In May 1967, a labor dispute occurred in a Hong Kong factory. The British Hong Kong authorities dispatched military police to suppress it. The Chinese government protested and demanded that the Hong Kong government’s actions should stop. Subsequently, the Hong Kong government arrested more than ten journalists from Xinhua News Agency affiliated with China National News Agency and other news agencies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China issued a note to the British Agency in China on this incident; it was the strongest protest Hong Kong’s government persecution of Hong Kong’s patriotic journalism; these journalists must be acquitted within 48 hours. China did not receive any reply; then, some Beijing People burnt the British Agency (Xie, 2005, p. 261). Such activities harmed China’s diplomatic work.

The anti-party groups tried to usurp the Central Government’s decision-making power over foreign affairs. They recalled nearly all the Chinese ambassadors participating in the Cultural Revolution, disrupting the Chinese diplomatic missions (Han, 1990). As a result, China's diplomacy has deviated from the correct road for some time. The right diplomatic route is to serve the national interests. From 1966 to 1967, China had diplomatic disputes with nearly 30 of the 40
countries with which it had full or semi-diplomatic relations (Xie, 2005, p. 261). The Chinese side bore the main responsibilities of these disputes. China’s diplomacy at this stage seemed aggressive and isolated from other countries.

During the socialist revolution period (1949 - 1978), China failed to improve its relations with the rest of the world (Want et al., 2016, p. 6). China’s long-term revolutionary experience had a great influence on Chinese people’s thinking and practice. They used this thinking to analyze and deal with the affairs completely differently, making their review and actions inappropriate. At the time, China’s relationship with the world was a kind of “rebellion against the powerful, with more suspicion than coordination, conflict prevailing over dialogue, and more struggle than cooperation” (Wang et al., 2013, p. 6).

China’s diplomacy from 1978 to 2012

China established its policy of reform and opening-up at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1978. At this meeting, the Chinese government committed to the four modernizations – industrial, agricultural, national defence, and scientific and technological - which implies that the focus of China’s domestic work had shifted from class struggle to economic construction (Zhou, 2009). Since then, the four modernizations have been regarded as priorities for domestic politics and foreign policy. Diplomacy should create a good domestic and global environment for economic growth. From the 1940s to the 1970s, China emphasized the danger of and preparation for war (Xie, 2009). In the late 1970s, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping believed that the United States and the Soviet Union were not ready for a world war, so “we can strive to delay the outbreak of the war” (Deng, 1994, p. 77).

China’s foreign policy underwent fundamental changes. The purpose of China’s diplomacy changed from advocating a world revolution to pursuing world peace; its attitude towards
international rules and community from doubt to respect; the focus of diplomacy changed from focusing on ideology to national interests (Zhou, 2009). As Deng pointed out, “China’s diplomatic goal is to strive for world peace; under the prerequisite of striving for peace, we will devote to four modernizations and build socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Deng, 1993, p. 57).

In the late 1980s, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Eastern European regimes were huge changes in the international situation (Xie, 2009, pp. 449-451). At that time, China was subject to economic sanctions by Western countries led by the United States because of the incident of Tiananmen Square (Xie, 2009, p. 445). Facing the challenges at home and abroad, Deng announced a new “keeping a low profile” policy in 1990. The contents of this policy were that “being moderate and cautious, keep a cool head, maintain a low profile, never take the lead but aim to do something big” (Deng, 1994, p. 350). The new policy emphasizes “China’s own economic development through economic cooperation” (Yan, 2014). Only when the country is strong can it play a greater, positive, and constructive role in international affairs. In short, China could focus on its own development and achieve something on the international stage at the same time. This policy also refers to “not running after hegemony, searching for no expansion, and being consistent with the thought of peaceful development” (Yan, 2014).

The Chinese people had learned that a country could not prosper without national independence. Hence, maintaining its independence was the cornerstone of China’s diplomacy (Xie, 2009, p. 4). China declared that it never sought hegemony even if it gets powerful in the future, and it did not allow any hegemonist to impose on itself (Wang et al., 2016, p. 15). China always takes the task of strengthening its solidarity and cooperation with other neighbouring and developing countries as a cornerstone of its foreign policy (Zhang, 2009). Since the focus of China’s work shifted to economic development, the goal of its diplomacy was to create a good and
peaceful environment for economic construction. However, due to the coherence of its foreign policy, China has always opposed hegemonism and power politics. It seems that opposing hegemonism and power politics is the only or main method to maintain world peace (Zhang, 2009).

*China’s diplomacy from 2012 to the present*

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the 18th CPC Congress in November 2012, China’s foreign strategy has experienced another transformation (Su, 2016). President Xi presented the foreign strategy of “striving for achievements (*fenfayouwei*)” at the foreign affairs conference of the CPC in October 2013 (Yan, 2014). In his speech, Xi insisted that China’s diplomats adopt the guidelines or principles of “striving for achievements,” “being more active” (*genjia jiji*), and “taking greater initiative” (*gengjia zhudong*) (Xi, 2013). China’s GDP was second only to that of the United States in 2010. In that same year, China’s relations with Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and the United States were strained by maritime disputes and the Obama administration’s rebalancing of China. Based on these facts, the Chinese government believes that keeping a low profile “was no longer suitable for China” (Yan, 2014).

Based on the strategy of “striving for achievements,” Xi Jinping has proposed “China dream,” “Asia-Pacific dream,” and “one belt, one road.” The essence of Xi’s strategy is collective happiness and pride, state prosperity and national rejuvenation (Stig & Chen, 2016, pp. 117-118). China’s State Council Yang Jiechi stresses that “the Chinese dream requires a stable and peaceful neighbouring and international environment and China is committed to realizing the dream through peaceful development” (Yang, 2013). Furthermore, Xi has advocated that China follow a peaceful development path and build a community with a shared future for humankind at the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017 (Xi, 2017). He also proposed that the Chinese government forge
a new form of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation (Xi, 2017).

Now China is a major player on the international stage. Its international influence is increasing. The Chinese people and the people worldwide are concerned about China’s choice for their rising road. Hence, it is necessary to examine China’s diplomatic evolution. By reading China's diplomacy, we can summarize some characteristics of China's diplomacy. China focuses on harmony and peace. The Chinese government pursues to achieve harmony with other nations. They also pay much attention to establishing good relations with other states, especially their surrounding countries.

*China’s diplomacy studies*

After reviewing the literature on China's diplomacy, I find that people are naturally concerned about China’s diplomatic relations and have sensitive views on its actual tendencies, such as whether its diplomacy is more assertive or a status quo power. Before PRC’s finding, some researchers had introduced and translated some Western theories of international relations but interrupted later. Chinese researchers have “re-introduced and re-learned Western international relations theory” since the 1980s (Wang et al., 2016, p. 272). Many researchers realised the necessity and importance of Chinese consciousness (Wang et., 2016, p. 274). Chinese consciousness required a combination of the theories and the reality in China. Combining “China’s realistic concern and foreign theories” has brought a series of practical and theoretical focuses (Wang et al., 2016, p. 277).

Many researchers have studied the relations between China, the United States and Japan, and other major powers. There is a consensus that US-China relations are the most significant bilateral relations in the world (Massot, 2019; Ross, Wang, & Tunsjø, 2021; Sutter, 2017, p. 1; Yang, 2019;
Scholars are now looking at the increasing economic competition between the two states (Fu, 2020; Lau, 2020; Wu, 2020; Wang, 2021). With the economization and globalization of diplomatic activities and the increasing economic competition between China and the United States, the study of economic diplomacy in international relations has also become a hot issue and gained much attention worldwide.

With the end of the Cold War, multilateral diplomacy has become more frequent. Researchers are interested in multilateral diplomatic practice, contemporary multilateralism theory and their links with China’s diplomacy (Wang, 2001; Qin, 2001). According to Wang Yizhou, it is not only a strategic but also “a process of adaptation and self-improvement” to develop “multilateral diplomacy with Chinese characteristics” (Wang, 2001). Multilateralism research can take the forms of structural, functional, strategic and social analysis (Qin, 2001).

Military diplomacy is a significant part of a country’s diplomatic strategy and national defence (Wang et al., 2016, p. 278). Both academic and military circles have paid great attention to China's military. The Chinese government wants to enhance its military strength to protect China’s national sovereignty and national interests (Wang et al., 2016, p. 279; Zhao & Zhu, 2009). Other states are suspicious of Chinese intentions and increase their own military capabilities in response (Garver, 1997; Ross, 2000; Tucker, 2009). In addition, problems related to summit diplomacy, regional diplomacy and public diplomacy are causes of concern.

In addition to the above development in diplomatic studies, researchers have explored some major issues of China's diplomacy theory, which shows that China's diplomatic research is getting deeper. They have made studies on diplomatic institutions, some emerging areas, China's activities in international organizations and the construction of Chinese diplomatic theory (Wang et al., 2016, pp. 285 - 289). The most influential of these is the study of Chinese diplomatic theory. After the
reform and opening up in 1978, Western theories of international relations entered China’s academic circles. The construction of “a diplomatic theory with Chinese characteristics is urgent for China’s diplomacy” (Wang et al., 2016, p. 285). Chinese diplomatic theory is both an academic theory and a theory that can guide China’s diplomatic practice. According to Qin Yaqing, Chinese diplomatic theory is far behind Chinese diplomatic practice (Qin, 2008). Chinese leaders have insisted that China needs a unique diplomatic theory.

Since the end of the Cold War, scholars like Yan Xuetong and Zhang Qinmin have investigated the cultural element in international relations. At the same time, China began to study cultural factors in diplomacy. Many scholars believe that the root of China’s diplomatic theory is Chinese traditional culture (Yan, 2011; Zhang, 2011; Zhang & Tian, 2016; Zi, 1998). Researchers have explored the influence and role of cultural elements on China's diplomacy from several perspectives. One is the study of the relationship between Chinese strategic culture and contemporary Chinese diplomatic activities. For instance, Alastair Johnston investigated China’s diplomatic behaviours in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and concluded that China’s strategic culture was "realpolitik" (Johnston, 1995).

In contrast, Chinese scholars search for the elements of peace in Chinese culture from a positive perspective, and they believe that China’s strategic culture is defensive and limited use of forces (Feng, 2005; Li, 2006). The second one is to sort out the thought of ancient Chinese diplomacy and relations among nations. For example, Chinese scholar Ye Zicheng discussed Chinese diplomatic ideas during the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period in his work (Ye, 2003). The third one is to link certain elements of the broad Chinese culture with certain aspects of China’s foreign policy or find the cultural origins of contemporary China’s foreign policy from ancient Chinese classics. This type of study has a more fruitful result, but it lacks
systematic research. For example, some scholars investigated the traditional culture impact on modern China's diplomacy, some studies view righteousness and benefit in Chinese traditional culture and Chinese diplomacy (Wang, S., 2006; Chu, & Wang, 2007; Ye, 2007).

Johnston’s cultural realism is typical of strategic culture research in the 1990s. The core of strategic culture theory is that it determines a country’s understanding of war and peace, conflict and cooperation; it also shapes a country’s identity and strategic preferences (Johnston, 1995). To verify the influence of strategic culture on national behaviour, Johnston selected China’s Ming Dynasty as a research case and concluded that China has two strategic cultures (Johnston, 1995). One, the benign Confucian-Mencian culture, is a symbolic or idealized strategic culture that is culture consistent with China’s dominant culture. In this culture, “war is inauspicious and to be avoided; the enemy is not necessarily demonized; violence is a last resort” (Johnston, 1995, p. 66). The other is China’s hard Realpolitik strategic culture, which is opposed to Confucian culture. Johnston believes that in realistic decision-making, hard Realpolitik takes the initiative (Johnston, 1995, p. 249).

Johnston’s cultural realism theory has noted the important influence of Chinese strategic culture on national strategy. His theoretical design provides a feasible path for the empirical research of strategic culture, which has significant theoretical value (Li, 2006). However, his use of the Ming Dynasty is flawed. Although he believes that strategic culture is a subset of culture, when selecting the object of analysis to determine the type of China’s strategic culture, he ignores the philosophy and literature that reflect Chinese culture traditions and selects only military books (Li, 2006). Based on these military books, he concludes that China’s dominant strategic cultural tradition is a hard Realpolitik strategic culture, opposite China’s dominant culture. This is a logical error that draws general conclusions based on a one-sided literature analysis (Li, 2006). Similarly,
he analyzed the Ming Dynasty, one of the many dynasties in China, and reached a general and inaccurate conclusion.

The relational theory of world politics uses the theoretical construction path of Constructivism and implants the Chinese concept of “relationality” into it. It has become one of the most influential Chinese schools in studying international relations theory, and Qin is an expert in this theory (Liu, 2020). Qin made three hypotheses about “relationality.” The first is that the world of international relations is composed of continuous events and relationships rather than separate, independent atomic entities. The second is that an actor is and can only be an “actor” in a relationship, which means that social relations shape the identity and role of a social actor; the concept of “actor in the relationship” means that the basic unit of analysis should be the relations, not the actor itself. The analysis of world politics should start from the study of relations, rather than fixing the unit of analysis as an independent, self-interested, and rational state actor. The third hypothesis is that “process” is a key concept in relational theory that defines flowing relations (Qin, 2018b). The logic of relationality uses the relationship circle of the actor as the background and makes corresponding decisions based on the closeness and/or importance of the relationship between the actor and the specific subject (Qin, 2018b).

Qin has been committed to the Chinese school of international relations theory since 2003. His substantive innovative efforts in theorization and conceptualization in the Chinese school apply Chinese civilization experience to international relations theory, which is considered a milestone (Liu, 2020). As Kazanstein suggests, the relational theory of world politics marks the arrival of a truly global discipline of international relations (cited in Liu, 2020). Relationships indeed play a major role in Chinese culture and social practice. However, one assumption in the relational theory seems confusing: whether actors’ behaviour, including countries and people,
depends entirely on “relations” or “relation types.” According to relational theory, what determines the character of a system is the type of relations between the actors in the system, not the features of the actors themselves (Qin, 2018b). In this way, this theory negates the role of an actor’s subjective attributes and behaviour motivations in determining system features. The type of relations must be admitted as an important environmental variable that the actor refers to when engaging in certain behaviour. However, as an actor, whether a person or a country has a subjective side and active behaviours based on its requirements and needs. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the actor’s motivation and attributes (Shang, 2017).

Johnston and Qin are the leading scholars in studying the role of culture in China’s diplomacy. However, Johnston ignored the role of philosophical ideas when he defined Chinese strategic culture as Realpolitik. Qin has developed the Chinese school of international relations theory through Chinese cultural elements, relationality. Although relationality is vital, other cultural factors, such as peace and harmony, are important in China’s diplomacy.

**Conclusion**

The chapter has investigated the literature on European and Chinese diplomacy. A review of the literature on diplomacy reveals the Europa is the center of the field. Modern diplomatic rules and principles were formed at the Peace of Westphalia and then spread worldwide. However, China’s diplomatic practice began centuries earlier. It is a challenge to Eurocentrism, and it makes sense to use Chinese culture to analyze Chinese diplomacy.

Peace and independence have been themes of China’s diplomacy for a long time. The diplomatic practice had its principles and rules in ancient China. Since 1840, when it became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, China fought for its independence. After the end of the Cold War, scholars such as Johnston, Feng, and Qin studied the role of cultural factors in China’s
diplomacy. Based on the analysis of Johnston’s research, Qin’s research, and the study of China’s diplomacy practice, this thesis explores the role of cultural factors in China’s diplomacy. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework that combines centuries of Chinese philosophical ideas and Chinese strategic culture.
Chapter 3

The cultural traditions of China’s diplomacy

Introduction

This chapter establishes a cultural framework that combines Chinese strategic culture (Realpolitik) and Chinese philosophy. The focus of this chapter is theoretical. This chapter explores a via media between the account that Chinese strategic culture is Realpolitik and China’s diplomatic culture has distinctive Chinese philosophical traditions. The position “Chinese philosophy has occupied in Chinese civilization compared to religion in other civilizations” (Fung & Bodde, 1997, p. 1). Given the complexity of traditional political philosophy, it is impossible to examine all of it. The thesis identifies five motifs that form the basis of Chinese diplomatic culture: dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony.

The first part of this chapter examines Chinese strategic culture through the perception of ancient Chinese philosophers on conflict and war. The second part investigates the five motifs of Chinese diplomatic culture. Confucianism is one of the important core contents of Chinese culture, and it is often equated with Chinese culture (Zhang & Tian, 2016). Confucius (Kong Zi, 551-479 BCE) founded Confucianism. Confucianism emphasizes personal virtue, morality and respect for the community and its values. Therefore, in the analysis of this chapter, Confucian cultures occupy an important position.

Chinese strategic culture

Strategic culture is “based on the understanding that states are predisposed by their historical experience, political systems and cultures to deal with security issues in a particular way” (Ress &
Aldrich, 2005, p. 906). In essence, “strategic cultures are generally stable as they are tied to identity conceptions and narratives of a given community.” (Meyer, 2011, p. 677). In other words, strategic culture is a relatively stable value orientation and behaviour pattern, which shows in achieving the country’s strategic goals. Christoph Meyer argues that “one strength of strategic culture lies in its potential to forecast foreign policy decisions” (cited in Hinton, 2020, p. 84). This section explores the perceptions of Chinese philosophers on war and conflict to identify Chinese strategic culture.

The Perceptions of Conflict

Strategic culture is “grand strategic preferences derived from the nature of conflict and the enemy, and shared by decision-makers” (Johnston, 2021, p. ix). In ancient China, Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, Laozi, Mozi, Guanzi and Hanfeizi, argued that the cause of the conflict was embedded in human selfishness, the nature of survival, and disorder. The human nature emphasized here is like the “state of nature” mentioned by Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes describes the pre-civilization state as the “state of nature,” which was a “state of war.” (Hobbes, 1946, p. 82). In the “state of nature,” every man, woman, and child are threatened by everyone else; life is a constant adventure, and no one can have any confidence in their own safety and survival; “people are living in constant fear of each other” (Hobbes, 1946, p. 82). Hobbes believes that the way to escape from the state of nature and enter the state of civilization is to “establish and maintain a sovereign state” (Jackson & Sørensen, 1999, p. 64). However, in Chinese culture, the founding and maintaining a sovereign state is not the end of the conflict. Then, Chinese philosophers suggested several ways to resolve conflict.

Laozi was the founder of Taoism and the writer of the classic Dao De Jing. Laozi argued that the greatest flaw in human nature was the voracious mind, leading to war. He says, “the most
dangerous thing is never to be satisfied; the biggest mistake is the desire to gain more” (Lao & Xu, 2003, p. 103).

Mozi was the founder of Mohism. Mohism prioritized authenticity, self-reflection, and self-restraint rather than the rituals emphasized by Confucianism. Mozi also blamed the conflict on human selfishness and “lack of mutual love” (Mo & Johnston, 2010, p. 130).

Hanfeizi, an influential representative of ancient Chinese Legalism, insisted on making strict laws. Hanfeizi explained that the reason for the conflict was the failure of material goods to meet demand: “when the population grows, the material goods are insufficient, people compete for each other. Although the methods of reward and punishment have been applied, the result of the conflict will occur inevitably.” (Han & Chen, 1974, p. 1041).

Xunzi, Confucius and Mencius were the three greatest Confucian philosophers. Xunzi believed that human nature was naturally evil. It is natural for people to strive for gain. Thus, competition between people inevitably leads to conflict or war. He says, “when the status of the two people who exercise the powers is equal, and they have the same desires, then the material goods are not insufficient for them, the conflict will occur” (Xun, Dong, Zhang & Mou, 2001, p. 182). The selfishness of human nature was based on the desire for material resources. Confucius Mencius and Guanzi believed that war could resolve conflicts. They might think that the struggle for human survival causes conflict among human beings. Chinese philosophers have done a substantial discussion on the issue of conflict to avoid conflict and war. These philosophers lived in the chaotic and violent periods of Spring and Autumn and the Warring States. Hence, they focused on resolving conflicts and pursuing peace.
The Perception of War

Chinese strategic thinking is cautious about war. *The Art of War*, a classic on military strategy and tactics by Sun Wu (545 – 470 BCE), says, “war is the most important affair to a state, it is a matter of life and death, a road to survival or extinction. Hence, it demands careful study and analysis” (Sun, Wu, S., Wu, L. & Lin, 2000, p. 2). Ancient Chinese thinkers regarded war as an instrument to resolve conflict but suggested careful consideration before waging war.

Laozi regarded war as a crime, so he opposed all wars. Laozi would now be considered a pacifist. He says, “weapons are ominous things, and people hate them, so the person with the ‘Way’ (Dao/virtue) will not touch them” (Lao & Xu, 2003, p. 67). Mozi thought the cause of the conflict was a lack of mutual love, so he suggested loving everyone as much as they loved themselves and loving other states as they loved their own. Hence, Mozi condemned offensive warfare. He says, “from ancient time to now, kings, princes, dukes, and minsters, if they desire success and hate failure, if they wish to be safe and dislike in a dangerous situation, one thing they must do is to condemn offensive war” (Mo & Johnston, 2010, p. 166).

Confucius argued that war could be used for self-preservation. Confucius and Mencius both opposed unjust wars and supported just wars. Confucius claimed that just wars are used by the sage “to stop violence and put down inhumanity” (Wang F. & Wang X., 2002, p. 366). Mencius used the terms “attack” and “punishment” to distinguish unjust from just war. He says, “the Son of Heaven (the king of the central government) decrees punishment but does not implement it; the feudal lords implement punishment cannot decree it” (Mencius, Shi & Wang, 2009, p. 359). Xunzi also stressed that there were just wars and unjust wars (Xun, Dong, Zhang & Mou, 2001, p. 377). A just war was waged by “the armies of benevolent” aimed at stopping violence and eradicating evil” (Xue, Dong, Zhang & Mou, 2002, p. 377). The ancient Chinese philosophers’ views on just
and unjust war are like those of Michael Walzer, who wrote *Just and Unjust War* in 1977. Since then, “just war theory has become the dominant framework for discussions of war within academic, military, international law and public arenas” (Parsons & Wilson, 2020, p. 2). According to Walzer, “all offensive wars, or any armed attack on the territorial integrity of a sovereign state or political independence are unjust and wrong and constitute crimes of aggression (cite in Hudson, 2009, p. 8). All defensive wars are just, except the defensive wars of societies engaged in massive human rights violations (enslavement, genocide, and widespread massacre)” (Ibid.).

Hanfeizi did not consider war as just or unjust; he was concerned only with the result. He says, “to wage war and gain victory can bring peace to the state and make the status of the royal person stable. A victorious war can also make the army strong and establish a good reputation of the state (Han & Chen, 1974, p. 792). To wage war and not gain a victory can ruin the state, make the army weak, and extinguish the reputation of the state” (Han & Chen, 1974, p. 792). Hanfeizi thought a victorious war could make a state achieve its goal, while a defeat could destroy a state. That is why most Chinese philosophers believe war can resolve disputes and achieve their goals, but they think carefully before waging war.

Chinese thinkers preferred to solve disputes peacefully. Based on their studies on the cause of conflicts, philosophers gave corresponding solutions to maintain peace. The Confucians—Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi thought that systematic norms and ritual principles could be established to restrain human behaviour and achieve peace (Yan, 2011, p. 36). Hanfeizi and Guanzi believed that a state needed to increase its strength to solve the conflict and attain peace (Yan, 2011, p. 28; Liu, 2016; p. 48). They held that conflict among people and states could not be avoided, and it was impossible to maintain a long-lasting peace. Therefore, they suggested increasing their national strength to safeguard their security and maintain their peaceful life. Hanfeizi maintained
that “the strength and size of a state are dependent on its legal governance” (Yan, 2011, p. 28). He argued that “if the one who makes the law is strong, then the state will be strong” (cited in Yan, 2011, p. 28). Laozi thought the selfishness of human nature caused the conflicts, and he believed that the selfishness of human nature could not be eliminated. Then, he advocated that the conflict could be reduced by reducing communication and interaction between groups of people (Lao & Xu, 2003). To construct the idea of mutual love, Mozi suggested establishing a structural system to unify the ways of people’s thinking to construct the idea of mutual love (Mo & Johnston, 2010, p. 138).

Chinese philosophers advocated different non-violent ways to resolve conflicts and maintain peace. They proposed educating people to avoid war, establishing norms to prevent conflicts, and improve their national strength to maintain peace. There is a Chinese saying, “try peaceful means before resorting to force.” Chinese strategic culture is “cautious about war” (Liu, 2016, p. 59; Sun, Wu, S., Wu, L. & Lin, 2000, p. 2). War should be regarded as the last resort. If a country wants to wage war, then it should ensure victory. A country can wage righteous war to stop violence and eradicate evil.

Johnston describes Chinese strategic culture as Realpolitik. This means that “war is inevitable, the enemy is disposed to challenge one’s security and interest, and the use of force is the best response” (Johnston, 1995, p. 106). Johnston points out that China’s strategic preference advocates the pre-emptive use of force (Johnston, 1995). When conflicts arise, it is preferable to resolve them based on established principles and norms. The Chinese resort to force only when peaceful methods have failed and when the conflict involves the survival of the country, territorial integrity, and national reputation. From the Chinese perspective, wars for national sovereignty, integrity and honour are just.
The Chinese tradition of solving conflicts uses peaceful methods, which makes China’s strategic culture defensive. After the People’s Republic of China’s founding in 1949, the Chinese government has advocated peaceful resolution of international disputes instead of resorting to force. In 1957, Premier Zhou Enlai stated that “our government has consistently maintained that all unsolved issues between China and other countries should be resolved fairly and reasonably through peaceful consultation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China & PLRC, 1990, pp. 230-231). Deng Xiaoping also strove for seeking peaceful methods rather than force (PLRC, 1993, p. 49). He proposed ending international conflicts through negotiation. Deng initiated the “one country, two systems” policy to solve the Hong Kong issue with Britain. He used the principle of “shelving differences and seeking joint development” to establish warm relations with Japan. China still tries to “settle disputes and disagreements through dialogue and consultation, dissolve tensions and seek consensus, and make the international order more equitable and just” (Xi, 2016). A violent dispute is costly and destructive in terms of material resources and human lives.

However, China’s strategic culture seems to be Realpolitik regarding the conflict over China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Non-violent resolutions require “strong commitments from all parties” (Jeong, 2017, p. 167). For the Chinese people, issues related to national sovereignty and territorial integrity cannot give any commitment. As Xi Jinping stated in 2016, “no country should expect us to trade with our core interests and do not expect us to swallow the bitter consequences of harming our sovereignty, security, and development” (Xi, 2016). China’s diplomatic culture influences its strategic culture.
China’s Diplomatic Culture

China is the world’s oldest recorded civilization (Ojha, 1969, p. 3). Over the last three centuries, the impression of Western historical analysis on the Chinese is that they are “a people at an eternal standstill” (Dawson, 1967, pp. 65-89). Today’s Chinese people have inherited a long historical and cultural tradition. When China’s President Hu Jintao made a speech at Yale University on April 21, 2006, he stated that “a nation’s past and present perceptions of the world and life always embody in its nation’s culture; culture is an important aspect of national attributes, which tells a nation’s fundamental pursuit of mind and impact a country’s behaviour in different ways and also give its diplomacy remarkable national culture characteristics ( cited in Zhang & Tian, 2016). Hence, it is appropriate to discuss the influence of culture on the conduct of diplomacy. (Harris & Klintworth, 1995, p. 28).

Chinese philosophy emerged in the Western Zhou era (1046-771 BCE). Chinese philosophy is divided into ancient philosophy and modern philosophy. Modern Chinese philosophy resulted from the introduction and development of Western philosophy, especially Marxist. Ancient philosophy mainly consists of Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism and Mohism. Legalism is a school of thought in Chinese history that studied the way of governance of the country and proposed the idea of prospering the state, strengthening the army, and governing the nation by law. The main ideas of Mohism are: equal love between people, oppose wars of aggression, oppose extravagance and waste, attach importance to inheriting the cultural wealth of the predecessors, and master the laws of nature. The following part explores the five motifs that form the basis of Chinese diplomatic culture: dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony.
The Concept of Dichotomy

In Chinese culture, Yin and Yang represent dichotomies (Feng, 2009, p. 311). Yin and Yang are a pair of contradictive objects, for example, female and male, night and day, dark and light, soft and hard, heaven and earth, low and high. The term “yin” is associated with female qualities, and “yang” with male ones (Feng, 2009, p. 311). The two depend on and complement each other. The Book of Change, written in the West Zhou dynasty (1046-771 BCE), is one of the oldest classical texts on Chinese cosmology and dialectics. The book uses hexagrams with “Yin” and “Yang” symbols to represent the operation status of all things in the world. This book points out that “all the complex phenomena in the universe are due to the corresponding interaction between ‘Yin’ and ‘Yang’ (Feng, 2009, p. 311). The two parts are interacting and mutual changing. If there is yin, there must be yang and vice versa; the two parts have clear boundaries, but they are complementary with each other, this is “the ‘Tao’ (principles), it is the law or standard way followed by everything in the world” (Feng, 2009, p. 312).

Yin and Yang are in dynamic harmony (Qin, 2016). It is achieved through constant coordination and mutual tolerance. Diagram 1 depicts Chinese dialectic thought. The white part represents the Yang pole, and the black represents the Yin pole. Each part contains an element of the other, and the two parts are in a circle. Chinese social scientists use this dichotomy to diagnose and manage the opposite relations. They “conceptualize the universe in a polar war, believing that progress and evolution take place by the interaction of the two opposite poles” (Qin, 2016, p. 39). The two opposites “interacting in an immanently inclusive way, depending and complementing each other for full expression and for life, and co-evolving into a new synthesis through a dynamic process which keep on maintaining, adjusting, and managing complex and fluid human relations so as to reach the ideal state of harmony” (Qin, 2016, p. 41).
The book also incorporates some natural science knowledge and materialist thinkers’ interpretation of natural phenomena. The *Book of Changes* (*Yi Jing*) states that “When things develop to the extreme, they will change; only when changes occur can the development of things be unimpeded; then things can continue to develop” (Liu & Lin, 2006, p. 298). Chinese philosophy emphasizes the development, movement, transformation, universal connection, the immortality of matter, the transformation of energy and demonstrates the law of the unity of opposites (Feng, 2009, pp. 314-325). In the law of the unity of opposites, unity is based on opposition, and the struggle between the two opposite sides promotes movement and development. Chinese philosophical dialectics do not deny the existence of conflicts and struggles but believe that managing and regulating struggles and conflicts can lead to harmony (Qin, 2015). Therefore, Chinese philosophical dialectics have weakened dialectics' revolutionary spirit, and more emphasis is placed on attaining harmony.

The biggest difference between Chinese and Marxist dialectics is that Chinese dialectics weakens the importance of struggle. Marxist dialectics is based on movement, development, struggle, and transformation. Karl Marx noted that “dialectics does not worship anything; it is critical and revolutionary by its nature” (Marx & Engels, V2, 1969, p. 218). Frederick Engels argued that “dialectics is the subjective reflection of the oppositions that prevail in the world from the objective perspective; these oppositions, with their constant struggle and final mutual
transformation or transformation to a higher form, determine life in nature” (Marx & Engels, V3, 1969, p. 534). Vladimir Lenin, the Bolshevik leader, and head of the Russian revolutionary government, claimed, “development is a struggle of opposites; the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary, perishable, and relative; the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and movement” (Lenin, 1986, p. 408). The struggle is the revolutionary soul of Marxist dialectics.

_The Concept of Change_

_The Book of change_ focuses on change and how its influence can extend across different realms (Lai, 2008, p. 10). It reveals that the only constant and unchangeable thing is change (Qin, 2011). The Chinese people believe that everything in the world is changing and interrelated. Even opposites can transform toward each other, such as good luck and bad luck, and strength and weakness (Feng, 2009, p. 316). These things seem to be the opposite, but they can also be changed to form a whole. Bad luck can be called a harbinger of good luck, and weak can become strong, and vice versa. The premise of this change depends on how people adapt to them.

According to _The Book of Change_, “if people do not accumulate good deeds, they will not be able to achieve a lifetime reputation; if people do not accumulate evil deeds, they will not be killed at last” (Chinese Philosophy Teaching and Research Institution, 2004, p. 109). In Chinese thinking, changes start from small changes and grow from here. Change requires people to give full play to their subjective initiative and strive to create a favourable environment to promote positive change instead of waiting for change to happen naturally.
The Concept of Relationality

Researchers in China and around the world have long noted the centrality of personal networks in Chinese life (Gold, Guthrie & Wank, 2002, p. 5). Personal networks are “guanxi,” meaning “relation” or “relationality.” According to Lucian Pye, the Chinese understanding of the world is that individuals are embedded in a web of relationships, naturally making individuals accomplish tasks by manipulating relationships (Pye, 1968, pp. 173-174). Liang Shuming, a noted Chinese scholar, stated that “Chinese society is neither individual-based (geren benwei) nor society-based (shehui benwei), but relation-based (guanxi benwei)” (Liang, 2005, p. 72). Chinese people recognize guanxi as crucial in their life and society.

In a relation-based society, the emphasis is not placed on individuals but upon the relation, the nature of the relationships between individuals who interact with each other (King, 1985, p. 63). According to Liang Shuming, “in China, when a person is born, he has relational ties with his parents, brothers, sisters, and so forth, he will live in the relational web throughout his entire life” (Liang, 2005, p. 72). Interpersonal relationships have played an essential role in Chinese culture and daily life (S. Yang, Huang & F. Yang, 2008, pp. 179-180). It believes that “all people live in a network of social relations. People grow up in and depend on their social communities, such as families, kinship webs, friendship circles, work colleagues, neighbours, classmates, and even casual acquaintances. Rationally, people can cultivate their relation circles and utilise their social ties to fulfil their interests” (Bian, 1994, p. 972). For the Chinese, “individuals can not accomplish their fulfilment in isolation from their fellow men” (King, 1985, p. 57).

In Chinese culture, the first important thing for a person is to identify the relationship between the self and the others in complex social connections; then, people can establish relations according to specific guidelines. However, the relationship between the self and the others is not
unchangeable. Because “the self and the other are immanently dependent on each other for their coexistence” (Qin & Nordin, 2019; Nordin & Smith, 2018; Qin, 2016; 2018), people must manage their relationships properly. In a relational society of practice, “interest is always shared and realized through reciprocity” (Qin & Nordin, 2019, p. 607). Therefore, the most desirable situation for the people is to establish and maintain stable, reciprocal, and long-term relationships between the self and the others for both personal advancement and social order (Qin, 2018, p. 231).

Such long-term harmonious relations are not only beneficial for achieving self-interest but also constitute part of self-interest. In the Han dynasty (202 BCE – 220 AD), the Han empires sent their princesses to be married to the rulers of minority nationalities “for pacifying such groups and maintaining good relations with them” (Shang, 2015, cited in Qin, 2018, p. 232). Such a policy presumes that “once you are related, you may not fight each other; and once you are intimately related, you may help each other when needed” (Qin, 2018, p. 232). This policy could be called the policy of “peace and kinship” (Lewis, 2007). Moreover, In Chinese culture, keeping a stable and long-term relationship is more significant than achieving immediate and tangible interests. It means that people can gain long-term interest through stable relations.

The Confucian discourse of social relations stresses intimate amicable, altruistic, affecting relations. It also recognizes enmity but believes that “enmity can be changed into amity” (Qin, 2018, p. 212). Then, it focuses on ways to establish amity rather than on threat management. Therefore, people set norms, rituals, educational principles, and behavioural codes to create a more stable social and political order (Qin, 2018, p. 230).

The first step in the management of the relationships is to establish and maintain good relations between the self and the others. Confucianism regards the family as the core unit of society (Qin, 2018). It argues that the intimate relations among family members should be the
model for other relations. The closer the relationship between the self and the other, the more people “tend to cooperate with and help each other” (Qin, 2018, p. 233). If a person has more intimate and important members of his relations networks, he might gain more.

People’s social connections can adjust to changes in the environment. It is, therefore, possible to change the nature of relations. “Chinese ontology of relations, instead of the Western ontology of things enables the peaceful transformation of enemies into friends” (Nordin & Smith, 2018). In traditional Chinese philosophy, “harmony is not only desirable but also achievable” (Qin, 2018, p. 234). It stresses changing the nature of relations from discordant to concordant or from negative to positive (Qin, 2018, p. 234). From changing the nature of relations from conflict to cooperation, people from both sides can gain more benefit. Hence, people try their best to maintain good relations. In addition, focusing on relational management does not deny the importance of the material interest. It believes that interests are embedded in relations and can be gained more through skilful management of relations (Qin, 2018, p. 226).

In the Western culture, classical “social theorists from Karl Marx (1888) and Émile Durkheim (1893) to Max Weber (1922) and Georg Simmel (1950)” all mentioned that “society was made up of relations” to some extent (cite in Abbott, 2020, p. 11). Marx remarked in “Theses on Feuerbach” that “the human essence is no abstraction inherent in every single individual; it is the ensemble of the social relations in its reality” (Marx, 1888). According to François Dépelteau, “the ideational core of relational thinking (and relational sociology) is composed of five principles or ideas: the principle of interdependence, the principle of co-production, processual thinking, rejection of dualisms and rejection of ‘substance’” (Dépelteau, 2018, pp. 17-19).

The principle of interdependency means that the “identities and actions of entities emerge and develop through interactions” (Dépelteau, 2018, p. 17). For example, a patient is a patient only
through her/his “interactions with the psychoanalyst” (Dépelteau, 2018, p. 17). The rejection of substance means that “relational theory treats ‘relations’, ‘transaction’ and ‘interaction’ as its starting points of understanding, observation, and explanation rather than posit ‘substance’, ‘things’, and ‘entities’ as the ontological priors of life” (Kavalski, 2018, p. 45). The rejection of dualisms suggests that relational thinking rejects modernist dualism such as objectivity-subjectivity, individual-society, and body-mind; this thinking chooses to “study the interactions between various entities in specific fields” (Dépelteau, 2018, p. 18; also see Abbott, 2020, p. 12). Processual thinking means that the dynamic and fluid universe is “a vast process composed of sub-processes, sub-sub processes and so on, emerging and developing through interactions between interdependent entities” (Dépelteau, 2018, p. 18). The principle of co-production means that “the interactions between human and non-human interactants constitutes the co-production of knowledge” (Dépelteau, 2018, p. 18).

This argument leads to the conclusion that the relations in Chinese culture place much emphasis on human relations. China has always been an agricultural society in history, and the lives of the Chinese people and the development of the community depend on agricultural production. Therefore, the Chinese emphasize the group, the relationships among group members, and harmony with nature. ‘Relationality’ is a cultural element accumulated in Confucian culture and long-term historical practice (Qin, 2015). The Chinese emphasize the importance of good relationships and changing the nature of relationships. This leads us to the concept of benevolence.

*The Concept of Benevolence (*Ren*)

China’s Confucian tradition places supreme value on the cultivation and management of relationships (Solomon, 1995, p. 31). Benevolence (*ren*) is one of the core concepts in Confucianism, which demonstrates the importance of self-cultivation and educates people to learn
how to treat others (Mei, 1967, p. 328). Ren has also been translated as humanity, goodness, and altruism. Confucius never gave ren a precise definition. Ren means treating others with sincerity and kindness from the heart. Benevolence is the ideal personality considered by Confucius and is highly respected by generations of Confucian scholars. Benevolence is “to restrain the self,” which means not to violate ritual laws (Chinese Philosophy Teaching and Research Institution, 2004, p. 22). The pursuit of “benevolence” is determined by the self and not dependent on others.

Ren also can be translated as ethical wisdom, which is associated with five attitudes: tolerance, diligence, deference, generosity and making good on one’s word (Chinese Philosophy Teaching and Research Institution, 2004, p. 22). It is worth noting that, from the perspective of Confucius, nobles have the virtue of benevolence, and the ruled slaves and other working people have no such virtue (Chinese Philosophy Teaching and Research Institution, 2004, p. 23). Benevolence (Ren) is “to love the people” (Feng, 2009, p. 64). Love is not merely from the mind’s rational faculty but also the heart (Ni, 2011, p. 31). Benevolence consists of the “mutually beneficial relations between self and other…a complementarity grounded in the specific conditions of one’s cultivated relations with another person” (Hall & Ames, 1998, pp. 258-259; also see Nordin & Smith, 2018).

However, Confucius defines love in terms of social roles and relationships. He believes that the starting point for people is to love their parents and then gradually love the others “according to degrees of closeness” in relationships (Ni, 2011, p. 31). Love is not only the characteristic of benevolence but also a way of being benevolent. Ren is “not only about the ideal quality of a virtuous person and the moral property of the person’s actions; it is also about the internal capacity of the people and the principle believed by the people for making moral actions” (Fung, 2014, p. 91). The principle of “faithfulness and reciprocity” (Zhong-shu) is the requirement of benevolence.
and the principle for people handle their relationships. This principle can be regarded as “what we can contribute to each other” (Fung, 2014, p. 102). According to Confucius, “a benevolent person helps others to succeed while seeking his success. While doing his best to achieve his development, he also chooses to help others in their development endeavour” (Confucius, Sun & Yang, 2005, p. 73). Confucius stated, “do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you” (Confucius, Sun & Yang 2005, p. 194). In other words, people should be honest and trustworthy and treat others as the self expects to be treated. Being “faithfulness and reciprocity” is a good way to deal with personal relationships.

The principle of benevolence applies both to the communication between people and to the governance of the country. Mencius was one of the principal interpreters of Confucian thought. The core political philosophy of Mencius was “benevolent governance” (ren zheng). Mencius believed that “the benevolent state has no enemy” (Wang, ed., 2009, p. 11). Mencius noted, “when a state wants to establish a relationship with a smaller neighbouring state, the state should stick to the principle of benevolence and justice. When the state wants to establish a relationship with a bigger neighbouring state, the state should stick to the principle of benevolence, and the ruler of this state should be wise and cautious. The ways of the state deals with a smaller neighbouring state can make the world stable and peaceful. The ways of the state deals with a bigger neighbouring state can make the state itself safe.” (Wang, ed., 2009, p. 31).

For Mencius, justice is the pursuit of political morality, and profit is the pursuit of economic and military power (Xu, 2011, p. 174). Xu Jin explains the distinction between justice and profit in Mencius’ thought: “if a state pursues profit in a hegemonic way, the state cannot maintain its status for long, and its state power will decrease. If a state sticks to the principle of justice and is governed in a benevolent way, then its state power will be strengthened, and its status will be
improved” (Xu, 2011, p. 174). We can therefore conclude that the main principles of benevolence and justice are the basis of international practice. Through these two principles, a country can establish and maintain harmonious international relations.

**The Concept of Harmony**

In ancient China, Chinese thinkers were concentrated on the critical issues of social stability and harmony. Chinese philosophers deliberated on the methods, processes, and institutions to maintain peace and stability (Lai, 2008, p. 8). *The Doctrine of the Mean (Zhong Yong)*, a monograph on moral philosophy on the realm of life cultivation written by Kong Ji (483-402 BCE), advocates that human behaviour should pursue harmony (Fu, Cai & He, 1996, p. 5). It demonstrates that human desires and emotions should act to their expected degree without going to extremes (Li, 2010). In that way, society can maintain harmony and peace. In other words, harmony means appropriateness and peace. Confucius (551-479 BCE) advocated using rituals to promote and achieve harmony (Confucius, Sun & Yang, 2005, p. 7). In Chinese culture, nothing is more important than harmony.

In Chinese thinking, harmony does not mean sameness but means differences. It refers to different things or the different elements of the same thing in a harmonious condition. As China's former foreign minister Li Zhaoxing pointed out that, “a musical instrument has different tones, only these tones work together can produce enchanting melodies” (Li, 2010). Harmony is a pursuit of harmony amid diversity. Relations between people, between the individual and society, and between human beings and nature should be harmonious. The highest goal, however, is to achieve harmony among nations in the world. Confucius advocated that “Men of virtue can maintain harmonious relations with others while respecting individual differences” (Zhao, 2014, p. 2). The pursuit of peace and harmony does not mean the obliteration of differences and conflicts; on the
contrary, pursuing peace and harmony should be on the premise of recognizing differences and conflicts.

As stated above, the highest goal of harmony is international peace and harmony. *The Book of History (Shangshu)*, a compilation of ancient Chinese political documents, states that:

““The Chinese emperor Yao is a great man, he can govern nine generations of his family with his virtue, then he makes his family unity and harmony. After realizing his harmonious family, he coordinates the people, coordinate the relationship between various families, and then makes the social harmony. After realizing the harmonious society, he coordinates the princes of the vassal states; then he makes the vassal states cooperate harmoniously.” (Jiang, 2008, p. 125).

Harmonious families lead to harmonious societies, harmonious countries, and finally, a harmonious world. That is to say, self-development is the best way to achieve harmonious relations with others.

According to Astrid Nordin, “a harmonious world has not been, is not and cannot be made fully present, despite we attempt to make it” (Nordin, 2016, p. 2). She argues that “harmony requires multiplicity or difference,” but Western people do not “regard ‘non-Western’ people as *properly different*, but rather as *behind* in a predefined story about process and modernization” (Nordin, 2016, pp. 1-2). In other words, in this story, the non-western people are not different from the Western people; the non-western people are just behind, then will eventually become like western people. Harmony balances between different things as discussed; if different things disappear, then harmony is impossible. Although Nordin suggests that a harmonious world is impossible, she believes that the importance of harmony has “carried great weight in China’s governance system for thousands of years” (Nordin, 2016, p. 3).

The concept of dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony are occupied significant positions in Chinese philosophy. These concepts are embedded in China’s diplomatic
culture. The Chinese government is constantly adjusting its diplomacy to changes in national power and the international environment. The government addresses to create favourable conditions to resolve difficult issues or keep these issues in a good direction, not to settle them through sanctions, suppression, or even military violence, for example, China used the policy of “one country, two systems” to resolve the Hong Kong issue with the United Kingdom (Sun, 2017, pp. 10-11).

China wants to establish and maintain peaceful and friendly relations with other countries for its long-term interests. In 2002, the Chinese government proposed the principles of friendship and partnership with its neighbouring countries, and then formulated the principle of its diplomacy: “The big country is the key, and the periphery is the priority” (Zhou, 2010, p. 336). The periphery means “those land and maritime areas adjacent to China” (Swaine, 2014). This policy means that “in China’s diplomatic work, big powers are the key, neighbours are paramount; developing countries are the foundation” (Swaine, 2014). Beijing has implemented some new regional diplomatic policies, including “one belt and one road,” the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and China’s push for free trade regional and bilateral agreements (Lanteigne, 2019, p. 155). The influence of these concepts on China’s diplomacy will be explained in the case studies.

Conclusion

This chapter establishes the cultural framework of this thesis based on Chinese strategic culture and Chinese philosophical ideas. The five motifs of Chinese philosophy were examined. By exploring the relationships among these five motifs, we find that they are intertwined. The Chinese understand the world in terms of dichotomy and change. Relations are a major part of Chinese culture. In relationships, adhering to the principle of benevolence can create and maintain good relations and harmony.
The Chinese prefer to use non-violent methods. War is very dangerous and is a matter of a country’s survival or extinction. Hence, if the conflict is not related to national survival, sovereignty, and integrity of territory, the Chinese people would like to resolve disputes peacefully. However, if the conflict is related to these issues, China will use every method, including force. It, therefore, seems that Chinese strategic culture is based on Realpolitik. China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity are the core interests, which requires China to take any necessary methods to protect, including military methods. As General Wei Fenghe, China’s state councillor and minister of national defence stated, “China is the only major country that is still striving for national reunification. Any individuals or forces cannot stop the momentum of China’s reunification” (Wei, 2019).

Since the 1990s, the Chinese military modernization process has achieved an astonishing speed. In the new era, the incremental improvement of China’s maritime capabilities has made “China more active in regional maritime affairs” (Ross & Tunsjø, 2017, p. 2). Since 2009, China has been involved in disputes in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, and the Korean Peninsula, which has inevitably made many states in the region “more apprehensive about their security” (Ross & Tunsjø, 2017, p. 5). Those countries, especially the United States, question the motives of China’s military modernization. The United States notes that China is leveraging predatory economic, influence operation, and military modernization to “coerce neighbouring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage” (National Defence Strategy Commission of the United States, 2018). In addition, China’s “deployment of oil drilling in Paracel Islands, its reclamation activities in the South China Sea, and its declaration of East China Sea air defence identification zone are described as ‘overassertive’” (Ross & Li, 2016, p. 234).
The Chinese government has been trying to dispel the doubts of other countries. Chinese analysts and officials have emphasized that China’s action is acting defensively. It should be noted that China’s strategic culture is influenced by Chinese philosophy. From the Chinese cultural perspective, even a victorious war is costly; a country should maintain peaceful and harmonious relations with other states; therefore, the best option for resolving conflicts is to use peaceful means. In addition, China has experienced the pain of being invaded. China does not want to impose this pain on other countries, so China addresses that it will not engage in a war of aggression (Xi, 2021). Moreover, the use of force does not always bring the expected results. The war in Afghanistan (2001 to 2021) followed the US and its allies invaded the country oust the Taliban, and deprive Al-Qaeda of a safe base of operations; however, the Taliban regained power now after the withdraw of most NATO forces (“War in Afghanistan,” n.d.).

In his speech at a ceremony marking the centenary of the Communist Party of China on July 1, 2021, China’s President Xi Jinping pointed out,

“a strong nation must have a strong military, as only then can it guarantee the nation’s security; Chinese people’s military is a strong pillar to safeguard our socialist country and preserve our national dignity, and a powerful force to protect peace in our region and beyond” (Xi, 2021).

As China’s economic and military capabilities have grown, the Chinese government has pursued “its sovereignty interests, regional security and sought regional stability and good relations with its surrounding countries and the United States” (Ross & Li, 2016, p. 234). Even if China may use force to achieve territorial unity and protect sovereignty integrity, China’s attitude to war is still cautious, and it is still considered a last resort. The best method to resolve these disputes is peaceful ones. The case studies will examine China’s strategic culture-related sovereignty and territorial integrity.
Chapter 4

Research Methodology and Case Selection

Introduction

This chapter establishes an intensive case studies research design to examine the role of cultural factors in China’s diplomacy. This chapter puts the methodological sections in this thesis into a theoretical context. This thesis depends mainly on an intensive research approach concerned with “how a process works in a particular case or a limited number of cases” (Sayer, 2010, p. 163). The main purpose of the intensive research method is not to predict; rather, it provides an in-depth study of a particular phenomenon. The empirical evidence of this thesis is primarily based on three case studies.

The next section demonstrates the validity of intensive research and the use of process tracing and interviews and then discusses the data sources used in this thesis. The following section explores the selection of case studies. The case studies are the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the negotiations between the United Kingdom and China over the Hong Kong issue, and the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-1996 between the United States and China. The final section discusses the use of abductive and retroductive inference to analyze data. The central component of abduction inference is “the redescription or recontextualisation”, which means recontextualising and reinterpreting a known phenomenon in a new context (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002, pp. 88-96). Retroduction is “[advancing] from one thing (empirical observation of events) and [arriving] at something different (a conceptualisation of transfactual
conditions)” (Berth et al., 2002, p. 96). It clarifies the conditions or prerequisites for actions, social relations, reasoning and knowledge.

**Intensive research method**

This thesis relies on an intensive research methodology to examine the effect of the culture of China’s diplomacy. According to Andrew Sayer, Mats Ekström, Berth Danermark, Liselotte Jakobsen, and Jan Christer Karlsson, the primary questions of an intensive research design are “how does a process work in a particular case or a limited number of cases?” “what produces a certain change?” and “what did the agents actually do?” (Danermark et al. 1., 2002, p. 165; Sayer, 2010, p. 163;).

An extensive research method is usually contrasted with an intensive research design. The two types of research design pose different sorts of questions, depending on different approaches, and define different objects and boundaries (Sayer, 2010, p. 163). Intensive research is concerned with discovering “how a mechanism works in a concrete situation”, which involves investigating the “substantial relations of connection” and describing the interaction between objects (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 166; Sayer, 2010, 163). In comparison, extensive research reveals patterns and formal relations in relation to dissimilarity, similarity, and correlation (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 165; Sayer, 2010, pp. 163-166). Generally, the procedures of intensive research design are:

(i) describing the object or the phenomenon.

(ii) interpreting and recontextualizing the phenomenon within a new conceptual framework (abduction inference).

(iii) reconstructing the basic conditions for these phenomena from the description and
analysis of specific phenomena (retroduction inference)

(iv) discovering the interactions between the objects and the potential outcomes activated through the interactions (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 80).

Based on these four steps, the following chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) will describe China’s diplomatic behaviour and reinterpret China’s actions in the framework of Chinese traditional culture. Finally, I will discuss the interactions between China’s actions and Chinese traditional culture and the potential outcomes.

Because of the focus on specific processes or mechanisms, the results and explanations presented in this thesis may be unique and cannot be applied elsewhere, which makes the results and explanations are not treated as a prediction because they are not ‘representative’ of the whole population (Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 165; Sayer, 2010, pp. 166-167). Intensive research requires concrete explanations of events. The world of social science is not a closed system but an open and complex system. Hence, it cannot simply use the findings from examining one event to interpret another because of different contexts. Although the results are non-predictive, the arguments of this thesis - Chinese traditional culture impact China's diplomacy - have some implications for explaining China's diplomatic behaviours. In an open and complex social system, it is more accurate to understand the effects of the mechanisms as tendencies rather than generalities or regularities (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 163). Whether the trend of a mechanism is triggered depends on the context and its relations with other mechanisms. Even if the concrete results are not achieved, it does not necessarily signify that there is no underlying mechanism; it might simply mean an absence of the appropriate conditions (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 14; C. Wight, 2015, pp. 52-56).
A social realist ontology guides the research procedure of an intensive research design and searches for drawing a link between manifest mechanisms in various contexts and generative mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 163). Roy Bhaskar’s ontological map shows three ontological domains: the empirical, the actual, and the real (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 13). The empirical domain focuses on people’s direct and indirect experiences (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 20). The actual domain consists of “events that happen whether people experience or not” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 183). The real domain encompasses the empirical and actual domains in addition to their generative mechanisms (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 14). This thesis presents a real domain and mechanism in Chinese diplomacy by analyzing events and experiences.

Process tracing is used to explore the effect of a specific situational mechanism (Beach, 2016; Trampusch & Palier, 2016). It tracks the process of causality under specific conditions by “trying to get closer to the micro-foundations or mechanisms behind the observed phenomenon” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 147; Trampusch & Palier, 2016, p. 438). According to Peter A. Hall, social scientists believe that it is increasingly difficult for people to use two or three independent variables to accurately explain a phenomenon under multiple interaction effects in the world we confront; in this case, process tracing is more appropriate (cited in George & Bennett, 2005, p. 206). Therefore, process tracing explores processes in considerable detail in a particular context. The researcher can then eliminate alternative interpretations of the result and enhance the certainty of “the explanatory power of other accounts” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 149). Considering the level of detail required for effective process tracking and the emphasis on context and time, the method only allows “within-case inferences” about underlying mechanisms and processes (Beach, 2016, p. 470; George & Bennett, 2005, p. 149). We use these three case studies to examine China’s diplomacy. Although process tracing focuses on “within-case inference,” by comparing the
outcomes of three cases, it would be possible to make a cross-case comparison on China’s actions in foreign contacts, and thereby, it could provide in-depth understandings of the impact of the context on the mechanism.

The process of deducing and tracking mechanisms working under particular contexts requires a qualitative analysis (Sayer, 2010, p. 163). Qualitative researchers are interested in the ways in which people construct their worlds, interpret their experiences, and “what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 6). Qualitative methods focus on particular cases and mainly include causal and structural analysis, participant observation and interviews. The basis of this research method “lies in the interpretive approach to social reality and the description of the lived experience of human beings” (Holloway, 2017, p. 3). The core of the interpretive method is “how human beings understand their subjective reality and attach meaning to it” (Holloway, 2017, p. 25). The value of qualitative research is to focus on one or several particular cases. Thus, the thesis primarily relies on an interpretive approach for case studies. This methodology is the most appropriate approach for this research as it allows a comprehensive evaluation of the selected cases while at the same time taking the wider, often complicated context into consideration (Bennett & George, 2002, p. 19; Halperin & Health, 2012, p. 209).

Moreover, a case study can explore causal mechanisms in detail. This thesis uses a wide range of primary and secondary data sources, obtaining from different resources to analyze the cases. The main data sources are from the national archives of China, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, documents, historical narratives, and interviews with politicians, scholars and journalists. The main secondary sources are newspapers and magazines. The use of several data sources of the same phenomenon allows for corroborating different information sources,

The interview is a means of data collection in social science (Guthrie, 2010b, p. 119). The researcher can deeply understand an informant’s insights or perspectives on the selected issues and questions through in-depth interviews. Interviews can be unstructured, semi-structured or structures. Unstructured interviews are conversational. It requires a topic and a general plan. The interviewer usually “asks open-ended questions flexibly” to keep the process smooth (Guthrie, 2010b, p. 119). Semi-structured interviews require guides with standard introductions and conclusions so that the interviewer can compare information from different interviews. The interviewer tends to ask “closed-response questions” based on his/her research design. Still, the interviewer can flexibly adjust the order of questions according to the specific situation of the interview to maintain a natural flow (Guthrie, 2010b, p. 120). Structured interviews primarily rely on formal standardized questionnaires. The interviewer conducts all interviews “in the same way to generate reliability by employing set questions and set response codes” (Guthrie, 2010b, p. 122).

Before the interviews, I prepared a rough outline in advance and listed the interviewing questions that relied on the research question and cases. Then, I carried out nine semi-structured interviews with scholars and diplomats who were familiar with or had expertise in the events of one or more of the three cases. The interviews were one to two hours long and were conducted to elicit insights about the case studies. The interviews began with open-ended questions that were framed as “what” or “how”, rather than the more constraining or leading questions that were bound as “why”. Questions pertained to the role of Chinese traditional culture in China’s diplomacy. The purpose was to invite the participants to discuss what they believed was vital to the story, whether I have considered it or not (Becker, 1998, p. 59; Robson, 2011, p. 283).
I interviewed three diplomats and six distinguished scholars. Seanon S. Wong and Ngok Ma from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in Hong Kong gave me advice on collecting information in Hong Kong. We discussed the Hong Kong issue as well. Liu Jiangyong from Tsinghua University is an expert on Japan and East Asia. We discussed the role of culture in the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations. Huang Dahui from the Renmin University of China explained China’s efforts in the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, especially the efforts made by China. I also interviewed Su Hao of China Foreign Affairs University and Zhang Hongshi of Yanshan University. I am not authorized to disclose the names of the three diplomats. Through discussions with these excellent professors and diplomats, I was greatly inspired.

In the interviews, informants could decline to answer any question. I hoped to create and maintain a natural flow in our conversations and discussed with them freely. The participants offered information along with their insights and understanding of my research questions. Based on their responses, I was able to add and modify questions in ways that might not have otherwise occurred to me.

Attribution was a significant issue in the interviews; that is, the participants decided their choices be identified in the study. The six professors that I interviewed permitted me to quote them. The diplomats, however, spoke to me off the record because of the sensitive nature of their work. This, however, does not diminish the value of the interviews. Based on their answers, I was able to locate additional sources in the literature.

I went to Hong Kong to do fieldwork in October 2019, but the Hong Kong’s riots in November forced me to leave ahead of schedule. While I was conducting fieldwork in Beijing in January 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic started, and the Australian government-imposed travel
restrictions. On March 11, 2020, Australia’s government announced that foreign nationals who have been in mainland China were not allowed to enter Australia. I am not an Australian citizen or permanent resident; hence, I could not enter Australia. I had difficulty accessing books and data on the shelves in my university library.

This section has demonstrated the value, objectives, and intensive research process and how to employ an intensive method to design this thesis’s research. The section has then outlined the significance of interviewing in case studies and has introduced the interviews of this thesis. The next section will discuss the selections of the case studies.

**The case study method**

The case study method involves the in-depth and holistic investigation of one or more specific cases. This method usually “takes a situation as given” and explores what is particularly important to the participants (Guthrie, 2010a, p. 67). In the process of studying the cases, the researcher can maturely consider the findings, correct misunderstandings, fill in missing data, evaluate new ideas generated by the data and conduct longitudinal observations (Guthrie, 2010a, p. 67). The value of case studies is to create and test hypotheses (Flyvbjerg, 2010, p. 140). According to Sharan Merriam, “particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive” are four common case study traits (Merriam, 1988, p. 25). “Particularism focuses on a particular phenomenon, for example, a person or an event (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 158). The descriptive element requires a detailed description of the case. The heuristic factor gives the reader a deeper understanding of the case. The inductive factor focuses on theory-generating conclusions arising from “the experiences of the case” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 158).

Unlike the sampling principle in the extensive design, the sampling principle in the intensive approach is strategic; then, the empirical basis of the intensive approach is ‘cases’ (Danermark et
al., 2002, p. 170). It means that the choices of case studies are not random, while they are chosen depending on the way "they manifest the phenomenon of interest, rather than the extent to which they are most different or most similar" (Wagner, 2016, p. 60). There are four methods to select cases, or four types of cases (Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 170-171; Flyvbjerg, 2010, pp. 142-146).

The first kind of case is a pathological or extreme case. As the name suggests, this type of case can “provide more relevant information than an average or representative case” (Danermark et al., 2002, p.170). Pathological situations can reveal hidden mechanisms and structures. Mechanisms are often hidden when other mechanisms counteract them; however, it becomes clearly apparent in particular situations (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 104). The second kind of case is extremely varied cases. The purpose of selecting this type of case is to attain information about the importance of various conditions for producing the phenomenon under investigation (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 170). It focuses on selecting some cases from different dimensions that have great importance for the study; then, it analyzes “how mechanisms operate under different conditions” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 170; Flyvbjerg, 2010, p. 143).

The critical case involves investigating an instance where “one particular symptom has appeared that should not have done so,” or an instance where “the property of interest should in all likelihood be found but is not” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 170-171). The researcher can formulate “logical deductions” through evaluating a “least probable” or “most probable” case, then apply these “logical deductions” to other phenomena (Flyvbjerg, 2010, pp. 143-144). The normal case is the last and fourth type of case. The normal case offers insight into prevailing generative mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 171). Since these four types of cases are not mutually exclusive, a researcher can combine them. In this thesis, I used these four methods to select three case studies to examine the cultural factors that have affected China’s diplomatic behaviours.
The Selection of Case Studies

The research question of this thesis is the influence of Chinese traditional culture on China's diplomacy, which is the basis for selecting the cases. Given the emphasis on the cultural role in China's diplomatic behaviours, plenty of events provide the appropriate conditions for this study. It is argued that the case study contains a subjective bias towards verification, which means the researcher tends to confirm his/her preconceived notions (Diamond, 1996, p. 6). However, according to Campbell, Flyvbjerg, Geertz, Ragin and others, after conducting in-depth case studies, the researchers typically state that their pre-existing views, concepts, hypotheses and assumptions were wrong, and they had revised their hypotheses and views on essential points based on the case material (cited in Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 398). Hence, the contexts of the cases should be selected depending on how well they provide perceptions into the particular processes under study (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 170; Wagner, 2016, p. 60; Geddes, 1990; Levy, 2008, pp. 8-9).

As John P. Lovell points out, a researcher can link diplomacy and culture if he/she analyzes “patterns of diplomatic action and commitment over a period of years” (Lovell, 1990, p. 95). As stated in Chapter 1, cultural factors often take years to generate the desired outcomes. Hence, selected the cases that lasted several years. Lovell also suggests that three dimensions of culture can be used to examine the link between diplomacy and cultural variables. The first dimension consists of the myths and beliefs that are associated with a country’s historical experience by its people and leaders and people’s view about their nation’s current role and status (Lovell, 1990, p. 97). This cultural dimension contains the prevailing ideas of “who are we” and the state’s destiny. The second dimension is an image of other nations and other world regions held by elites and the public (Lovell, 1990, p. 97). The third significant dimension involves people’s attitudes and habits to solve problems in human relations (Lovell, 1990, p. 98).
Myths help people understand themselves and their nation’s destiny well and have a strong effect on the nation’s diplomacy. Americans believe that the United States is a superpower. While between the 18th and early 19th centuries, Americans recognized that their country was a relative weakness. Presidents like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson had carried out non-entanglement diplomacy (Lovell, 1990, p. 97). President Washington stated that “extended their commercial relations with foreign nations and had with them as little political connection as possible” (cited in Henrikson, 2016, p. 324). Thomas Jefferson “epitomized this as peace, honest and commerce friendship with all nations while entangling alliances with none” (cite in Henrikson, 2016, p. 324). The second dimension is about the views of other nations on a country’s image. According to John King Fairbank, Americans thought that China’s image was exotic and focusing on the oddities of Chinese culture, then the government of the United States made response by fluctuating their diplomatic policy toward China, and this affected relations between the United States and China (Fairbank, 1983, pp. 289-295). According to the third dimension, diplomatic actions reflect cultural patterns of problem-solving, deep-seated attitudes and beliefs about conflict and compromise, and “cultural or subcultural norms that control the use of force to resolve disputes” (Lovell, 1990, p. 98). These three dimensions informed my selection of case studies.

This thesis has mainly chosen the diplomatic contexts of dealing with relations with other countries to test the cultural traditions in China’s diplomacy. There are two kinds of diplomatic practices: the establishment of relations with other states; and the resolution of international disagreements. The three cases in the thesis are the establishment of normal relations with Japan, the negotiation of the Hong Kong issue between China and the United Kingdom, and the Taiwan Crisis of 1995-1996.
After the People’s Republic of China’s was founded in 1949, the relations between China and Japan were tense and sometimes hostile. It almost took two decades for the two countries to resume normal relations. The normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan ended the longtime hostility and opened a new chapter in the good-neighbourly friendship between the two countries. China’s core interests are its national sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity, and national unity. If the dispute involved territorial integrity, would China stick to its conventional principles? If not, and China makes a military response, what does it mean? Based on this thinking, this thesis chose two cases related to the territorial disputes; the Hong Kong issue has been resolved, the Taiwan issue has not.

The purpose of intensive research is to explain the events; it does not predict them. However, by studying these cases, we can arrive at logical deductions that can be applied to other phenomena. To a certain extent, the outcomes of the case analysis may have implications for similar cases. Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States are China’s most important partners or neighbour. The cases selected here can therefore illuminate China’s relations with these countries.

With the start of the Cold War, Japan and China entered different camps, which made them act as strategic adversaries. At the same time, China attempted to restore diplomatic relations with Japan. This was initially a difficult process. This case is a good example of how China settles disagreements to reach a consensus with other countries. Moreover, China and Japan still have not resolved the problem of school textbooks, visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, the issue of Diaoyu (Senkaku) island and Taiwan’s status. This case involves the problem of Taiwan’s position, one of the main obstacles to the restoration of Sino-Japanese relations. The way China and Japan handled such issues might have implications for similar disputes with other countries.
For an example of a territorial dispute that has been resolved, Hong Kong was chosen. According to the Treaty of Nanking signed by the British and Chinese government in 1842, the Qing Chinese government ceded Hong Kong to Britain, and this lease was due to expire in 1997. From then on, the British government had governed Hong Kong for more than 150 years until China reclaimed it in 1997. For the Chinese, the Treaty of Nanking was the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history, making Hong Kong the first part of the territory ceded by China. Modern Chinese history begins with the outbreak of the Opium War in June 1840 (Xiong, Su, Chen & Li, 2013). The Chinese people believe that modern Chinese history is a history of “humiliating invasions, massacres, disasters, and occupations at the hands of Japanese and Western imperialists” (Callahan, 2010, p. 8). Reclaiming Hong Kong would wipe away the nation’s shame for one hundred years and constitute an important step towards the reunification of Chinese territory (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 15). Studying this case can better understand China’s methods (mainly peaceful means) to solve territorial disputes.

The thesis chose the Taiwan crisis from 1995 to 1996 between China and the United States to evaluate Chinese strategic culture in military disputes. Scholars such as Robert Ross, Wang Dong, Tunsjø Øystein, and Zhang Ketian perceive the relationship between China and the United States as the most significant bilateral relationship in the 21st century (Ross, Wang & Tunsjø, 2021; Steinberg & O'Hanlon, 2014, p. 1; Zhang, 2020). At the same time, the most important issue between these two states has arguably been the Taiwan problem (Tan, 2016, p. 283). From the Chinese perspective, the Taiwan issue is a question leftover from the Chinese civil war of 1945 to 1949. China proclaims that “Taiwan is part of the territory of China”, and it is the sacred duty to reunify Taiwan with the mainland (the National People’s Congress (NPC), 1994, p. 5). Since China established diplomatic relations with the United States, the United States has recognized Taiwan
as part of China. China insists that it will not become involved in a confrontation with any big power or big power group (Wang, 2009). Nevertheless, if the dispute relates to its core interest (in this case, territorial integrity), China will use all the methods, including military ones, to protect its core interest. This military confrontation raised the possibility that the two great nations could engage in armed conflict, even a hot war. It is worthwhile to investigate China’s strategic culture in the case of military conflicts.

**Abduction and Retroduction**

Now that the three cases have been chosen and justified, this section analyzes the inference modes used to track the mechanisms of each case. The two complementary inference modes used in this thesis are abduction and retroduction. Abduction inference is the “redescription or recontextualization of a known phenomenon in the new context of a framework,” while the purpose of retroduction is to “unpack the constitutive properties of the ‘abducted’ structure” (Wagner, 2016, pp. 56-57). Induction and deduction are usually contrasted with abduction and retroduction (Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 80-81). Given that the primary objective of the former two modes is to “derive the knowledge of individual phenomena from universal patterns and laws” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 80), they are not appropriate for investigating the specific conditions and underlying mechanisms that make China’s actions feasible in foreign contacts. The abduction and retroduction modes of inference imply that there are no ultimately true theories or rules. Hence, the purpose of these two inference modes is to obtain the best explanation and broaden our knowledge (Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 94-96).

When a researcher uses the abduction mode of inference, the central issue is that “what meaning is given to something interpreted within a particular conceptual framework?” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 81). The role of abduction is to observe, describe, explain and interpret something
within a new conceptual framework. It is to “move from a conception of something to a different, possibly more developed, or deeper conception of it by placing and interpreting the original ideas about the phenomenon in the frame of a new set of ideas” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 91). Then the researcher can have a better understanding of this phenomenon. More fundamentally, all abduction builds on imagination and creativity (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 93). This thesis redescribes China’s diplomatic behaviours in the three case studies in an original cultural framework combined with Chinese strategic culture and Chinese philosophical ideas. China’s actions in these three cases are assumed to be influenced by Chinese traditional culture. This process can deepen the knowledge of ways in which Chinese culture shapes China’s diplomatic behaviours. This is not to argue that cultural factors provide a more trustworthy account of China’s actions in foreign contacts than other accounts. Instead, it gives “a plausible and alternative type of knowledge of the phenomenon towards deepening the understanding of its fundamental causes” (O’ Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, p. 17).

After the abduction, it is the step of retroduction. The central issue of retroduction is that “what qualities must exist for something to be possible?” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 80). Retroduction is to clarify a conceptualization of transfactual conditions from empirical observation of events. (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 96). In other words, it is to find out the basic necessities or prerequisites of the general structures. In applying retroduction, the researcher can “get beyond the perception that something generates some change to an understanding of what it is about the object that enables it to do this” (Sayer, 2010, p. 106). If we call the object X, then the question thus: “what constitutive properties must exist for X to exist and to be what X is?” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 97). In simple terms, the question is, what makes X possible? In the context of this thesis, I will propose the question: what conditions make it possible for Chinese traditional culture to
shape China’s actions in external contacts? As discussed above, it is particularly helpful and useful to analyze the question through several strategies to study pathological and extreme conditions and compare different cases. In pathological and extreme cases, the mechanisms are more easily revealed. Simply put, the researcher can “learn about the conditions for the normal by exploring the abnormal” through the pathological and extreme cases. In contrast, the comparisons of different cases can help to provide a foundation “to sort out contingent differences in order to arrive at the common and more universal” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 104).

I have formulated a creative conceptual framework based on Chinese traditional culture and strategic culture. I have chosen the three cases studies about China’s diplomatic events. According to the analysis, the abductive and retroductive modes of inference reveal the underlying cultural factors that shaped China’s diplomatic actions in foreign contacts. Through abduction and retroduction, I expect to get the outcomes of the conditions for Chinese traditional culture to affect China’s diplomacy. The following chapters will investigate and answer this question.

**Conclusion**

The thesis uses an intensive case studies research design to examine the cultural role played in China’s diplomacy. This chapter has discussed the intensive research method, the selections of cases and the methods of analyzing the three cases. This thesis uses primary sources, second sources, process tracking, and interviews. The modes inference of abduction and retroduction will be employed in analyzing these cases to explore the conditions that make it possible for the cultural factors to shape China's diplomatic behaviours. Specifically, My case studies are the establishment of normal relations between China and Japan, the negotiations between China and the United Kingdom over Hong Kong, and the Taiwan Strait crisis between China and the United States from 1995 to 1996. This thesis explores specific explanations to generate knowledge about the
conditions behind China’s diplomatic activities. Through getting more insights and broadening knowledge about the influence of cultural factors on China's diplomacy, this thesis adds the outcomes of this study about explaining China’s diplomatic actions from the view of China’s culture to the existing literature.
Chapter 5

The Normalization of China and Japan relations

Both China and Japan are great nations and the Chinese people and Japanese people are hardworking and brave people. Chinese people and Japanese people should keep friendships for generations.

---Zhou Enlai, former Chinese Premier, 1972

Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the diplomatic event of the normalization of the relations between China and Japan within a cultural framework combining with Chinese strategic culture and Chinese philosophical thoughts. It intends to examine the influence of cultural factors on China’s diplomatic behaviours in the context of this event, primarily focusing on China’s cultivation and management of its relations with hostile countries. The first part of this chapter examines the influence of Chinese strategic culture, followed by the impact of the five philosophical motifs of dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony, concluding with the outcomes of the analysis.

The relationship between China and its neighbour Japan is complicated and long, intertwined with love and hate. There are two thousand years of peaceful time between Japan and China and fifty years of conflict and wartime (Wu, Lin, & Xu, 1995, pp. 185-186). In ancient history, the
Sino-Japanese relationship was peaceful and good, but their relationship was frozen in modern history. Since the end of World War II, relations between Japan and China have been in a vacuum in the postwar period. China’s Premier Zhou Enlai’s statements in 1972 demonstrated a dominant theme in Sino-Japanese relations: a willingness to maintain stable and friendly relations between the two countries. During this time, Japan and China formed alliances with the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively; then, the two nations had acted as strategic adversaries for over two decades (He, 2013). In 1972, China and Japan’s relationship underwent a historic transformation, realizing normal diplomatic relations between the two nations. The joint efforts of both sides achieved the opening of a new chapter in Sino-Japanese relations. During this process, the Chinese government’s policy toward Japan was more proactive and positive.

**The Influence of Chinese Strategic Culture**

One of the most important methods of managing and solving conflicts is establishing systematic norms among humankind. Strategic culture comprises preferences of value orientation and behaviour patterns regarding the nature of conflict and the enemy. This section mainly examines the methods (peaceful means) employed by the Chinese government to restore its diplomatic relations with Japan.

In modern times, two full-scale wars broke out between the two nations. The first China-Japan war occurred in 1894 and ended in China’s failure in 1895 (Kokubun, Soeya, Takahara & Kawashima, 2017, p. 9). In 1894, the two nations clashed over influence in Korea in the War of Jiawu (called the Japan-Qing War in Japan, or the First Sino-Japanese War in the West). China was defeated and forced to cede Taiwan and its affiliated islands, the Pescadores group, and the Liaodong Peninsula (later rescinded due to the interference of France, Germany, and Russia) to Japan (Xiong & Su, 2005, pp.161-167). Japan also obtained many other privileges and huge
indemnities from China. After the war, Japan continued its military expansion. In September 1931, Japan occupied northeastern China and established the puppet state of so-called Manchukuo (Xiong & Su, 2005, pp. 344-354). Six years later, Japanese continuous military invasion into North China fatefully clashed with rising Chinese nationalism at Lugou Bridge (the Macro Polo Bridge) on July 7, 1937, and escalated into a full-scale and brutal eight-year war, which was regarded as the starting point of the Second Sino-Japanese war (called the Chinese People’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression in China) (Xiong & Su, 2005, pp. 375-378). The war ended in Japan’s surrender in 1945.

The second Japan-China war officially began in July 1937. However, the beginning of Japan’s incursion into China was in 1931 (Dixon, 2018). The war lasted for fifteen years till Japan surrendered in August 1945, and its troops left Chinese territory. For the Chinese, the two full-scale wars were righteous wars to stop the Japanese military’s violence and safeguard Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity (Zhang, 2011, p. 3). China was defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War and suffered heavy losses, but China had no choice but to fight because it involved its survival. The two Japan-Chinese wars demonstrate that China’s strategic preference was defensive, a counterattack responding to aggression, rather than an offensive attack on Japan. Although China was victorious in the second Sino-Japanese war, China paid a huge price (Wu, Lin & Xu, 1995, p. 1).

During the fifteen-year war, Japanese armies killed tens of millions of Chinese people and executed many Chinese prisoners of war (Dixon, 2018, p. 95). During the war, the Japanese forced implemented the military “comfort women” (sexual slavery) system, setting up thousands of comfort stations in many Chinese cities in the early 1930s (Tanaka, 2002, p. 12). The Japanese
military forced about “forty thousand Chinese men into slave labor”, and approximately seven thousand Chinese (17.5 per cent) died (Wan, 2006, p. 305).

Japanese forces conducted chemical and biological warfare on Chinese civilians and thousands of prisoners. It is estimated that Japan’s armies carried out roughly two thousand chemical and biological attacks around China (Reilly, 2012, p. 58). Japanese Unit 731, located in Harbin (the largest city in the puppet state of Manchukuo, northeast China), conducted “medical experiments to test biological” and chemical weapons on living human beings, including infants, pregnant women and the elderly. Most of the victims were Chinese people, while a lesser percentage were Korean, Soviet, and other allied prisoners (Wan, 2006, p. 312). According to the Chinese government’s calculation, Japan’s military had conducted germ and gas warfare throughout twenty Chinese provinces and caused approximately 270,000 Chinese people to die of diseases such as cholera, typhus, and bubonic plague (cited in Wan, 2006, p. 312).

Japan’s invasion of China in World War II caused tremendous economic losses and psychological harm to the Chinese people. According to statistics, from 1937 to 1945, the number of Chinese people who died in the war reached more than ten million; the loss of China’s public property and war expenses was about thirty billion U.S dollars, and the loss of private property was about twenty billion U.S. dollars (Gao, 1951). The Chinese people also believe that the war also brought great suffering to the Japanese people (Wu, Lin & Xu, 1995, p. 1). The war ended, but the bitter memory of wartime did not end. Hence, after World War II, the Chinese people proposed that “the people of China and Japan are opposed to war and that the two nations’ people should develop friendly relations” (Zhang, 2011, p. 13). Chinese strategic culture is cautious about war owing to its dangerous and high cost. Hence, they prefer to resolve disputes or conflicts through non-violent methods. Judging from the Sino-Japanese War, even if China was victorious,
the war still brought huge disasters to the Chinese people. Hence, the Chinese government has
desired to establish stable and friendly relations with Japan. Then, if there is a conflict between
them, they can coordinate and negotiate diplomatically instead of resorting to force.

From the Chinese perspective, they should unite with the Japanese people to prevent a
resurgence of Japanese militarism by establishing peaceful and friendly relations between the two
countries. As China’s Premier Zhou stated, “the crime of Japanese militarism’s foreign aggression
cased not only huge losses to the Chinese people and the people of the Far East but also caused
unprecedented disasters to the Japanese people; I believe that Japan’s peace-loving people will
remember this history lesson and will not allow Japan to re-militarize and re-invade foreign
countries, lest Japan suffers a more serious disaster than in the past and now” (Zhou, 1953, cited
in Wu et al., 1995, p. 39). Hence, the Chinese government attempted to cooperate with the Japanese
people to establish norms and principles for normal diplomatic relations. Under the framework
established by the two countries, they can resolve disputes through peaceful means rather than
military forces. Hence, the Chinese government promoted normal relations with Japan and made
efforts to achieve this goal through establishing economic relations, promoting cultural exchanges
and dialogue.

The Influence of Dichotomy

This section mainly discusses the application of dichotomy in the process of establishing Sino-
Japanese diplomatic relations. Chinese politicians are used to employing dichotomy to analyze and
explain social science phenomena, believing that one thing has two contradictive and
complementary objects. In this diplomatic event, the Chinese leaders emphasized distinguishing
between ordinary Japanese people and Japanese militarists. The Chinese leaders believed that
Japanese militarists should be responsible for the aggression war and that ordinary Japanese people
were also the victims of the war (China’s Central Archive (CCA) & Party Literature Research Center for the CPC Central Committee (PLRC), 2018, vol 6, pp. 322-325; Kokubun et al., 2017, pp. 46-47). The Chinese people advocated this dichotomy between ordinary people and militarists as early as 1945.

After the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945, Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Chinese Nationalist Government, broadcast a speech to the Chinese people in which he stated, “we have …repeatedly that we were only opposed to the Japanese militarists and harbored no enmity for the Japanese people…. We must not look forward to retaliation, and much less shall we impose insults on the innocent civilians” (cited in Wu et al., 1995, p. 23; Yoshida, 2006, p. 63). Chiang Kai-shek proposed that the Chinese people distinguish between the ordinary Japanese and the Japanese militarists and appealed to the Chinese people that they did not seek revenge on the Japanese people (Wu et al., 1995, p. 23; Yoshida, 2006, p. 63). The Communist Party of China adopted a similarly lenient stance toward Japan after coming to power in 1949 (Reilly, 2012, p. 58). The Chinese government distinguished between the vast number of Japanese people and a handful of Japanese militarists.

When dealing with diplomatic relations, the Chinese government often distinguishes the government of a country from its people. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai made a distinction between the Japanese military leaders and the Japanese people in his statement in May 1952, stating, “the Japanese government’s actions are not in accord with the Japanese people’s desire to end the war and restore peaceful relations with the People’s Republic of China…. The Chinese people are willing to be friendly, develop and promote trade, respect each other’s national independence and national sovereignty, and live in peace with the Japanese people; the Chinese people are willing to cooperate with the Japanese people to safeguard peace in Far East Asia; only by doing such will it
benefit the peoples of the two counties and the two nations” (CCA & PLRC, 2018, vol 6, pp. 322-325). Zhou’s statement demonstrated that China was willing to maintain a good relationship with the Japanese people.

With respect to dichotomy, Liu Jiangyong added that “the Chinese regarded Japan in the wartime as the devil, but there were also some anti-war Japanese people and peace-loving people; some of them standing with the Chinese people and providing information to the point of even establishing an intelligence system; we should unite with these people and cooperate with them to improve Sino-Japanese relations” (personal communication, January 5, 2020). Hence, the militarists-and-people dichotomy can make the Chinese people draw more Japanese people to support their proposal to realize normal relations with Japan and cooperate with the Japanese people to achieve this goal.

After the war, Japan was not an independent state; it was occupied by the United States. The United States changed its policy toward Japan in 1947 from demilitarization and democratization to economic revival (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 28). At the same time, Japan had adopted a new constitution; the subsequent Japanese governments followed the United States’ policies in both internal affairs and external affairs (Zhang, 2018). As for the issue of recognition of the Chinese government, the Japanese government originally intended to wait to see until the question of the Chinese government's representation was resolved internationally (Inoue, 2010).

Moreover, the United States exerted its influence on Japan’s choice to recognise either the Chinese government or Taiwan. In February 1952, the Japanese government undertook negotiations with Taiwan to conclude a peace treaty (Zhang, 2018). Japan’s behaviour meant that it recognised Taiwan, which posed a serious obstacle to developing and normalising diplomatic relations between Japan and China. Considering the difficulty of improving the relations between
Japan and China, the Chinese governments decided to develop a “people’s diplomacy” (non-governmental relations) between the Chinese and Japanese people (Zhang, 2011, p. 13). Both Chinese chairman Mao Zedong and Chinese premier Zhou Enlai proposed “people leading the way and encouraging the officials” to handle the relationship with Japan at that time (Zhang, 2018).

Meanwhile, some Japanese who were advocating for establishing relations with China had successfully created several non-governmental organizations aimed at promoting Japan-China relations, such as the Japan-China Trade Promotion Association (JCTPA) in May 1949, Japan-China Friendship Association in 1950 (Kokubun et al., 2017, pp. 43-44; Wu et al., 1995, pp. 34-36). Many Japanese conservatives and leftist politicians believed that it was necessary to establish normal relations with China, not only for narrow national interests but also keep “a larger perspective in mind” (Itoh, 2017, pp. 11-13). From these politicians’ perspectives, Japan had established relations with China for two millennia, and the Chinese had in a sense been their mentors, and they felt “guilty for Japan’s aggression in China” (Itoh, 2017, p. 11). While considering the great significance of the US-Japan alliance, they sought to establish non-governmental relations with China as the first step (Itoh, 2017, pp. 11-13). In April 1950, Japan’s upper house passed a resolution promoting trade between Japan and China (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 44). The two countries started non-governmental exchanges. The “people’s diplomacy” adopted by the Chinese government was successful in maintaining non-governmental relations between the two countries and often pressuring the Japanese government to reconsider its policy towards China.

**The Influence of Change**

Sino-Japanese relations are not static but constantly changing. Therefore, the Chinese government’s policy in handling relations with Japan also constantly adjusts to the ever-changing
internal and external environments. This section investigates changes in Sino-Japanese relations and China’s Japanese policies.

Japan’s official interactions with China can “date back to at least the fifth century” (Reilly, 2012, p. 57). In ancient times, China had been both a source of wealth and knowledge and a competitor of Japan. Japan had borrowed heavily from Chinese philosophy and culture (Roy, 2013, p. 81). During China’s Tang dynasty (618-907), the two countries enjoyed an intimate relationship. Their relationship sustained long-term peace throughout the imperial dynasties with “few ruptures of violence”, though their interaction was limited (Reilly, 2012, p. 57). In the late Qing dynasty (1616-1912), Japan had successfully transitioned to a modern nation-state, which was regarded as a model for Chinese intellectuals and officials such as Liang Qichao, a Chinese philosopher and reformist who was the main leader of China’s Reform Movement of 1898 (Fogel, 2012). During this period, China had introduced Western modern vocabularies and concepts via Japan. Before the nineteenth century, China was more powerful and prosperous than Japan, so the ancient Japanese learned from and respected China (Roy, 2013, p. 81).

However, the relations between the two nations began to deteriorate when Japan pursued the idea of a “rich nation and strong army” through foreign aggression, while China grew weaker because of internal and external troubles in the 1860s (Reilly, 2012, p. 57). In modern times, two full-scale wars broke out between the two countries. The end of World War II did not bring about Sino-Japanese relations’ healthy and smooth development. At the beginning of 1949, Xinhua News Agency of China made a comment that “China and Japan, the two great nations of Far East Asia can and should establish intimate friendships” (cited in Zhang, 2002, p. 69). This news agency is a ministry-level press agency run by the Chinese government. Since then, the Chinese government
has proposed improving their relations with Japan and adjusted its Japan policy according to the changing environment.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the Japanese government wanted to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan, while they also wanted to maintain economic connections with Mainland China (Itoh, 2017, p.13). Hence, Japan’s cabinet adopted a “separations of politics and economic policy” toward China. The Japanese government expected Mainland China’s huge market to “serve to revive the postwar Japan’s economy due to geographical conditions and historical circumstances” (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 43). The Chinese government also needed to heal wounds caused by the long-term war and break the containment and isolation initiated by the United States (Zhang, 2011, p. 13). Chinese leaders realized that Japan would not recognize the Chinese government for a long time and manage relations with China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Zhang, 2011, p. 14). The Chinese government could start its unofficial relations with Japan. Although the two nations had different attitudes and opinions on their political relations, they reached a consensus on resuming and developing their economic relations.

In April 1952, representatives from 42 countries, including Japan and China, attended an international economic conference promoting trade between the East and the West in Moscow (Itoh, 2017, pp. 16-17; Wu et al., 1995, pp. 40-41). Before the conference, Chinese Premier Zhou instructed the Chinese delegation to expand exchanges with foreign delegations and trade exchanges between China and the West (PLRC, 1997, vol1, p. 219). During the conference, Nan Hanchen, the head of the Chinese delegation, met and discussed with the Japanese Diet members of the delegation, Kora Tomi, Hoashi Kei, and Miyakoshi Kisuke. Nan suggested that the two countries “revive and develop their normal trade relations” (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 45). After negotiation, the two sides developed to trade on the basic principles of equality, peace, friendship,
and mutual benefit (Pei, 1994, p. 159). Then the Chinese delegations invited the three Japanese Diet members to visit Beijing. These three persons received the invitation and went to Beijing, which was the first time for the high-ranking Japanese officials to visit Beijing after the war (Zhang, 2018).

On June 1, 1952, the two countries concluded the First China-Japan Private Trade Agreement after negotiations (Itoh, 2017, pp. 16-17; Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 45). Although the implementation of this trade agreement was bad (only five per cent completed) due to Japan following the U.S. policy of containing China on the trade, the trade between China and Japan had finally resumed (Pei, 1994, p. 159; Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 44). The two sides concluded Second Japan and China Private Trade Agreement on October 29, 1953 (Itoh, 2017, p. 18; Zhang, 2018). The second trade agreement’s final implementation was approximately forty per cent (Pei, 1994, p. 160).

In May 1955, the Chinese delegation led by Lei Renmin, the Vice President of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade, went to Japan on the invitation to negotiate a third trade agreement (Han, 1990, p. 245; Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 49). Among the agreement’s other terms, the two sides established non-government trade representative offices (Zhang, 2018). According to Sun Pinghua, the deputy secretary of the Chinese delegation, “to put it bluntly, when the two sides negotiate the trade agreement, the non-government sectors were on the stage, while the governments of the two nations virtually were behind the screen” (Sun, 2009, p. 27). The third trade agreement went further than its previous versions; thus, the agreement’s final fulfilment was sixty-seven per cent (Han, 1990, p. 246).

The fourth trade agreement between China and Japan and its relevant Memorandum was concluded on March 5, 1958. The negotiations on this agreement were interrupted twice regarding
the issue of the mutual establishment of permanent trade institutions (Itoh, 2017, p. 25; Wu et al., 1995, p. 87-88; Zhang, 2018). The Memorandum’s content included flying the flag at the representative office and granting diplomatic privileges to the commercial representatives (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 54). The Memorandum’s content required the consent or default of the Japanese government (Sun, 2009, p. 45). Obviously, the scope of that content had exceeded the private or non-government trade relations. Thus, it was believed that Japan and China’s relations were “on the verge of transitioning from private to the public” (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 54).

After signing the trade agreement and its Memorandum, Chinese Vice Premier Chen Yi met with the Japanese representatives and told them that the Chinese government supported the agreement, and arguing that the agreement was not only an economic trade agreement but also a political friendship agreement between the two countries (Han, 1990, p. 250). The Japanese Premier Kishi Nobusuke believed that it was not appropriate for the commercial representative offices to fly the national flag on the day of the signing of the agreement, and that was difficult for the Japanese government to accept (Xie, 2009, p. 124). The United States and Taiwan had “strong negative responses” to this agreement (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 54). To appease their anger, the Japanese Cabinet issued a statement that they would not bestow diplomatic privileges on the trade representatives and would not agree to fly the national flag at the representative offices (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 54).

The Kishi administration stepped down at the beginning of 1960, and the Ikeda Cabinet came into power in July 1960 (Zhang, 2018, p. 56). Japan’s new Premier Ikeda expressed his wishes to improve Japan-China relations, especially the trade relations (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 61). In this context, the Sino-Japanese relations were improved. In October 1962, Tatsunosuke Takasaki, former Japanese Minister of Commerce, Japanese Diet member of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP),
led a large delegation to China consisting of twenty-two Japanese companies and business representatives. Liao Chengzhi led the Chinese delegation. The two sides signed the Memorandum of Sino-Japanese long-term comprehensive trade on November 9, 1962, also known as L.T. Trade, taking the first letter of the family names of the two men who signed the Memorandum (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 68). The following December, the two sides signed the first five-year plan for the China-Japan trade. In 1964, the two sides reached an agreement to establish representative trade offices. The Liaison Service of Takasaki Office was established in Beijing, and the Liaison Service of Liao Chengzhi Office in Tokyo (Ioth, 2017, p. 48). From then on, the Sino-Japan relations had developed from non-governmental to virtually semi-governmental relations (Han, 1990, p. 256).

At the same time, the two sides signed the Friendship Trade based on “the principle of inseparability of politics and economics” put forward by the Chinese government (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 67). From that point on, L.T. trade and friendship trade became the two main Sino-Japanese trade channels in the 1960s (Wu et al., 1995, p. 130; Zhang, 2018). The trade volume between Japan and China rose from 23.45 million U.S. dollars in 1960 to more than 100 million U.S. dollars in 1963 (Wang, 1998, p. 23). The number of exchange visits between the two countries also increased rapidly.

At the end of 1964, Sato Eisaku came to power as Japanese prime minister. The Sato administration made restrictions on Japan-China trade and hindered China from restoring its seat at the U.N. (Zhang, 2002). Japan-Chinese relations’ development had encountered much resistance and had been stagnant for a long time (Kokubun et al., 2017, pp. 75-77; Zhang, 2018). From the Chinese government’s perspective, the Sato cabinet was not trying to improve Japan-China relations and was not hospitable to China (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 76; Wu et al., pp. 139-143). On February 21, 1971, People's Daily, the official newspaper of the CPC’s Central Committee,
commented that “[T]he Sato government, on the one hand, pretends to deceive the people, on the other hand, it conspires to be hostile to China… to ‘improve’ Sino-Japanese relations is spurious, to create ‘two Chinas’ or ‘one China, one Taiwan’ is true.” In response to Japan’s attitude and actions, the Chinese government adjusted its Japanese policy. The government expressed that they had no intention to push for the normalization of their bilateral relations with the Sato cabinet and would prefer to resolve various issues between the two countries with the following Cabinet. During this period, although Sino-Japanese relations’ development encountered resistance, the non-governmental (private sector) exchanges between the two sides continued to develop and expand (Zhang, 2018).

In the 1970s, significant changes occurred in the international scene. In the late 1960s, the tension between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified, and the United States felt that the Soviet Union became more aggressive, so the U.S. needed to make some changes to deal with the problem (Xie, 2009, p. 276). Moreover, due to the rapid economic development of Western Europe and Japan, the U.S. position and leadership relatively declined in the world, the international monetary system of the dollar standard became unstable, and the U.S. had fallen into the quagmire of the Vietnam War (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 83; Wu et al., 1995, p. 164). At the same time, after the Zhenbao Island incident (the Soviet Union invaded the Zhenbao Island of China), China believed that the Soviet Union was a big threat to its security (Wu et al., 1995, p. 165; Zhang, 2018). The American and Chinese governments thought they should adjust their policy and improve their bilateral relations (Xie, 2009, pp. 276-281). It was believed that their improvement of relations was beneficial to confront the Soviet Union and resolve other bilateral issues such as the Taiwan issue and the Vietnam issue.
On July 16, 1971, U.S. President Richard M. Nixon announced his plan to visit China by invitations in early 1972, which profoundly shook the Japanese government (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 84). The Japanese government did not receive any prior notice on the visit (Itoh, 2017, p. 121; TaKakazu, 2012). The Japanese government had planned to resume the normal diplomatic relations with China after it gained its representation in the U.N., and the Japanese government believed that it could be a bridge between the United States and China (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 86). After the Nixon shock, the Japanese government began to adjust China’s policy and wanted to start negotiations with China on their normal bilateral relations (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 87). Accordingly, China had responded positively to Japan, expecting to realize normal relations. After two decades, with joint efforts of both sides, Sino-Japanese relations were going to develop on the brighter side.

In the past two decades, the Chinese government had been committed to gradually improving its relations with Japan, although they had encountered some obstacles. At the beginning of China’s founding in 1949, there was no direct exchange between the two countries. After the 1950s, non-governmental exchanges between the two nations resumed under difficult circumstances, while from the 1950s to the 1960s, Sino-Japanese relations were at the stage of non-governmental exchanges. In the next decade, the two states’ bilateral relations were at the stage of “semi-official” exchanges, which means not just non-governmental exchanges, but those in which the government also partly participated (Itoh, 2017; Zhang, 2018). Through the continuous accumulation of these small positive changes, China finally realized the change in the nature of its relations with Japan. The two sides decided to resume their diplomatic relations in 1972.
The Influence of Relationality

This section explores the influence of the philosophical concept of relationality in the process of establishing and improving diplomatic relations between China and Japan. In Chinese culture, there is a saying that “close neighbours are better than distant relatives”. This old proverb expresses the importance of a good neighbour. From ancient China to today’s China, establishing good neighbour relations occupy a vital position in China’s diplomacy. Geographically, China and Japan are neighbouring nations separated by the East China Sea. Historically, the two countries have a continuous and long-term exchange tradition, with strong and rich cultural connections (Feng, 2012). Stable bilateral relations between these two countries are vital to their mutual development and plays an important role in the peace and development of the Asia-Pacific region and the entire world.

Additionally, the Japanese people have occupied a particular position in Chinese thinking. The Chinese people have never really regarded the Japanese as foreigners. In Mandarin, foreigners, including Americans, Englishmen, and other foreign nationals, are alien country people (waiguoren), while Japanese are ribenren. The first name of waiguoren was barbarian (yiren) and then ocean people (yangren). The Japanese people are still ribenren even to today, and they are not yangren nor waiguoren. This demonstrates “a deep-rooted, cultural differentiation” between the Japanese and foreign nationals in the Chinese mindset (Shih, 1995, p. 543). In other words, the Chinese have a subconscious sense of kinship with the Japanese. This sense of kinship prompted China to propose resuming normal diplomatic relations with Japan. China has played a proactive role in advancing the process of the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations (Zhang, 2018).

In Chinese culture, the self and the other are coexistent and dependent on each other. In a relational community, the interests are “shared and realized through reciprocity” (Qin & Nordin,
Before World War II, Japan and China had already developed close trade ties, which played an essential part in the two countries’ economies (Wu et al., 1995, p. 34). China’s market occupied the first position for Japanese exports and was in the third position only behind the United States and Korea for Japanese imports (Jain, 1977, p. 24). However, the Japan-Chinese trade relations were established under unusual circumstances. At that time, Japan established trade ties with China under unequal treaties and used its military power to protect its own economic interests (Jain, 1977, p. 24).

After the end of World War II, the Japan-China trade declined drastically due to the end of previous unequal positions, the breakout of the Chinese civil war from 1945 to 1949, and Japan’s postwar economic difficulties (Jain, 1977, p. 24). Although the trade between the two countries was reduced, Japan and China still maintained their trade ties. In August 1949, just before the PRC’s founding, the Communist Party of China sent a small trade mission to Japan to purchase Japanese rail equipment. According to Heitaro Inagaki, Japan’s Minister of International Trade and Industry, Japan exported most of the $30 million worth of Japanese goods to China through Hong Kong in 1949 (Nippon Times, February 9, 1950, cited in Jain, 1977, p. 24). At that time, China needed to break its blockade by Western countries. China thought that Japan was the way to this breakthrough, which could import some technologies and energy from Japan; for Japan, according to Japan to China’s economic data, China accounted for 70% of Japan’s economy; hence, Japan needed China’s vast market (personal communication with Huang, January 3, 2020). Hence, economic interest was a key driving force for the two countries to improve their relations.

According to the Confucian ideals, the starting point of various relations is from the smallest and core unit, the blood family, which then extends to friends, to society, and finally to the world (Qin, 2018, pp. 211-212). In reality, the self is the starting point; the self will connect with others
and establish its own relational circle. Among these various relations, the most significant relations are intimate and important relations between the self and others because the self can use these relations for self-advancement (Qin, 2018, pp. 208-212). During World War II, Japan caused great damage and psychological harm to the Chinese people. Moreover, at the beginning of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, China and Japan were respectively allied with the Soviet Union and the United States. They belonged to different camps, so the relationship between Japan and China was that of strategic adversaries (Kokubun et al., 2017, pp. 35-36). It seemed that China would not treat Japan in a friendly manner, but in fact, China proactively promoted restarting normal relations with Japan.

However, the Chinese people believe that everything in the world is continuously changing and is interrelated; even opposites can transform into each other, such as good luck and bad luck, strength and weakness (Feng, 2009, p. 316). Hence, the relations between the self and the others are not unchangeable, and it varies with the change of the situation and passage of time (Qin, 2018, p. 209). The traditional thinking of “relationality” has a significant influence on China’s diplomacy. When Chinese leaders observe international politics, it is easy for them to understand the uncertainty and instability of international relations in anarchy. Chinese politicians are good at distinguishing among the self, enemy, and friend in different periods and on different issues (Wang, J., 2006, p. 2). They seek to create favourable conditions from adverse conditions (Sun, 2017). This thinking has heavily influenced China’s diplomatic behaviour.

Since the end of World War II, Japan and China were indeed adversaries. In Chinese culture, it is possible to change negative relations to positive relations. Hence, the Chinese government believed that they could change their relations with Japan from enemy to friend. The intimate relations between the self and the other are beneficial for self-development, arguing that “the more
intimate between the self and the other is, the more they tend to cooperate and help each other” (Qin, 2018, pp. 232-233). Hence, the Chinese government wanted to restore their diplomatic relations and establish friendly relations with the Japanese government, which was beneficial for achieving China’s long-term interests. The most desirable situation for China is to establish harmonious, reciprocal, stable, and long-term relationships between itself and the others for both personal advancement and the social order (Qin, 2018, pp. 231). Such long-term harmonious relations are not only beneficial for achieving self-interest but also constitute part of self-interest. The development of friendly relations between the Chinese and Japanese peoples could prevent the rise of Japanese militarism and deter the United States from pursuing warlike policies in East Asia, thereby benefiting peace in East Asia as a whole (Zhang, 2011, p. 13). Therefore, even if Sino-Japanese relations were chilly at that time, the international environment was not conducive to the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations. Still, China could create favourable conditions to promote better bilateral ties with Japan.

In March 1950, Chinese Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Zhou Enlai stated in a report to all cadres of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “in order to break the deadlock in Sino-Japanese relations and the cold war blockade, China should seize the opportunities in international occasions to establish non-governmental relations with the Japanese people and win their sympathy and support; then the Japanese people will promote the Japanese government to change its hostile policy towards China, and finally strive for the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations” (Zhang, 2011, p. 13). To promote its relations with Japan, the Chinese government adopted some positive practices.

After the war, tens of thousands of Japanese nationals were stranded in China. The Chinese government adopted a protection policy and took steps to assist their return to Japan (Ioth, 2017,
Because of the two countries’ abnormal relations, it was not easy to assist the Japanese residents in returning home singly by the Chinese government. To resolve this issue, on December 1, 1952, the Chinese government made a statement express their welcoming negotiations between Japanese delegations and the Chinese Red Cross Society on this problem (Zhang, 2018). After receiving the message, the Japanese government commissioned a delegation to consist of “the Japanese Red Cross Society, Japan-China Friendship Association, and Japan Peace Liaison Committee to come to China to discuss” this issue (Han, 1990, p.243). The two sides reached an agreement and initiated a communique on March 5, 1953 (Zhang, 2018). From late March 1953 to the last batch of Japanese nationals leaving China, a total of more than thirty-two thousand Japanese nationals returned to Japan “in groups and by stages” (Han, 1990, p. 244).

The Chinese government also took a magnanimous attitude toward Japanese war criminals to strengthen its friendship with the Japanese people. At the time, there were more than one thousand Japanese military criminals detained in China (Han, 1990, p. 246; Yoshida, 2006, p. 67). In the military trials conducted in China in 1956, only 45 Japanese war criminals who had committed serious crimes were sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment, and the remaining 1017 were released and repatriated (Zhang, 2018). None received life imprisonment or the death penalty. By mid-1964, even those 45 Japanese who had received prison terms had been repatriated (Yoshida, 2006, p. 67). Many of these war criminals committed to realizing the normal diplomatic relations between Japan and China after returning to Japan.

Another significant move implemented by the Chinese government was to renounce collecting war reparations from Japan. In May 1950, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened several meetings to discuss the issue of concluding a peace treaty with Japan; the fourth conference on May 19 discussed the question of economic compensation (Zhang, 2011, pp. 9-12). After Japan
signed the peace treaty with Taiwan on May 5, 1952, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai stated that the Chinese government would not recognize this peace treaty and declared that China reserved the right to demand war reparations from Japan (Tian, 1994, p. 20). However, the Chinese government waived its right to claim war indemnities from Japan in the end, as shown in the Joint Communique.

China took all these positive steps to let Japan know that China was sincere and willing to restore normal relations. The Chinese government wanted to create favourable conditions to change its relations with Japan from enemy to friend, helping China serve its long-term interest through established relations. As Liu Jiangyong stated, “we cannot regard Japan as China’s immutable enemy; we must create conditions to turn enemies to friends, promoting some deceived ordinary Japanese people brainwashed by the Japanese emperor to stand on the right side, the side of peace and the people.” (personal communication, January 5, 2020). With changes in the international situations and the improvement of Sino-US relations, China and Japan (especially China) finally ushered in the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations after nearly twenty years of hard working.

At that time, Japan’s domestic environment had prepared for resuming diplomatic relations with China (Soeya, 1995). In October 1971, Japan’s delegation visited China to promote the restoration of the Japan-Chinese diplomatic relations. The Chinese delegation formally stated three principles for normalizing relations with Japan when they met with the Japanese delegation. The “three principles” were: the government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is part of China; and the treaty between Japan and Taiwan “is illegal and invalid” and should be abolished (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 92; Wang, ed, 1998, p. 20). At that time, the Sato government had struggled to negotiate with China to push its normal diplomatic relations. The Chinese government also wanted to realize its normal relations with Japan. However,
the Sato cabinet had hardly made any headway in initiating an active policy toward China in the later 1960s. In the first half of 1972, China’s Premier Zhou Enlai paid much attention to Japan’s political situation changes. On May 15, 1972, when Zhou met with Japan’s delegation, he expressed that “if Tanaka Kakuei would be the prime minister of Japan, and he wants to come to China to discuss the issue of the China-Japan relations, we welcome him” (PLRC, 1997, vol 3, p. 525).

On July 2, 1972, Tanaka Kakuei, Ohira Masayoshi, and Miki Takeo held a meeting and concluded that they would negotiate with China to normalize their bilateral diplomatic relations (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 91). The next day, Xiao Xiangqiang, the second chief representative, was on his way to his post in the Tokyo Liaison Office of the China-Japan Memorandum Trade Office (Han, 1990, p. 360), which was a positive move adopted by the Chinese government to push for the Sino-Japanese normal relations coinciding with the beginning of the Tanaka administration (Tian, 1997a). Five days later, the Tanaka cabinet came into power, and Tanaka appointed Ohira as his Foreign Minister. Prime Minister Tanaka stated at his first press conference that “the time for normalizing Japan-Chinese diplomatic relations is mutual, I will seriously deal with this historical issue” (Zhang, 2018). Ohira also told the press that “[T]o realize the normal relations between Japan and China, the new Japan’s primer and the foreign minister should visit China; after the normalization of the bilateral relations, it cannot imagine the continued existence of the Japan-Taiwan treaty” (Sun, 1992).

The Chinese government had a positive and swift response to the new Japanese Cabinet’s statement. On July 9, Chinese Premier Zhou expressed the Chinese government’s welcome of Prime Minister Tanaka’s announcement accelerating bilateral diplomatic relations (Sun, 1992). Three days after the Tanaka cabinet’s inauguration, the Chinese government appointed Sun
Pinghua, the head of the China-Japan Friendship Association, to lead more than 200 people from the Shanghai Ballet Mission to Japan (Itoh, 2017, p. 118). According to Sun’s recollection, his main task was not being in charge of the Shanghai Ballet performance but rather to promote the realization of Tanaka’s visit to China. During his visit to Japan, he had met with Foreign Minister Ohira four times and discussed Premier Tanaka’s visit to China in detail (Sun, 1992).

Meanwhile, the Japanese opposition parties, such as the Socialist Party and the Liberal Democratic Party, visited Beijing successively. Among these visits, the most famous and vital was the visit of Takeiri Yoshikatsu, president of the Kōmeitō Party. Chinese Premier Zhou and Takeiri discussed some issues related to the normalization of diplomatic relations, which paved the way for Tanaka’s future visit to Beijing (Han, 1990, p. 360). From the Chinese side, they knew that Prime Minister Tanaka respected the three principles for resumption of diplomatic relations as proposed by the Chinese government; from the Japanese side, they knew that their negotiation of diplomatic relations would not involve the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and that the Chinese government would renounce reparations (Tian, 1997b, pp. 89-91). After reading the conversation record with Zhou brought back by Takeiri, Japan’s Premier Tanaka and Foreign Minister Ohira believed that the prospects of their future negotiations were bright (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 93).

On July 25, 1972, Japan’s Foreign Minister Ohira met with Taiwan’s official and told him that it was inevitable that Japan’s government would resume normal relations with China and sever ties with Taiwan (Asia Bureau Chief Yoshida Kenzō, 1972). Prime Minister Tanaka met with Sun Pinghua and Xiao Xiangqian on August 15, 1972. It was the first time for Japan’s incumbent Premier to formally meet with Chinese officials, which was regarded as the prelude for formal exchanges between China and Japan (Tian, 1997a). In this meeting, Sun officially conveyed Zhou’s invitation to Tanaka to visit China (Sun, 1992).
Then, Tanaka sent several delegations to Beijing to discuss some issues related to the realization of normal relations with China. The two sides had reached a consensus on some issues before Tanaka visited China. On September 25, 1972, Tanaka, accompanied by Foreign Minister Ohira, Chief Cabinet Secretary Mikaido Susumu, and other officials, visited China (Han, 1990, p. 361). After four days’ effort and hard work on both sides, the Chinese government and the Japanese government reached and signed an agreement, the Joint Communiqué of the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of Japan.

After the singing of the Joint Communique, Foreign Minister Ohira issued a statement at a press conference stating that “as a result of the normalization of Japan-China diplomatic relations, the treaty between Japan and Taiwan had lost its *raison d'etre* and is recognized as ended” (cited in Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 95). The signing of the Joint Communique indicated the termination of the twenty-seven-year abnormal relations between the two nations, which was a milestone in their bilateral relations.

**The Influence of Benevolence**

This section mainly discusses the role of benevolence in shaping China’s behaviour in this event. Benevolence is one of the core concepts in Confucian culture and means treating others with sincerity and kindness from the heart, but it does not mean to treat others without any principle (Feng, 2009, pp. 64-65). Benevolence requires people to consider others’ interests in others’ positions, and do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you (Confucius, Sun, & Yang, 2005, p. 194). This concept demonstrates the importance of self-cultivation and educates people on how to treat others (Mei, 1967, p. 328). In this case, China’s handling of the issue of war reparations implies benevolence.
Zhou stated that “the Chinese people had suffered a lot from war compensation, and the Boxer compensation was not fully paid until China’s liberation in 1949; since the two countries are friendly neighbours, we cannot increase the economic burden of the Japanese people and make the Japanese people suffer the sufferings that the Chinese people had suffered” (cited in Wu et al., 1995, p.190). The Boxer indemnity is the payment stipulated in the final protocol for the settlement for the disturbances of 1900 signed by China and eleven other countries, including the U.S., Britain, French, Russia, Japan, and six other countries. The Chinese people themselves did not want to be forced to indemnify, so the Chinese knew that the Japanese people did not want to do so either. The other reason is that “the culprits of war should be responsible for the war, especially Class-A war criminals; hence we cannot ask the Japanese people to bear the responsibility of compensation for war criminals” (personal communication with Liu, January 5, 2020).

Besides, there were two practical reasons for China to renounce war reparations. The first reason is that the Chinese government believed that what Japan compensated for would be old and worthless. Premier Zhou stated that “Japan’s war indemnities for Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia are all material compensations, and they are not compensated with advanced things, they are almost repaired old things; it does not make much sense for people to compensate you with the old things” (Lin, 2019). On the other hand, China’s refusal to demand Japanese war compensation is far-reaching significance in preventing Japanese militarism’s resurgence (Wu et al., 1995, p. 5). After World War I, the victorious countries demanded a huge amount of war reparations against Germany, who were poor from this heavy tax burden, which gave Hitler the opportunity to come to power (Zhang, 2018, p. 58). That is to say, the victorious nations demanding compensation from the defeated nations could lead to retaliation of the defeated countries and provoke a new war, just like the two world wars.
As Liu noted, “in terms of national sentiment, Japan should pay reparations to China for its prior aggression; however, considering the reality and the influence of benevolence, China decided to renounce war reparations from Japan” (personal communication, January 5, 2020). Itoh Mayumi stated, “it was not easy for China to “relinquish its war reparation claims towards Japan to re-establish friendship and peace” between the two nations for generations; it was “a huge concession” on China’s part.” (Itoh, 2017, p. 135).

China’s assistance of Japanese nationals in returning to Japan and the lenient treatment of Japanese war criminals reflect the benevolence of the Chinese government as well (personal communication with Huang, January 3, 2020). Benevolence means to love and tolerance. In the early 1950s, “more than 1,000 Japanese war criminals were imprisoned in China” (Zhang, 2011, p. 28). They committed crimes during the war of aggression against China, and the Chinese people hated them deeply. However, proceeding from the long-term interests of relations, the Chinese government adopted a lenient policy with a tolerant attitude. Most war criminals who had committed relatively minor crimes and showed varying degrees of penitence during their detention were not prosecuted and sent back to Japan (Wu et al., 1995, p. 43). Some criminals with serious crimes were also given a lighter sentence; if they performed well during their sentence, they could be released early, and those who were old, ill, or in poor health could also be released on parole (Wu et al., 1995, p. 43). China’s approach had turned many war criminals into friends. After returning to Japan, they were committed to the restoration of Sino-Japanese relations. Meanwhile, China’s efforts had enhanced understanding and friendship between the people of China and Japan and “laid a solid foundation for the restoration and development of Sino-Japanese relations” (Zhang, 2011, p. 29).
The Chinese government understood the position of the Japanese government. The United States’ China policy deeply influenced the Japanese government’s China policy. When China promoted its official relations with Japan, the Chinese government took the influence of the United States on Japan’s position into account. In 1955, the Sino-U.S. ambassador talks were held to ease their bilateral relations in Geneva (Xie, 2009, p. 111). From the perspective of the Chinese government, this talk created a favourable condition to advance its official relations with Japan (Zhang, 2018, p. 55). In August 1955, the Chinese Consul General in Geneva stated in a reply letter to the Japanese Consul General in Geneva that, “in order to promote the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations and the relaxation of the international situation, the Chinese and Japanese governments can discuss trade, national, and people exchanges issues; if the Japanese government has the same desire, the Chinese government welcomes the Japanese government to send a delegation to Beijing for talks” (Zhang, 2018, p. 55). In November, the Chinese Consul General in Geneva handed the Japanese Consul General another letter, proposing that the normalization of relations between the two countries was the most urgent issue to be resolved. However, the Japanese government did not respond (Zhang, 2011, p. 37).

Although the Chinese government understood Japan’s position, China adhered to its principles when advancing Sino-Japanese relations. On May 2, 1958, Nagasaki flag incident occurred (Wu et al., 1995, p. 86). China’s national flag hung at the exhibition of Chinese products hosted by the Japan-China Friendship Association in Nagasaki was dragged and torn down by two Japanese. The Japanese police asserted that it was not a significant crime; it was just “the case as property damage”, so they released the perpetrators soon (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 54). The Chinese government and its people thought it was a serious insult to their nation, but the Japanese government did not apologize to China or punish the perpetrators (Han, 1990, p. 251). The
Nagasaki incident and the obstruction of the fourth trade agreement made the Chinese government believe that Japan had no intention to improve Japan-Chinese relations. Then, the Chinese government decided to cut off the trade and cultural relations with Japan. Nevertheless, the Chinese government did not completely cut off all the China and Japan relations. Some Japanese people who advocated establishing a friendship with China still visited China (Zhang, 2018, 56).

**The Influence of Harmony**

Harmony means to pursue peace. The normalization of Sino-Japanese relations is the process of establishing peaceful and stable relations with Japan. The Chinese government wanted to realize its ties with Japan in a harmonious state, which required China and Japan to respect each other’s differences and seek common ground while reserving differences. Following American’s China policy, the Japanese government recognized Taiwan politically and established economic ties with China (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 32). Hence, Japan’s cabinet adopted the “separations of politics and economic policy” towards China (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 48). From the beginning, the two sides did not reach a consensus on the establishment of diplomatic relations. However, the two sides had common interests in creating trade ties, so they actively promoted economic connections.

In July 1958, the Chinese government proposed the three political principles to the Japanese government that, “the Japanese government should not be hostile to China, not follow the United States’ China policy and stop adopting the ‘two Chinas’ policy, and not hinder the normalization of the two nations’ relations” (Li, 2001, p. 70). Although the two sides could not reach an agreement on political principles, their economic relations developed, and China was actively promoting the economic relations between the two states. In August 1960, Zhou proposed the three economic principles to promote Sino-Japanese trade: “namely intergovernmental agreement, nongovernmental contact and special individual considerations” (Han, 1990, p. 253; Kokubun et al.,
In February 1961, Zhou met with the Japanese economic delegation and expressed his wishes that “the Chinese people and the Japanese people should be friends forever” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China (MFA) & PLRC, 1990, p. 303).

At the beginning of 1961, the Asia Bureau’s China Division of Japan reexamined its China’s policy and implemented a de facto “two Chinas” policy that was to “eventually establish diplomatic relations with China” while maintaining the international status of Taiwan (Kokubun et al., 2017, p. 61). Then, the Japanese government proposed that China’s representation in the U.N. could be recognized but that the status of Taiwan should be unchanged. The Japanese government insisted on the “two Chinas policy” and tried to preserve Taiwan’s seat in the UN (Ibid.). The Taiwan issue and the UN seat were the main obstacles to the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. It was difficult to reach an agreement at that time. The Chinese government had adopted seeking common ground while shelving differences to deal with these two issues; the Chinese government adhered to its own principles (the Chinese government is the sole legal government representing China) but did not impose those principles on the Japanese government (personal communication with Liu, January 5, 2020).

According to documents declassified by Japan’s Diplomatic Records Office, Japan’s Cabinet explicitly expressed that they wanted to improve the relations with China in 1968. However, the prerequisite was the improvement of Sino-U.S. relations, and China became a U.N. member (China Division of Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1968). By August 1970, Japan’s basic policy toward China was still unchanged, and it kept ties with Taiwan while seeking a venue for ambassador-level dialogue with China (China Division, 1970a). Japan’s actions in wartime and its attitude and policies toward China seriously hindered the realisation of normal diplomatic relations.
between the two states. However, the Chinese government’s attitude was positive, and it took proactive measures to facilitate Sino-Japanese contact.

The establishment of Sino-Japanese relations does not mean that their differences had been eliminated, but rather that those differences had formed a harmonious state. Take the Taiwan issue in the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement as an example; the statement did not point out that Japan recognized Taiwan as an inalienable part of Chinese territory. It shows that “the government of the People’s Republic of China reiterates that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People’s Republic of China. The government of Japan fully understands and respects this stand of the Government of the People’s Republic of China” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1972). Even though there were still many differences between China and Japan, the restoration of their normal relations allowed the two countries to coordinate their relationship according to their formulated rules, thereby achieving peaceful Sino-Japanese relations.

**Conclusion**

The relations between China and Japan have been changing. From the past to the twentieth century, their bilateral relations have gone through two states. In ancient times, their relationship status was that of the strong to the weak; China was stronger than Japan; and relations between the two countries were peaceful. From the beginning of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to the end of the twentieth century, their relationship status was weak and strong. China was weak, and Japan was strong; this period’s relations between the two states were full of conflicts and two full-scale wars. Japan’s invasion of China caused enormous damage to the Chinese people, which is difficult to forget. However, the Chinese people should not forget its long-term friendly relations with Japan in the past and should not let this painful history influence their children and grandchildren. Zhou
Enlai stated that “past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future” (Zhou, 1972, cited in Dirlik, 1991).

Japan is an important neighbouring country for China. Maintaining intimate and stable relations with Japan can help China gain more, not only for their self-development but also for regional peace and development. When China proposed resuming normal relations with Japan after China’s establishment in 1949, China and Japan were still in a state of hostility. The Chinese people believed that they could use peaceful methods to change the nature of relations from an enemy to a friend by changing the environment. Then the Chinese government took some goodwill measures to promote the change of Sino-Japanese relations. When small changes accumulate to a certain extent, qualitative changes will occur. It took China two decades to achieve normal diplomatic relations with Japan, demonstrating that China had great patience for improving its relations with Japan and would not give up due to temporary setbacks.
Chapter 6

The Negotiations between the U.K. and China on the Hong Kong Issue

Introduction

This chapter investigates the role of cultural factors in China’s negotiations with Britain on the Hong Kong issue. This chapter concentrates on China’s manner of resolving issues related to sovereignty. The chapter explores China’s diplomatic activities in this context within a cultural framework. The first part examines the influence of strategic culture, and the next part examines the influence of the five philosophical ideas of dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony. Then, the last part summarizes the outcomes of this case study.

Hong Kong is a Chinese metropolis on the eastern side of the Pearl River estuary in southern China. However, it was still a British colony when the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949. Hong Kong was ceded by the Qing Chinese government to the United Kingdom in 1842 based on the Nanjing Treaty signed by the British and Chinese governments. For the Chinese, this was the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history, making Hong Kong the first territory ceded by China. Modern Chinese history is the history from the outbreak of the Opium War in 1840 to the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. For the Chinese, modern Chinese history is a humiliating history full of invasions, massacres, disasters, and occupations at the hands of Japanese and Western imperialists (Callahan, 2010, p. 8). The British government ruled Hong Kong for more than 150 years. The Chinese government thought that taking back this
lost territory would wipe away the nation’s shame for one hundred years and complete an important step towards the complete reunification of Chinese territory.

After the PRC’s founding in 1949, the Chinese government announced that the treaties signed by the two countries had been imposed by the British and were thus invalid. They claimed that Hong Kong was a part of China and would resume Hong Kong’s sovereignty when the right time came. In 1982, the British and Chinese governments began to negotiate on the Hong Kong issue. After the hard work of both two countries through 22 rounds of talk, the two states reached an agreement.

The Influence of Chinese Strategic Culture

Chinese strategic culture is “cautious about war”, regarding war as a last resort. This section mainly examines the influence of Chinese strategic culture on China’s resolving the Hong Kong issue related to sovereignty. The Chinese government preferred to use negotiations to resolve this issue with Britain, but they also were prepared to resort to forces if negotiation failed.

In 1840, the British government defeated China (Qing dynasty) in the Opium War (the First Anglo-Chinese War in Britain). It forced the Qing court to sign the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, by which the Qing court ceded Hong Kong Island with a total area of 75.6 square kilometers to Britain (Qu & Zhong, 2018, p. 23). In 1860, the British and French governments defeated China in the Second Opium War (the Arrow War, or Second Anglo-Chinese War). After the war, the Qing government signed the Beijing Treaty with the British government, by which the Qing court ceded the South Kowloon area, covering 11.1 square kilometers (Qu & Zhong, 2018, p. 23). At the end of the nineteenth century, China was in the middle of a partition frenzy by the Western powers. In 1898, China was compelled by the British government to sign a treaty, The Convention between the United Kingdom and China, Respecting an Extension of Hong Kong Territory, which agreed
to rent the remaining area of the Kowloon island and the surrounding area (later named the New Territories) with a total area of 975.1 square kilometers for 99 years from July 1, 1898, to June 30, 1997, to the British government (Xiong & Su, 2005, p. 176). Therefore, Hong Kong was effectively ceded to the British government.

The 99-years lease, covering nearly 92 per cent of the Hong Kong island, determined the timing and the nature of the talks between the U.K. and China on Hong Kong’s future (Cradock, 1999). From China’s perspective, the three treaties were imposed by the British government and were unequal and invalid. The British government insisted that the three treaties were valid. However, the treaties could not provide a legal basis for the British rule of Hong Kong after 1997 (Roberti, 1993, P. 7). June 30, 1997, was the deadline for the two countries to resolve this issue. After the PRC’s founding in 1949, the Chinese government wanted to take back Hong Kong. The central question was that of how and when China would take Hong Kong back.

At that time, the Cold War had fully arrived. Britain allied with the United States, belonging to the capitalist camp. In contrast, China was in the socialist camp. Britain followed the United States’ China policy in the hostilities between the United States and China, which imposed an economic blockade on China. Against this background of fierce confrontation between the two camps, it was not easy to resolve the Hong Kong issue through peaceful means (Li, 1997, p. 47). The New Territories nearly covered 92 per cent of the whole Hong Kong Island, and Hong Kong island and the South Kowloon area only occupied 8 per cent. The food and water of the 8 per cent area depended on the Mainland; this area could not be viable on its own (Cradock, 1999, p. 177). Hence, from a military perspective, China could take back Hong Kong by resorting to force (Cheng, 2012).
However, the British would not give up Hong Kong easily, as they needed to retain Hong Kong to support its role as a major power in the world and its future economic interests in East Asia (Tang, 1963, p. 114). From a military perspective, it was not easy for Britain to defend Hong Kong by themselves, so they would inevitably draw the United States into a military contest with China (Li, 1997, p. 40). Due to Hong Kong’s importance, the British took steps to strengthen the colony militarily and prepared for emergencies (Yu & Liu, 1995, pp. 175-180). Britain “raised the strength of the Hong Kong garrison from 5,000 to 30,000, with token contingents of Australian and New Zealand troops signifying those countries’ joint commitment” (Cottrell, 1993, P. 26). The Chinese government could take back Hong Kong “with a bloody, drawn-out action” (Ibid.). That was a scenario that China very much wanted to avoid (Li, 1997, p. 40).

Moreover, if China used military methods to recover Hong Kong’s sovereignty, it would face a tougher international environment. Besides, China wanted to keep Hong Kong’s prosperity and special status through British cooperation (Li, 1997, p. 86). Therefore, when the conditions for a peaceful settlement of the Hong Kong issue did not materialize, China decided to leave Hong Kong in British hands and wait until the right time (Li, 1997, p. 43). In fact, in 1948, the People’s Liberation Army of China reached the border between the Mainland and Hong Kong, but it did not make any military moves, maintaining the area’s peace instead (Yu & Liu, eds., 1995, pp. 197-198). The Chinese government knew that they could use war to resolve the Hong Kong issue, but such a war would cause great damage and danger for Hong Kong and the Mainland’s economic position, as well as China’s international reputation. Then, China preferred to use negotiations to resolve this issue. Although the Hong Kong issue was related to China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Chinese government created favourable conditions for peaceful resolution rather than military force.
According to Sir Percy Cradock, the British ambassador to China from 1978 to 1983 and the principal negotiator in Sino-British negotiations, “when Mrs Thatcher approached the Hong Kong issue, she was in an uncooperative and combative spirit; she gained victory in the Falklands War, and she thought the Hong Kong issue had some superficial similarities to the Falklands issue; she considered the possible solution of this issue based on legal or even military strength” (Cradock, 1999, p. 174). The Chinese government stated that “China is not Argentina, and Hong Kong is not Malvinas islands; the Malvinas islands is no precedent for handling Hong Kong” (Zong, 2009, p. 249). The British tested all the theories on the issue and found that the best solution was to negotiate with the Chinese (Cradock, 1999, pp. 174-178). Hence, the two countries had reached a consensus on the settlement of the Hong Kong issue through negotiation.

During the negotiations, the two countries had some inevitable disputes. The central conflict concerned the issue of sovereignty. Before the formal talks between the two countries, they had some confrontations on the question of sovereignty. The Chinese insisted that the British agree to hand over Hong Kong to China in 1997, and only then could talks start (Li, 1997, p. 96). The British suggested that they could not accept this as the negotiation’s precondition and insisted that both sides discuss returning Hong Kong to China (Cradock, 1999, pp. 183-185). The British wanted to have talks early, but they were consistently told that they had only to accept this premise proposed by the Chinese side, and then the path of the talks would be smooth (ibid.). The Chinese government suggested that both sides discuss what they could do during the transfer period rather than whether Hong Kong should be returned (Zong, 2009). In Chinese thinking, the Hong Kong issue is related to national sovereignty and territorial integrity; hence, the Chinese government could not make any concessions on the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. The Chinese government must recover Hong Kong; the question was how they could take it back.
At the beginning of the negotiations, the leading British concern was to continue British administration in Hong Kong. The British suggested that Britain accept China’s claims to sovereignty over all of Hong Kong but that China should allow Britain to continue to rule Hong Kong (Li, 1997, pp. 107-108). Britain conveyed to the Chinese that Hong Kong’s prosperity and businessmen’s confidence were linked to their administration (Cradock, 1999, p. 188). If this situation were changed, it would be fatal for Hong Kong. The Chinese stated that they could not adopt any administration division from sovereignty; if they allowed Britain to continue to rule Hong Kong, it amounted to China signing another unequal treaty with Britain (Zong, 2009, p. 255). The Chinese demonstrated that they had made the Twelve Points plan for Hong Kong, maintaining Hong Kong’s prosperity and investor confidence (Li, 1997, pp. 100-103). In any event, the Chinese government would not make its political imperative—the recovery of sovereignty subordinate to economic prosperity.

Hence, the Chinese rejected the British proposal (Cradock, 1999, p. 190). The Chinese restated that if both sides could not reach an agreement until September 1984, they would announce a unilateral decision regarding Hong Kong (Wong, 1997). In his meeting with Margaret Thatcher in 1982, Deng Xiaoping stated that “China will recover the sovereignty of Hong Kong in 1997; the Chinese government will formally announce our decision to recover Hong Kong in one or two years” (Deng, 1993, p. 12). The Chinese responses were very threatening and intransigent from the British point of view. For the Chinese side, Hong Kong is part of their territory; they must take it back. If the issue could not be resolved non-violently, China was prepared to use force to resolve it. Deng’s statement showed China’s determination and timetable to take Hong Kong back. Chinese leaders set a deadline for negotiations because they were worried that the long-term failure to reach a principled agreement would lead to chaos in Hong Kong (Xie, 2009, p. 411). Still, it
did not mean that China preferred preemptively using force to resolve the Hong Kong issue. Resolving by force is the worst and final plan.

The focus of the conflict between China and Britain is the issue of sovereignty. The British government ignored the Chinese attitude on this question, asserting that Hong Kong’s crucial economic status should be prioritized in negotiations (Cradock, 1999). In the 1960s, Hong Kong was a critical trading partner of China and was China’s largest export market in the 1980s (Ho, 1986, p. 166). Since 1979, Hong Kong also had become China's main contributor to investment capital, which accounted for almost 70 per cent of total foreign capital (Lau, 1986, p. 239). According to China’s State Administration of Exchange Control, China’s one-third of the US$20 billion foreign exchange earnings was contributed by Hong Kong, which demonstrated the significant role of trade between Hong Kong and Mainland China in China’s economy (Lau, 1986, p. 239).

However, the Chinese government was sensitive to this question and adopted an unyielding stance (Thatcher, 2012). From the establishment of the Qin dynasty in 221 BC, the first unifying Chinese dynasty with the centralized authority, to the present, national unification has always been a top priority for the Chinese governments and their leaders (Bislev & Li, 2014). The Chinese people are very proud of their long history with the relatively stable territory and splendid Chinese culture. The prefaces of many modern Chinese history textbooks describe their glorious past summarily in the beginning, “[O]ur great nation with its long history, huge territory, and excellent culture was established long ago and created the most glorious culture in human history, which made a great contribution to the progress of human civilization” (Cheng, 1998, p. 1).

However, China’s glorious history was ruined in 1840 in the First Opium War between Britain and China, which hurt Chinese national pride immensely. After signing the Nanjing Treaty
with Britain in 1842, the Chinese entered the “century of humiliation” lasting from 1842 to 1949 (Xiong, Su, Chen & Li, 2013). From 1840 to 1949, China was tragically bullied, plundered, and humiliated by the imperialist powers (Han, 1990). The Chinese feeling of humiliation has remained in their minds even to the present day. Although the Japanese imposed most of the suffering and cruelty on the Chinese, the British were the dominant player throughout this period, even after China’s reunification in 1949, still occupying Hong Kong (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 15).

The Chinese government was firmly determined to reassert its sovereignty over Hong Kong and take back its lost territory. The Hong Kong issue was their “black spot”, so they were eager to remove it. Li Ruichuan, a senior Chinese official, argued for the influence of national humiliation on the recovery of Hong Kong as follows:

Hong Kong’s return is a significant event in Chinese history. Britain occupied Hong Kong in 1842. After this, other foreign powers invaded China…occupied our territories, seized our wealth, killed our people, and established their influence on our affairs, which has been a heart-breaking feeling for many generations of Chinese. After taking back Hong Kong, we can wipe out our ancestor’s shame and console their spirits. (Li, 1995, cited in Flowerdew, 1998, p. 15).  

The Chinese humiliations suffered at foreign hands was neglected by the British. National humiliation is a painful memory for the Chinese, while in Western discourse, it is just regarded as the result of Chinese foreign policy and the relationship between China and the West (Callahan, 2010). Hence, the British ignored the influence of this feeling on Chinese thinking and behaviours.

The British believed that Hong Kong occupied an essential role in China’s economic construction and external relations. They argued that “Hong Kong was a window for China” (Cottrell, 1993, p. 26). Hence, they thought that maintaining Hong Kong’s prosperity was more
critical. Thus, they aimed to exchange China’s sovereignty over Hong Kong or the British administration of the territory after 1977 (Thatcher, 2012, p. 259).

The Chinese government announced that national reunification was their core interest. Territorial reunification was at the top of the agenda of China’s long-term goals (Lane, 1990, p. 105). Therefore, on the issue of Hong Kong’s sovereignty, the Chinese government’s attitude was tough and made no concessions. China must take Hong Kong back, even if they would pay a high cost. In the memoirs of Sir S. Y. Chung, a senior member of Hong Kong’s Executive and Legislative Councils in the 1970s and 1980s, he believed that if necessary, the Chinese government would take Hong Kong back even if it were a barren rock (Chung, 2001, pp. 30-31). Cradock noted that China’s central objective was to recover its national territory controlled by Britain; the Chinese would reject any proposal that harmed their sovereignty (Cradock, 1999, p. 210). The Chinese wanted to end their humiliating history; hence they would resume full sovereignty over Hong Kong, including administrative rights (Ibid.).

Chinese strategic culture is “cautious about war” and tries to resolve disputes by peaceful means. Hence, the Chinese prefered to choose negotiations as the main method of resolving the Hong Kong issue with Britain. “Cautious about war” means not easily launching a war and regarding it as a last resort. China’s goal was to recovery Hong Kong’s sovereignty, and its main strategy was to try peaceful means before resorting to force. That is to say, if China thought they could not resolve this issue through negotiations, they would use military methods. Thus, the Chinese told the British, “if they could not reach an agreement with the British government, they would take unilateral actions to recover Hong Kong, even if it meant sending troops to Hong Kong before 1997” (Wong, 1997). When it came to resolving the Hong Kong issue, China adopted a tough attitude and a non-violent approach. If necessary, China would use force to resolve the Hong
Kong issue. However, China preferred to pursue Hong Kong’s reunification through dialogue rather than military means.

**The Influence of Change**

This section examines changes in China’s Hong Kong policies according to the changing environment. China was firm about reclaiming Hong Kong, but when it would be reclaimed depended on the realistic situation and internal and external conditions. In the preliminary stage of China’s establishment, the Chinese government did not immediately intend to take back Hong Kong (Lau, 2000; Li, 1997, p. 40). At that time, the Chinese government’s primary goals were maintaining the new regime, obtaining recognition from other foreign countries, and fostering economic development (Xie, 2009). In the 1950s, the international conditions were perilous for China. Few countries recognized the new Chinese government or established diplomatic relations. The relationship between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated in the late 1950s, which imposed enormous pressure on China (Xie, 2009, pp. 201-203). It was difficult for China to negotiate the Hong Kong issue with the U.K. peacefully. If China chose military methods to resolve the Hong Kong issue, it would be detrimental to the new Chinese regime. In this context, to let Hong Kong continue to stay in the British government’s hands temporarily and maintain Hong Kong’s unique status was beneficial to China in terms of foreign trade, economic exchange, and information exchange (Lau, 2000; Li, 1997, pp. 40-41).

In 1957, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai stated that “One day, we will resume our sovereignty over Hong Kong, and the British people might think so, now we will maintain Hong Kong’s special status for China’s sake” (Zeng, 1993, p. 595). Zhou also indicated, “Hong Kong can play a significant role in establishing economic relations with the outside world, attracting foreign investments, and increasing foreign currency for the socialist construction of the Mainland” (Zeng,
Hong Kong could be a “window” for China to establish political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic ties with foreign countries (Li, 1997, p. 47). As the Chinese government had proposed a similar political framework to resolve the Taiwan issue for China’s reunification, the Hong Kong issue has had a profound effect on Taiwan (Yahuda, 1996). Hong Kong’s question also involves the potential historical legacy and the reputation of the Chinese leadership (Cheng, 2012, p. 128). Therefore, it is beneficial for China to remain invested in the position and status of Hong Kong.

In the 1960s, the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee formally put forward the principle of dealing with the Hong Kong issue: “taking a long-term plan and make full utilization” (Xu, 1997). In a document regarding the Hong Kong question published by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of The State Council of China (HKMAO) in 1997, the Chinese authorities described, “in the foreseeable future, they have no intention of making the position of Hong Kong change but would make full use of the Hong Kong’s special status to serve the socialist construction and diplomatic strategies of China” (Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of The State Council of China, 1997). An editorial published at People’s Daily on March 8, 1963, pointed out that “we (the Chinese government) have always been advocating to use peaceful negotiations to solve the questions of Hong Kong when the time is ripe, and before solving this issue, we would choose to retain the status quo” (Qu & Zhong, 2018, p. 25).

According to British cabinet papers (1949), after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the British government had to decide whether to recognize the new communist regime as the de jure Government of China (Cabinet Memorandum, 1949). Based on research in the national archives of the United Kingdom, Britain’s interests were higher than other powerful countries in China, and Hong Kong was essential, so the British cabinet advocated the policy of keeping a foot
in the door towards China (Cabinet Memorandum, 1949). They proposed that the best method to preserve their friendship with China was to continue trade with the Chinese people, as commercial contacts transcend political differences (Ibid.). After the foundation of the PRC on October 1, 1949, the British government was one of the first countries to recognize the new Chinese regime on January 6, 1950 (Cradock, 1999, p. 12). Meanwhile, another aspect that the British government should consider was the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. At that time, the United States had a confrontational and negative perception of China. The British government chose to privilege the Anglo-American relationship solidarity when Britain lost most of its assets in China (Chan, 1998, p. 347). It was not the right time for Britain to negotiate with China on the Hong Kong issue. Therefore, the British government chose to maintain the status quo of Hong Kong.

Considering the international context and poor relations between Britain and China, it was not easy to negotiate. From a military point of view, it would not have been difficult for the new Chinese government to take back Hong Kong (Cheng, 2012). At that time, decolonization was considered an inevitable global tendency, and the international community would hardly condemn the Chinese authorities for taking back Hong Kong through military force (Cheng, 2012, p. 130). However, China did not want to use military force because of the great potential damage of war. Considering the critical role of Hong Kong and the realistic environment, the Chinese government had consistently declared that the Hong Kong issue would be resolved appropriately when conditions were ripe (Li, 1997, p. 42).

Although it was not the time to resolve the Hong Kong issue, the Chinese government created favourable conditions for Hong Kong’s return. The Chinese government announced that the treaties signed with Britain were unequal and invalid after the PRC’s founding. The Chinese would
resolve the Hong Kong issue through negotiations at the right time (Zong, 2007, p. 235). On March 8, 1972, Huang Hua, the permanent representative of China to the United Nations, wrote formally to the chair of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, reiterating the Chinese government’s stance on the Hong Kong issue and the Macao issue and opposing keep Hong Kong and Macao in the list of colonial categories. In his letter, Huang Hua pointed out that,

Hong Kong and Macao are parts of China’s territory. The British and Portuguese authorities occupied Hong Kong and Macao through unequal treaties imposed by military force. To resolve Hong Kong and Macao issues are entirely belong to China’s sovereignty range instead of in the category of so-called colonial affairs for self-determination (Huang, 2007, p. 193).

The United Nations approved China’s request. At the twenty-seventh session of the U.N. General Assembly on November 8, 1972, it was decided to remove Hong Kong and Macao from the colonial list, which created favourable circumstances for the Chinese government to resolve the Hong Kong issue in the context of Chinese sovereignty. The British government made no public objection to China’s request, and it was accordingly accepted (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 28). Murray MacLehose, twenty-fifth Governor of Hong Kong from 1971 to 1982 appointed by the British Prime Minister Edward Heath, was the first governor to be appointed from the ranks of the Foreign Affairs rather than the Colonial Service, which meant that the Hong Kong issue was no longer a colonial issue to be handled, but rather a diplomatic problem to be solved (Roberti, 1996, p. 11).

In the late 1970s, as the New Territories lease’s terminal date drew nearer, the foreign and local businessmen began to express their concern for Hong Kong’s future. The New Territories' lease deadline meant that the Hong Kong government was not allowed to rent for this area beyond June 1997, which posed a significant obstacle to the economic development of Hong Kong and
had a negative influence on business confidence. Thus, the Hong Kong government received growing pressure from the commercial community to seek a clarification of Hong Kong’s status after 1997 from the Chinese government (Hong Kong Standard, 1976, cited in Tang & Ching, 1994, pp. 154-155).

With increased awareness of the potential economic damage, the British government began discussions with the Chinese government. At that time, China proposed that one of its important tasks was to “realize the reunification of China” (Xie, 2002, p. 409). Besides, the Hong Kong lease’s terminal date was coming. Hence, it was time for the Chinese government to solve this issue and change its Hong Kong policy. Then, the Hong Kong issue was on the Chinese government’s agenda (Zong, 2007, p. 237). The Chinese leaders paid attention to the situation in the U.K. In May 1974, British Prime Minister Edward Heath discussed this issue with Deng Xiaoping during his visit to Beijing. Deng told Heath that “we can wait till your government comprehensively considered this issue, perhaps we can reach an agreement after you are re-elected as the British Prime Minister” (Chen, 2009, p. 5).

In May 1978, China’s State Council established the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) to handle Hong Kong and Macao’s issues. At that time, China had implemented “the policy of reform and opening up”, and the focus shifted to economic construction. Hence, the Chinese government thought that it was time to implement the Hong Kong policy. Deng Xiaoping made an internal statement to the members of the Communist Party of China (CPC), saying, “[N]ow the question of Hong Kong is on the agenda, so we must have a clear stance and a clear policy” (Zong, 2007, p. 240). Cradock submitted a memorandum on the question of the New Territories land leases on July 5, 1979. His memorandum mainly expressed that the Hong Kong government should issue leases beyond 1997 (Wong, 1997). After examining Cradock’s
memorandum, Zhang Wenjin, the Chinese vice-Foreign minister, replied that China would not allow the Hong Kong government to grant leases beyond 1997 (Li, 1997, p. 62). Zhang suggested that it was a bilateral issue, so it should be resolved through bilateral negotiations (Roberti, 1996, p. 24).

The Influence of Dichotomy

In Chinese dialectic thought, the universe’s phenomena have two complementary poles. Through constant coordination and mutual tolerance, the two poles can achieve harmony (Qin, 2016). The Chinese government understood that Hong Kong’s social system was different from that of the Mainland. The Chinese government proposed two principles to resolve the Hong Kong issue: one was to take Hong Kong back, and the other was to maintain its prosperity and stability (Li, 1997, p. 66). In response to Hong Kong’s political and social system differences from the mainland, the Chinese government adopted a dichotomy approach to formulating Hong Kong’s policy- that is, “one country, two systems”. The premise of this policy is one China, and the Chinese government is the central government. In other words, in the People’s Republic of China, the mainland with a population of one billion people implements the socialist system, Hong Kong implements the capitalist system” (Xie, 2002, p. 410). Then, the two systems would attempt to achieve a harmonious state under the leadership of the central government.

The Chinese leaders headed by Deng Xiaoping believed that the Hong Kong issue was resolved in accordance with the policy of “one country, two governance”. That is, only aspects related to sovereignty should be changed after Hong Kong’s recovery, and other things should remain unchanged, achieving both the purpose of the recovery and its stability and prosperity (Li, 1997, p. 67). Because this policy was easy for Hong Kong’s people and foreign investors to accept, it was conducive to reaching an agreement with the United Kingdom and obtaining cooperation.
from other countries (Li, 1997, p. 67). In July 1984, Deng Xiaoping reiterated that “after the Chinese government resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, Hong Kong’s current society, economic system, laws, and social lifestyles remain unchanged” (Deng, 1993, p. 58).

At that time, China created a Special Economic Zone in the city of Shenzhen, bordering Hong Kong, which started experimenting with a market economy (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 30). Hong Kong invested a significant amount of money in Shenzhen’s development (Lau, 1986, p. 241). The Chinese government hoped that the capitalist system of Hong Kong and the socialist system of the Mainland would jointly contribute to China’s modernization and reunification (Li, 1997, p. 66).

The policy of “one country, two systems” well reflects the idea of dichotomy. This policy properly handles the relationship between capitalism and socialism and makes them harmonious. Hong Kong’s capitalism and Mainland’s socialism were not necessarily opposed but could potentially coexist harmoniously in China.

The Influence of Relationality

The Hong Kong issue involves the relationship between the United Kingdom and China and the relationship between the central government and the local government in Hong Kong. Retaining Hong Kong was important to “Britain’s role as a major power” in the world and to Britain’s future interests in East Asia (Tang, 1963, p. 114). Resolving the Hong Kong issue successfully was an important role to safeguard extensive British interests in Hong Kong. Margaret Thatcher stated that the British government had a moral responsibility to the people of Hong Kong, and they sought the Hong Kong people’s wellbeing (Thatcher, 2012). The British policies on the question of Hong Kong also were shaped by their guilty regarding the people of Hong Kong because they would be handing over Hong Kong to a communist government (Yahuda, 1996).
During the negotiations, a crisis in the Hong Kong dollar occurred on September 23, 1983. Thatcher indicated that if the Chinese government intended to take back Hong Kong, then Hong Kong’s prosperity would collapse, which would be a disaster for Hong Kong (Thatcher, 2012). Hong Kong practices a capitalist system and a market economy, while the Mainland practices a socialist system and a planned economy. Hence, the British did not believe that China’s socialist governance could maintain Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability. Therefore, they suggested that they return Hong Kong to China but continued to administer Hong Kong after 1997.

When the Chinese government formulated the policy towards Hong Kong’s recovery, one of the most critical elements was maintaining Hong Kong’s prosperity and international status. At that time, Hong Kong was the third largest port and financial center in the world, was China’s largest source of foreign currency, and had established business relations with over 100 countries (Qu & Zhong, 2018). Therefore, maintaining Hong Kong’s prosperity after reunification had great significance for China, not only in terms of political goals but also in economic development. China insisted that they needed British cooperation to maintain Hong Kong’s stability and prosperity during the transfer period (Xie, 2009, pp. 410-411). However, this did not mean that Hong Kong’s prosperity could only be maintained under the British administration; it depended on applying suitable policies to Hong Kong under the Chinese administration in the post-1997 era (Deng, 1993, p. 13). Thus, the Chinese government had to formulate a policy to coordinate the relationship with the British as well as the relationship between the central government and local government, which enabled the Chinese government to reach an agreement with the United Kingdom, “win the hearts of Hong Kong people”, and maintain the confidence of investors (Li, 1997, p. 67; Cheng, 2012). Then, the policy of “one country, two systems” came into being.
Ma believed that one of the most important aspects of the negotiation was resolving the relationship between the local government and the central government (personal communication, November 6, 2019). The “one country, two systems” policy stipulated that the Hong Kong government is composed of local people—that is, Hong Kong people govern Hong Kong (Xie, 2009, p. 412). The relationship between the central government and the local government is that the central government administers local government, but the local government enjoys a high degree of autonomy (Li, 1997, pp. 171-181). The central government manages the foreign and national defence affairs of the Hong Kong government, while the Hong Kong government enjoys administrative power, legislative power, independent judicial power, and final adjudication power and maintains financial independence (Xie, 2009, p. 412). The Chinese government stated that the economic interests of Britain and other countries in Hong Kong would be accommodated (Xie, 2009, p. 412).

The issue of the composition of the delegations demonstrated China’s positioning of its relationship with the United Kingdom and Hong Kong. The British proposed that the talks be attended by three parts, Beijing, London, and Hong Kong, the three-legged stool (Gao, 2008). The British argued that Hong Kong people should have the right to attend the meeting related to their future. The Chinese rejected this proposal. From the Chinese point of view, this was a purely bilateral talk between China and Britain and solving the question of Hong Kong was belongs to the scope of China’s sovereignty (Gao, 2008). They stated that Hong Kong was a part of China and could not participate in the equal and bilateral negotiations between China and Britain, the two sovereign countries. (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 43).

A distinctive characteristic of Chinese negotiation styles is that the Chinese attempted to establish friendship with the British. They attempted to cultivate an excellent personal relationship,
a sense of friendship and obligation, with sympathetic counterpart officials. A friendship between nations is significant “because friends help calm the anxiety that is an effect of ontological insecurity” (Nordin & Smith, 2018). If the Chinese can trust persons as their old friends, they, then, will try to manipulate feelings of dependence, obligation, goodwill, or guilt to achieve their objectives (Solomon, 1999, p. 4). During negotiations, the friendship between the two countries’ officials played an important role in breaking deadlocks.

In September 1983, 50 days after the talks, two British persons made it possible for the next round of negotiations to begin. The first individual was Edward Heath, the former prime minister of the British, who paid a visit to Beijing to meet with Deng Xiaoping. Edward Heath was an old Chinese friend. Deng Xiaoping reiterated the Chinese stance and suggested the two sides begin to negotiate arrangements for Hong Kong. After the meeting, Heath relayed Deng Xiaoping’s statement to London. The other person was Margaret Thatcher, who sent a message to the Chinese government to drop her insistence on continuing British administration. Before Thatcher sent this message to Beijing, she sought advice from Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister of Singapore, who told Thatcher, “you should adopt the right attitude--neither submissive nor defiant, but friendly and calm” (Thatcher, 2012, p. 491). A friendly attitude could help to proceed with the negotiations. According to the memoirs of Cradock, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary from June 1983 to July 1989, established a sympathetic working relationship with Wu Xueqian, the Chinese Foreign Minister, which significantly advanced the progress of the negotiations (Cradock, 1999, p. 198).

**The Influence of Benevolence**

The concept of benevolence suggests that people should love people from their hearts and consider other interests in others’ positions. When the Chinese and the British began to negotiate the Hong
Kong issue, Hong Kong people were anxious and feared for the future. They mistrusted the CPC and lacked confidence in their future (Lau, 2000). Considering Hong Kong people’s anxieties and maintaining Hong Kong’s stability and prosperity, the Chinese government implemented the policy of “one country, two systems". The Chinese leaders had publicly explained the policy many times to alleviate the worries and anxiety of Hong Kong’s people. The Chinese love Hong Kong and Hong Kong’s people, so they should understand their concerns. The main elements of this policy were:

(1) The Chinese government decided to resume sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1, 1997.

(2) The Chinese government would directly establish a special administrative region in Hong Kong under the central government. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) enjoys a high degree of autonomy.

(3) HKSAR enjoys legislative power, independent judicial power and final adjudication power. The existing laws, decrees, and regulations remain basically unchanged.

(4) The Hong Kong government is composed of local people. Hong Kong governmental institutions may also hire British and other foreigners as consultants.

(5) The current social systems, economic system and lifestyle remain unchanged.

(6) HKSAR remains a free port and independent customs territory.

(7) Hong Kong continues to maintain its status as a financial center.

(8) Hong Kong’s finances remain independent.

(9) Hong Kong could establish a mutually beneficial relationship with the United Kingdom to take care of British economic interests.
(10) HKSAR could independently maintain and develop economic and cultural relations and sign agreements with countries, regions and relevant international organizations in the world in the name of China’s Hong Kong.

(11) Hong Kong’s social security is the responsibility of the Hong Kong government.

(12) The guidelines as mentioned above and policies are stipulated by the National People's Congress in the Basic Law of HKSAR. They will remain unchanged for fifty years (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2014).

These contents could persuade Hong Kong’s people that their lives would not change drastically after Hong Kong’s return to the Mainland in 1997.

The Chinese leaders understood that the Hong Kong issue’s settlement required the negotiation and efforts of the Chinese and British governments and the understanding and support of Hong Kong’s people. Deng Xiaoping had extensive contacts with people from all walks of life in Hong Kong and listened to their opinions and voices (Li, 1997, p. 71). Knowing their worries and anxieties about Hong Kong’s return in 1997, the Chinese government proposed the “one country, two systems” policy to reassure them and strengthen their confidence in Hong Kong’s future. Judging from public opinion in Hong Kong at that time, it was not true that the vast majority of Hong Kong’s people actively supported Hong Kong’s return (Li, 1997, p. 72). For the Chinese, some representative figures in Hong Kong mostly loved China. However, at the same time, they had negative opinions about the Mainland and the socialist system, and they also distrusted the “one country, two systems” policy (Li, 1997, p. 72). Lu Ping, the director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council at that time, recalled that “many Hong Kong people were not prepared at the time and put forward many different opinions. Deng Xiaoping listened patiently one by one, and after listening, analyzed with them” (cited in Liu, 2014).
In June 1984, Sir S. Y. Chung and his colleagues had a meeting with Deng Xiaoping in Beijing. During the meeting, Chung expressed his inner worries, saying, “you said that Hong Kong people rule Hong Kong, we support it with both hands, but we are worried that Hong Kong people do not have this ability; if Hong Kong is not well managed, the loss will be great” (cited in Liu, 2014). Deng Xiaoping replied that:

“We must believe that the Chinese in Hong Kong can govern Hong Kong well. The intelligence of the Chinese is not lower than that of foreigners. Do not always think that only foreign talents can do well but believe that we Chinese are capable of doing well. The content of the Sino-British negotiations has not yet been announced. Many Hong Kong people do not understand the central government’s policies. Once they truly understand, they will be fully confident” (PLRC, 1993, p. 60).

Chinese leaders continued to communicate with representatives from all walks of life in Hong Kong, hoping to relieve their anxiety, enhance their confidence, and gain support.

The Influence of Harmony

In Chinese thinking, harmony does not mean the same but means different. Harmony refers to different things or different elements of the same thing in a harmonious condition. The Chinese government respects Hong Kong’s differences in social and economic systems and then rationally handles these differences in order to achieve a harmonious relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Therefore, the Chinese government proposed the policy of “one country, two systems” to resolve the Hong Kong issue. That is, “the mainland continues its socialism, while Hong Kong maintains its capitalism; China resumes its sovereignty over Hong Kong while Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy” (Xie, 2009, p. 412). It showed that the Chinese believed
that socialism and capitalism could coexist in China, greatly benefiting Hong Kong’s and China’s stability and prosperity.

The Chinese government solved the Hong Kong issue with Britain through peaceful means-negotiation. China wanted to live in harmony with the United Kingdom and insisted on handling the Hong Kong issue through dialogue rather than confrontation. Throughout the negotiations, the two countries inevitably had some disputes. In the beginning, the British government suggested that both sides discuss the issue of returning Hong Kong to China. In contrast, the Chinese believed that both sides should discuss what they could do during the transfer period instead (Zong, 2009). In the following negotiations, the question of sovereignty continued to cause conflicts. Although the entire negotiations process was full of conflicts and sometimes even reached a deadlock, a spirit of cooperation prevailed. The dialogue was the main method to resolve these conflicts. Finally, they succeeded in reaching an agreement between both sides on the Hong Kong issue in September 1984.

Conclusion

According to the Nanjing Treaty signed with Britain in 1842, the Qing Chinese court ceded Hong Kong to Britain. After the new China’s founding in 1949, the Chinese government had not immediately proposed resolving the Hong Kong issue. Given the domestic and international environment in the early days of China’s founding, they thought it was not the proper time to resolve this issue with Britain through peaceful means. Since the late 1970s, China’s international and domestic conditions have changed fundamentally. As the New Territories lease’s terminal date drew nearer, the British and Chinese governments began to prepare for negotiations on the Hong Kong issue.
Regarding the realistic situation and the cultural influences, the Chinese government preferred to use negotiations to resolve this issue rather than military methods. The Chinese government needed to take back Hong Kong and, at the same time, wanted to maintain Hong Kong’s stability and prosperity. Therefore, the Chinese government was constantly adjusting their policies towards Hong Kong, waiting for the best time to peacefully resolve the Hong Kong issue.

In addition, taking into account the Hong Kong people’s worries and anxiety about future changes and maintaining Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability, the Chinese government had meticulously designed a policy of “one country, two systems”, hoping to ultimately achieve mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence between Mainland China and Hong Kong.

Deng Xiaoping said that national independence and self-reliance had always been and would always be the basic Chinese position (Deng, 1984, p. 396). From the Chinese’s perspective, they value their cooperation and friendship with other nations and other peoples, and they value more their hard-won sovereignty rights and independence. China will not accept anything harmful to its national interests. The Chinese people have their national pride and self-respect; they deem it the most profound disgrace to impair their interests, honour and dignity (Deng, 1984, p. 396). The objectives of national reunification and territorial integrity are at the top of the agenda of Chinese long-term goals, which are regarded as the core interests of the Chinese government and the Chinese people. Hence, the Chinese government was prepared to resolve this issue unilaterally and “take Hong Kong back by force in the worst case” (Gao, 2009). Fortunately, after 22 rounds of talk, the two countries successfully reached an agreement to settle the Hong Kong issue peacefully.
Chapter 7

The Taiwan Strait Crisis from 1995 to 1996
between China and the United States

Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China’s complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the Communist Party of China. It is also a shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation…No one should underestimate the resolve, the will, and the ability of the Chinese people to defend their national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

President Xi Jinping, 2021.

Introduction

This chapter investigates the role of cultural factors in the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis between the U.S. and China. This chapter concentrates on China’s manner of resolving the issues related to its national reunification. The chapter explores China’s diplomatic activities in this event within the proper cultural framework. The first part of this chapter briefly introduces this crisis. The next part examines the influence of strategic culture and then examines the influence of the five philosophical ideas of dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony. The last part summarizes the outcomes of the case study.
The Sino-US relationship has been regarded as the most important bilateral relationship of our time (Ross, Wang & Tunsjø, 2021; Steinberg & O'Hanlon, 2014, p. 1; Zhang, 2020). The increasing and evident strategic competition between the United States and China is arguably the most consequential issue in international relations, not only for the United States’ dominant position but also for the international community’s peace and stability. As Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State, stated, “[N]ow we are trying to find an answer, a new answer to the ancient question of what happens when a rising power and an established power meet” (Clinton, 2012). In Chinese President Xi Jinping’s phone conversation with U.S. President Joe Biden on September 10, 2021, Xi stated that “the Sion-U.S. relationship is not a multiple-answer question of whether we should have good relations, but a compulsory question of how” (Zhao, 2021). Many issues have plagued Sino-U.S. relations. Among these issues, the Taiwan issue is arguably the most crucial problem between the two nations since the end of World War II (Tan, 2016, p. 283).

The Communist Party of China (CPC) defeated the Kuomintang of China (KMT) in the Chinese civil war from 1945 to 1949 and founded the People’s Republic of China in 1949. The KMT fled to Taiwan and occupied the Taiwanese island to the present. For China, achieving the unity of Taiwan and the motherland was a primary political task. The Chinese have strong and emotive nationalist sentiments on the Taiwan issue, as it was a scar left by foreign imperialist powers from a century of humiliation. According to Article 4 of the Anti-Secession Law announced by the Chinese government in 2005, “accomplishing the great task of reunifying the motherland is the sacred duty of all Chinese people, the Taiwan compatriots included” (National People’s Congress, 2005). The Taiwan Strait crisis from 1995 to 1996 was the greatest challenge to the US-China relationship in several decades (Hickey, 1998). This crisis indicated that the conflicts on the Taiwan issue between the two great nations could lead to military
confrontation, which makes this event a good case to examine the strategic culture and Chinese philosophical thoughts in terms of China’s diplomatic behaviour.

A brief introduction to the crisis

The Taiwan problem is left over from the Chinese civil war from 1945 to 1949 (Zhao, 1999, p. 2). The Communist Party of China, led by Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek’s KMT government, resumed four years of struggle for power after the two parties defeated Japan in 1945. After Chiang Kai-shek’s defeat, he and his nationalist government fled to Taiwan; they hoped to “make Taiwan their last-ditch stand” (Myers & Zhang, 2006). Then, Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT began to rebuild the island’s administration, reorganize the KMT, and prepare a military defence of the island. Since then, Taiwan has been under the rule of the KMT.

In the early 1950s, China began to make military preparations to reunify Taiwan with the motherland. However, the Korean War changed that situation. Till now, the Taiwan issue still has not been resolved. Since the end of the 1970s, the Chinese government has formulated the policy of peaceful reunification of Taiwan (Sheng, 1998, p. 3). Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-Kuo insisted on the “one China” policy, that is, the mainland and Taiwan belong to China (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 20). In March 1990, Lee Teng-hui, a native Taiwanese, was elected as the leader of Taiwan. Initially, Lee Teng-hui steadfastly supported the “one-China” policy when he was designated as successor by Chiang Ching-Kuo. After he became the leader of Taiwan, “he reaffirmed that there was only one-China policy” for Taiwan’s policy in his first press conference (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 21).

However, the Lee administration began to conduct a “pragmatic foreign policy (wushi waijiao)”, attempting to promote Taiwanese relations with other nations “regardless of the Mainland China factor” in 1993 (Institute of Taiwan Studies of Nanjing University, 1999, p. 494).
Lee had already proposed implementing a “pragmatic foreign policy” to “expand Taiwan’s survival space, preserve national security, and safeguard their national sovereignty” in 1989 (Huang, 2016, p. 466). Later, Taiwan sought to establish state-to-state relations with other countries, pursued a return to the United Nations, and regarded itself as an “entity of one China” (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 32). In March 1995, Lee Teng-hui spent his Chinese New Year holiday in Southeast Asia to conduct the so-called “vacation diplomacy”. During his holiday in this region, he met with the president of the Philippines, the president of Indonesia, the King of Thailand, and other high-ranking officials of various nations (Mann, 2000). All the governments of these countries “had established diplomatic relations with China and cut off their official ties with Taiwan” (Mann, 2000). Lee’s diplomatic policy and practice challenged the Beijing authorities. They believed that Lee was attempting to boost Taiwan’s status and pursuit of independence. Thus, Beijing leaders responded to Lee’s policy by contesting his effort to “expand state-to-state relations with other countries and adopted a hardline strategy to Taiwan” (Mann, 2000).

On May 22, 1995, the White House publicly announced granting a visa to Lee Teng-hui to attend a reunion at his alma mater, Cornell University (Xie, 2009, p. 498). On April 17, 1995, Qian Qichen, China’s vice premier and foreign minister, had a meeting with Warren Christopher, U.S. Secretary of State, in New York (Qian, 2005, p. 233). Christopher had pointed out clearly that the United States would not grant a visa for Lee’s visit because such a visit did not accord with the unofficial relations between the U.S. and Taiwan. At most, the U.S. government would consider extending Lee’s transit visa (Qian, 2005, pp. 233-234; Ross, 2000). However, the United States broke its promise and granted Lee Teng-hui a visa. The decision to allow Taiwan’s high-level officials to visit the United States reversed over twenty-five years of diplomatic precedent since the normalization of the relationship between the U.S. and China; this decision challenged not only
the Clinton administration’s statements of public policy but also his private reassurances to the Chinese leaders (Ross, 2000).

On June 9, 1995, Lee Teng-hui made a speech at Cornell University. In his speech, Lee mentioned the Republic of China fifteen times, repeatedly referred to country and nation, and suggested that Mainland China should follow Taiwan’s political development model (Tucker, 2009, p. 214). From the Chinese perspective, Lee openly pursued Taiwan independence (Wu, 2004, p. 152). From the United States’ perspective, the speech would preclude any hope for China’s tolerance (Tucker, 2009, p. 214). Immediately following Lee’s speech, President Clinton made a call to China’s President Jiang Zemin and reassured him that the United States remained committed to the policy of one China and would effectively align with the Chinese government to oppose Taiwan’s policy (Ross, 2000). The United States attempted to use these means to dispel the cloud of suspicion that had settled over U.S.-Chinese relations.

However, the Chinese government believed that Lee attempted to use his highly political speech to publicize the “Taiwan experience” and declared that Taiwan had broken its diplomatic isolation and indicated that their relationship between the United States and Taiwan was strengthened (Qian, 2005, p. 247). From the Chinese perspective, the Clinton administration issuing a visa for Lee was a significant change in its policy (Ross, 2000). The United States encouraged and supported Taiwan to pursue the policies of two Chinas, or one China, one Taiwan, which violated the political base of U.S.-China relations and caused great damage to their bilateral relations (Xie, 2009, pp. 498-499). Allowing Lee’s trip also reinforced the Taiwan authorities’ arrogance and the international anti-China movement (Qian, 2005, p. 244). Although Beijing acknowledged that Washington had taken some measures to limit Lee’s visit, Beijing still suspected that Washington was attempting to change its policy toward Taiwan.
From China’s perspective, granting a visa to Lee by the Clinton administration indicated that the United States recognized Taiwan to a greater degree than it had done since 1979, which was a diplomatic challenge to the Chinese government, and they had to counterattack (Qian, 2005, p. 245). The Chinese authorities made quick and vehement responses. On May 23, 1995, Qian Qichen issued a strong condemnation and protested on behalf of the Chinese government to the U.S. ambassador, Stapleton Roy (Zhou, 1998). On the same day, Yu Zhenwu, the Commander of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), cut short his visit to the United States and returned home (Xie, 2009, p. 498). On May 26, 1995, the Chinese government cancelled the planned visits of State Councilor and Minister of National Defence Chi Haotian and State Councilor Li Guixian to the United States (Xie, 2009, p. 498). On May 28, 1995, the Chinese government announced a postponement of Sino-American bilateral discussions on arms proliferation and nuclear cooperation. At the time, all high-ranking official meetings “at the vice-ministerial level or above and some significant bilateral consultations were cancelled” (Qian, 2005, p. 246).

On July 18, 1995, the Chinese government announced that they would carry out air and naval exercises and missile tests “in the waters near Taiwan from July 21 to July 28” (Ross, 2000). On August 15, giving a five-day advance warning, China’s PLA aircraft and naval vessels “conducted live-fire tests” for ten days (Garver, 2011, p. 74). From September 15 to October 20, Beijing initiated a joint military operation involving the PLA’s land, sea, and air forces (Scobell, 2000). From October 31 to November 23, Beijing conducted an amphibious landing combat exercise on Dongshan Island off the southern coast of Fujian (Qian, 2005, p. 247).

In December 1995, the U.S. sent aircraft carrier Nimitz with its escort battle group to pass through the Taiwan Strait to remind China that the U.S.’s interest was to resolve the Taiwan issue by peaceful means (Hickey, 1998). On March 10, 1996, U.S. Secretary of Defence William J.
Perry, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Director of Central Intelligence John Deutch, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, and General John Shalikashvili held a meeting and agreed to dispatch two carrier battle groups to the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait (Mann, 2000, pp. 336-337). Then “Perry ordered the Independence battle group from Okinawa to the waters east of Taiwan and the Nimitz carrier group from the Persian Gulf to the Philippine Sea, which would allow it to join the Independence on short notice” (Ross, 2000). The U.S. carrier deployment was its largest naval activity in the Asia-Pacific region after the Vietnam War (Zhao, 1999, p. 1). The tension across the Taiwan Strait rose drastically as if war were imminent.

**The Influence of Strategic Culture**

This section mainly discusses the influence of strategic culture on China’s efforts to settle its disputes with the United States. When China established diplomatic relations with the United States in 1979, the two sides established norms and principles to regulate their behaviour on the Taiwan issue. According to the Joint Communiqué of the People’s Republic of China and the United States on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, “the government of the United States recognizes the government of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is part of China; in this context, the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan” (Carter, 1979). This was the political basis for the correct development of Sino-US relations and the handling of the Taiwan issue. These principles could restrict the behaviour of the two nations and resolve conflicts. In other words, the Chinese government and the U.S. government had already established principles for preventing and resolving their conflicts on the Taiwan issue.

China worked for a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue. China issued “the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan” on January 1, 1979, which promulgated a fundamental policy of striving
for a peaceful reunification of the motherland (Xie, 2009, p. 366). The United States’ granting a visa to Lee Teng-hui “totally contravened the fundamental principles” established by the two countries (Garver, 2011, p. 71). The actions of the United States triggered strong protests from China. Lee’s speech further exacerbated the tension. The Taiwan issue is related to China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the great cause of the peaceful reunification of the Chinese nation. “On this major issue of principle involving China’s fundamental interests, China’s position is always firm; any attempt to create two Chinas or ‘one China and one Taiwan’ is absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese people” (People’s Daily, 1954).

Taiwan’s recovery has long been a core issue on the Chinese political agenda (Garver, 2011, p. 51). National reunification and territory integrity are a dream cherished by all Chinese people. The Chinese government and its people could not tolerate Lee Teng-hui or anyone pursuing Taiwan’s independence. Additionally, in 1992, the Bush government violated the pledge made in the 1982 Sino-America Joint Communiqué to reduce arms sales to Taiwan, selling 150 F-16 warplanes to Taiwan (Xie, 2009, pp. 497-498). In 1994, the Clinton administration made the Taiwan Policy Review revise its rules regarding its “unofficial” treatment of “diplomats” from Taiwan (Ross, 2000). Lee’s actions and America’s intervention undermined China’s sovereignty, identity, dignity, and great cause of peaceful reunification, which recalled painful memories and the heartbreak of the Chinese at the hands of the hegemony of the United States (Tan, 2006, p. 283). Besides, the one-China policy was still regarded as the keystone of the Sino-U.S. relationship (Zhou, 1998). Beijing firmly opposed any perceived deviation from this policy. Beijing stated that Washington’s behaviours had seriously violated this principle, undermining their two governments’ credibility and betraying the Chinese people (Qian, 2005).
The Taiwan issue is a matter of China’s core interest in unification, principle, pride, and dignity. Hence, Beijing adopted severe diplomatic protests, military exercises, and missile tests to respond to Lee’s visit and his pursuit of Taiwan’s independence (Ross, 2000). Beijing wanted to use its military exercises to urge Taiwan to pursue national reunification, not independence from China, and also wanted to send a message to Washington that Beijing was deadly serious about the Taiwan issue (Scobell, 2000). If necessary, it would use force to realize Taiwan’s reunification with China, with or without Washington’s intervention (Scobell, 2000). China intended to clearly express its attitude toward Taiwan that Taiwan’s independence meant war.

The Taiwan issue was and remained such a vital nationalist cause in China that the Chinese government and leaders could not appear weak on this question, as this would make them lose the trust of the Chinese people and thereby affect its political legitimacy (Shepperd, 2013, p. 72). As China’s President Jiang Zemin noted, if any Chinese leader compromised on the Taiwan issue, he would face a strong reaction from the Chinese people (Jiang, 1995, cited in Shepperd, 2013, p. 72). China’s Taiwan policy was and still is to reunify with the Mainland peacefully. However, if the military methods seemed rational and necessary to prevent Taiwan’s separation from Mainland China, the majority of the public would support a military attack on Taiwan (Zhong, Chen & Scheb, 1997).

A poll taken by Beijing residents in December 1995 showed clearly that the majority of people supported Beijing’s actions in the crisis (Zhong, Chen, & Scheb, 1997). The proposal of “ensuring a strong national defence” enjoyed a high approval rating among all the issues in evaluating government performance (Scobell, 2000). Amid the crisis, 64 per cent of the participants chose the categories of “good” or “very good” to describe the performance of the Chinese government on national defence, and if the assessment contained the option of “fair”, the
rating would increase to 95 per cent (Zhong, Chen & Scheb, 1997). The survey on public political views of Beijing residents indicated that it seemed possible that a similar support rating existed in ordinary Chinese people throughout the whole nation, which needed to be taken into consideration in handling the Taiwan issue and other issues related to China’s national unification and territorial integrity.

Although considering a military response, the Chinese government initially responded to Lee’s visit supported by the United States diplomatically to warn Washington and Taiwan to return to the right track, but they failed (Qian, 2005). Lee made a speech to promote Taiwan’s international status and indicated a preference for Taiwan’s independence, driving Beijing to take the most serious option, military operations, to prevent Taiwan’s pursuit of independence (Tucker, 2009, p. 214).

The Chinese leaders believed that every American government adopted a policy supporting the Taiwan regime to keep China off-balance; it only differed in degree and form depending on the varying historical backgrounds (Qian, 2005, p. 244). The United States wanted to play the Taiwan card to make China weak politically and economically (Qian, 2005, p. 245). Chinese officials were very clear in their minds that Taiwan could not be able to make any moves towards independence without great support from within the United States (Shepperd, 2013, p. 51). From the Chinese perspective, consistent U.S. interference in the Taiwan issue virtually interfered in China’s internal affairs, which violated its pledge to leave the resolution of the Taiwan issue by the Chinese themselves. Given Chinese experiences with the United States during its century of humiliation, Beijing regarded Washington as a hostile, hegemonic, and neo-imperialist nation (Bi, 2002). Hence, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) proposed to adopt a hardline policy toward the
United States and Taiwan. Beijing’s military stated that they should deal with the Taiwan problem with a high hand and take an intransigent attitude toward Washington’s Taiwan policy (Bi, 2002).

Nevertheless, it seemed that China did not intend to wage war and attack Taiwan. Washington believed that Beijing’s aim was not to attack Taiwan or smaller offshore islands but rather to influence Taiwan’s election and impede its pursuit of independence (Lord, 1996). Washington also thought that the Chinese government wanted to use its military operations to test how much Washington cared about Taiwan and to what extent it could defend the island (Mann, 2000, p. 334). From the perspective of the United States, Beijing’s military operations aimed at merely warning Washington and Taiwan of its serious stance, and Beijing had no intent to wage actual combat and attack Taiwan (Lord, 1996). Hence, the U.S. did not respond forcefully to the Chinese military exercise, avoiding increasing Taiwan Strait tension (Ross, 2000). The Chinese government would announce its military exercise several days in advance, including the details of form, location, and duration (Scobell, 2000). The advance notification of military operations could avoid the escalation of the situation caused by the unknown, and it seemed that China did not really want to start a war.

The Chinese government was concerned about the attitude and activities of the U.S. government to China’s military response. Washington initially “adopted a low-key posture and responded with conspicuous silence towards” China’s military activities (Ross, 2000, p. 96, 103). Christopher and Qian had a meeting in Brunei on August 1, 1995. “[C]hristopher presented Qian with a confidential letter from President Clinton to President Jiang in which Clinton wrote that the U.S. opposed Taiwan independence; did not support a policy of “two-China” or “one China and one Taiwan”; and did not support Taiwan membership in the U.N.” (Ross, 2000, p. 96). The
Chinese government believed that the U.S. did not translate its statements into actions. Hence, the Chinese did not stop military exercises.

Washington believed that China had ignored their warnings, and China’s missile tests challenged Washington’s credibility (Ross, 2000, p. 109). Washington reiterated that its interest in the Taiwan issue was and remained to resolve this problem through peaceful means. Hence, the Clinton government was suggested adopting a hardline strategy to China. For the United States, if they did not make a forceful response to China’s military exercises, Beijing would suspect Washington’s commitment to resolving the Taiwan conflict through peaceful means, which would encourage Beijing to escalate its military actions in a future confrontation, and consequently caused a far more severe Sino-U.S. crisis (Ross, 2000, p. 109). Equally significant, if Washington failed to respond to China’s military activities, Washington’s commitment to its regional allies would be doubted (Ibid.). According to Christopher, U.S. Secretary of State, the nations in the Asia-Pacific region watched the situation in the Taiwan Strait and the response of the United States; they wanted to know whether the United States could maintain the region’s peace and stability; hence, the United States must take necessary actions to ‘calm the situation’ (Christopher, 1998, p. 427).

However, China and the United States used military exercises cautiously to avoid escalation of the situation. The U.S. sent the Independence battle group and Nimitz carrier group to the vicinity of Taiwan (Ross, 2000, p. 110). However, President Clinton was worried that the conflict between the American and Chinese military would escalate into nuclear war; therefore, Clinton asked his national security assistants to prevent this situation from happening (Suettinger, 2003, p. 251). The Chinese government understood that the U.S. did not intend to start a war.
Chinese military tradition historically has taken a circumspective attitude to war affairs as a subject that required careful study (S. Wu & L. Wu, 2000, p. 3). However, in this crisis, the Chinese government’s military operations seemed inconsistent with traditional military thinking. The Chinese military tradition included many nonviolent methods such as negotiation, bribery, intimidation, subversion, mediation by a third party, splitting from authorities, and all forms of deception (Fairbank, 1979, p. 70). The last method of the Chinese military tradition was resorting to war after all the other methods failed. In traditional Chinese thinking, the best way of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting, which is generally regarded as one of the core concepts (Johnston, 1995, p. 99). The Chinese people tried to avoid actual war and used stratagems to drive an enemy to psychological submission, thereby gaining victory (Johnston, 1995, p. 99). That is to say, China’s true intention was to express its attitude on the Taiwan issue and make the United States and Taiwan return to the right track rather than wage actual war or attack Taiwan. Here, the threat of military response was a way for China to express its stance and attitude on the Taiwan issue. Moreover, the Chinese government was also cautious about military exercises and announced its exercise plan in advance to reduce the risk of military conflicts (Scobell, 2000).

Johnston argued that Chinese strategic culture was offensive. This type of strategic culture believes that “the external environment is dangerous, adversaries are dispositional threatening, and conflict is zero-sum; then this strategic culture emphasizes violent, offensive strategies before accommodationist strategies and static defence”, such as China’s Great Wall and military fortresses; then “the application of violence is ultimately necessary to deal with threats” (Johnston, 1995, p. 155). Influenced by this strategic culture, “decision-makers prefer preemptive or offensive uses of force against the enemy and achieve state security” (Johnston, 1995, p. 175). In the crisis, China indeed preemptively used a kind of military force but did not want to use military means to
resolve this crisis. China was cautious and restrained to prevent the conflict from escalating when using military methods (Scobell, 2000). Besides, Chinese traditional cultural emphasizes peace, not violence. In this crisis, China did not stop using diplomatic methods to resolve this issue. Hence, although this crisis made Chinese strategic culture resemble realpolitik, Chinese traditional culture still deeply influenced it.

The Influence of Change

The Chinese government’s policies towards Taiwan were changing along with a changing environment. In the beginning, the Chinese government’s Taiwan policy was to liberate Taiwan by force (Yang, 1996). Several years later, China’s Taiwan policy changed from military confrontation to political confrontation (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 10). In the mid-1950s, China’s Taiwan policy changed from liberation by force to peaceful liberation (Cheng, 2013). Based on the changing domestic and international situations, the Chinese government adjusted its Taiwan policy and put forward the policy of peaceful reunification (Sheng, 1998, p. 3). Then it put forward the policy of “one country, two systems” to resolve the Taiwan issue in the 1980s (Yang, 1996). Furthermore, the policy of “one country, two systems” became China’s basic policy toward Taiwan in the new era.

“[T]he United States has been intimately involved in the Taiwan issue since 1950” (Scobell, 2000). Its Taiwan policy changed due to the changing situation and greatly influenced the settlement of the Taiwan issue. Despite the United States giving many hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid to the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek’s government never provided “the effective tactics, the leadership, or the civil and official organizations to win the civil war” (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 2). As President Truman described, “we picked a bad horse” (Pike,
2010, p. 77). After the KMT’s defeat and fled to Taiwan, “the United States had already decided to wash its hands of the KMT” (Tan, 2006, p. 284).

In a report to the National Security Council from the Secretary of Defence on the strategic importance of Formosa (report number is NSC 37/3) on February 11, 1949, the Joint Chief of Staff argued that Taiwan was valuable to U.S. national security interests; hence, they would use appropriate diplomatic and economic methods to ensure a Taiwan administration friendly to the United States (Secretary of Defence, 1949). For the Americans, Taiwan could be acted as a wartime base to stage troops, carry out strategic air operations, and control shipping routes. Additionally, it could be a major source of supplying “food and other materials for Japan” (Secretary of Defence, 1949). This report clearly stated that every reasonable effort should be made to keep Taiwan in friendly hands without using military force (Secretary of Defence, 1949). In the note NSC 37/5 on supplementary measures concerning Formosa (Taiwan), it was unwise to “make any overt military commitment in Formosa” at this time, and now “units of the U.S. fleet should not be stationed at or off Formosan ports” (Executive Secretary, 1949).

A report (NSC 37/1) signed on January 19, 1949, described the American position on the Taiwan issue, arguing that given the uncertainties of the Taiwan situation, they had better keep “a wide latitude of flexibility in their position” (Department of State, 1949). On January 5, 1950, Truman announced in a news conference that “[T]he United States Government will not pursue a course that will lead to involvement in the Chinese civil conflict. Similarly, the United States Government will not provide military support or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa” (Truman, 1950). During this period, the United States’ policy toward Taiwan was neutral, and it wanted to wash its hands on the Taiwan issue. At this time, Mainland China prepared to liberate Taiwan
through force (Yang, 1996). However, the outbreak of the Korean War made U.S. compelled the U.S. change its attitude and policy on Taiwan.

As early as February 1949, the Chinese government had a plan to reunify Taiwan with the Mainland. During the meeting between Mao Zedong and Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mao talked about the Taiwan issue (Shan, 2018). He asserted that it was indisputable that Taiwan was Chinese territory, but the issue was complicated because of the United States’ intervention, which entailed more time to solve this problem (Li, 2015). On March 15, 1949, Xinhua News Agency published an article titled “The Chinese people must liberate Taiwan”, which pointed out that the Chinese people, including the people of Taiwan, would not tolerate the KMT regarding Taiwan as their last stand. The task of the Chinese people was to liberate all of China, including Taiwan (People’s Daily, 1949). The article was the first document to demonstrate that the CPC proposed to solve the Taiwan issue through military force (Yang, 1996).

In July 1949, Mao Zedong announced that they should prepare to recover Taiwan in a letter to Zhou Enlai (Shan, 2018). After that, the Chinese government made military preparations to attack Taiwan. The Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, and the United States dispatched the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait, making it difficult for the Chinese government to liberate Taiwan (He, 2002). China’s elaborate plan for attacking Taiwan that had been prepared for one year was disrupted by the United States. There were two main reasons for China to abandon attacking Taiwan. One was that China did not have the ability to compete with the United States in the Taiwan Strait at that time (Chen, 2013); the other significant consideration was that “China’s heavy industry was mainly distributed in Northeast China, close to the Korean peninsula, and the Korean War outbreak had brought great dangers to China’s strategic security on this area” (Shan,
2018). Hence, the Chinese government decided to forgo its plan of attacking Taiwan and shifted its strategic security’s attention to Northeast China (He, 2002).

In the early days of the founding of the people’s republic of China, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army had an absolute military advantage. It was feasible for the Communist Party of China to adopt a tough Taiwan policy. Besides, the U.S. government was still holding a wait-and-see attitude on the Taiwan issue at that time. A favourable international environment created conditions for the armed liberation of Taiwan. The Chinese government believed that if there were no unforeseen circumstances, Taiwan’s liberation was just around the corner (Cai, 2009). Therefore, the Chinese government formulated a policy to liberate Taiwan by force, but the subsequent outbreak of the Korean War interfered with this plan.

After the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, the United States dramatically reversed its Taiwan policy, abandoning its neutrality or “hands-off approach” (Tunsjø, 2008). The strategic importance of Taiwan had been consistently discussed within the United States government. General Douglas MacArthur, the Commander in the chief of U.S. forces, reiterated Taiwan’s significant strategic position; he pointed out that Taiwan’s eventual fate rested with the United States, and if an unfriendly power dominated Taiwan, it would be a great disaster to the U.S. (Department of State, 1976, p. 366). The United States government began to interfere with the Taiwan issue through military force. In fact, the intervention of the air and naval power of the United States created today’s problem of a divided China (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 3).

In 1954, China’s Chairman Mao Zedong thought it was their fault that they had not promptly proposed the goal of “liberating Taiwan” after the end of the Korean War, and if they did not do so now, it would be a serious political mistake (Zhang, 1996, p. 119). On July 23, 1954, the People's Daily, an official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of
China, announced that China must liberate Taiwan (cited in Xie, 2009, p. 80). At this time, the United States and its allies adopted the policy of containment and isolation toward China, and the United Nations would not accept China as a member (Xie, 2009, pp. 105-106). The Chinese government had no forum to express its position on the Taiwan issue. In the absence of a better choice, China had to resort to the limited military method of shelling Jinmen (Quemoy Island) to demonstrate its attitude to the international community (He, 2002). Jinmen has two groups of islands controlled by Taiwan and is quite close to Xiamen, a southeastern coastal city of China.

China’s military behaviours caused the United States to proceed with “signing the mutual defence pact with Taiwan” (Tan, 2006, p. 285). The aim of this treaty was to protect Taiwan from attack by Mainland China. By signing the security pact with Taiwan, the United States indicated that an attack on Taiwan would “result in all U.S. forces necessary for the defence of that territory” (Glennon, Mabon, & Schwar, 1985, p. 706). From the American perspective, signing a security pact with Taiwan might not only offset the effects of the contemplated action in the U.N. but also might be the best way to deter a Communist attack against Taiwan (Glennon, Mabon & Schwar, 1985, p. 706).

With the relaxation of the Far East situation, a new situation emerged on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in which “liberation struggles were the mainstay, and military confrontation was the supplement” (Cai, 2009). After the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement and the Vietnam Ceasefire Agreement, the situation in the Far East eased, and the Chinese government realised that Taiwan’s liberation would be a long-term and complex task (Cai, 2009). After the war, China badly needed a peaceful and stable environment to develop its economy (Yang, 1996). As a result, the Chinese government began to adjust its Taiwan policy, seeking a new way to resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully.
In May 1955, Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai first clearly advocated that the Chinese government and its people were willing to strive for a peaceful solution to the Taiwan issue under certain conditions (Chen, 2013). The statement indicated that the Chinese government was making a major adjustment to “Taiwan’s policy from military confrontation to political confrontation” (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 10). At this time, the Chinese government had taken the liberation of Taiwan as a long-term strategic aim. Moreover, it changed from a mere military operation to a comprehensive political task in which political confrontation became prominent, and military confrontation eased (Cai, 2009).

On May 22, 1960, the CPC proposed new guidelines regarding Taiwan. They thought that it was better to leave Taiwan in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek and his son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, rather than in the Americans’ hands; they could wait for Chiang Kai-shek to negotiate the Taiwan issue, and their generation did not need to solve the Taiwan problem; they could leave this problem for the next generation to resolve (Yang, 1996). Despite Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-Kuo having different perceptions than the CPC leaders on the “One China” policy, they always “insisted upon the policy of ‘One China’ and opposed any attempt to make Taiwan independent” (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 11).

On June 13, 1961, Mao Zedong stated that China had allowed Taiwan to maintain its existing social system after its return during his talk with Bung Sukarno, the president of Indonesia (He, 2002). Later, Zhou Enlai announced a general plan for negotiation with Chiang on the Taiwan issue, named “one principle and four points” (Yi mu si gang), and “the one principle was that Taiwan must return to China” (Yang, 1996). The four points were: (1) After Taiwan’s return, the central government in Beijing would take over diplomatic affairs, but other affairs, including local government affairs, military affairs, and personnel arrangement would be conducted by Chiang
Kai-shek; (2) The central government would provide Taiwan with financial support for any insufficient funds of the government, army, and economy; (3) Taiwan’s social reform could not be carried out immediately and could wait till the right conditions and be approved by Chiang Kai-shek; (4) Each side should refrain from any behaviour harmful to the other side’s unity (Sheng, 1998, p. 3). The plan of “one principle and four points” actually was the seed of the principle of “one country, two systems”, which was proposed and publicly raised by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s.

In the late 1960s, the ideological differences, clashes of national interests, and mutual mistrust between the Soviet Union and China made the Sino-Soviet relations split, making the United States and China share a common interest in countering the Soviet Union; thus, the two erstwhile adversaries began a surprising rapprochement (Tan, 2006, p. 286). After careful preparation by Henry Kissinger, National Security Assistant, President Nixon made his groundbreaking visit to Beijing in February 1972.

After the rapprochement of the 1970s, the United States and China successfully signed three joint declarations that guided the U.S. policy toward Taiwan (Qian, 2005). According to the Joint U.S.-China Communiqué signed on February 28, 1972, the United States acknowledged that all Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait belonged to China and that Taiwan was a part of China; the United States reaffirmed their interests in resolving the Taiwan issue with the Chinese themselves through peaceful means, and it affirmed that its ultimate objective was to withdraw all military installations and U.S. forces from Taiwan (Myers & Zhang, 2006, pp. 126-127). In the Joint Communiqué on Establishment of U.S.-PRC Diplomatic Relations signed on January 1, 1979, the United States acknowledged China’s position on the Taiwan issue that there is one China. The two countries expressed their wishes to “reduce the danger of international military conflict”
(Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 128). In the U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqué signed on August 17, 1982, the United States government reiterated that they had “no intention of infringing on Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, or interfering in China’s internal affairs, or pursuing a policy of ‘two Chinas’ or ‘One China, one Taiwan’” (Myers & Zhang, 2006, p. 144). All three joint declarations between the two countries acknowledged the principle of “One China”, and these three communiqués were regarded as the most important historical documents in resolving the Taiwan issue.

The United States and China formally established diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979. On the same day, the U.S. notified Taiwan that their diplomatic relations were being terminated (Tan, 2006, p. 287). Also, their Mutual Defence Treaty was being terminated following the provisions of the U.S.-China Communiqué, and the United States also pointed out that they would withdraw their remaining military installations from Taiwan within four months (National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, 1979, p. 2266). This change in the relationship between China and the United States dealt Taiwan a devastating blow. However, the United States agreed to maintain an unofficial relationship with Taiwan (Hickey, 1998).

Following the changes in Sino-US relations and China’s domestic focus on economic development, the Chinese government again adjusted its Taiwan policy (Chen, 2013). In December 1978, CPC leaders no longer reiterated liberating Taiwan through military force and formulated a new policy of “peaceful reunification”; subsequently, the communists “launched a series of peaceful moves toward Taiwan” (Sheng, 1998, p. 3). On January 1, 1979, the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress publicly sent “A Message to Taiwan Compatriots” to announce achieving China’s reunification through peaceful negotiations (Chen, 2013). Then, on January 30, 1979, during Deng Xiaoping’s visit to the U.S., he made a clear
statement that Beijing would not use the phrase “liberating Taiwan”; as long as Taiwan returned to China, they would respect Taiwan’s reality and its existing system (Yang, 1996). On January 26, 1983, Deng Xiaoping advanced a six-point proposal to solve the Taiwan issue, the core content of which was that after Taiwan’s return to China, it would enjoy a high degree of autonomy, and Taiwan could maintain its existing political, social, and economic system, and continue their way of life unchanged (Chen, 2013).

President Jiang Zemin, the third generation of China’s leadership, announced that China would adopt the policies of peaceful reunification and “one country, two systems” to resolve the Taiwan issue in his speech celebrating China’s national independence on September 30, 1989 (Yang, 1996). From then on, the following generations of China’s leadership have insisted on this policy and guideline to handle the Taiwan issue. Beijing believes that the best way to achieve cross-strait reunification is to use peaceful means and avoid military force. However, the Taiwan issue is a complicated question, involving the United States’ intervention and the increase of “Taiwan independence” secessionist forces. Hence, Beijing has pointed out that it will adopt a non-peaceful approach, if necessary, along with other measures to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this crisis, the Chinese government initially preferred to use diplomatic methods; however, if diplomatic methods failed, China would choose to use military methods.

In 1995, Jiang Zemin reemphasized the content of “peaceful reunification” when he delivered a speech celebrating the Chinese New Year. However, in this crisis, the Chinese government changed its policy from peaceful reunification to military confrontation. Some analysts, principally Western specialists, believed that China’s hardline had a lot to do with its domestic politics (You, 1999, p. 77). They argued that members in the Politburo Standing
Committee of China were competing to appear hawkish toward the United States and Taiwan “at the final stage of power transfer from Deng Xiaoping” (Ibid.). Some criticized Jiang Zemin “for his softness, which reportedly encouraged Lee Teng-hui to embark on a dangerous path” (Ibid.). This analysis exaggerated the divisive nature of the Taiwan question in Chinese elite politics. According to You Ji, Taiwan’s pursuit of independence was a factor that helped China’s “top civilian and military leaders agree to a common response rather than divide them” (You, 1999, p. 77).

Beijing’s military response to Lee’s activities was a result of accumulated disappointment and “frustration over Taiwan’s political development” in the early 1990s, including the change in Lee’s attitude toward the reunification, the development of independence movement, the pursuit of Taiwan’s international status, and foreign intervention (Zhao, 1999, p. 99). Prior to the military operations in July 1995, China argued that Taiwan made a three-step plan for achieving its independence: “constitutional reform, direct presidential elections, and striving for the recognition of the international community as an independent political entity” (Zhao, 1999, p. 7). At that time, Beijing suspected that Washington wanted to change its Taiwan policy and attempted to sabotage China’s peaceful reunification and let China remain in a state of long-term split (Zhao, 1999, p. 119). From the perspective of Beijing, “after the end of the cold war, the structural support of the strategic relationship between Washington and Beijing was removed, and their relations became disoriented” (Zhao, 1999, p. 118). Hence, Beijing changed its policy and made a military response due to changes in Taiwan’s and international situation.

Moreover, Chinese leaders Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Li Peng are “all nationalists with a strong belief in their definition of national sovereignty and territorial integrity” (You, 1999, p. 85). They shared a similar stance concerning Taiwan, “if peaceful overtures can no longer hold
back the slide toward independence, then let us try the hard way” (You, 1999, pp. 84-85). Although China was reluctant to enter a war, it had to fight if Taiwan declared independence.

On March 23, 1996, Lee Teng-hui won the election and was re-elected as the top leader in Taiwan. The situation of the Taiwan strait calmed down after the dust settled of the election. Two days later, the Chinese government concluded its military exercises (Hickey, 1999, p. 280). In response, the United States redirected its two carrier battle groups away from Taiwan island.

**The Influence of Dichotomy**

The Chinese government is good at distinguishing the government from its people when dealing with disputes. China responded to this Taiwan crisis with military means, but these measures are aimed at Taiwan’s government working for independence and supporting Taiwan’s actions, not against Taiwan’s people. As Chinese President Jiang Zemin said, “we do not promise to renounce the use of force; we are definitely not targeting our compatriots in Taiwan but targeting foreign forces’ attempts to interfere in China’s reunification and engage in Taiwan’s independence” (Jiang, 1995). The Chinese government has distinguished the separatist forces in Taiwan from compatriots in Taiwan. The government believed that Taiwan compatriots were all Chinese, brothers and sisters of flesh and blood. To strengthen ties with Taiwanese compatriots, “we welcome all parties and people from all walks of life in Taiwan to exchange views with us on cross-strait relations and peaceful reunification and welcome them to visit the Mainland” (Jiang, 1995). The Mainland opposed the Taiwanese separatists while striving to actively wins over Taiwan’s people.

Although China made a military response to the United States and the Taiwanese government during this crisis, economic and cultural exchanges between the two sides of the strait did not stop (Hua, 1996). According to relevant data, indirect trade volume between the two sides of the strait increased yearly, reaching 20 billion U.S. dollars in 1995; Taiwanese investment in the mainland
continued, and by the end of 1995, the total number of investment projects reached 30,000; the investment area had expanded, and the scale of investment had also increased; the field of economic cooperation had been continuously grown, and some preliminary agreements had been reached in joint oil exploration and information and communication standardization. By 1995, Taiwanese businesspeople had applied for more than 20,700 patents on the Mainland (Hua, 1996).

More than 8.2 million cross-strait personnel exchanges had been exchanged, among which nearly 8.1 million Taiwan compatriots had gone to the mainland (Hua, 1996). This shows the attitude of the Chinese government, welcoming people from Taiwan to the mainland. The number of cross-strait exchanges continued to increase; in 1995, the mainland went to Taiwan for 774 project exchanges with 5139 people (Hua, 1996). The scope of exchanges had been fully expanded in the fields of culture, education, science and technology, sports, health, news, film and television, law, religion, ethnicity, tourism, transportation, economy, finance, youth, and social science (Hua, 1996). These exchanges enabled people on both sides to increase their understanding and sentiment, which was conducive to peaceful reunification. The Chinese government adopted hardline measures against the Taiwan authorities to stop them from pursuing Taiwan independence, while it took a soft policy to Taiwan’s people to win their support for reunification.

The Influence of Relationality

Although Beijing has always claimed that the issue of Taiwan is a China’s internal matter that should be resolved by the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, it has been fully aware that the U.S. is a crucial factor in settling the Taiwan issue (Wang, 2013, p. 205). The United States’ Taiwan policy has a significant impact on the Taiwan issue and the relationship between U.S. and China. The Chinese government believed that without the help of the United States, Taiwan could “not achieve any gains in international politics and Taiwan independence would not go anywhere”
The resolution of the 1995-1996 Taiwan crisis was to deal with China and the United States’ relationship on the Taiwan issue. The relationship between the two countries deteriorated because the United States underestimated the importance of the Taiwan issue to China (Xie, 2009, p. 498). Taiwan is an important “issue of unsolved sovereignty and the most critical consideration in China’s diplomatic policy” (Zhao, 1999, p. 99).

In Chinese thinking, good relations between China and the United States has played an important role in resolving the Taiwan issue and maintaining stability in the Taiwan Strait. Hence, Chinese leaders have wanted to maintain stable and friendly relations with the United States. However, in this crisis, the United States and China had to adopt a hardline policy with each other, and their bilateral relations had deteriorated accordingly (Scobell, 2000). Initially, the Clinton administration responded to the crisis with a low-key posture (Ross, 2000). The first round of China’s military exercises in 1995 made the officials of the White House realize that they had contributed to the Sino-U.S. conflict by failing to maintain its pledges to China on the Taiwan issue; thus, they did not want to exacerbate tensions in the Taiwan Strait by overreacting to China’s military exercise, and Washington also wanted to send a message to Taiwan that their actions provoking China were not free of cost but would have consequences (Ross, 2000, p. 104).

During the crisis, the two countries kept in consistent contact and negotiated to restore their relations and solve their conflicts. They held meetings of high-ranking officials at the vice-ministerial level or above (Qian, 2005, p. 250). On October 24, 1995, after attending the U.N.’s fiftieth anniversary, the presidents of the two states, Jiang Zemin and William Jefferson Clinton, held a formal conference in New York (Ross, 2000). This meeting paved the way for restoring and developing bilateral relations. In the meeting, Clinton stated that the American government strictly observed the three U.S.-China Joint Communiqué, recognizing that there was only one China,
that Taiwan was part of China, and that the government of the People's Republic of China was the sole legal government of China (Qian, 2005, p.250). After the conference, the two nations resumed their dialogue and held negotiations on other bilateral issues (Ross, 2000).

This crisis demonstrated that the two countries did not manage their relations well on the Taiwan issue, which had led to military confrontation. However, this crisis made the two countries reach a common understanding that maintaining a constructive relationship between the two parties would benefit their long-term interests (Qian, 2005; Scobell, 2000). As discussed, the two nations maintained their contact and negotiations throughout the crisis, working hard to repair their bilateral relations (Ross, 2000).

In November 1996, President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin held a meeting in Manila, at which they agreed to exchange states visits in 1997 and 1998 (Ross, 2000). During the state visits, the two leaders discussed the Taiwan issue (Qian, 2005). In 1998, President Clinton paid a state visit to Beijing and publicly stated America’s “three noes” policy toward Taiwan. The “three noes” were: Washington would resist or oppose Taiwan’s independence, would not support the policy of “two Chinas, or one China, one Taiwan”, and would not support Taiwan’s membership in the U.N. (Mann, 2000, p. 330). After these Sino-U.S. summits at the state level, the relationship between China and the United States began to develop comparatively smoothly and even improved in Clinton’s second term (Qian, 2005, p. 251).

Moreover, the United States proposed to resume the political dialogue between Beijing and Taiwan to reduce military conflict in the Taiwan Strait. China’s opposition to Lee’s pursuit of Taiwan independence and the U.S. support for Lee’s policy led to the crisis. Therefore, it was also important to properly handle the relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China. The Chinese government insisted on realizing its unification with Taiwan. Then, they could handle their
relationship in the framework of “one country, two systems”. The Chinese central government requires that “Taiwan would act as a part of China; at the same time diplomacy and national defence could only be undertaken by the central government, and the central government will not send troops and administrative personnel to Taiwan” (Xie, 2009, p. 499).

The Influence of Benevolence

Successive Chinese leaders have always emphasized placing hope in the Taiwanese and introduced a series of measures to benefit Taiwanese compatriots and win the hearts of the people. On January 1, 1979, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China issued “A Message to Compatriots in Taiwan”, which put forward the political proposition that “we place our hopes on the 17 million Taiwanese people, and we also place our hopes on the Taiwanese authorities” (Taiwan Affairs of the State Council of China, 2011, p. 30). On January 30, 1995, on behalf of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government, Jiang Zemin delivered an important speech entitled “Continue to strive to promote the reunification of the motherland” and put forward an eight-point proposal on promoting the peaceful reunification of the motherland (He, 2002). These proposals proceeded from the interests of Taiwan’s people, answered their concerns, and appeased their worries.

Jiang Zemin pointed out in the eight proposals that “the twenty-one million Taiwan compatriots are all Chinese, and they must fully respect the lifestyle of Taiwan compatriots and their desire to be their country’s masters and protect all their legitimate rights and interests” (China Daily, 2009). Jiang Zeming also pointed out that “we should try our best to achieve China’s reunification peacefully since Chinese should not fight Chinese; we do not promise not to use force, if used, it was not against Taiwan compatriots, but against the foreign forces’ attempts to interfere in China’s reunification and engage in Taiwan’s independence” (China Daily, 2009). However,
putting hope on the Taiwanese people and striving for the Taiwanese people’s hearts must stick to the bottom line: to never allow division of China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese government resolutely opposed any statement and action leading to Taiwan’s independence (China Daily, 2009).

Jiang Zemin stated that “we must listen to the opinions and demands of Taiwan compatriots, care about and take care of their interests, and help them solve their difficulties as much as possible” (Jiang, 1995). Considering the actual interests of Taiwan’s compatriots, economic ties with Taiwan had not been broken after this crisis, as mentioned in the previous section. The Chinese government “provided preferential treatment toward Taiwanese investment and tolerated a huge trade deficit with Taiwan: about $14.8 billion in 1995, which far exceeded Taiwan’s trade surplus with the United States” (Zhao, 1999, p. 104). The Chinese government understood the Taiwanese people’s concerns about their future, thus proposing using the “one country, two systems” policy to resolve the Taiwan issue, by which the Taiwanese people would enjoy a high degree of autonomy and maintain their current political, social, and economic system. All the people wanted to live in a peaceful environment, including the Taiwanese, so China preferred to use a peaceful method to realize reunification. However, the prerequisite for these policies and plans was that the Taiwanese people would not pursue Taiwan’s independence.

The Influence of Harmony

The concept of harmony requires the Chinese people to maintain peaceful relations with other states and resolve disputes peacefully. The Taiwan crisis had led to a military conflict between China and the United States, in which was seemed the war to be approaching. Although Washington and Beijing almost risked open conflict to solve their disputes on the Taiwan issue, the two countries’ first choice was to use diplomatic means and maintained their diplomatic
contacts and negotiations throughout the crisis. On the second day after the United States announced the granting of Lee Teng-hui’s visa, the Chinese government staged a diplomatic protest and suspended and cancelled China’s diplomatic and military visits to the United States (People’s Daily, 1995). In fact, before the U.S. formally granted Lee’s visa, China held consultations with the United States on this issue and argued that the granting of Lee’s visa violated the three Sino-US joint communiqués, undermining the cause of reunification (Qian, 2005). Later, the U.S. government granted Lee’s visa, which made China doubt the intentions of the United States. The Chinese government suspected that the U.S. might use the “Taiwan card” to contain China (Zhao, 1999, p. 118).

Regarding Lee Teng-hui’s visit, the United States and China had been communicating through diplomatic channels. However, Lee’s speech at Cornell University on June 9, 1995, completely changed the situation (Tucker, 2009, p. 214). In his remarks, Lee mentioned the “Republic of China” and the “Republic of China on Taiwan” 16 times but did not mention China once; he publicly advocated that the most important thing for Taiwan at present was to maintain its “own sovereignty” (Xu & He, 1995). Lee expressed that he wanted to promote Taiwan’s independence. Therefore, the Chinese government believed that Lee’s visit was entirely purposeful and planned, advocating political actions for two Chinas, or “one China one Taiwan” (Xu & He, 1995).

Although China had adopted military means to deal with the crisis, the diplomatic ties between China and the United States had not been broken. Instead, they had continuously resolved the problem and repaired Sino-U.S. relations through diplomatic means. On July 4, 1995, Chinese Premier Li Peng met with former U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger and the U.S.-China Association in Beijing to discuss relevant issues (People’s Daily, 1995). It is worth mentioning that Henry
Kissinger was an old friend of the Chinese and played an important role in establishing diplomatic relations between the United States and China. According to the agreement of the foreign ministers of China and the United States when they met in Brunei on August 1, 1995, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and the U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Tartaf held consultations in Beijing from August 26 to 27. During the talks, the main topic of discussion was eliminating the serious consequences of Lee’s visit to the United States for Sino-U.S. relations and returning the relations between the two states to a normal track (People’s Daily, 1995). Through continuous communication and exchanges between China and the United States, their relations gradually recovered.

Maintaining peace and stability between China and the United States was beneficial to the peoples’ interests in both nations. The best solution to the Taiwan issue is peaceful reunification, which also conforms to the fundamental interests of the Mainland and the people of Taiwan. China has been patient regarding Taiwan’s return, knowing that it would be a long-term process. Regarding the deadline for Taiwan’s return, I have discussed this with Su Hao, a distinguished professor at China Foreign Affairs University. The Chinese people usually hold large-scale celebrations on important anniversary days; so, I wondered if China plans to resolve the Taiwan issue before the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 2049. Su argued that,

We do not know how long it will be to resolve the Taiwan issue. There are two ways to resolve the Taiwan issue: force and the other is the peaceful method. We do not want to use force to resolve it. It is unthinkable to use force to resolve the Taiwan issue; hence we cannot set a deadline for resolving this issue. Only by using force can we have a deadline. (personal communication, January 7, 2020).
The Chinese government insists on peacefully resolving the Taiwan issue. There is no deadline for this issue, and China still needs a long time to arrive at a solution.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has mainly investigated the Taiwan Crisis between the United States and China from 1995 to 1996 within the framework of Chinese traditional culture. From the perspective of Chinese philosophical thought, following the changing domestic and international environment, the Chinese government has continuously adjusted its Taiwan policy, gradually moving from a policy of liberating Taiwan by force to a policy of peaceful reunification and “one country, two systems” (Chen, 2013). In Chinese thinking, they would like to establish constructive relations with the United States, which benefits resolving disputes and conflicts. Hence, the two countries have maintained contact continuously during this crisis.

When disputes and conflicts occur, the Chinese prefer to resolve them based on previously established principles and norms. The United States and China have established principles to deal with the Taiwan issue through the three joint declarations (Qian, 2005). However, the Chinese government believed that the United States violated the Taiwan issue’s principles, and the crisis occurred (Ross, 2000). In the beginning, the two sides used diplomatic methods; however, they did not resolve the conflict. For the Chinese people, the Taiwan issue is related to sovereignty, territorial integrity, and their states’ reputation. If necessary, they have chosen military means to resolve this issue (Scobell, 2000). China’s military response did not mean to wage actual war or attack Taiwan, but rather that they wanted to express their serious attitude and stance on the Taiwan issue. The Chinese government still insists that the best way of resolving the Taiwan issue is by peaceful methods. Although China’s military response in this crisis made its strategic culture take
on some features of realpolitik, this type of strategic culture was different from Johnston’s realpolitik because it has been deeply influenced by Chinese philosophical thought.

The Chinese government proposes to place its hope in the Taiwanese people and strive to win their hearts through caring about their interests and concerns. Nevertheless, the prerequisite for doing this is that Taiwan does not pursue independence. The 1995-1996 confrontation shows that it is very easy to risk an open conflict between the two great powers if their interests in the Taiwan issue are not managed properly (Ross, 2000). Garver pointed out that great powers would not “enter into confrontations with one another” easily; if they did or had the willingness to do so, it meant that it was “weighty enough to risk war to protect their interests” (Garver, 2011, p. 4).

As Kissinger observed, “whatever the cost, China will fight rather than give up what is considered Chinese territory” (Kissinger, 1996). The Chinese leaders gain a high support rate to use necessary methods to protect their national sovereignty and unification, even resulting in military conflict. The United States and China remain to handle the problem of Taiwan well into the coming years. When dealing with the Taiwan issue, Washington and Beijing should take cautious attitudes and moves to avoid open conflicts or even war, which is in line with the basic interests of the two nations.
Chapter 8

Conclusion

This thesis uses an alternative approach to analyze China’s diplomatic behaviour, drawing from Chinese philosophy and Chinese strategic culture. The central argument of the thesis is that China pursues its aims in a manner that is constructed with and framed by a unique cultural and philosophical culture. This thesis examines this argument with three case studies: the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, the negotiations over the return of Hong Kong between the United Kingdom and China, and the Taiwan Strait crisis between the United States and China of 1995-1996. This thesis’s framework of cultural factors helps us understand that cultural factors matter in China’s diplomacy.

Although culture plays a role in diplomacy, we do not know how culture matters. Johnston has stated that China’s strategic culture is Realpolitik, but he did not explore its role in China’s diplomacy. When restoring its relations with Japan, China used peaceful methods, including negotiations, trade, and exchange programs. China’s strategic preference was still peaceful negotiations when resolving the Hong Kong issue with the United Kingdom. However, China’s attitude on this issue was tough. If Hong Kong could not be recovered peacefully, the Chinese government was prepared to recover it by force. When dealing with the Taiwan strait crisis with the United States, China initially preferred to use diplomatic methods until they failed. At that point, the Chinese government resorted used limited military engagement. China did not intend to wage a real war, so it was cautious about its military methods, preventing the escalation of the conflict. In fact, before the crisis, the Chinese government continued to have diplomatic dialogues...
with the U.S. government to prevent the occurrence of conflicts. The outcomes demonstrate that China’s strategic preference is Realpolitik when it comes to sovereignty and territorial integrity. In other words, if peaceful means fail to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, China will use force.

China’s diplomatic culture is founded on dichotomy, change, relationality, benevolence, and harmony. The Chinese government is good at distinguishing the government from its people. Disputes between governments are not disputes between people. China’s diplomatic policies are constantly adjusted to accommodate situational and environmental changes. China’s relationship with other countries is not static. It is possible to change the nature of the relationship from a hostile relationship to a friendly one. The Chinese government attempts to maintain peaceful relations and resolve the dispute peacefully with other countries.

This thesis explores the role of Chinese cultural factors in the practice of China’s diplomacy. It, therefore, contributes to an expanded, non-Western understanding of China’s diplomatic culture. Given China’s rise as a significant global power, understanding the culture of Chinese diplomatic practice is essential to pursue a non-confrontational form of foreign policy.

**Theoretical and empirical implications**

Theoretically, this thesis studies China’s diplomacy in a new cultural framework. China’s diplomatic policies, proposals and actions reflect Chinese traditional culture but do not explicitly explain how culture affects diplomatic policies. By centering on traditional Chinese culture, this thesis explains how the Chinese government do diplomacy with material and ideational characteristics. By applying the theoretical framework oriented around cultural factors to China’s diplomatic practice, the thesis has demonstrated the underlying logic of China’s diplomatic thinking and practice. The idea that cultural factors influence China’s diplomatic activities
supplements the extant literature of China’s diplomacy and diplomacy in offering the conceptual language to capture what China does in international politics and the kinds of results their practice could achieve.

As the thesis has demonstrated, cultural factors, intersubjective interactions and specific domestic and international contexts have affected China’s diplomatic behaviours. When formulating its diplomatic policy, China must consider its international and domestic environment. At the same time, its diplomatic policy will be constantly modified in response to changes in the environment. For example, in the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, Sino-U.S. relations and the domestic situations in Japan are important factors. The Chinese government began to pursue the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in the mid-1950s, but it encountered structural obstacles in the Cold War politics of the United States and the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1960s, the Sino-Soviet alliance broke down because of their armed conflict. China sought to improve Sino-U.S. relations. At the same time, the U.S. leaders judged that they should improve U.S.-China relations as well. The renewed contact between China and the United States promoted the normalization of China-Japanese diplomatic relations. The analysis of this thesis has also implied the relations between ideational and material aspects of China’s diplomatic practice. On the one hand, China’s diplomacy is designed to realize its national interests and safeguard its national security. On the other hand, cultural factors shape the thinking and practice of the Chinese government on how to realize their national interests and protect their national security.

The case studies suggest the distinction between China and other countries (Japan, the U.K., and the U.S.) in terms of thinking. In the negotiations between China and the U.K. on the Hong Kong issue, the British government believed that the most important goal was maintaining Hong
Kong’s stability and prosperity. Due to the important role of Hong Kong in Mainland China’s development, the British proposed that it would accept China’s claims to sovereignty over all Hong Kong, but China should allow Britain to continue to rule Hong Kong after July 1, 1997. The British persuaded the Chinese leaders that Hong Kong’s prosperity and businessmen’s confidence were linked to their administration. The Chinese government rejected this proposal and addressed that China had no room for a maneuver on sovereignty. They stated that sovereignty was topped for China, and the question of maintaining Hong Kong’s stability and prosperity was in the second place. This disagreement once caused a deadlock in the negotiations.

The United States believed that they had responsibilities for making Taiwanese people enjoy a peaceful life. Based on its interaction experience with communism (mainly the Soviet Union and China), the United States’ perceptions of China were and might remain evil. In this crisis, Washington regarded Beijing as an aggressive and irresponsible nation, regarded Taiwan as the victim. Hence it was a ‘defender’ or ‘peacekeeper’ to prevent democratic and progressive Taiwan from ruling by Communist China. While the Chinese people believed that each American government adopted the policy that supported the Taiwan regime to sustain China off-balance, it differed in degree and form depending on the varying historical backgrounds. The United States wanted to play the Taiwan card to make China weak politically and economically. From the Chinese perspective, the U.S. consistently interference in the Taiwan issue virtually interfered in China’s internal affairs, which was violated its pledge on resolving the Taiwan issue by the Chinese themselves. Given Chinese contact experiences with the United States during its century of humiliation, Beijing regarded Washington as a hostile, hegemonic, and neo-imperialist nation. The different ways of thinking between the United States and China increased the difficulty of resolving problems and reaching consensus.
To handle foreign affairs with the Chinese government, Western leaders and politicians should consider the cultural factor, making them have a reasonable prediction and better understanding of China’s diplomatic behaviours. The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis demonstrates the damage caused by misunderstandings between the United States and China. The Taiwan issue has been and will remain the most important and sensitive question in Sino-U.S. relations for years to come. The 1995-1996 military actions between Washington and Beijing made the Taiwan Strait one of the world’s most dangerous places. The confrontation indicated that the two nuclear powers had a high possibility to go to war over Taiwan. A war would be disastrous to world peace, prosperity, security, and stability. As stated earlier, the Chinese government will take any necessary methods, including military force, to achieve its reunification. By the same token, China should not underestimate the possibility of America’s military involvement. Hence, the two nations should take cautious moves to deal with this issue. Any misunderstanding, miscalculation, or even accident can lead the two nations to open conflicts or war.

Kissinger stated that Washington and Beijing should “seek to define the sphere in which their peaceful competition is circumscribed; if that is managed wisely, military confrontation can be avoided; if not, escalating tension is inevitable” (Kissinger, 2012, p. 48). If Washington and Beijing peacefully resolve the Taiwan issue, they can avoid a military confrontation; if they fail, tensions in the Strait will rise. Washington and Beijing should be careful to avoid future conflicts or wars rather than enhance their military preparations for war. However, the uncertainty and instability of the relationships between Beijing and Washington are deteriorating because of Taiwan. Washington and Beijing do not trust each other. The task of diplomacy is to discover the space for peaceful competition between the two countries and expand the space if possible. If it is difficult for the two countries to understand each other well originated from their differences of
culture, economic system, and political system, at least they should know where the other’s bottom line is.

Strategic culture largely determines a country’s strategic choices. Strategic culture can be based on conflict or cooperation. China’s strategic culture had evolved from a strategic conflict culture to a cooperative strategic culture. Before the reform and opening up in 1978, the Chinese government assumed that war was inevitable and that it was impossible to change its enemies’ nature and strategic intentions (Qin, 2005b, p. 353). When conflict with the enemies, they emphasized the necessity of carrying out the struggle to the end and the complete elimination of the enemies. Every war had to end with the annihilation of the other side. After World War II, China was not recognized by the Western-dominated international community and was threatened by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. These core elements of strategic culture had been strengthened in their interaction with the environment. Therefore, China’s preparation for a full-scale war has not weakened since World War II. China’s strategic culture is characterized by struggle, while cooperation is the non-dominant aspect. During this period, China had many conflicts with other countries, such as the Korean War in 1950, the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962, and the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969.

At the end of the 1970s, China’s focus shifted from domestic and international struggle to economic construction. At the same time, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping initially suggested postponing war for at least a decade. Later, the Chinese government proposed that world peace was possible. Deng Xiaoping announced that peace and development were the two major themes of the times. By 1987, Deng made it clear that war could be avoided. The Chinese now strived to cooperate with the opponents and to handle differences through dialogue. China regarded itself as
an important country and participant in international affairs. China’s diplomacy can be understood in relation to the national and international environment.

The potential weaknesses of the thesis

Most international relations theories are single-level theories, but the factors influencing diplomacy are both domestic and international. A country’s diplomatic policy is affected by factors such as the personality characteristics of its leader, the cognition of the environment, the processing of information, the government’s mechanism and decision-making process, the domestic political and economic situation, the balance of international power, and the external actors’ possible reactions. It is necessary to investigate the relationship among these and other variables and organically integrate them into a logical system.

However, researchers usually concentrate on the impact of a specific influencing factor or independent variable on the policy decision-making process and its outcomes when studying the specific diplomatic policy, which makes the study have certain limitations. In actual diplomatic policy research, researchers cannot describe every detail in the process of the incident. Researchers usually find out the determinant factors behind the event and use relevant evidence and materials to explore the relationship between these factors and the outcomes of the policy.

This thesis uses the cultural factor to analyze China’s diplomatic practice, so its outcomes are limited. This thesis overemphasized the role of culture on the influence of cultural factors on diplomacy. Although culture influences diplomacy and diplomatic practice, we understand that cultural factors are not the main or the only determinants of a country’s diplomacy. Culture does not determine the practice or outcome of diplomatic practice, but no explanation is complete without understanding its role.
In interpersonal communication and diplomatic behaviour, the Chinese government emphasizes face and relationship. Face-saving sometimes harms China’s foreign contacts. For example, during the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and President Clinton negotiated Taiwan’s leader Lee Teng-hui’s visit to the United States. The U.S. stated that issuing a visa for Lee’s visit would not accord with unofficial American relations with Taiwan. Several days after their conversation, the United States lost its words and granted Lee a visa. The Chinese government believed that the actions of the U.S. government made China lose face, which may also be part of the reason for China’s military response.

The Chinese leaders often propose a diplomatic policy without explaining it or how it should be implemented. This leads Westerners to complain that China’s policies are vague and unclear. For example, when the United Kingdom and China discussed Hong Kong’s future arrangement, the Chinese offered only bland statements. For the Chinese, an equivocal or ambiguous approach could offer the best feasible solutions to particular problems under many conditions. In contrast, the British have a diplomatic tradition of making detailed proposals. The British side wanted precise information about every crucial aspect of Hong Kong’s future so they could affect the agreement. The different diplomatic traditions brought an opportunity for the British to insert their ideas in the agreement of Hong Kong’s arrangement.

This thesis tends to ignore the drawbacks of China’s diplomacy because it is outside its focus, not because it is unimportant. This thesis analyzes the positive influence of Chinese culture on China’s diplomacy, so it ignores criticisms of China’s diplomatic policy. In the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-1996, the Chinese government believed their military response was to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity. While the United States criticized China as a threat to the peace and stability of Taiwan, the region, and the world.
In recent years, China has proposed “One Belt One Road,” which is a new platform for regional and inter-regional cooperation. For the Chinese, the “One Belt One Road” policy promotes the spirit of peace, equality, and cooperation. Through the policy, China wants to realize the benefit of cooperation with its neighbours and other countries. While some people state that “One Belt One Road” is not only a geo-economic strategy to maintain China’s economic growth, it is also the culmination of China’s search for a grand strategic narrative. Beijing is using China’s geo-economic power to achieve greater geopolitical objectives. Analysts believe that China seeks to achieve a new geopolitical landscape with China at the center and its neighbouring states revolving around it. From the perspective of the White House, through the “One Belt One Road,” Beijing can soft-balance Washington’s international influence. This policy strengthens the cohesion of Beijing’s partnerships network and other collective security regimes, at the same time, increases the costs of Washington to block China’s initiative. The policy also provides an opportunity to change the global financial order. Some analysts criticize that China may be pursuing a modern-day version of its past tributary relations with its neighbours. This thesis rarely discusses the criticism of China’s diplomacy.

**Future study’s areas**

Diplomatic analysts, politicians, and researchers are encountering increasing problems when resolving international issues. Then they have begun to use culture as an explanation of last resort. If researchers want to look for a more appropriate research method, adapt it to the contemporary world’s major events to be able to understand and evaluate these major events more accurately and provide people with predictive capabilities, it is, therefore, necessary to take a careful study of the role of culture in international relations. A country that wants to formulate policies toward another needs to understand that country’s history, culture, habits, values, and ideologies. The more
politicians understand that country, the more realistic policies they make. For this reason, it is necessary to study the influence of cultural factors on diplomacy.

Many factors affect diplomacy, so there is no comprehensive theory of diplomacy. The general theory of diplomacy must be a systematic, concise, and universally applicable theory. It is important to explore the diplomatic policies of different countries and then conclude their diplomatic characteristics. The more detailed the research, the more difficult it is to generalize.

By studying the practice of specific diplomacy, researchers can summarize or extract the patterns of factors affecting the outcomes of diplomacy at specific levels and use different models to analyze the process and results of these factors affecting specific policies, instead of showing the diplomacy decision-making process and results in a panoramic manner. Simply put, the study of diplomacy can reveal patterns and models. Researchers can find out the factors behind an event and explore the relationship between these factors and policy results. It proposes a conceptual model that will help researchers determine the most important characteristics of complex diplomatic decisions. Researchers should explore the relationship between cultural and material factors in diplomacy. Relationality is a most significant concept abstracted from the social and cultural practices centred around relations; and, to a large extent, a most crucial element of the background knowledge of the Confucian cultural community of practice (Qin & Nordin, 2019). In the future, researchers can analyze China’s diplomacy by placing cultural factors, philosophy, and Marxism together in a relational framework.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese government has emphasized the importance of enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture and the guiding role of Chinese culture in China’s diplomacy. The Chinese government has also increased the interpretation of Chinese culture in foreign exchanges. The increase of cultural factors in China’s
foreign relations does not mean that the Chinese government intends “retroversion” or “reversion” in its diplomatic behaviour. The increase of cultural elements in China’s foreign relations is an inevitable requirement for maintaining self-awareness and self-identity in globalization and a manifestation of cultural consciousness in the context of globalization.

Due to the differences in historical culture and political environment, Western methods of diplomacy analysis cannot be used to explain China’s diplomacy without any adjustment, let alone not considering the specific circumstances of China’s diplomacy. With some appropriate adjustments, the combination of the Western and China’s foreign policy analysis can be beneficial, and the outcome will definitely be a win-win situation. The combined theory by Western and China’s diplomatic theories can better understand the diplomacy of different countries and then arrives at a truly global discipline of international relations.
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