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Same Path, Different Experience:

Culture's Influence on Attribution, Emotion, and Interaction Goals in Negotiation

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Abstract

This study examines cultural variations in negotiators' attribution and emotion as a viable means to understand culture's multiplex influence on goal pursuit when it interacts with situational factors. 277 US Americans and 239 mainland Chinese responded to a hypothetical employment negotiation scenario in two experimental conditions. Findings indicate that given the same set of persuasive messages by a counterpart, American participants judged the counterpart as more personally responsible for perceived negative behavior, felt more anger and less compassion toward the counterpart, and placed greater importance on competitive goals than Chinese participants. Although the paths whereby emotions arise and influence interaction goals are largely similar across cultures, mainland Chinese demonstrated a stronger tendency to compete when they felt angry, whereas US Americans were more likely to pursue cooperative goals across both conditions. Theoretical and practical implications of these seemingly contradictory findings are discussed in this article.

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Traditional economic theories tend to characterize negotiation as a strategic, rational decision-making process where two or more parties who hold incompatible goals need to work out a mutually acceptable solution (Raiffa, 1982). In the past two decades, substantial evidence has shown that negotiators often deviate from the predictions of rational choice models due to cognitive biases and emotions (e.g., Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, & Raia, 1997; Thompson & Hastie, 1990). As a result, negotiation researchers have demonstrated a growing interest in a social cognition approach to negotiation, which aims to understand the psychological and emotional processes that lead to different behaviors and outcomes.

Although negotiation theory and research have proliferated in the United States and Northern Europe over the last several decades, they are laden with Western values and assumptions (Brett & Gelfand, 2004). Cross-cultural negotiation research has found considerable differences in negotiators' bargaining strategies (Adair et al., 2004), offer patterns (Adair, Weingart, & Brett, 2007), and negotiation outcomes (Brett et al., 1998); however, these studies are still largely shaped by rational choice models. Limited research has examined cultural variations in negotiators' cognitive biases and emotional responses, and how these factors in turn predict their behavioral intentions.

This study, therefore, is intended to provide such an assessment. Recent research has shown that the interaction goals that negotiators pursue prior to negotiating have a significant influence on their and their counterparts' bargaining tactics, as well as the two parties' individual and joint gains (Liu & Wilson, in press). Drawing from an attributional theory of emotion and motivation developed by Weiner (1995, 2006), this study assesses culture's main and moderating effects on the process through which causal attributions concerning an opponent's behavior

predict negotiators' feelings of anger and compassion, and consequently, their interaction goals. The study takes a dynamic constructivist view of culture (Morris & Fu, 2001). Cultural differences are not traced to a single source; rather culture is defined as a "loose network of domain-specific knowledge structures" (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000, p. 710) that are activated in ways peculiar to the situation (Friedman, Liu, Chen, & Chi, 2007). The purpose of this study is twofold: First, it seeks to empirically assess, rather than assume, the extent to which the attributional theory of emotion and motivation developed in a Western culture is equally useful in an Eastern culture; second, it seeks to generate new insights on the multiplex influence of culture on negotiators' interaction goals, when it interacts with situational variables, such as emotions. The following section reviews relevant literature that informs key hypotheses of the study. Next, the methods used to evaluate the hypotheses are described, followed by the research findings. Finally, the theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed, along with the limitations.

Culture, Causal Attributions, and Emotions

In the past two decades, a growing body of research has examined the role of other-directed, discrete emotions (as opposed to general mood states) in negotiation. Anger has received far more attention than other discrete emotions because it is more likely to be prevalent in conflict and negotiation situations (Liu, 2009). Positive emotions, such as compassion, are mainly examined as a contrast to anger. Allred et al. (1997) found that negotiators who felt high anger and low compassion toward the counterpart achieved smaller joint gains and had less desire to work with each other in the future.

Cognitive theorists commonly assume that all emotions are initiated by an individual's appraisal of his or her circumstances in relation to things that he or she cares about; appraisal, therefore, is at the heart of every emotion (Lazarus, 1995). A variety of appraisal dimensions

have been identified to explicate the attribution process of emotion (e.g., Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Attribution of responsibility, an appraisal dimension identified by Weiner (1995), has been widely used to explain the attribution process leading to feelings of anger and compassion in a variety of situations, such as conflict and negotiation (Allred et al., 1997), help giving (Schmidt & Weiner, 1988), and supportive communication (MacGeorge, 2001).

According to Weiner (1995), people evaluate an event in the environment based on whether their goals or expectations have been realized or violated; perceptions of the causes of success or failure, such as ability, effort, and luck, lead to inferences about personal responsibility, which in turn generate emotional responses such as anger and compassion. The assignment of *responsibility* is guided by a distinction between *internal* (dispositional) versus *external* (situational) causality. Internal causes, such as inattentive driving that caused a car accident, often are perceived as *controllable*; an individual is judged personally responsible for such behavior because he or she could have done otherwise to prevent the negative event. External causes, such as a physical injury that caused poor performance in a game, often are perceived as *uncontrollable*; an individual is judged as having less responsibility for such behavior because there was not much that could have been done to prevent the event.

The issue of internal (dispositional) versus external (situational) causality has been a focal concern in numerous studies concerning the “fundamental attribution error” or “correspondence bias,” which refers to the tendency to over-assign causality to personality traits and under-assign it to situational constraints. For example, Jones and Harris (1967) asked participants to read an essay allegedly written by another student that was either for or against an important social issue. Although participants were told that the essayist had been required to take a pro or con stand by an instructor, a debate coach, or an experimenter, when asked to estimate the essayist’s actual opinion, participants still tended to ignore the situational constraints and

judge the content of the essay as reflective of the essayist's actual opinion. This correspondence bias has been demonstrated so many times in a variety of contexts that it has been considered "a staple of modern social psychology" (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999, p. 47).

Cross-cultural psychologists have noted that the correspondence bias is not universal; it was found to be weaker, and in some cases even nonexistent, in East Asian cultures (e.g., Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994), except when the event being explained is a group action (Menon, Morris, Chui, & Hong, 1999; Friedman et al., 2007). Scholars have attributed the absence or weakness of correspondence bias in East Asian cultures to a holistic thinking style that focuses on the context of behavior, as compared to an analytical thinking style that focuses on individual attributes (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001). For example, Masuda and Nisbett's studies examined whether East Asians attend to the context more than U.S. Americans do. They asked Japanese and American respondents to watch animated vignettes of underwater scenes or photographs of wildlife and to report what they had seen. Their results showed that the Japanese (a) made more statements about contextual information and (b) recognized previously seen objects more accurately in their original settings than in novel settings; U.S. Americans, on the other hand, paid more attention to specific details of individual objects and made fewer mistakes when judging previously seen objects with novel settings.

These findings suggest that when making causal attributions, U.S. Americans are more likely to locate responsibility for behavior within the individual, whereas Chinese are more likely to take situational constraints into consideration (Choi et al., 1999). Given that attribution of internal (dispositional) causality for a negative event necessitates assignment of responsibility and consequently feelings of anger, whereas attribution of external (situational) causality mitigates judgment of responsibility, causing feelings of compassion, we have reasons to expect that U.S. Americans are more likely to experience anger whereas East Asians, compassion.

Research on culture and emotion has suggested a different, but largely consistent, set of explanations regarding culture's effect on emotions. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), people in East Asia and the United States hold strikingly divergent construals of the self in relation to others. In the U.S., a primarily individualistic society, the self is generally construed as independent from the social context; individuals focus on their internal attributes – their preferences, abilities, and traits – as key aspects of the self. In contrast, in East Asian societies, which are primarily collectivistic, the self is generally construed as fundamentally connected to the larger social context; individuals focus on adjusting their preferences, interests, and behaviors to fit in and be accepted by others (Gelfand et al., 2002). On the other hand, anger has been considered an *ego-focused* emotion that derives from and promotes an independent view of the self, whereas compassion (or sympathy) has been considered an *other-focused* emotion that results from being sensitive to another person's, rather than one's own, feelings and concerns and in turn promotes interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 2001). Based on this reasoning, U.S. Americans are more likely to experience anger, whereas East Asians, compassion. This view has received some empirical support. For example, Matsumoto, Kudoh, Scherer, and Wallbott (1988) found that American respondents reported experiencing ego-focused emotions (e.g., anger) longer and more intensely than Japanese respondents. Research has rarely examined cultural differences in the experience of positive emotions.

The current study views culture as a network of domain-specific knowledge structures activated by a particular situation. It focuses on patterns of differences between Chinese and U.S. Americans in their causal beliefs regarding a counterpart's behavior as a viable means to account for cultural variations in emotional experiences. Drawing upon different, but consistent, streams of research, the study predicts that given the same information about the counterpart's behavior,

H1: American negotiators will attribute greater personal responsibility to their

counterpart for perceived negative behavior than will Chinese negotiators.

H2: American negotiators will report more anger and less compassion toward their counterpart than will Chinese negotiators.

Linking Attribution and Emotion with Interaction Goals in Negotiation

Cognitive theorists maintain that the causal beliefs an individual has concerning another's behavior not only generate specific emotions, but also motivate behavioral reactions. According to Weiner (2006), a judgment of responsibility based on the perception that another person performed poorly in a football game due to lack of effort produces antisocial behavioral intentions such as reprimand, condemnation, neglect, or retaliation. On the other hand, a judgment of non-responsibility (e.g., poor performance due to a physical injury) results in prosocial intentions such as withholding of reprimand, help giving, and an absence of aggressive retaliation. Emotion theorists contend that such behavioral reactions allow people to cope adaptively with emotion-arousing events, also known as the *action tendencies* of emotions (Burlinson & Plana, 2000). The innate action tendency of anger is to “*attack* the agent held to be blameworthy for the offense” (Lazarus, 1991, p. 226). Anger was found to be associated with more contentious behavior (Liu, 2009), less helping behavior (Weiner, 1995), and less concern about the consequences of one's aggressive actions (Berkowitz, 1988). In contrast, compassion entails empathy (a capacity to think and feel in another person's place) and is associated with a readiness to help (Weiner, 1995; 2006). Anger and compassion, therefore, can mediate the influence of attribution of (non)responsibility on behavioral tendencies.

Negotiation research has identified two primary approaches to negotiation: an integrative (cooperative) approach consisting of tactics that serve to maximize the amount of resources available for both parties (e.g., exchanging information and formulating mutually beneficial tradeoffs) and a distributive (competitive) approach consisting of tactics that serve to maximize

one's own share of the available resources (e.g., demands, refusals, persuasion, threats) (Walton & McKersie, 1965; Pruitt, 1981). Although Weiner's theory helps to predict general behavioral orientations (e.g., to retaliate or to help), it does not offer a mechanism to explain how emotions can influence specific forms of behavior (e.g., the specific tactics used for retaliating or helping).

Message production scholars have turned to the concept of interaction goals for extending Weiner's model (Burlison & Planalp, 2000). Interaction goals are desired future states of affairs that can only be achieved through communication and coordination with others (Wilson, 2002). Interaction goals have been found to predict communication behavior in conflict management (e.g., Canary, Cunningham, & Cody, 1988; Keck & Samp, 2007), social influence (Olufowote, Miller, & Wilson, 2005), and emotional support situations (Burlison & Mortenson, 2003). Liu and Wilson (in press) found that the relative importance negotiators placed on various interaction goals prior to negotiating had a significant influence on their use of bargaining tactics, as well as individual and joint gains. MacGeorge (2001) found that judgment of responsibility had an indirect influence on social support providers' goals through anger and compassion. These studies provide reasons to believe that an examination of the influence of causal attribution and emotion on negotiators' interaction goals can yield important insight into the dynamic process whereby emotion influences negotiation tactics and outcomes.

Wilson and Putnam (1990) recognized three types of interaction goals that negotiators typically pursue: *instrumental* (or task-oriented goals, e.g., obtaining money or information), *relational* (e.g., gaining power or building trust), and *identity* goals (e.g., managing one's own or the other party's face). Interaction goals reflect a negotiator's social motives (i.e., a negotiator's preference for particular outcome distributions between him- or herself and the counterpart). The mixed-motive nature of negotiation often places negotiators in a position of pursuing multiple, sometimes conflicting goals, such as wanting to maximize joint profit as well as avoid being

taken advantage of. Given the contextual features of a job contract negotiation, this study assesses six interaction goals that vary in type (instrumental, relational, and identity) and motivation (competitive vs. cooperative). The study predicts that:

H3: Anger will mediate the influence of judgment of responsibility on competitively-oriented goals.

H4: Compassion will mediate the influence of judgment of responsibility on cooperatively-oriented goals.

According to Weiner (2006), few psychologists want to limit the applicability of their theories to particular cultures or ethnicities; therefore, the demographic or sociocultural constraints of these theories are often ignored, not specified, or not anticipated. This has given rise to an important question: Do theories of human emotion and motivation require basic modification to incorporate diverse ethnicities and cultures? Despite the substantial cultural differences found in thinking styles (Peng & Nisbett, 1999), attentional patterns (Nisbett & Musada, 2001), self construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and the types and degrees of causal attribution bias (Choi & Nisbett, 1998), scholars have maintained that although attribution content (e.g., whether a situation is regarded as success or failure) may be culture specific, the structure of the attribution theory is general and can transcend specific instances (Weiner, 2006). Perhaps for this reason, research on emotion in negotiation has rarely been extended to non-Western cultures. This study seeks to empirically test, rather than assume, whether the mediation models hypothesized above are culturally universal. Culture may either moderate the influence of the independent variable (attribution of responsibility) on the mediator (anger or compassion) or the dependent variables (interaction goals), or moderate the influence of the mediator on the DVs. Thus, the study assesses the following questions:

RQ1: Will culture moderate the effect of judgment of responsibility on emotions (anger

and compassion) and its indirect effect on interaction goals?

RQ2: After controlling for judgment of responsibility, will culture moderate the effects of anger and compassion on interaction goals?

Substantial research has compared how members of different cultures negotiate; however, research that examines culture's influence on negotiators' goal pursuit remains limited. Of the few studies available, Cai (1998) found that U.S. American and Taiwanese negotiators differed significantly in their long versus short-term focus of interaction goals in their pre-negotiation plans: U.S. Americans focused more on short term, local goals, whereas Taiwanese focused more on long term, global goals. These findings are consistent with broader culture and cognition research that describes the Western cognitive style as analytical and the Eastern cognitive style as holistic (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001).

Nevertheless, scholars have noted that the U.S. approach to negotiation, relative to other cultures (e.g., Chinese), is more interests-based (Adair et al., 2004; Liu, 2009). Several studies with simulated business negotiations suggest that U.S. Americans are more inclined to apply interest cognitive frames whereas East Asians (e.g., Japanese), power frames (Brett & Okamura, 1998; Tinsley, 1998). In a similar vein, Liu and Wilson (in press) found that after completing a distributive (zero-sum) negotiation task, Chinese participants placed greater importance on competitive goals for a subsequent negotiation with the same partner than did American participants. In addition, although cross-cultural research suggests that collectivists (e.g., East Asians) value relational harmony more than individualists (e.g., U.S. Americans; Brett & Kopelman, 2004; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003), Cai (1998) found that Taiwanese negotiators gave as little attention to relational and identity goals as Americans, but focused primarily on instrumental goals.

These findings suggest that negotiation is a particular context that necessitates specific

desires and goals that may override general cultural values. It would be interesting, therefore, to examine how these domain-specific knowledge structures combat situational influences that dictate contradictory tendencies. For example, given the above hypothesized cultural differences in causal attribution and emotion, it is reasonable to predict that Chinese participants, who attribute less responsibility to, and feel less anger and more compassion toward, the counterpart, are likely to place less importance on competitively-oriented goals than Americans, whereas given a culturally programmed power frame of negotiation, it is also reasonable to predict that Chinese participants are likely to place less importance on cooperative goals than U.S. Americans. Although these tendencies seem contradictory, the Chinese have long held a reputation for practicing the *Middle Way* (also known as the *Confucian Doctrine of the Mean*, see Cheung et al., 2003), which entails finding an appropriate point of balance among extremes. Therefore, with regard to culture's main effect on interaction goals, the study predicts:

- H5: Culture will have a significant influence on perceived importance of interaction goals, such that Chinese negotiators will place less importance both on competitively-oriented goals (5a) and on cooperatively-oriented goals (5b) as they plan a subsequent negotiation with their counterpart.

Method

Participants

The study recruited 277 American college students (97 men and 180 women) from a major Eastern university in the U.S. through an on-line participant pool. They were 19.62 years in age on average and were allowed to receive a small amount of extra credit from their course instructors for participating in this study. The study also recruited 239 Chinese college students (125 men and 114 women) from a major university in Southeast China through in-class announcements and campus flyers. They were 19.82 years in age on average and were paid 20

yuan (equivalent of 3 U.S. dollars) upon completion of the study.

Survey Procedures and Hypothetical Scenarios

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions that varied by manipulation condition (high vs. low responsibility) and bargaining role (employer vs. employee).¹ They read a negotiation scenario where they took on the role of either an HR manager of a large-consulting firm or a prospective employee to negotiate over an employment contract. After reading the first task, which is a single-issue, zero-sum game concerning the type of laptop computer the employee would receive from the company, participants were told how the counterpart behaved (i.e., they were given a list of positional statements and persuasive arguments made by the other party that prevented them from achieving their desired option). They then completed a questionnaire assessing (a) their perception of the other's behavior, (b) the extent to which the other party was responsible for such behavior, and (c) the emotions they felt toward the other party. Participants were then instructed to prepare for a subsequent negotiation with the same partner on core employment issues. After reading the instructions, they were asked to complete a questionnaire assessing the importance they would place on a list of interaction goals for this subsequent negotiation. They were not asked to do the simulation.

Prior studies showed that the hypothetical scenario was perceived realistic by members of both American and Chinese cultures (e.g., Allred et al., 1997; Liu, 2009). Participants were told that their objective was to get as good a deal as they could for their company or for themselves, measured by the total number of points they could earn from the two negotiation tasks. The first task, which is distributive in nature, concerned what kind of laptop computer the employee would receive from the company. Three options were available for discussion, the basic, advanced, and elite options, which varied in price, weight, and accessories, and were respectively worth 0, 20, and 100 points for the employee and 100, 20, and 0 points for the manager.

Instructions for this task and responses from “the other party” were intended to elicit contrasting expectations. For example, “employees” were told that the laptop computer was an important symbol of status and respect at the firm and aggressive pursuit of the elite option was typically perceived as an indicator of their requisite confidence to succeed at the firm; however, in the negotiation, the “manager” argued that the consulting firm frowned upon ostentatious fringe benefits, and most new recruits had been happy with a basic option computer.

The laptop negotiation was thus designed to elicit perceptions in both parties that the other party was competitive and stood in their way for achieving desired goals. The experimental manipulation then focused on altering participants’ perceptions of how responsible the other was for that negatively perceived behavior. In the low responsibility condition, additional explanations for the other party’s behavior were provided in the scenario that aimed to divert participants’ attention to external, uncontrollable causes (i.e., situational constraints). In the employee version, the participant had learned through a friend that the employer representative had little choice in the laptop computer he or she could offer because the partners in the firm had previously made that decision. The employer version stated that the prospective employee was from a graduate program that stressed the importance of new technologies and state-of-art computer equipment, and the program also instructed students to demand cutting-edge computers in order to gain the tools and respect needed to be successful. In the high responsibility condition, these additional explanations were not presented.

After participants completed the questionnaire assessing their attribution of responsibility and emotions, they were told that the other party eventually agreed upon the advanced option laptop computer (i.e., a compromise). They were then asked to prepare for a subsequent negotiation with the other party concerning the core terms of employment, including salary, medical coverage, vacation time, and start date. A payoff schedule that described five options for

each issue was presented to them; the priorities of these issues were different from one another, indicated by the point values associated with the options. For example, in the employee version, getting the highest salary leads to 660 points, but getting the best medical coverage only leads to 100 points; the values of the two issues were reversed for managers. Participants were told that for an offer to be acceptable, they should try to get a minimum of 900 points but a straight compromise for all issues only leads to 620 points. This task, which contained integrative potential (i.e., both parties could “win” by trading off issues of differential importance; see Pruitt, 1981), can motivate participants to form a variety of interaction goals that are both competitively-oriented and cooperatively-oriented in order to meet the 900 point minimum requirement, despite the distributive nature of the previous interaction. Participants were then asked to respond to an interaction goals questionnaire after reading this hypothetical negotiation task. To ensure that Chinese participants fully understood the material, all scenarios and questionnaires were translated into Chinese and then back-translated into English by Chinese graduate students who were experienced in bilingual translation.

Measures

Judgment of responsibility for perceived negative behavior. This construct consists of two components: (a) judgment of how negative the other party’s behavior was, and (b) judgment of how responsible the other party was for such behavior (Allred et al., 1997). Six items on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) assessed negativity (e.g., “To what extent do you perceive Mr. Johnson’s behavior as negative?”). Eight 7-point items assessed judgment of responsibility, with four items focusing on internal causality (e.g., “To what extent do you believe Mr. Hale is personally responsible for his behavior?”) and four items focusing on external causality (e.g., “To what extent do you believe Mr. Hale’s behavior is due to something in the environment”). These measures demonstrated validity in pilot tests. Cronbach’s *alpha*

was .68 for negativity and .72 for responsibility. Weiner (1995) suggests that the negativity and responsibility elements have a multiplicative rather than an additive effect on anger and compassion. Thus, we followed Allred et al.'s (1997) method and multiplied the composite negativity and responsibility scores for each participant to compute a measure of "judgment of responsibility for perceived negative behavior."

Anger and compassion. Four items on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) were included to measure anger, which assessed participants' feelings of anger, annoyance, madness, and irritation; for compassion, four items assessed participants' feelings of sympathy, compassion, empathy, and understanding (MacGeorge, 2001). The internal consistency of the two scales was deemed satisfactory: Cronbach's *alpha* was .89 for anger and .77 for compassion.

Interaction goals in negotiation. Twenty-four 7-point Likert-style items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) assessed six interaction goals. Sample items included: (a) to get a better deal ("I want to get a better deal than Mr. Hale"), (b) to maximize both parties' profit ("I want to find a solution that meets both parties' needs and concerns"), (c) to attack the other's face ("I want to tell Mr. Hale that he makes poor arguments that do not hold water"), (d) to enhance the other's face ("I want to tell Mr. Hale that he appears friendly and polite"), (e) to gain power ("I want to convince Mr. Hale that he needs me more than I need him"),² and (f) to promote relationship ("I want to tell Mr. Hale that I care about our relationship"). These measures demonstrated validity in pilot tests. Cronbach's *alpha* was .74 for "to get a better deal," .76 for "to maximize both parties' profit," .71 for "to attack the other's face," .84 for "to enhance the other's face," .70 for "to gain power," and .75 for "to promote relationship."

Results

Manipulation Check

The inducement of anger and compassion by manipulating participants' judgment of

responsibility was successful. Participants in the high responsibility condition ($M = 20.29$, $SD = 6.67$) attributed greater responsibility to the counterpart for perceived negative behavior than those in the low responsibility condition ($M = 17.42$, $SD = 5.43$), $t(515) = 5.37$, $p < .001$, $d = .47$. A 2 x 2 (culture x manipulation) ANOVA test shows a non-significant interaction: The manipulation effect was slightly stronger for American participants, $t(270) = 4.54$, $p < .001$, $d = .55$, than for Chinese participants, $t(230) = 2.95$, $p < .01$, $d = .37$. Judgment of responsibility for perceived negative behavior was positively associated with anger, $r = .38$, $p < .001$, and negatively associated with compassion, $r = -.30$, $p < .001$.

Culture's Main Effects on Judgment of Responsibility, Anger, and Compassion

Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted that given the same argumentative messages from the counterpart, American participants would (a) attribute greater responsibility to the counterpart for such behavior and (b) report more anger and less compassion toward the counterpart than Chinese participants. Independent sample t -tests were performed to evaluate these hypotheses; results are summarized in Table 1. Results showed that members of the two cultures differed significantly in their attribution of responsibility and emotions: American participants held the counterpart more responsible for perceived negative behavior and reported more anger and less compassion toward the counterpart than Chinese participants. H1 and H2 were both supported.

The Mediated Effects of Judgment of Responsibility on Goals through Anger and Compassion

Hypothesis 3 predicted that anger would mediate the influence of responsibility judgment on competitively-oriented goals and Hypothesis 4 predicted that compassion would mediate the influence of responsibility judgment on cooperatively-oriented goals. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a *mediated* effect is present when (a) X significantly predicts M , (b) M significantly predicts Y after controlling for X , (c) X significantly predicts Y , and (d) when M is controlled, the effect of X on Y decreases (partial mediation), with the strongest demonstration of

mediation occurring when the effect becomes non-significant (full mediation). Although these procedures are by far the most commonly used method in social sciences to guide mediation analysis, recent scholarship has identified several shortcomings in this method (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). These scholars argue that mediation exists whenever a significant *indirect* effect (i.e., the influence of X on Y through an intervening variable or M) is found, regardless of whether X has a total effect on Y . The bootstrapping procedures developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) have been advocated to be a well-suited method to assess indirect effects. Bootstrapping has the advantage of making no assumptions about the shape of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect or its underlying paths; rather, it is accomplished by empirically estimating these distributions through resampling procedures and deriving a confidence interval with them.

This study used Preach and Hayes' procedures to evaluate H3 and H4. Results of the bootstrapping tests (5,000 resamples, $N = 498$) are summarized in Table 2. The *total effect* refers to the zero-order correlation between judgment of responsibility (X) and interaction goals (Y); the *direct effect* refers to the effect of X on Y after controlling for M (anger); the *indirect effect* is defined as the product of the $X \rightarrow M$ path and the $M \rightarrow Y$ path, which is equivalent to the difference between the total effect and the direct effect. As Table 2 shows, the indirect effects of judgment of responsibility on the three competitively-oriented interaction goals ("to get a better deal," "to attack the other's face," and "to gain power") through anger were all significant ($p < .01$). H3 was supported. In addition, compassion mediated the influence of judgment of responsibility on one of the three cooperatively-oriented goals ("to enhance the other party's face") ($p < .01$). H4 was partially supported.

Culture's Moderating Effects on the Links between Attribution, Emotion, and Goals

Research Question 1 asked whether culture would moderate the effect of judgment of

responsibility on emotions (anger and compassion) as well as its indirect effect on interaction goals; Research Question 2 asked whether culture would moderate the effects of anger and compassion on interaction goals after controlling for responsibility. Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) recently developed bootstrapping procedures to test the significance and strength of moderated mediation in a variety of situations. RQ1 involves testing moderated mediation when the a path ($X \rightarrow M$) is moderated by a moderator W (culture). Results of the bootstrapping tests (5000 resamples, $N = 498$) following Preacher et al.'s procedures are summarized in Table 3.

As the table shows, culture's moderating effect on the association between attribution of responsibility and anger approached, but did not reach, conventional levels of statistical significance ($p < .10$). The strength of the association was stronger for Chinese, $b = .43$, $t(228) = 7.24$, $p < .001$, than for U.S. Americans, $b = .29$, $t(270) = 5.02$, $p < .001$. Culture's moderating effect on the direct link between judgment of responsibility and the goal of gaining power over the other also approached significance ($p < .10$): After controlling for anger, the strength of association was also stronger for Chinese, $b = .14$, $t(224) = 1.90$, $p = .06$, than for U.S. Americans, $b = .07$, $t(268) = 1.04$, $p = .30$. Finally, culture has significantly moderated the effect of judgment of responsibility on the goal of maximizing both parties' profit. After controlling for compassion, judgment of responsibility was positively associated with perceived importance of maximizing both parties' profit for U.S. Americans, $b = .15$, $t(269) = 2.33$, $p < .05$, but not for Chinese, $b = -.04$, $t(227) = -.63$, $p = .53$.

RQ2 involves testing moderated mediation when the b path ($M \rightarrow Y$) is moderated by a moderator W (culture). Results of the bootstrapping tests (5000 resamples, $N = 498$) are summarized in Table 4. As the table shows, culture has a significant moderating effect on the association between anger and the goal of attacking the other's face: After controlling for

judgment of responsibility, the association between anger and this competitive goal is stronger for Chinese, $b = .40$, $t(222) = 5.99$, $p < .001$, than for U.S. Americans, $b = .21$, $t(269) = 3.42$, $p < .001$. In addition, culture has a marginally significant moderating effect on the association between anger and “to gain power over the other”: After controlling for judgment of responsibility, the association between anger and this competitive goal is stronger for Chinese, $b = .20$, $t(224) = 2.86$, $p < .01$, than for U.S. Americans, $b = .13$, $t(268) = 2.03$, $p < .05$.

Culture’s Main Effects on Interaction Goals in Negotiation

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the Chinese would place less importance on both competitively-oriented goals (5a) and cooperatively-oriented goals (5b) than U.S. Americans when planning a subsequent negotiation. Independent sample t -tests found main effects for culture on four out of the six interaction goals; results are summarized in Table 1. American participants placed greater importance on two of the competitively-oriented goals than Chinese participants, “to get a better deal” and “to gain power over the other.” American participants also placed greater importance on two cooperatively-oriented, intangible goals: “to enhance the other party’s face” and “to promote a positive relationship.” Thus, both H5a and H5b received support.

Discussion

This study examines cultural variations in the process through which the causal attribution negotiators make about the counterpart’s behavior influence their feelings of anger and compassion toward the counterpart, which in turn influence their perceived importance of various interaction goals for subsequent negotiation. This section reviews major findings of the study, along with a discussion of its theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and directions for future research.

Culture’s Main Effects on Causal Attribution and Emotion

The study found substantial cultural differences in participants' attribution of responsibility and subsequent emotional responses. When given the same information concerning the counterpart's negotiation behavior, American participants judged the counterpart more personally responsible for perceived negative behavior, and subsequently felt more anger and less compassion toward the counterpart than Chinese participants. Nevertheless, when additional information was provided concerning situational factors that caused the counterpart's competitive behavior, both American and Chinese participants attributed less responsibility to the counterpart and felt less anger and more compassion; the manipulation effect was more pronounced for U.S. Americans than for Chinese.

At a theoretical level, these findings support the assertion that although cultures may vary in the type or strength of causal beliefs people make, the mechanisms through which causal attributions give rise to emotions are universal. The cultural differences found in the attribution process are consistent with research in cross-cultural psychology demonstrating that East Asians and U.S. Americans differ in attentional patterns and thinking styles (e.g., Masuda & Nisbett, 2001): Whereas U.S. Americans tend to think analytically and see behaviors as products of dispositional factors, East Asians tend to think holistically and situate individuals' behaviors within a larger context. The findings are also consistent with Markus and Kitayama's (1991) classical work concerning culture and emotion: Whereas anger, an ego-focused emotion that derives from and promotes an independent view of self, is more likely to be experienced by people in individualist societies, compassion, an other-focused emotion that promotes perspective-taking and interdependence, is more likely to be experienced by people in collectivistic societies. Thus, the study supports a dynamic constructivist view of culture as a network of domain-specific knowledge structures activated by a given situation: In the case of

emotional experience, causal beliefs regarding the other party's behavior play an equally important role as general cultural values in shaping an individual's emotions.

At a practical level, these findings suggest that the correspondence bias that American participants are more likely to subscribe, as well as the subsequent feelings of anger, can be reduced by contextual information. Research has shown that anger is associated with more distributive and fewer integrative bargaining tactics, a smaller joint profit, and less desire to work with each other in the future (Allred et al., 1997; Liu, 2009). In a bargaining situation that involves integrative potential and a long-term relationship, it is desirable to manage one's angry feelings by engaging in motivated information search about the external, uncontrollable factors that may potentially account for the counterpart's apparent negative behavior.

The Indirect Effects of Causal Attribution on Interaction Goals through Emotions

Another major finding from this study is that the degree to which negotiators judged the counterpart personally responsible for perceived negative behavior had a significant indirect impact on all three competitive goals due to angry feelings, such as "to get a better deal" (instrumental), "to attack the other's face" (identity), and "to gain power over the other party" (relational). In addition, judgment of (non)responsibility also had a significant indirect effect on a cooperative goal, "to enhance the other's face" (identity), due to feelings of compassion. These findings provide support to Weiner's (2006) attributional theory of motivation and emotion, with evidence from conflict and negotiation situations in two cultures.

More importantly, these findings yield insight into the psychological process whereby cognitive biases and emotions influence negotiation performance. Research shows that a primary cause of suboptimal outcomes is negotiators' misperception of the bargaining situation as a mystical "fixed pie," which is often formed during the first few minutes of the negotiation (e.g., Thompson & Hastie, 1991). The current study shows that the distributive mind-set (e.g., focusing

on “getting a better deal than the other” rather than “maximizing both parties’ profit”) may result from misperception about the counterpart’s personal attributes, as well as the negative emotions that accompany such perception. Unless negotiators practice perspective-taking and can re(orient) themselves toward a cooperative direction, such a misperception is likely to drive them to place greater importance on contentious behaviors (e.g., positional statements, face attacks, power tactics) directed at gaining an upper hand at the cost of a positive relationship. This may further explain why intercultural negotiation involving members of different cultures tends to yield poorer outcomes than intracultural negotiation (Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2006). Negotiators from contrastive cultural communities rely on different assumptions about social interaction and have different preferred communication styles. Unless negotiators are fully aware of culture’s influence on the counterpart’s behavioral differences, misjudgment of the counterpart’s intentions and motives is very likely, which will inevitably generate negative emotions and reduce negotiators’ desire to identify mutually satisfactory solutions.

Culture’s Moderating Effects on the Links between Attribution, Emotion, and Goals

The study’s assessment of culture’s moderating effects on the meditated links largely supports Weiner’s (2006) attribution theory of motivation and emotion as a pan-cultural mechanism. Although this theory has been developed, and primarily tested, within Western cultures, findings from this study showed considerable support from a non-Western culture (China). Most of the associations between theoretical components of the model were not moderated by culture; when culture’s moderating effects were observed, in most cases, the associations were even stronger for Chinese participants than for their American counterparts. For example, the positive association between judgment of responsibility and anger was stronger for Chinese than for U.S. Americans, so were the positive associations between anger and two competitive goals, “to attack the other’s face” and “to gain power over the other.” This is

consistent with prior research showing that anger as a self-focused emotion can drive collectivists to assert their autonomy over others unless mitigating circumstances can “pull” them back from such a tendency (e.g., when relational harmony with the counterpart outweighs personal interests) (Liu, 2009). The current study entails no such mitigating circumstance.

This study, however, also generated counter-intuitive findings. After controlling for compassion, judgment of responsibility had a direct positive effect on the goal of maximizing both parties’ profit for American participants; this effect was not found for Chinese. In addition, although American participants placed more importance on two of the competitively-oriented goals, “to get a better deal” and “to gain power over the other,” they also placed more importance on two cooperatively-oriented intangible goals, “to enhance the other’s face” and “to promote a positive relationship.” These findings seem to contradict existing research that characterizes American negotiators as more confrontational and less concerned about other face (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Nevertheless, scholars have also argued that the U.S. approach to negotiation, relative to other cultures, is more interests-based or integrative (Adair et al., 2004); as an egalitarian culture, U.S. Americans are also regularly encouraged to share feelings with others and value emotional support (Burlinson & Mortenson, 2003). These findings, therefore, can be interpreted as evidence showing that although American negotiators are more subject to correspondence bias, this does not necessarily preclude them from pursuing cooperatively-oriented goals; from another angle, American negotiators may perceive greater agency in both the counterpart and themselves in taking actions toward a mutually satisfying outcome. This study supports the assumption that due to the mixed-motive nature of negotiation, negotiators often pursue contradicting goals concomitantly (Wilson & Putnam, 1990).

These findings also suggest that culture’s influence on goal pursuit is multiplex. On one hand, negotiation as a particular context may activate domain-specific knowledge structures that

are different across cultures (e.g., interest vs. power frame); on the other hand, situational factors (e.g., anger vs. compassion) may dictate competing behavioral tendencies. Consistent with the view of Chinese culture as favoring the *Middle Way* to competing influences (Cheung et al., 2003), the study found Chinese participants to place less importance on both competitively and cooperatively-oriented goals. However, given that the influence of anger on competitive goals was even stronger for Chinese than for U.S. Americans, such a middle way approach should not be interpreted as avoidance or non-action, but an effort to achieve balance between competition and cooperation. Recent research shows that the distributive tactics used by Chinese negotiators did not lead to smaller joint profit as those used by American negotiators did (Liu & Wilson, in press). Understanding the competition-cooperation dialectic, therefore, may better equip U.S. negotiators to negotiate more effectively with the Chinese.

Limitations

Like any research, this study has several limitations that constrain the generalizability of its findings. First, although manipulation of judgment of responsibility was successful, the study accomplished this goal by providing participants with standard responses given by a hypothetical counterpart rather than an actual person through face-to-face interaction. It may be important for future research to triangulate the current findings with interaction-based negotiation simulations. Second, we measured participants' interaction goals through self reports for an imagined subsequent negotiation. Although these one-time reports provide insights into participants' motivational tendencies in response to an emotion-inducing event, such tendencies may deviate in a less controlled environment where counterparts vary in their personal attributes. In addition, to capture the dynamic nature of interaction goals future research should measure interaction goals using alternative methods, such as stimulated recalls after face-to-face interactions, (see Keck & Samp, 2007).

Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the literature by being among the first to examine patterns of differences between Chinese and U.S. Americans in the process whereby social cognition, such as causal beliefs regarding the counterpart's behavior, influence negotiators' emotions, and consequently, their interaction goals. The study provides empirical support to existing theories and research but also generates new insights with regard to how culture influences the attributional process of emotion and motivation in negotiation.

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Footnotes

¹Participants' responses in the two bargaining roles are equally distributed within each culture and each manipulation condition. Although bargaining role has a significant effect on participants' causal attribution, emotion, as well as goals, these role-specific effects are equally distributed across cultural and manipulation conditions. To maintain a clear focus of the study on culture's main and moderating effects, bargaining role was excluded from this investigation.

²In this measure, gaining power refers to establishing a favorable interdependent relationship by asserting one's own BATNA (i.e., best alternatives to a negotiated agreement) and attacking the other's BATNA. Although the bargaining roles (employee vs. manager) entail differential legitimate power, the scenario was designed to leverage the two parties' relational power in that both parties were told to have BATNAs.

Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations for Judgment of Responsibility, Emotions, and Interaction**Goals*

Dependent Variables	Americans		Chinese		Independent Sample <i>t</i> -tests		
	<i>(N = 277)</i>		<i>(N = 237)</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Judgment of Responsibility	19.76	6.80	17.68	5.33	3.76	.00	.34*
Anger	3.52	1.39	2.43	1.15	9.58	.00	.85***
Compassion	2.89	1.03	3.32	1.20	-4.41	.00	.38*
To get a better deal than other party	5.04	1.10	4.71	1.11	3.31	.00	.30*
To attack the other's face	3.35	1.20	3.51	1.10	-1.52	.13	.14
To gain power over the other party	5.01	1.08	4.77	1.19	2.48	.01	.21*
To maximize both parties' profit	5.73	1.05	5.89	1.00	-1.71	.09	.15
To enhance the other's face	4.76	1.07	4.47	1.11	3.04	.00	.38*
To promote a positive relationship	5.71	.84	5.45	.95	3.22	.00	.29*

Note. * $.20 < d < .50$, small effect size; ** $.50 < d < .80$, medium effect size; *** $d > .80$, large effect size

Table 2

The Mediated Effects of Judgment of Responsibility on Interaction Goals through Anger and Compassion from Bootstrapping Tests

Dependent Variables	<u>Independent Variable (manipulated)</u>			<u>Mediating Variables</u>	
	<u>Judgment of Responsibility</u>			<u>Anger</u>	<u>Compassion</u>
	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	Direct Effect
Competitively-oriented Interaction Goals					
To get a better deal than other party	.02 [*]	.01	.01 ^{***}	.15 ^{***}	
To attack the other's face	.04 ^{***}	.03 ^{**}	.02 ^{***}	.18 ^{***}	
To gain power over the other party	.03 ^{***}	.02 [*]	.01 ^{***}	.15 ^{***}	
Cooperatively-oriented Interaction Goals					
To maximize both parties' profit	.01	.01	-.00		.05
To enhance the other's face	-.02 ^{**}	-.02 [*]	-.01 ^{**}		.13 ^{**}
To promote a positive relationship	-.01 [*]	-.01 [*]	.00		-.01

All entries in this table are unstandardized regression coefficients. $N = 498$.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Culture's Moderating Effects on the a Path ($X \rightarrow M$) of the Mediation Model ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$)

	Direct Effects			Conditional Indirect	
	Judgment of	Culture	Culture x	Effects ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$)	
	Responsibility (X)	(W)	Responsibility	Am.	Ch.
Mediator (M)					
Anger	.06 ^{***}	-1.60 ^{***}	.04 ⁺		
Dependent Variables (Y)					
To get a better deal	.00	-.52	.02	.01 [*]	.01 ^{**}
To attack the other's face	.03 [*]	.36	.01	.01 ^{***}	.02 ^{***}
To gain power over the other	.01	-.68 [*]	.03 ⁺	.01 ^{**}	.01 ^{**}
Mediator (M)					
Compassion(Y)	-.04 ^{***}	.81 [*]	-.03		
Dependent Variables					
To maximize both profit	.02 [*]	.77 [*]	-.03 [*]	-.00	-.00
To enhance the other's face	-.02 [*]	-.37	-.00	-.01 ^{**}	-.01 ^{**}
To promote a positive relation	-.01	.07	-.02	-.00	-.00

All entries in this table are unstandardized regression coefficients. $N = 498$.

⁺ $p < .10$, ^{*} $p < .05$, ^{**} $p < .01$, ^{***} $p < .001$.

Table 4

Culture's Moderating Effects on the b Path ($M \rightarrow Y$) of the Mediation Model ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$)

Dependent Variables (Y)	Direct Effects				Conditional Indirect Effects ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$)	
	Responsibility (X)	Emotion (M)	Culture (W)	Culture x Emotion	Am.	Ch.
Mediator (M) = Anger						
To get a better deal	.00	.11*	-.28	.03	.01*	.01*
To attack the other's face	.03**	.19***	.01	.16*	.02**	.03***
To gain power over the other	.02*	.09 ⁺	-.53*	.15 ⁺	.01 ⁺	.02**
Mediator (M) = Compassion						
To maximize both profit	.01	.01	-.06	.04	-.00	-.00
To enhance the other's face	-.02**	.19**	-.31	-.03	-.01*	-.01*
To promote relationship	-.02**	.02	-.23	-.02	-.00	-.00

All entries in this table are unstandardized regression coefficients. $N = 498$.

⁺ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.