

# Comparative Study of International Negotiations Between Developed Countries and Africa from a North-South Cooperation Perspective

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**Abstract.** The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the evolution of the "major changes unseen in a century," intensifying the power and information asymmetry between Northern and Southern countries in international negotiations and deepening the hierarchical structure of international society. This paper compares the "logic of consequentiality" and the "logic of appropriateness" adhered to by different developed countries during negotiations. It also analyzes the "high-context culture" and "low-context culture" exhibited by individuals in negotiations. Through this, a qualitative model is established, and case studies are conducted to discuss the differences in negotiation thinking between Northern countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Japan with Africa, aiming to provide insights and references for the international negotiation practices of Global South.

**Keywords:** North-South cooperation, international negotiations, developed countries, Africa

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## 1. Introduction

The Treaty of Westphalia established the tradition of resolving international conflicts and fostering international cooperation through international negotiations [1]. After World War II, the norms of prioritizing negotiations over initiating conflicts to safeguard national interests gradually took shape. As North-South inequality intensified, new trends have emerged in international negotiations. Negotiations aimed at controlling or resolving conflicts have increased, such as those between Russia and NATO, the United States, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) [2]. Additionally, non-state actors such as international organizations, industry associations, and multinational corporations are increasingly participating in international negotiations. Moreover, the inequality and asymmetry in negotiations between Northern countries and Global South are becoming more pronounced [3]. Therefore, studying negotiation cases between Northern and Southern countries is crucial for Global South to strive for more equitable rights in negotiations. This paper attempts to conduct case studies and paradigm induction on negotiations between developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and France with African countries, providing references for Global South in participating in international negotiations.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

International negotiations involve both subjects and objects. International negotiation is an inter-subjectivity process in which multiple subjects communicate within a limited time to ultimately achieve common goals [4]. This paper focuses on the individual as the "first image" in international relations and the state as the "second image," conducting a binary matrix analysis [5].

### 2.1. Dimensions of National-Level Analysis in International Negotiations

National behavior in negotiations is always driven by different logical thinking—one based on rational calculation of the consequences of the behavior to determine whether to carry it out. This pre-emptive logic of expected outcomes and preference for gains is known as the "logic of consequentiality." The other emphasizes that national behavior should adhere to international law, norms, and conventions and should align with the nation's legitimate identity in the international community. This logic holds

that the reputation a nation builds in negotiations is far more important than maximizing gains in a single negotiation; this is the "logic of appropriateness" [6]. In this logic, negotiators are driven not only by material interests and preferences but also by beliefs and values, constructing their identity and role in the negotiation process [7]. These two logics are not mutually exclusive in international negotiations but are hierarchically integrated. During the Sino-British negotiations on Hong Kong, the last Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, insisted on promoting the "democratization of Hong Kong," reflecting the "logic of consequentiality" driven by short-term interests. At the same time, Patten's efforts to seek international public support reflected the "logic of appropriateness" [8]. Specifically, the differences between these two logics are as follows:

**Table 1.** Comparative Analysis of Dual Negotiation Logics

	<b>Logic of consequentiality</b>	<b>Logic of Appropriateness</b>
<b>Paradigm Attribution</b>	Realism	Constructivism
<b>Goal Pursuit</b>	Interests	Reputation
<b>Fundamental Element</b>	Material	Idea

## 2.2. Analysis of International Negotiation Dimensions at the Individual Level

At the individual level, previous studies have predominantly employed "rational choice" theory to analyze the behavior of negotiating parties and the negotiation process between them [9]. However, humans have bounded rationality, and representatives from different countries often exhibit negotiation styles closely related to their national character in numerous negotiation practices.

We can refer to the distinction between "high-context cultures" and "low-context cultures" in cultural anthropology to assess individual negotiation styles based on nationality. Hall posits that high-context cultures prioritize collectivism over individual achievements. In high-context cultures, communities familiar with each other develop a concise, suggestive mode of communication within the group, where individuals have a high sensitivity to behavior. Tradition, rituals, and history are also highly valued. Many characteristics of cultural behavior in high-context cultures, such as individual roles and expectations, do not require extensive or meticulously considered explanations.

In low-context cultures, communication between members must be more explicit, direct, and detailed, as individuals are not required to know each other's history or background, and communication is not necessarily determined by a long-term relationship between the speakers. Low-context communication involves more direct signals, where the meaning of signals is more dependent on the spoken text itself rather than on interpreting subtler or unspoken cues [10]. This dimension is reflected in negotiations as follows:

**Table 2.** Comparison of Two Contextual Cultures

	<b>High-Context Culture</b>	<b>Low-Context Culture</b>
<b>Language Characteristics</b>	Implicit	Descriptive
<b>Semantic Features</b>	Vague	Precise
<b>Textual Features</b>	Inductive Text	Deductive Text
<b>Grammatical Features</b>	Simple Sentences	Complex Sentences

## 3. Case Studies

The following sections will analyze negotiation cases involving United States, United Kingdom, France, and Japan in their dealings with African nations, using a binary matrix at both the national and individual levels.

### 3.1. Representative Case of U.S. Negotiations with Africa: Low-Context Logic of Consequentiality

A classic case of the U.S. negotiations with Africa is the Camp Lemonnier case. Camp Lemonnier is the only permanent military base of the U.S. in Africa and serves as a hub for humanitarian operations in the region. In 2013, the government of Djibouti announced the reopening of lease negotiations with the U.S. on the grounds of a domestic land shortage. Subsequently, the U.S. Department of Defense engaged in a year-long negotiation with Djibouti's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the perspective of negotiation context, the U.S. side made clear demands regarding rent, lease duration, and the operational scope of the U.S. forces. Additionally, the U.S. assessed difficult-to-measure negotiation objectives, such as the environmental impact of Camp Lemonnier on surrounding areas, using a graded scale. The final agreement was signed in 2014, granting the U.S. a 20-year lease on Camp Lemonnier, with an option to extend for another 10 years. In exchange, the U.S. agreed to invest \$1.4 billion in Djibouti's infrastructure projects over the next decade [11]. The precise semantic style and clear demands reflect the low-context characteristics of the U.S. in this negotiation. Furthermore, the U.S. side gave little consideration to factors related to legitimacy and international public opinion, which are elements of identity recognition in the international community, demonstrating a logic

of consequentiality focused on national interests. The U.S. negotiators tend to adopt a forceful language style, using precise, legalistic language, and support their positions with factual evidence. They often lack patience in negotiations, striving to achieve quick results to respond to domestic public pressure.

### 3.2. Representative Case of U.K. Negotiations with Africa: Low-Context Logic of Appropriateness

A classic case of British negotiations in Africa is the Volta River Project, initiated by the British colonial government and the Gold Coast government (now Ghana) in 1949. The project faced structural obstacles from the start, such as cultural differences between the British and Ghanaians, power asymmetries, and nationalist sentiments, leading to negotiations that lasted over a decade. Throughout the marathon stalemate, the British side consistently worked alongside their negotiation counterparts, fostering relationships and bridging cultural and language differences, ultimately securing the signing of an agreement and establishing a long-term partnership with Ghana. In 1962, the two sides formed a joint venture, the Volta River Authority (VRA), responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Volta River Dam. Ghana agreed to repay 80% of the project costs to the U.K. and the U.S. over 50 years and to export electricity to neighboring countries at preferential prices [12]. The agreement reflects the U.K.'s exploitation of Ghana, but the British side's legal-oriented approach, precise language, and strict boundary-setting, characteristic of a low-context style, were recognized by Ghana. At the same time, British negotiators tend to maintain long-term partnerships with their counterparts, enhancing the legitimacy of their actions, which reflects a distinct "logic of appropriateness."

### 3.3. Representative Case of Japanese Negotiations with Africa: High-Context Logic of Consequentiality

A classic case of Japanese negotiations with Africa is the Olkaria Geothermal Power Plant Project in Kenya. The tender prequalification document issued by the Kenya Electricity Generating Company outlined the scope of work, qualification criteria, and evaluation methods. The Japanese side provided detailed responses to each requirement in the tender document. Ultimately, Mitsubishi Corporation and Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems won the cooperation rights for the project with a bid of 40 billion yen (approximately 360 million USD) [13]. In this case, the Japanese side pursued their goal of winning the contract with a clear logic of consequentiality. However, in negotiations with the Kenya Electricity Generating Company, the Japanese side employed implicit, suggestive communication, leaving room for compromise on both sides. This patient approach to silence or compromise, seeking mutual benefit through gentle and ambiguous language, reflects the Japanese style of "hiding a needle in cotton."

### 3.4. Representative Case of French Negotiations with Africa: High-Context Logic of Appropriateness

A classic case of French negotiations in Africa is the solar power plant project in Burkina Faso. In 2019, France signed a financing agreement worth 24.2 million euros with Burkina Faso to establish a solar power plant expected to generate 33 megawatts of electricity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This project is an important component of France's strategy to promote green growth and climate action in Africa [14]. This strategy reflects a logic of appropriateness, as it involves making concessions in negotiations to foster long-term cooperation. France tends to build trust and cooperation with African countries, respecting their sovereignty and needs, and offering competitive and sustainable solutions. French negotiators often leverage soft power advantages to influence African countries with their values, and they demonstrate considerable patience in dealing with complexity and uncertainty, which reflects a high-context style.

### 3.5. Summary

In summary, the binary matrix of different countries' participation in international negotiations is as follows:

Table 3: Matrix of National Negotiation Types

	<b>Logic of Consequentiality</b>	<b>Logic of Appropriateness</b>
<b>High-Context</b>	Japan	France
<b>Low-Context</b>	United States	United Kingdom

## 4. Conclusion

As the "major changes unseen in a century" continue to accelerate, Southern countries, including China, have become important participants in international negotiations. Global South possesses diverse cultures and rich histories, yet its values and soft power

are often underrepresented in negotiations with Northern countries. To reduce the asymmetry in negotiations with the North, Southern countries can improve their strategies in the following ways:

1. Adopting the Logic of Appropriateness: By setting aside short-term conflicts with negotiating counterparts, respecting and accommodating the legitimate interests and concerns of the opposing party, Southern countries can build long-term partnerships. This approach can enhance their reputation and credibility on the international stage.

2. Cultivating a More Pragmatic Negotiation Style and Professionalism: Focusing on practical benefits and using data and logic to strengthen negotiation advantages is crucial. As seen in the practices of the United States and Japan, where they prioritize tangible outcomes over ideology, Southern countries should emphasize data collection and scientific reasoning over personal emotions during negotiations. This approach helps to increase efficiency and reduce misunderstandings and conflicts.

Moreover, as demonstrated by China's balanced patience and decisiveness during its negotiations to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), flexibly adapting negotiation strategies according to the changing dynamics and offers from counterparts can help seize opportunities and pursue development [15]. As the "Global Development Initiative" (GDI) continues to deepen on the international stage, Global South will gradually gain more experience in international negotiations, leading to more equal and diverse cooperation between the Southern and Northern countries.

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