

The Emerging and Construction of Individualistic Identity in Modern China: Negotiation and Conflict Between the Emerging Individualistic and the Traditional Ideological Discourses

Jia Yuxin, Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin PR China

Jia Xuelai, Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin PR China

1 Introduction: Premises and Argument

The basic premises of this paper are: (1) Identity is co-created by self and others through communication. Where communication differs in terms of not only *what* but also *how*, social reality itself becomes subject to question. (2) The newly emerging discourse which makes up the component of the individualistic identity negotiates, conflicts and competes with the more established traditional discourse and in the process of conflict and negotiation, the emerging individualistic identity asserts and reasserts its right, entitlement, identity, and establishes itself in terms of ideological discourse or values, beliefs, and norms, and ways and styles of communication.

The paper primarily examines and analyzes the negotiation and conflict between the two ideological discourses in the soccer sports world in China. However, what happens in the soccer world reflects social reality at large, as the metaphor goes, “the small soccer field is the society at large and the society is a big soccer field.” Although individualistically oriented, the newly emerging identity may or may not be the same as the individualistic identity in the western society as it is encouraged by the government within the framework of the traditional collectivism orientation.

This paper regards the negotiation and conflict between the competing ideological discourses as a complex intercultural communication process within the same dominant cultural context and, on the one hand, according to Gumperz (1982:3) where communicative conventions and symbols of social identity differ, the social reality itself becomes subject to question. Communication in terms of both what and how including norms or conventions for styles, strategies and social reality are part of and serve to maintain an ideology which takes on

a historical life of its own. This implicates the assumption that conventions or norms, stylistic mode of communication and other symbols of social and cultural identity, as well as the what is conveyed in communication once change over time and space, culture and social reality, the ideological discourse or social reality they serve to maintain change. This paper explicates how the new ideological discourse inherently enters interactional communication with the more established traditional discourse to create an intercultural or intracultural space in which the two opposing discourses compete, conflict, and negotiate with each other and the new discourse asserts and reasserts its right, entitlement, and identity. The authors believe that it is not without setbacks and frustrations the new individualistic identity emerges and constructs itself in the process of its conflict and negotiation with the well established traditional discourse.

The paper builds on the study of over a dozen cases during the long years of controversy over the ideological discourses in the sports world in China, particularly over the incident of Hao Haidong's "attack" on Milu, the coach of the national soccer team, and the conflict and negotiation between thousands of people and Shen Xiangfu and others that represent the government and the traditional ideology and the social reactions to the conflict and negotiation throughout 2000-2004. This paper accounts for how the newly ideological discourse represented by Hao Haidong, the most famous soccer star in China and those who identify with him enters into face-to-face conflict and negotiation with the more established discourse represented by Mi Lu, Shen Xiangfu and others, and the government officials of the China Soccer Association, and people who identify with them to create a "battle field" for its right and identity. The long years of debate, conflict, and negotiation with the more established discourse which makes efforts to prevent the deviation of the newly emerging discourse towards the individualistic value and to overcome anything that may be called the result of the Western influence, reveals the complexity of current Chinese social reality. With the eventual establishment and construction of the individualistic identity, the paper assumes that on the one hand, due to the influence of free-market economy and open-door policy, the development of individualistic identity with the individualistic ideological discourse as its component is inevitable. However, on the other hand, in its formation process, its development cannot but meet oppositions and challenges from the more established traditional ideological discourse.

2 The Emerging of New Identity in its Conflict and Negotiation with the Traditional Ideological Discourse

Viewed from a sociological and communication perspective, who we are or our identity is part of the message we convey and interpret. If we attempt to exchange and interpret

messages, we must include an account of identities. As we probably know, we behave the way we do, because that is the only thing a person like us could do. We just could not do otherwise. *Self* or “*Who I am*” or “*Who you are*” functions just like an invisible frame, within which we act normally. However, different cultures and different groups within a dominant culture conceptualize self in different ways and the differences are enacted, through, among other things, communication. Where communication in terms of conventions, styles, and the message content differs, social reality becomes subject to question. The implication is: Where new identity emerges and speaks out for its right and legitimacy, conflict, competition, and negotiation between the newly emerging ideological discourse and the more established traditional discourse will occur. “Identities are enacted in social interaction through communication and may be defined as those messages” (Martin, 1993:46). **[This is not in Ref]** Thus, what and how one communicates expresses one’s ideological discourse in terms of values, beliefs, and communication conventions and norms, which enters into the making of one’s identity.

2.1 “Who Am I?” and “Who Is He?”

On June 4, 2004, *Sports Newsweek* carried an article entitled *Who Am I?* This is the identity problem facing Hao Haidong, the most famous star at his time in the soccer world of China, and millions of people including soccer fans in the society. What role is he expected to play in the team as he is at the same time a member of the national team, the coach of the team of Shida Soccer Club, and the boss of a soccer club? How is he expected to behave in relation with the coach of the national team, with other members of the team, and with the members from his own club who are his “disciples” in the national team? How should he be addressed? Should he coach his “disciples” in the national team? “Who am I?” Hao Haidong was puzzled. “Who is he?” becomes subject to question for others as well.

However, more than that, there are even more serious and pervasive questions about his identity. Far too many people of the country whether they liked him or not often ask, “Who is this guy that dares to challenge the coach and the China Soccer Association which was supported by the government and which represents the long-standing traditional ideology of the country?” The question “Who is Hao Haidong?” and “How should he behave?” have become pervasive questions hanging over millions of people in recent years.

To answer the question “Who is he?”, we should examine and explicate how he interacts through communication with others, what he says and how, how he is related to others, and how others around him think about him. The study of this will be of importance to the

understanding of the social reality in modern China: A new identity is emerging in China and it arises through communication, and it plays an ever increasing important role in today's China.

2.2 “Who Am I?” : Hao Haidong’s Assertion of Individualistic Identity

Identity is created through communication and interaction in the society. However, in Hao Haidong’s case, the interaction and communication through which Hao Haidong asserted his identity were in the form of what people regarded as an “attack.” It was through his “attack” against Milu, the coach of the China Soccer Team, supported by the China Soccer Association, Hao Haidong first asserted his individualistic identity and this threw him into conflict and negotiation with the more established traditional ideological discourse for years.

In recent years, there has been a great concern about the China Soccer Team as it failed the expectations of soccer fans and millions of others in recent competitions with some teams of Asian countries for the two places in the World-Cup to be held in the fall of 2001. Then, Milu, (acronym), coach of the China Soccer Team, became the target of complaint, which usually happens to almost all the coaches in the world when the teams they coach are in trouble. At this juncture, Hao Haidong voiced his criticism in a TV interview against the ways in which Milu trained the Chinese team, which was followed by or his talk invited a heated debate for and against him both inside and outside the sports world. Anyway, Hao’s criticism was generally regarded as a surprise “attack” at Milu by quite a number of people. Hao’s open “attack” did cause a stir for a period of time in the sports world. In fact, Hao Haidong asserted his identity through his “attack” and the different reactions from the people to his “attack” reflect to different extent how much they identify with him or otherwise, i.e. with the China Soccer Association supported by the government.

The incident of Hao Haidong’s “attack” on the coach was circulated via media of different newspapers and interviews on TV. Here the one we are using for our analysis was reported in *Sports Newsweek*, May 25, 2001. This report was entitled “I Must Say What I Want to Say”, in which Hao Haidong voiced his severe criticism against the Coach of the National Soccer Team. This is really rare as in the Chinese situation, openly “attacking” the authority is considered to be abnormal, especially when the Coach was supported by officials in the China Soccer Association, and Hao’s criticism was hence regarded as one spearing at the Association behind which stood the government. Hao was considered to have chosen a wrong time, a wrong place, and said what he was in no position to say. Or his behavior fell into the category “名不正言不顺” (What one says is not in keeping with his social position). He voiced his criticism when other famous players, such as Jihai Sun and Anhua Zhang just held back what they

wanted to say.

The phenomenon that a soccer player stands out to voice different opinions and directly confronting and criticizing the coach in the public or through the media rarely happens in the Chinese cultural context where such behavior is regarded as deviation and hence is sure to invite criticism.

Briefly, in his criticism, Hao Haidong in the first place, made his attitude towards the coach clear: He could no longer keep his mouth shut even though many others did. He had to say what he wanted to say. Second, Hao criticized the Coach almost in every aspect of his coaching including his principle for using players, the way of coaching, the planning and scheduling for training, etc. Thirdly, Hao particularly pointed out that the Coach had prejudice against those competent soccer players claiming they were not behaving properly just because they had their own way of saying and doing things. The Coach did not let them enter into the national team. And those who were lucky to be chosen as members of the national team were seldom given chances to play in important games. Even worse, by doing so, Hao Haidong was believed to have directed his criticism to the China Soccer Association which represented the government.

What we would like to mention is the fact that the tone or style in which Hao voiced his opinions and criticism was not in any way acceptable. Hao was direct, confrontational, straightforward, and forthright, and what and how he said might sound rude to authorities and this is certainly anything but usual in a highly hierarchical society.

Hao Haidong's unusual behavior did puzzle the people both inside and outside the sports world. "Who is Hao Haidong?" That was the question on their mind and lips.

Viewed from the perspective of communication, according to W. Barnett Pearce, the *self* constitutes part of the communication process by which we make our social world. Communication including what and how (norms, styles, strategies, and what not) produces our *selves* and our *selves* get to be recognized through communication by others. However, it is defined in contrast with other *selves*. This self then programs the way we communicate and accounts for the fact that we have to speak the way we do because persons like us cannot do otherwise. This self usually functions as an invisible "frame" within which we act normally. However, when somebody does and says things and in ways unlike him/her, the self becomes visible. Then people may be puzzled or even worse, people are most likely to ask, "Who is s/he?" (Pearce, 1994: 248-289). Or in the Chinese way, "Who do you think you are?"

Unfortunately, this is the case with Hao Haidong—"Who Is He?" was called into question. Some people, including those in the China Soccer Association questioned Hao's

self-identity. At least, he might feel great pressure from the society as he acted the way he did simply to become the self he wanted to be. To explain why Hao behaved the way he did, we must include an account of what his *self* is expected to be, not what he wanted his *self* to be. Stated differently, more often than not, in the Chinese context, one's behavior is not dictated by his or her personal or true self but by his or her social self, in public interactions in particular. Anyway, identification rather than individuation is most predominant in the traditional Chinese cultural context.

2.3 “Who is He?” : Reactions from the Emerging and the Traditional Ideological Discourses

The voice of criticism from Hao Haidong met with pros and cons. Reactions to Hao's open “attack” at the coach immediately followed via different media. In fact, different people had different say. Some argued that Hao had made a very bad mistake, claiming he should not have launched such an “attack” at the coach since behind Milu stood the China Soccer Association and the government, and especially it happened at a time when the top ten Asian teams were going to meet and fight for the two places in the forthcoming World Cup 2001 to be held in South Korea and Japan.

Many people, including thousands of thousands of soccer fans, however, stood on Hao's side, saying Hao had just taken the words out of their mouth. The head of the local soccer club, Shide, Dalian, which Hao was a member officially declared that there was nothing wrong with what Hao had said, for (1) Hao told the truth; (2) he did not in anyway violate the law; and (3) he had good intention: he said what he had said merely for the sake of the national soccer team. This, however, “irritated” some people and hence made the already hot debate hotter.

Then the China Soccer Association, the administrative organ of the government, through the voice of an information official of the Association at a press conference, expressed their official disapproval of Hao's behavior, claiming that his behavior was not appropriate. The newspaperman pointed out that Hao had chosen the wrong time and the wrong occasion to publicize his wrong opinions as (1) he placed himself in an opposing position to the Coach and the Association standing behind him, (2) the national team was facing a critical moment and his “attack” may likely violate the fighting morale of the team, and (3) the way in which he voiced his criticism was not appropriate. At the same time, the official said that the Association would be working out some measures in connection with Hao's behavior as his behavior had brought about bad influences. In fact, as *Sports Newsweek* reported, Hao's conduct had thrown the Association into an awkward position.

2.4 The Traditional Ideological Discourse: “What is Wrong with Hao Haidong?”

Hot upon the heel of the official statement of the Association, those who had chosen to stand against Hao Haidong seemed to be more excited as they felt that they had gained official support. Some went as far as to support the government’s criticism with ethical and moral principle:

The following is a critical comment entitled “What is Wrong with Hao Haidong?” carried on the 4th page of *Sports Newsweek*, June 18, 2001. This comment analyzed Hao Haidong’s mistakes in detail in terms of ethical and moral codes. In general, the essence of this comment is as follows:

The mistakes Hao Haidong and those who identify with him have made (in the eye of the more established traditional discourse) are:

(1). China is a hierarchical society, in which all its members have different social positions and status, and accordingly have different roles to play. This can be summed up in the Chinese saying “名正言顺” (Speak what one’s social position allows him/her to say or speak what is appropriate to one’s social position).

(2). Hao’s inappropriate behavior is the result of his disregard of his social role and social status in the society. He forgets who he is. He has committed moral and ethical impropriety which his social role does not in anyway allow him to. This can be summed up in the Chinese saying “名不正言不顺” (What one says is not appropriate since it is not in keeping with his or her social position).

(3). By the extension of father-and-son relationship (the core relationship in Chinese interpersonal relationship), the coach is father, and by extension, teacher, and authority while Hao’s social roles are a son to a father, a student to a teacher, and an ordinary soccer player to the coach or authority.

(4). As a “son”, he shouldn’t have openly criticized his father, as a student, he shouldn’t have openly criticized his teacher, and as an ordinary soccer player, he shouldn’t have openly criticized his coach. He should have been obedient to his coach and the Association standing behind the coach.

(5). The phenomenon that Hao has openly criticized the coach and some people have even been openly standing on his side demonstrates that the society is “out of order”.

Now, Hao Haidong is directly facing the Soccer Association. According to the ideological discourse of the traditional Cultural identity, the typical example of which in this

case is the China Soccer Association and those people who identify with it, Hao Haidong failed to do what he was expected to do in the society as he viewed himself as an isolated and individualistic self. So, fundamentally speaking, Hao Haidong, No. 1 soccer player, erred on the side of how he should view himself and how he should behave appropriately in the Chinese interpersonal relationships and interactions.

The evaluation or devaluation of Hao Haidong's behavior was a social judgment that people around him made about him, the China Soccer Association and people who identify with it in particular. To judge his behavior by using "who speaks to whom, about what, when and where, for what purpose, and how" as cultural and social or simply appropriateness standard, his 'inappropriateness' could be multidimensional. The italicized elements in the appropriateness standard indicate his mistakes. That is, "*who* speaks to *whom*, about *what*, *when* and *where*, for *what purpose*, and *how*." Of these seven factors, Hao was inappropriate on six. Of all these seven factors, *who* and *whom* one speaks to are the most important factors in the Chinese context. And in the case of Hao Haidong, the identification of the real *self* of the speaker in relation to *whom* he was speaking seems to be the most dominant factor. So, in the eye of the traditional discourse, the question seems to be how Hao should have viewed himself in this particular situation. That is, he should solve the problem "Who Am I?"

3 The Construction and Establishment of Individualistic Identity in the Conflict and Negotiations between the Two Ideological Discourses

3.1 The Traditional and the Newly Emerging Ideological Discourses in Negotiation and Conflict

As mentioned earlier, "Where communicative conventions and symbols of social identity differ, the social reality itself becomes subject to question. On the other hand, however, both talk and social reality are part of and serve to maintain an ideology which takes on a historical life of its own" (Gumperz, 1982:3).

Viewed in this light, we may just regard the interplay through communication between Hao Haidong and the coach of the national soccer team and the China Soccer Association standing behind him and those who identify with them as long years of conflict and negotiation between ideological discourses of the traditional collectivistic values and the emerging individualistic values. Of the two opposing values, one is represented by Hao Haidong and people who identify with him and the other represented by the coaches selected by the Association, behind which stands the government and the people who identify with them. It is in these long years of conflict and negotiation that the individualistic identity is step by step

constructed. Stated differently, it is through these negotiation and conflict of these two opposing and competitive ideological discourses, Hao Haidong and those who identify with him assert and construct their individualistic identity. And the construction is sure not without frustration and setbacks.

In general, we may regard the traditional ideological discourse as what is called the discourse of collectivistic ideology. This ideology emphasizes 'we' orientation or collective efforts and collective consciousness, in which is found the preference of the value of harmony, cooperation, interdependence, filial piety, the centeredness of authority or power-distance, group interest, obligation and responsibility according to social position and roles, obedience to authority, and non-confrontational and indirect way of communication, much care about face in terms of moral codes, and so on. In contrast the discourse of individualistic ideology may emphasize "I" orientation, or autonomy or self-actualization, in which is found the preference of the value of equality, independence, individual interest, individual initiative and individual decision making, difference and change, wealth, confrontational, assertive, and direct way of communication, less care about face, ambition, competitive consciousness, and so on.

As mentioned earlier, an individual's self-identity is co-created through communication, partly by the individual himself and partly by the social surroundings in which the person is located. Identification with others in the Chinese society is predominant in the construction of social and collectivistic identity. As we probably know, the collectivist cultures heavily depend on their in-group for support. So much so that the in-group becomes the major source of identity (Weber, 2001:26). Within this social structure, collective interests prevail over individual interests, identity is based on social networks, children learn to think in terms of "we," harmony is maintained, and direct confrontation is avoided (Hofstede, 2001). The collective or social identity in the Chinese culture has its own historical root. As Confucius thousands of years ago pointed out, "One should help others before one could establish himself." And today, long years after Confucian age, the popular saying, "I am for all and all for me" still operates as collective conscious for almost all the people's behavior.

However, individuation involves an entirely different process. Individuation brings about cognitive and social separation of an individual from his or her group or environment and provides the foundation for the acquisition of an individualistic orientation (Weber, 2001:25). According to Scollon and Scollon (1995:131), individualism is not something unique to the American continent. It has its roots in the western tradition going back to Socrates or to Jesus. There is a long tradition of emphasizing the separation of the individual from any other social commitments, especially in the pursuit of social or political goals. What is important is the fact

that these two facets of self-identity develop unequally, depending on how they are fostered culturally.

The case in point here is, on the one hand millions of soccer fans and others identify with Hao Haidong, and on the other, even more people, at the beginning of the controversy in particular, identify with the China Soccer Association, behind which stands the government. These two opposing and competing groups obviously are dictated by diverse ideological discourses with the more established ideological discourse representing the traditional cultural values, beliefs, and norms, or what we may call collectivistic values and the ideological discourse of the newly emerging group which represents the development or change of values, beliefs, and norms. The newly emerging group, of which Hao Haidong is a most exemplary member, is avowing and asserting its right, entitlement and identity by mobilizing individualistic values within or out of the framework of collectivism while the members of the more established are making efforts in propagating the traditional moral and ethical value to “battle” against or overcome the trend of individualism, which is considered by many to be the result of the Western influence.

In fact, more or less consciously or unconsciously, the government, due to the need of the development of free market economy and competitive consciousness, is not only allowing but encouraging diversity to grow and develop. The government’s intention, however, is to incorporate the growth of individualistic value into the framework of the value system of the more established traditional collectivism in the Chinese culture. But it is found extremely difficult for the government to strike a balance between the discourse of individualism and collectivism.

3.2 The Emergent Individualistic Identity as Social Reality

As the preceding part of this paper illustrates, the spokesman and his followers for the China Soccer Association attempted in one way or another to propose the traditional values and do’s and don’ts and lecture about what Hao Haidong was socially expected to do and what was not. However, Hao Haidong just went on his own way: He said what he thought right to say and did what he thought right to do. What is more, besides the Soccer Club of Dalian Shida to which he belonged, he received support from millions of soccer fans. As a result, the China Soccer Association, persuaded Milu to admit Hao Haidong and other players who were individualistically oriented in one way or another into the China soccer team to play for the nation.

Hao Haodong avowed and asserted his identity through his interaction with others and

in fact he spoke, though unconsciously, for many not merely inside the sports world to achieve their identity. In action, he mobilizes the individualistic values to achieve his right, position, and ambition. It is true that many people identify with him. The data analysis of the investigation of 24 graduate students (at the age of 22-25, 2 males and 22 females) we conducted may well support the fact that more and more people are becoming identified with the individualistic orientation represented by Hao Haidong. Of the 24 students, 11 said there was nothing wrong with Hao Haidong while 7 said that Hao Haidong was wrong. The other 6 said that Hai Haidong and the China Soccer Association might both have done something inappropriate. It is very interesting that the only two boys of these 24 both supported Hao Haidong saying that he was doing the right thing.

Among those 11 graduates who stood on Hao's side, Miss Wang claimed that it was not appropriate today to judge Hao's behavior by the traditional obedience-to-authority standard as it was based on the hierarchical order of father-and-son relationship. Blind obedience to authority today only leads to bad results. Obviously, individual initiative and thinking should be respected. One of the boys pointed out that the integration of the value of Western individualism such as independence, ambition, individual initiative, competition, change, difference and so on and the traditional value of collectivism, such as modesty, faithfulness, cooperative spirit, harmony, order, and so on is needed in modern China. Only the integration of these two values can make our soccer team strong. He used the Lakers case in the *NBA* as an example to support his viewpoint. He said that the Lakers were strong because Jackson, the coach, has introduced a Chinese non-action rationale into his way of coaching, particularly when he coaches Kobe, one of the most famous basketball player in *NBA*. Miss Li claimed the concept of traditional hierarchical order should give way to the development of equality and individual initiative should be given priority. Miss Hao, one of those who are for the China Soccer Association, claimed that Hao chose a wrong way to criticize the coach. He should not have done it through the media and he should not have been so confrontational. By criticizing the coach through TV interview, he caused the Association to lose face. Had he criticized the coach indirectly, the Association would not have lost face. The face of the authority should be respected if not lauded. Miss Guan pointed out that Hao created disorders in the sports world as he did not show respect to the authority. China team won't beat any others without discipline and order. And very interestingly, one girl said that the problem should have been solved in a round-about-way and by doing so, both of the faces could have been maintained and saved. Another one claimed that Hao made three mistakes: (1) he chose a wrong time; (2) he chose a wrong way; and (3) he chose a wrong target. Among the explanations

offered by those who took the middle road, the most typical is voiced by a girl who said that on the one hand Hao was too radical; and on the other hand the authority cared about their position and face too much.

The conflict and negotiation between these two opposing and competing ideological discourses as a social reality had been in existence and in competition for years. However, it is through official sources, *Sports Newsweek* on May 25, 2001, that the conflict or negotiation between these two opposing ideological discourses was officially publicized and began to draw people's attention. The negotiation between these two ideological discourses has continued and will surely persist over time both inside and outside the sports world. In this process, it seems that the voice for the newly emerging individualistic identity is for most of the time diminished by the voice of the more established traditional collectivistic discourse. It is especially the case when the new ideological discourse first openly avowed and asserted its right and identity in the year of 2001 in the sports field. However, the voice of individualistic discourse is getting louder and louder and by 2004, the conflict had become most acute and the individualistic discourse had become most distinct, persuading, and in fact developed to its extreme intensity.

4 The Essence of the Traditional Ideological Discourse

In 2004, three events concurrently took place: (1) China Olympic Soccer Team failed again in the Asian competition for the two places in the forthcoming Olympic Games to be held in Fall in Italy, 2004, and as a result, the coach is more than being questioned; (2) in connection with this failure, the important leaders of the China Soccer Association were facing an all-around crisis; and (3) almost at the same time, the China Soccer Team in the first three rounds of the selective group competition for the only two places in World Cup beat its opponents and in the first two rounds it was Hao Haidong alone that achieved the goals. As a result Hao Haidong was hailed a national hero and a savior of soccer in China. And hence the issue of conflict between him and those who identify with him and those who identify with the long established traditional ideology arose again.

4.1 Traditional Ideological Discourse vs. the Emerging Ideological Discourse

Very interestingly, these three events, like what happened in 2002, again involved three sides, Hao Haidong, whom we consider to be a typical example of the newly emerging individualistic identity, the coach, Shen Xiangfu, who was handpicked by the China Soccer Association and was known for his faithful obedience to the Association, and the China Soccer Association, both of whom we have regarded as the representative of the more established

traditional ideology. However, differences are salient between the events in 2004 and in 2001. In the first place, in 2004, the conflict or negotiation between these two ideological discourses is not started by Hao Haidong but by over 500,00 audience on the sports ground where the China Olympic Team failed in its competition with the Philippine Soccer Team which was considered to be the weakest team among all the Asian teams and as a result, all of these audience exploded with the shouting of “Depost” to Shen Xiangfu, or “Shen Xiangfu be laid off.” Shen Xiangfu was the coach of the Olympic Team and was famous for faithfully carrying out the instructions issued by the China Association. Whereas Hao Haidong was lauded as a hero of the nation, a savior of the China soccer as he himself alone achieved the goals in the two games in the selective group competitions in Asian area. All of the audience simply “exploded” their identification with him in one voice.

Why had the the China Soccer Team repeated the frustrating cycle of “fight-and-lose-and-fight-again-and-lose-again” for years? This is the question that had frustrated the Chinese for years and this is the question the China Soccer Association had to answer to the people right now. As the Association failed to overcome this frustrating cycle, it was facing unprecedented attacks from all corners of life. To help find answers to this question, the official paper, *Sports Newsweek* organizes an overview series, discussing this matter hotly.

In essence, sports games, in particular, soccer games, as it is the biggest, and the most exciting game, a game of integrating all skills, a game that is the most money consuming, and a game that is the most involving—involving people almost from all walks of life beyond space and time, is a microcosmic society. As the metaphor goes, “the soccer field is the society itself while the society is a big soccer field.” Soccer games and people’s response to them in fact reflect social and cultural reality. It is a place where cultural values, beliefs, and norms are deeply rooted. Whatever happens in the society happens in the soccer field and whatever happens in the soccer field happens in the society. Viewed in this light, the conflict and negotiation between the traditional ideological discourse and the newly emerging ideological discourse in soccer sports field go beyond the boundary of the sports field. They are themselves cultural and social reality.

This throws light upon the fact that what happens in the sports field should be analyzed and studied from the cultural and social perspective: Where communication including styles and ways of speaking and other conventions and symbols of identity differs in the sports world, social and cultural reality become subject to question. Or stated differently, where the opposing cultural and social identities backed up by the different ideological discourses come to negotiate, compete, and conflict through communication with each other in the sports world,

social reality may undergo changes.

We argue that the conflict and negotiation of these two opposing and competing discourses on the sports field through communication may demonstrate that (1) what happens in the sports field is a social reality and should be studied and analyzed in the cultural and social perspective, (2) soccer games reflect, like a mirror, the collective consciousness of the nation, the ethnicity, society, or a group at a given time, which may stimulate the growth of or awaken a new identity and promote its development, and (3) the identification with the newly emerging group or the new ideological discourse that enters into the making of a new cultural and social identity may come to its prime at the time when all of the audience in the sports field exploded with their shouting, either lauding their heroes for their best performance or with their shouting of “depose” to the coach. Or stated differently, the traditional ideological discourse or the identity representing it may find itself in danger, or conflict at least, when faced with the exploding of anger from the thousands of soccer fans when they were disappointed with the players on the spot.

The article “The Officialdom Culture is Eroding Chinese Soccer” written by Huang Jianxiang and published on *Sports Newsweek* on March 26, 2004 in the wake of the three events mentioned above, may well serve to confirm our assumption about how the conflict and negotiation between the two opposing discourses have been going on for so long and how the new ideological discourse that constitutes a new identity has emerged. In particular it exposes the true nature or the essence of the traditional ideological discourse.

In his article, Huang describes two kinds of cultures or two kinds of ideological discourses that exist in the sports world, which fits in well with the two ideological discourses mentioned in this paper. These two opposing ideological discourses meet, oppose and compete with each other in the sports field with the emerging one struggling for its right, entitlement, and identity.

On the one hand, there is the newly emerging discourse or what Huang calls the *emerging* (the authors) soccer culture which is defined as “the tacit consensus among soccer players and soccer game fans achieved through mutual interaction and feedback” (*Sports Newsweek*: A2, March 26). According to Huang, soccer games are like a mirror reflecting the collective consciousness of a given nation, ethnicity, society and the age. It may thus provide an opportunity for the members of the society to wake up, reflect upon the past, change, and progress. If we believe, as some cultural anthropologists claim, that culture can be regarded as the deposit of knowledge, values, beliefs, actions, attitude, meanings, relations, as well as collective characters or personalities of a given group, ethnicity, or nation, we may claim that when these collective characters, personalities, etc. are displayed in the sports field in the form

of most crude and competitive soccer games, the cultural explosion will be heard and felt. Culture, when found in such a full explosion, may best display its identity to the world.

On the other hand, there, however, exists what is called “officialdom culture” or a culture that is influenced by the traditional officialdom system, which places authority at the core, regards political interest as the objective, practices nepotism in using people, and which does not allow the existence of individualistic orientation including individualistic initiative and individualistic competitive consciousness.

While the China Olympic Team was repeating its failure in competition with other Asian teams and thus losing the opportunity to enter the Olympic Games, and almost simultaneously, Hao Haidong alone scored two goals in the first two games in the selective group competitions for World-Cup and thus becoming a national hero, Shen Xiangfu, the coach and the China Soccer Association standing behind him whom we consider to be the representative of the more established traditional discourse became the target of “attacks.” But Hao Haidong, whom we consider to be the representative of the newly emerging discourse received more and more support.

Traditional Chinese cultural discourse is widely known for its value of linear hierarchy underlying family structure, political structure and the structures of other social world, which are in fact the extension of family structure. The hierarchical system is characterized by authority centeredness which stresses the practice of subordinates’ loyalty to the rulers and a various dominance-obedience relationships. Power distance as such is specified in the society by clearly defined roles, obligations, responsibilities, and customs underlying behavior including interactions between and among people of different social positions at various levels.

While the emerging cultural discourse as mentioned earlier, runs counter to the traditional one, known for its defying authority, power distance and proposing equality and the right of individuality, individual personality, and its identity, as well as rationalism in doing things. The emerging ideological discourse is constructing and establishing itself through direct, confrontational, and assertive communication, as in the case of Hao Haidong in this paper. This newly emerging discourse is less established and vulnerable in its beginning stage but it is vital and is sure to come into being.

4.2 Challenge from the Emerging Discourse: What is Wrong with the Traditional Ideology

In the ensuing interplay between these two discourses in 2004, we can also trace the conflict and negotiation between these two ideological discourses, one, mainly represented by Shen

Xiangfu, the China Soccer Association, and people who identify with them, and the other represented millions of millions of people. Shen Xiangfu, in his most difficult days, was still loyal to the authoritative Association, faithfully fulfilling his obligations and shouldering responsibilities for his leaders or the Association, and sticking to the traditional way of thinking by persisting in his old way of training. Hao Haidong in contrast still stood where he persisted in doing what he thought was right. From the official sources, *Sports Newsweek* in particular, we may observe the trend of the negotiation, which, however, unlike the situation in 2001, which was in favor of the traditional discourse, was in favor of the development of the newly emerging discourse, as the China Olympic Team failed again for the entrance competition for the forthcoming Olympic Games and at the same time, Hao Haidong, performed wonderfully in the Group Competition of Asian area for the World-Cup to be held in Athens, Italy.

This time, it was the more established traditional discourse that was faced with an immense rhetorical challenge from the newly emerging discourse rather than otherwise as in 2001. In the first place, Shen Xiangfu, the coach, was severely criticized by millions and millions of people for his stubborn loyalty and blind obedience to the authority, the China Soccer Association. Secondly, he followed what was called a conservative closed-in system of training. Thirdly, Shen Xiangfu followed the traditional relationship orientation in using the soccer players. Fourthly, facing the frustrating failure, Shen Xiangfu, instead of taking the initiative to resign which is usually the case with almost all the coaches in the world in difficult situation, according to the report, felt it his duty and obligation to shoulder the responsibility for the authority.

Shen Xiangfu, the coach, was handpicked by the China Soccer Association. One of the reasons for the Association to choose him was that he was loyal and faithful to the leaders in the Association and in fact throughout these years of his coaching, he closely followed the Association in every aspect of his work, such as in selecting players, making decisions, making plans, and so on. More often than not he sacrificed his individual interest and individual initiatives to carry out the leaders' instructions. In fact, he closely followed the authority in thinking, speaking and acting. In return, he was highly appreciated by the Association. Even in the days when the Association was in difficulty, his faithfulness to the authority was still highly valued. On March 24, 2004, there was a comment carried on *Sports Newsweek* in regard to evaluating Shen Xiangfu's behavior as a coach, which read:

In the afternoon of March 23, at the office meeting chaired by the chairman of the Association, Shen Xiangfu was evaluated as having three weak points and one strong

point. His only merit is that he has faithfully implemented orders and principles from the Association.

It is true in every sense of the word that it is obedience, loyalty to the authority rather than difference and individual initiative that is the standard according to which he selected team members and practiced his training throughout so many years. Obviously this is a typical traditional rationale of teaching and training. As a matter of fact, Shen's concept of training is influenced by Confucian ideology in education, in which the moral aspect rather than competence and skills are given priority.

The more established traditional ideology finds expressions in Shen Xiangfu's way of training which can be summed up in three Chinese characters “官, 关, 管”. These three characters are in fact homophones and, according to the principle of the formation of the Chinese characters, they are often semantically related one to another. The cultural meaning loaded in these three characters combined together can be decoded as the way or system telling how the rulers should govern the people in the traditional Chinese system. Historically and traditionally speaking, the Chinese system lacked a healthy law system, to a great extent, the running of the country did not depend on law but on the officials' or rulers' own judgment whether right or not and accordingly, “官, 关, 管” was regarded as the best way to control the subjects. In Chinese “官” (pronounced as “guan”) means government officials or rulers, whose mission is to *control* (管) the people. The officers or rulers were supposed to control or take care of the common people in a way a father controls or takes care of his children in his family. In this sense, officer, or “官” literally means officials whose job is to “control” or “take care” . What is special in this case is that “官” and “管” are homophonous in pronunciation and according to the Chinese rule for the formation of Chinese characters, homophones are often semantically related, thus “管” is the explanation of the function of “官”. That can account for the saying that in the Chinese officialdom system, “官” the *rulers* is “管” to *control*. Also, traditionally, the best way for a father in the family to discipline his sons who have misbehaved is to “close the door and teach him a lesson”, thus the popular practice of disciplining the students and trainees in schools as well as players in the sports field is to shut them off from all possible connections with and interference from outside.” In this sense, “关” has long become the most popular means of “管” in the traditional system of training, in the sports world in particular. However, this traditional disciplining way of training is suspect from the society. Soccer fans begin to criticize China Association for their reinforcing the closed-in system of training, (Ran Xiongfei, a newspaper reporter, criticized such a closed-in system of training,

sarcastically calling it “圈养” (close the players in and then discipline”) (*Sports Newsweek*, March 24, 2004). Even worse, Hongfeng regards this kind of closed-in training as the product of the thinking of the “concentration camp” (*Sports Newsweek*, March 24, 2004).

In regard to the training of the soccer players, Shen Xiangfu, under the direction of the China Soccer Association, it was reported in *Sports Newsweek*, March 24, 2004, emphasized training of the players not as individuals but as a group aiming at making use of the collective efforts to beat the opponents in competition, which ignores or even sacrifices the development of individual competence and initiatives and which obviously is the extension of the traditional Chinese cultural orientation. It was reported that in the comment entitled “A Dialogue with Shen Xiangfu” by Ran Xiongfei in *Sports Newsweek*, April 26, 2004, when Ran Xiongfei asked Shen Xiangfu, “As you are predetermined by your own character, the way you use the players aroused suspicion and, as a result, you are criticized for the fact that the players lacked individual initiatives and individuality. For example, you can hardly find such forwards in the team.” Shen openly admitted that it was his character to emphasize collective training even at the expense of the development of individual’s initiative and competence. He claimed “The Chinese players should be taught or instructed personally or by hand.” That is, according to Shen, as a coach, he should personally pass knowledge and skill because as individuals you can hardly expect them to creatively learn and practice the knowledge and skill, which obviously is a typical example of traditional rationale of teaching and training.

Not only was Shen Xiangfu stubbornly loyal and blindly obedient to the authority but he also felt obligated to shoulder responsibility for the authority. In the most difficult situations or when China Olympic Team was badly beaten, Shen, instead of choosing to resign as most western coaches would do in similar situations, stood firm on the side of the Association. He tended to think that whether to resign or not should not be decided by himself but by the Association. And he should follow the instruction of the Association and should do what he was told to do. It was reported in *Sports Newsweek* on March 22, 2004, the soccer audience at Wuhan Soccer Field exploded with ‘depose to Shen Xiangfu’, ‘Shen Xiangfu be laid off’ on the night competition on March 20. However, Shen stood firm. “Is it that he himself intended to stick to the end or are there other reasons that have made him hesitate?” As a matter of fact, according to him, whether he be laid off or not is not up to him to decide. It is not a matter of an individual’s interest. He should take into consideration every aspect of sentiments and interest of the leaders. When he was faced with “Shen Xiangfu must resign. If he does not, he will continue to spoil the team” and “If Shen does not resign, the games will die” (reported by Zhou Wenyuan on March 24, 2004), he still stood his ground and was determined to follow the

Association's decision. Then, when the Association held an official meeting and decided that Shen should not resign, Shen stated, "It is easy to resign. But I choose to put up with it. To resign means sort of freedom. But I now know what I badly need. I need to put up with it. ...Even if things become worse, I should swallow up the bitterness myself" (Ma Dexing reported in Wuhan, March 24, 2004). His loyalty and obligation to the authority finds expressions in what Wei Ran, a special reporter stated in *Sports Newsweek*: What is in Shen Xiangfu's mind is the interest of the Chairman of the Association and to Shen's mind, the leaders have suffered enough and he should not add more trouble to the leaders by choosing resignation. Shen said, "Chairman, what will be up to you if I resign? To my understanding, the Chairman has more pressure to bear than I have. I should hold responsibility to the leaders. In such difficult situations, we should shoulder responsibilities for them." In fact, Shen Xiangfu has for three times thought of resigning, but he gave up each time, just because he does not belong to himself and his fate is not in his own hands but is in the hands of the Association.

What Shen Xiangfu thought, felt, said, and done all exhibits his blind loyalty and faithfulness to the traditional ideological discourse which is left over by the traditional Confucian ideology. However, though this more established ideological discourse still influences almost every aspect of the Chinese life, it is vulnerable to changes due to the emerging values and worldview.

5 Features of the Individualistic Identity

5.1 The Reassertion of Individualistic Identity

As stated earlier, now it is the traditional ideological discourse that is facing challenge from the newly emerging discourse or what it has battled with and seemed to have overcome. The emerging discourse was started by Hao Haidong and now is carried on by many others who identify with him.

Hao Haidong's individualistic identity and personality are in fact already manifested as it has been discussed earlier. However, Hao has repeatedly asserted his individualistic identity ever since then. The report by Jin Song in Hong Kong on April 1, 2004 may help us to get a further understanding of him. According to Jin Song, in Hong Kong we may assume that Hao Haidong's "I" or individualistic identity is manifested in the following three aspects. (1) He defies the traditional hierarchical system which is specified in terms of responsibilities, obligations, and customs according to social roles ascribed to each member of the society. He just does what he himself thinks right to do. (2) He is against the traditional ideology in many aspects but for the emerging or what is called the culture of individualistic orientation. Stated

differently, he mobilizes individualistic value to achieve his end. (3) He uses ways and styles of communication that are different from the traditional ways and styles so as to achieve his identity and his end.

Hao Haidong's "I" or individualistic identity first finds expressions in his way of thinking and doing. This has fully been described in his "attacks" in the first few sources drawn from *Sports Newsweek* in 2001. The passage taken from the same official source in 2004 may just as fully demonstrate his individualistic personality. As well-known by the soccer fans in China that, unlike many soccer players who are blindly and incredibly obedient to the coaches and the Soccer Association because they believe that they would otherwise run the risk of being kicked out of the national team, Hao Haidong has his own brains: He doesn't follow others blindly including those who are above him in social position. He did not even follow the soccer fans who are widely regarded as god. He always has his own say and his own way of doing things. He may criticize the coach or the Association or he may not even follow what people including the soccer fans say about him: He just goes his own way. What he said in this passage may best illustrate this point, he stated very directly and frankly, "If I follow what some people have wished, I would have retired from the soccer field. Isn't it so? I have read from the net, the newspapers, and so on that many people asked why Hao Haidong hasn't retired yet from the national team as he is so old? I have such feeling that many people wish that I should have stopped playing. Had I follow their advice (顺应民意), I would have long withdrawn and disappeared from the soccer field." He does what he thinks right—he does not, like others, blindly follow others' instructions.

His originality and his individual initiative always make him different and unusual. In fact he tries to be different from others in the sense he does not conform to the traditional rules and norms and his behavior is often out of the expectation of the society. His conduct and opinions about training, the use of players, leaders, and even the running of the soccer clubs (he is concurrently a coach of a soccer club and the boss of the club) are often different from those of other coaches and players. He practices self-training, a specific way he designed for himself, which is obviously different from what is called collective training. Earlier, when Milu was having his best time and enjoyed popularity, Hao was critical of Milu's way of training and picked faults with him. When people were overthrown into confusion as the national team failed repeatedly, and when people began to criticize the China soccer team, he stood out and claimed that the national team was making progress. What is unusual to the majority of people may seem quite normal to him and what may appear improper to others may appear quite proper to him. He may at one time criticize the coach and at a different time he may stand out for the coach. His

behavior is often unusual, out of social expectations. And at the time when almost all the people unanimously voiced their opinions against the coach and the Association for their failure in this selective regional competition for the Olympic Games, Hao Haidong unexpectedly stood out to defend the Association, stating that Chinese soccer and the Association were not totally wrong. They contributed something as soccer in China was making progress. What is more revealing about his individualistic personality is demonstrated in the fact that when China team went abroad for important warming-up exercise with internationally famous teams for the selective group competition for the World-Cup, he chose to stay behind at his own will, which though usual with players of other national teams is rare in China.

In sum, judging from what he says and what he does, suffice it to say that Hao Haidong mobilizes individualistic values to realize his dream and achieve his individualistic identity including the value of individualism orientation, ambition, change, difference, equality, individual initiative, competition, doing-orientation; confrontation, directness in interpersonal interaction, and even affluence and wealth as he is considered to be a very rich boss. All these traits may find articulation in the western counterparts. He thinks that something has gone wrong with soccer culture, which obviously has something to do with what Huang Jianxiang called officialdom or the authority centered culture in the sports world (*Sports Newsweek*, March 26, 2004). To our understanding, Hao Haidong claims that the traditional ideology should be changed. Hao Haidong and those who identify with him are the representatives of the change: The newly emerging discourse should replace the traditional ideological discourse of which the officialdom culture is the core.

5.2 Verbal Style of the Individualistic Identity

Communication, through language in particular, including what is conveyed and how, is most important in the construction of identity. Pragmatic norms and conventions as well as styles and ways of speaking and writing, and other symbolic conventions are generally believed to express the overall values, beliefs, worldviews of a culture. We have been discussing the identity issues in terms of what is conveyed through language. Now let's turn to the analysis of the ways or styles or the tone in which the emerging ideological discourse is expressed. We must know that stylistic mode of speaking and writing are just as informative in conveying the speaker's and writer's intention. In fact the opposing ideological discourses also employ opposing interaction verbal styles to demonstrate their different identities. We only choose how the emerging individualistic ideological discourse asserts and reasserts its identity.

According to Ting-Toomey (1999:103) and Katriel (1991: 7), the stylistic mode of

interaction refers to the “tonal coloring given to spoken performance, [the] feeling tone. “ The tone of voice, the speaker’s intention, and the verbal content reflect our way of speaking, our verbal style, which in turn reflects our cultural and personal values and sentiments” (Ting-Toomey, 1999:103). Broadly speaking, in comparing high context and low context interaction, a framework of direct vs. indirect verbal styles, person-oriented vs. status-oriented styles, self-enhancement vs. self-effacement verbal styles, and the importance of talk vs. silence is used (Ting Toomey, 1999:100-106). This framework may very well be used to describe the difference of the communication styles between the individualistic and collectivistic identities.

All cultures may share these four modes. Different cultures may, however, prefer different modes. In general, high context culture or persons of collective identity may lay emphasis on indirect, status-oriented, self-effacement, and silence verbal and non-verbal styles while low context culture may lay emphasis on direct, person-oriented, self-enhancement, and the importance of talk verbal styles. Chinese culture as a high context culture, or broadly speaking, as the majority of its people are towards collectivistic identity, they may obviously prefer the verbal styles of interaction which are popular in high context culture. They tend to prefer indirect verbal style to establish harmonious relationship and implicit interpersonal understanding (Ting Toomey, 1999:105; Jia Yuxin, 1997:156-166; Gudykunst, 1994: 74-79). As the society is hierarchically structured, verbal and non-verbal communication is inevitably power-distance or status-difference based. Its people emphasize not only indirectness but also silence and the avoidance of disagreement on the part of the subordinate to demonstrate obedience. Likewise, the Chinese tend to adopt self-effacement verbal style in their interaction with others. For example, they tend to practice what is called self-deprecation or self humbling to restrain self and to demonstrate modesty. In their communication they do show their high value of observer-sensitive value as opposed to the sender-responsible value which is a popular Western interaction pattern (Ting Toomey, 1999:108).

However, the interaction verbal style of the emerging individualistic discourse, of which Hao Haidong may serve a representative, has broken away from these patterns. Or he adopts the pattern of individualistic identity to demonstrate and assert its right, entitlement, and identity. We may in general use the verbal styles of direct, person-oriented, self-enhancement, and the importance of talk to characterize his communication style. Of the four dimensions, the direct verbal style is obviously the most prominent. Besides, the instrumental style rather than affective style as well as the style of self-disclosure constitutes the verbal feature of his individualistic identity. The instrumental style is often used to extend his self, to persuade, and control others while the style of self-disclosure functions as a means to establish relationship

with others, somewhat in a condescending way or self-enhancing manner.

Unlike those who in general adopt indirect style in speaking or simply avoid disagreement by revealing little about self, particularly when dealing with authority (in terms of seniority, age, gender, title, social status, etc.), Hao Haidong chooses to disclose self and use direct and confrontational verbal style, no matter with whom he agrees or disagrees. He voices his personal opinions directly, straightforwardly, and openly. His actual intentions are always enunciated in a forthright tone of voice, which runs counter to the indirect style in which the speaker's actual intention is often conveyed in a more nuanced tone of voice.

The fact that Hao Haidong in May 25, 2001 chose to be interviewed on TV to openly criticize Milu, the Coach of the China Soccer Team and his open criticism of Milu was regarded by some as an "open attack" is adequate enough to manifest the confrontational verbal style: direct, person-oriented, and self-enhancement. Hao Haidong stood out and openly criticized the authority at the critical moment, when the China Soccer Team was in a most difficult situation and when even Sun Jihai, his friend, who is also individualistically oriented kept silent. These expressions of individualistic identity indeed permeated almost every aspect of what he said.

In usual cases, if people dare to criticize their leaders, they would use the generally used indirect way or what is called dialectic method: They would first point out the strong points, the merit, or the progress they have made, and then criticism of whatever kind may follow. However, in similar case, Hao Haidong, instead of beating about the bush, directly and almost bluntly stated his personal opinion or criticism. According to what Zhao Lei reported in *Sports Newsweek*, May 25, 2001, Hao Haidong in the very beginning of the interview stated: "I don't know how he works. My attitude is that we should direct our criticism to the things he (the coach) does, not to the person himself." "To my understanding, he is not coaching how to kick the ball. They (the team members) get up at 7:30. It is too late for any sports team to start training. But this is the routine for his training. Then, many members in the team seldom get together for decent training and exercises. Why does he coach in such a way? Everything should observe some rules and follow some plans. Isn't it strange that he does not have a fixed plan and once he has a plan, he always changes it?"

Identity shapes communication and communication in turn shapes identity. According to Ting Toomey, the direct and indirect styles differ in the extent to which communicators reveal their intentions through their tone of voice and the straightforwardness of their content message. In the direct style, statements clearly reveal the speaker's intentions and are enunciated in a forthright tone of voice (Ting-Toomey, 1999:105-106). Pragmatically speaking, these statements are straight talk in nature revealing the speaker's intention of acting as equals or

defying power-distance. By speaking out his intention straightforwardly he was extending himself, persuading others and extending power over others. This direct style of statement does speak out the value and personality of Hao Haidong as a representative of the individualistic identity. What he said in the interview, reported by Jin Song in *Sports Newsweek* April 1, 2004, may best reveal his individualistic personality. He directly stated, "Had I followed the wish of some people, I would have resigned for long. Isn't that so? I have read from on-line news and newspapers that Hao Haidong should have resigned as he is too old to stay in the national team. I just feel that many people wish that I should have resigned. Had I followed their wish, I would have stopped playing at once as a member of the national team and even disappeared from the sports world."

Another verbal style or strategy often employed by Hao Haidong to assert his individualistic identity through communication is the use of rhetorical structure or questions. There are numerous examples to show that rhetorical structures or questions are his favorite to express his intention. This strategy in form looks like an indirect way of showing disagreement which is often used in the Chinese context, particularly in vertical relationships. However, when the rhetorical structures are used by Hao Haidong, they sound more self-enhancing, assertive, and forceful than what the imperatives can possibly do. They sound even blunt, arrogant, and even "rude" and aggressive when added with sarcastic tone. Just a few examples may well support this point. In the report by Jin Song in Hong Kong, when he was asked the first question, "People are very much concerned about who will be your successor as good forwards in the national soccer team. What is your idea about it?" The first utterance of his answer was out of people's expectation. He replied, "Do you know what you are talking about?" When he was asked, "Don't you think that we should have scored more in the game with the team of Hong Kong (which was considered to be a very weak team)?" He sounded very "pushy" and said, "How many do you think is enough? Does it make any difference between 1-0 and 10-0?" When answering the question of when he would retire, he sounded bitter and sarcastic, "Do you think it will be OK if I disappear completely from the soccer circle to meet the wish of some people?"

Hao Haidong seems to prefer to use rhetorical questions to assert his belief rather than to persuade others to change their mind and by doing so it seems that he is defying others' opinions and enhancing himself. In the two reports drawn from *Sports Newsweek*, you may find far too many rhetorical questions which Hao Haidong used to assert his individualistic personality.

The rhetorical questions were also used by Hao Haidong not only to counter others'

opinions, which were often accompanied by sarcastic statement and non-verbal behavior such as sneer and laughter, but also to demonstrate his cynical attitude towards people's worldly-wise view of life. This not only finds expressions in the above quotations but also in the following paragraph which is taken from Jin Song's report in *Sport Newsweek*, April 1, 2004. In this paragraph, Hao Haidong gave a comment on the competition between a weak team and the team of South Korea with the score of 0:0. This result is broadly considered to be a failure and a loss of face on the part of South Korea as it is the strongest team in Asia. Hao Haidong's attitude imbedded in his rhetorical questions was obvious. Not only did Hao Haidong voiced his different opinion but he also expressed his cynical attitude toward those who he considered to be worldly in the understanding of soccer.

It is through communication, not only through its content aspect but also the styles, as well as communication conventions and so on people assert their identity. And where the styles, or other modes of communication differ, social and cultural reality differ. The verbal styles or strategies of communication indeed reflect Hao Haidong's individualistic identity, which in one way or another differs from the styles in which the more established traditional discourse expresses itself. In fact, these direct and person oriented ways of communication implicates what is called "I" ideological discourse. In Hao's argument or statement, grammatically speaking, he always uses the first person "I", which often sounds imposing and somewhat impolite to some people who often use "we" to show their modesty.

6 Conclusion

This paper examines, explicates, and analyzes the process of the construction of individualistic identity, including its assertion, establishment, and development, against the backdrop of the more established traditional cultural and social identities. Given that it is through communication, either what it conveys or how it is conveyed, the individualistic identity is asserted, established, and developed. The paper assumes that that the new identity construction is a process of long years running interaction in terms of conflict and negotiation with the traditional ideological discourse and value system.

The paper argues that where there are differences in communication, including the ways and styles, communication conventions and other symbols of identities, social reality becomes subject to question. On the other hand, however, the paper argues that both communication and social reality are part of and serve to maintain an ideology, which takes a historical life of its own (Gumperz, 1982). The findings in this paper highlight how the individualistic value enters into the making of individualistic identity and how the individuals

like Hao Haidong and people who identify with him mobilize individualistic values to assert their right, entitlement, and identity through communication and achieve success within highly competitive environment.

The government has been making efforts to encourage the development of individualistic identity within the framework of the traditional ideological discourse, and it has been successful in doing so. However, there may be problems in balancing the newly emerging ideological discourse and the more established traditional ideological discourse.

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