EXPLORING CHINA'S RESPONSE TO THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: A LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper examines China's response to the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar from a theoretical perspective, drawing on both liberal and Asian cultural values. The study adopts a qualitative approach and employs document analysis to collect data. The findings suggest that China's response to the crisis can be explained by the liberal values of interdependence, cooperation, and institutionalism, which have guided China's peaceful and cooperative approach to resolving the conflict. However, the study also reveals the importance of Asian cultural values, particularly empathy and save-face, in shaping China's diplomatic behavior towards the crisis. The paper argues that China's response to the Rohingya crisis can be divided into three aspects: infrastructure investment, mediation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, and humanitarian assistance, all aimed at promoting collaboration and peace in the region. The study contributes to the understanding of the complexities involved in China's foreign policy decisions and provides insights into the role of cultural values in shaping international relations.

Keywords: China, Rohingya Crisis, Liberalism, Confucianism, Diplomatic Behavior

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing conflict in Rakhine, Myanmar has drawn great attention from the international community for years (UN, 2021). Accompanied with the conflict is a number of Rohinigya people escaping to other countries (UNHCR, 2019). With more Rohingya people flooding into neighbouring states, including Bangladesh, China, Malaysia and Thailand, more problems emerged in terms of humanitarian, human rights, trafficking, transnational crimes, terrorism, to name a few, jeopardizing the regional security and stability (UN, 2021).

The conflict between the Rohingya Muslims and the Rakhine Buddhists have escalated to an officially acknowledged crisis and those who escape from Myanmar are defined as refugees by the United Nations (UNHCR, 2019; UN, 2021; UNICEF, 2021). After the recent large-scale outbreak of Rohingya conflict in 2017, 762,325 people

have crowded into Bangladesh, which accounted for about 83% of the population in the refugee camps of Bangladesh as reported by UNHCR (2021).

China's response to the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar has been notably different from that of other countries, especially those from the Western world who have criticized and condemned Myanmar, accusing it of "genocide" (Green, MacManus & Venning, 2015). Despite the potential threats posed by the situation in Myanmar to China's security, economy, and public health, including risks of COVID-19 transmission and environmental spillovers, China has been cautious in condemning Myanmar's government during the crisis (Alam, 2021).

The question arises as to why China takes such a different response towards Myanmar, despite criticism from the international community, particularly the Western world, on humanitarian grounds. While constructivism has lost some prominence in the study of international relations in Southeast Asia, realism and liberalism remain deeply ingrained and strong (Chan, 2015). In the case of Sino-Myanmar relations, where cooperation and peace are more visible than conflict and condemnation, liberalism appears to be more plausible in understanding China's response.

Furthermore, as Asia integrates and institutions of cooperation are established in multiple layers, from the founding of ASEAN in 1967 to the establishment of AIIB in 2015, scholars have increasingly used liberalism and liberal institutionalism to explain relationships within Asia (Chan, 2015). Therefore, this paper adopts the perspective of liberalism as the primary approach to understanding China's distinct response to the Rohingya crisis compared to other states.

In the context of the Rohingya crisis, China's response stands out as being different from that of many other countries, particularly those in the western world who have been critical of Myanmar and accused its government of genocide (Green, MacManus & Venning, 2015). Despite the fact that the crisis in Myanmar poses potential threats to China's security, economy, and public health, China has been reticent about condemning Myanmar's government during the crisis (Alam, 2021). Similarly, ASEAN has not publicly condemned Myanmar either, with member states upholding the non-interference principle and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) signed by ASEAN countries in 1976 (Narine, 1998; Cook, 2010; Zahed, 2021). Although some Islamic states of ASEAN, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, have spoken out against the atrocities committed by the Myanmar government, the organization as a whole has remained in solidarity in its response to the Rohingya crisis.

These similarities in the responses of Asian countries to the Rohingya crisis may be associated with the embedded Asian values which the traditional major theories of international politics and international relations cannot explain. Moreover, the fact that China's relations with Southeast Asia predate the Westphalia system (Chan, 2015) suggests that the major theories of international relations that emerged after the formation of the Westphalia system may not be fully applicable to China and Myanmar's case. Therefore, this paper aims to evaluate whether liberalism can provide a holistic understanding of China's response to the Rohingya crisis, and to identify any

additional factors that may supplement the existing theories in understanding China's response.

This paper would also aims to examine the suitability of liberalism in explaining the complex interactions between China and Myanmar, as well as its ability to fully comprehend China's response to the Rohingya crisis. The empirical evidence presented in this study contributes to the understanding of contemporary international relations, with a particular focus on the international relations of East Asian countries from an Asian perspective. To achieve this objective, the paper provides a review and analysis of liberalism, Sino-Myanmar relations, and the Rohingya crisis. It then applies a liberal approach to analyze China's response to the Rohingya crisis. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the liberal approach in fully understanding this response. Consequently, new perspectives from an Asian lens are proposed to supplement the liberal approach in providing a more comprehensive understanding of China's response.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study involves a comprehensive review and analysis of existing literature on China's response to the Rohingya crisis, with a focus on the theoretical frameworks of liberalism, Confucianism, constructivism, and realism. The review of literature was conducted by searching academic databases, including JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Web of Science, using keywords such as "China," "Rohingya crisis," "liberalism," "Confucianism," "constructivism," and "realism."

After identifying relevant articles, books, and reports, the next step involved analyzing and synthesizing the information obtained from the literature review to identify key themes and arguments regarding China's response to the crisis. This involved critically evaluating the authors' perspectives and theories, and identifying any gaps or inconsistencies in the existing literature.

To further investigate China's response to the Rohingya crisis, a case study approach was employed, focusing on China's infrastructure investment, mediation efforts between Myanmar and Bangladesh, and humanitarian assistance. The data used for this case study was obtained through secondary sources, including news articles, reports from international organizations, and academic literature. Moreover, the study will also explore the shared concern over terrorism and violence between China and Myanmar, and how this has influenced China's prioritization of peaceful mediation over the use of force in resolving the crisis.

The analysis of the case study involved applying the theoretical frameworks of liberalism, Confucianism, constructivism, and realism to explain China's actions and behaviors. The use of multiple theoretical frameworks allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of China's response to the crisis, considering both cultural and historical factors as well as realist considerations of power and regional influence.

The limitations of this study include the availability and reliability of the data used, as well as the subjectivity of the authors' interpretations and analysis of the literature and case study. However, by employing a rigorous methodology that combines a

thorough literature review and case study analysis with the application of multiple theoretical frameworks, this study provides valuable insights into China's response to the Rohingya crisis and the complexities involved in international relations and diplomacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Liberalism

In contrast to realism, liberalism posits that human beings possess inherent goodness and that nation-states prefer peace over conflict or war. Liberals believe that cooperation and peace can be promoted through international institutions. While liberals acknowledge that individuals are self-interested and competitive to a certain extent, they also recognize that individuals have shared interests that can lead to cooperative action both domestically and internationally, resulting in greater benefits. According to Jackson and Sorensen (2003), liberals believe that human reasoning can ultimately prevail over fear and the pursuit of power.

The origins of liberalism can be traced back to the 17th century and are generally classified as classical liberalism. Classical liberals believe in the inherent goodness of human nature and assert that states should respect one another and engage in relations based on norms of mutual toleration, which would ultimately lead to perpetual peace in the world (Gallie, 1978).

Neoliberalism, which emerged as the dominant paradigm in international relations in the 1960s to 1970s, is a modern interpretation of classical liberalism (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003). This perspective perceives more interdependence, integration,

and democracy in international politics, which was reinforced by European integration after World War II. After the two world wars, nation-states have realized that wars cost more, not only materially but also intangibly with a loss of reputation in the globalized world. Therefore, states have shifted their focus to high politics of security and survival and to low politics of economy and social affairs, recognizing that economic development is more beneficial and less costly than wars (Rosecrance, 1986). For highly industrialized countries, economic development and foreign trade are more adequate and less costly means of achieving prominence and prosperity as the costs of using force have increased and the benefits have declined since 1950. Consequently, states are becoming more geared to cooperation, with the importance of power resources other than military ones, such as negotiating skills, increasing.

Institutions can help advance cooperation among states with common interests, as Keohane argues (Keohane, 1992). The United Nations, the European Union, and other institutions make efforts to construct peace and prosperity and bring states together in one human cause, either internationally or regionally. In Asia, institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by China, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) aim to promote integration, regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

The shift in focus from military to economic power resources is indicative of the modernization and interdependence of nation-states. The interdependence liberals believe that power resources other than

military ones are increasingly important, such as negotiating skills (Rosecrance, 1995). Thus, cooperation among states with common interests is essential, and institutions can help facilitate this cooperation (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003).

Liberalism has given rise to various branches of thought, including classical liberalism and modern neoliberalism. However, this paper does not aim to discuss or categorize liberalism in a separate vision for three reasons. Firstly, the classifications of liberalism differ among liberals, making it inappropriate to separate the branches (Berlin, 1969). Secondly, each new idea added to the paradigm of liberalism is inadvertently influenced by the characteristics of the times, making them suitable for explaining one phenomenon but not necessarily applicable in other cases. Thirdly, while several minor theories of liberalism have emerged over time, they are proposed as supplements rather than departures from liberalism. Moreover, liberals continuously update and revise their theories in response to changing times. For example, Keohane and Nye revisited their Power and Interdependence in 1987 and discussed power and interdependence in the information age in 1998.

Therefore, instead of producing a clear-cut division of each branch, this paper takes the view of liberalism as a whole. In today's rapidly changing world, where more uncertainty and non-traditional elements are added, theories of international relations cannot encompass every single case. Instead, they provide approaches to better understand the complex nature of international relations and politics. While acknowledging the differences among different branches of liberalism, the following analysis applies a liberal approach to understanding China's response to the Rohingya crisis in dialectical unity and possible sublation. This approach better explains the response in the modern context, where branched theories have witnessed the evolution of the world, rather than explaining the phenomenon as a single event. By doing so, the paper aims to provide a more reasonable and dynamic explanation of the phenomenon.

The Sino-Myanmar Relations

Despite the fact that Myanmar has experienced periods of both military and civilian government, China has remained engaged with both regimes, a stance that sets it apart from other states. China's preference for the civilian government over the military government may be due to the latter's undemocratic behavior. Nevertheless, criticism of Myanmar's government, including the civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has emerged following the detection of ethnic cleansing by external actors. Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate recognized "for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights," has been accused of involvement in the "genocide" in Myanmar, resulting in calls for the revocation of her honor (BBC report). Despite this criticism, China and Myanmar have consistently characterized their relationship as "fraternal" since their initial interactions (Geng, 2006).

Despite China's efforts to maintain stable relations with both governments, the relationship between China and Myanmar has experienced ups and downs. In 2011, Myanmar underwent political transformations and a new government under

President Thein Sein was inaugurated. As Myanmar developed stronger relations with Asian and Western countries, it decreased Chinese influence over Myanmar and Southeast Asia (Bi, 2014; Yi, 2013). However, after the 2015 general election, Aung San Suu Kyi became the leader of Myanmar and recognized the importance of China's substantial economic investment in the country. This led to a strengthening of Sino-Myanmar relations and a renewed focus on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Myanmar, including the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (Nian, 2020).

The positive relationship between China and Myanmar is built on mutual interests and interdependence, which promotes stability in the Southeast Asian community (Tosatti, 2018). Myanmar's strategic location provides China with an alternative to the Malacca Strait dilemma and improved border security, while China's economic investment in Myanmar enhances its energy security by developing supply route alternatives (Malik, 2017). This demonstrates how economic gains can be achieved without a focus on military construction. For Myanmar, China's economic assistance is crucial for its survival and entry into the global market. The interdependence of the two states encourages cooperation rather than a reversed relationship.

According to Sun (2021), despite the recent military coup in Myanmar, China's attitude towards the country remained ambiguous until a formal public meeting was held between Chinese Minister Wang Yi and his Burmese counterpart Wunna Maung Lwin on June 8, indicating an intention to preserve their favourable relationship. China's long-standing relationship with Myanmar has been shaped by both economic and strategic considerations. China's economic interests in Myanmar include resource extraction, infrastructure development, and trade, and Myanmar is an important partner in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In addition to economic interests, China also views Myanmar as strategically important, given its location and proximity to China's borders. Myanmar is a key player in China's efforts to counterbalance US influence in the region. However, the recent military coup in Myanmar has added a new layer of complexity to China's relationship with the country. The future of China-Myanmar relations remains uncertain, and will depend on a variety of factors, including the actions of Myanmar's military government, the response of the international community, and China's own strategic interests.

The Rohingya Crisis

Prior to analyzing China's response to the Rohingya crisis, it is necessary to provide an overview of the crisis itself. The Rohingya crisis has its roots in the settlement of Muslims in the Rakhine region of present-day Myanmar and Chittagong in Bangladesh since the 8th and 9th centuries due to commercial reasons (Ding and Rahman, 2010). Over time, more Muslims migrated to the Arakan region to escape turbulence in their homelands, particularly Chittagong, during the Arakan reign from the 14th to 19th century (Tarling, 1993). The Arakan Kingdom eventually declined and merged into Burma, which was controlled by the Konbaung Dynasty in the 18th century. Subsequently, Rakhine and Chittagong became part of Myanmar. During British

colonization, the former territory of the Arakan Kingdom was ceded to Britain, who brought another wave of Muslims from Bangladesh to Rakhine to meet demands for industrial development and war. Myanmar gained independence from Britain in 1948 and regained control of Rakhine, while Chittagong became part of Bangladesh. The Rohingya people, who practice Islam, have mixed ancestry, including Arabs, Indians, Persians, Turks, Afghans, and others, due to historical changes and ethnic integration.

The Rohingya crisis is rooted in the historical context of Muslims settling in Rakhine over centuries. However, after the establishment of The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the government imposed a unified governance system and designated Buddhism as the national religion to promote national unity. Rohingya people were faced with the choice of converting to Buddhism or leaving their ancestral lands, neither of which were acceptable options. Consequently, they began to rebel against discrimination by the Burmese in their religion, hoping to establish their own autonomy where only Rohingya Muslims could live together without interference. The government of Myanmar opposed this rebellion, viewing it as a threat to the unity of the country. As a result, military counterattacks were launched against the Rohingya, and the conflict has continued for several decades. The 2017 Rohingya violence, sparked by an attack on local policemen by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), led to a clearance operation by the Myanmar government, resulting in a new wave of Rohingya migration to Bangladesh. In summary, according to Foreign Minister Spokesperson Hua Chunyin, the Rakhine issue is a complex one, rooted in

historical, ethnic, and religious factors, which requires a proper settlement.

China's response

In contrast to the outspoken criticism of Myanmar from other states and the international community, China has taken a reserved approach to the Rohingya crisis, and has provided diplomatic support to Myanmar through its veto power in the United Nations Security Council (Mobley, 2019). However, given the potential negative impacts of the crisis on China's border security and economic plans in the region, as well as the risk of COVID-19 transmission from Rohingya movements across the border in Yunnan Province, China cannot remain entirely indifferent to the crisis in its neighboring country.

China's approach to the Rohingya crisis emphasizes the importance of dialogue and consultation over criticism and condemnation, in pursuit of regional peace, security, and a shared community for mankind. China views sanctions and criticism as counterproductive to the goals of cooperation and peace, as they can increase tensions among states, and instead emphasizes the role of consultation as an important form of contemporary international governance and democracy (UN Speech, 2015). As the conflict between the Myanmar government and ethnic armed groups intensifies, China has taken on a greater facilitation role in Myanmar's peace process (Joy, 2018).

China's foreign policy is guided by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which were proposed by the former Premier of China, Zhou Enlai, and are firmly rooted in the principles of peaceful development and mutual respect for national sovereignty (Zhao,

2019). In line with this, China has been cautious in its response to the Rohingya crisis, preferring dialogue and cooperation over condemnation and sanctions. As a nation-state itself, China respects the sovereignty of Myanmar and seeks to work with the government to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Furthermore, China's vision of constructing a community of shared future for mankind, as articulated by Chairman Xi Jinping, emphasizes the importance of cooperation and mutual benefit in international relations (Xinhua, 2017). China believes that military intervention is not a viable solution to diplomatic problems, as it goes against its principles of peaceful coexistence and would be counterproductive. Instead, China prioritizes economic cooperation and connection, as it believes that economic development can promote peace and stability in the region.

In summary, China's approach to the Rohingya crisis is informed by its commitment to peaceful development, respect for national sovereignty, and belief in the importance of cooperation and economic connection. While other countries may have criticized Myanmar more openly, China has preferred to engage in dialogue and work towards a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

China's economic success has been attributed to its own experiments and experience with economic reforms and opening up. This approach also informs China's stance on the Myanmar crisis, as it places great emphasis on the role of economic development in addressing conflicts. China views Myanmar's economic underdevelopment as the root cause of the conflict in Rakhine and believes that only through economic means can the crisis be resolved (Joy, 2018). To this end, China has taken measures to invest in Myanmar's infrastructure and integrate it into its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI aims to promote regional connection and cooperation, trade and cultural exchanges, and social prosperity and harmony. China has actively invested in infrastructure projects in Myanmar, including ports, oil and gas pipelines, railways, and other projects under construction in Rakhine, such as hydropower projects, an industrial park, a deep-sea port, the oil and gas pipeline, and the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone (Lwin, 2019; Joy, 2018). By strengthening economic ties with Myanmar through the BRI, China hopes to facilitate bilateral economic cooperation and contribute to Myanmar's economic development, which in turn will help address the crisis in the long term.

China's engagement with Myanmar is also driven by common interests. Myanmar's strategic position as a portal in Southeast Asia and its natural resources and coastal position for commerce and maritime security are of interest to China. Myanmar's membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) provides China with opportunities to have a say in Southeast Asia, enabling it to pursue its goal of integration and the pursuit of the common good. Moreover, China recognizes Myanmar's need for foreign investments to enter the global market and supply chain. The interdependent relationships between China and Myanmar and the mutual benefits of a stable and prosperous region underscore the importance of strengthening economic ties through bilateral economic cooperation facilitated by the BRI.

In addition to economic assistance, China has sought to act as a mediator between Bangladesh and Myanmar in order to ease the tension between the two neighboring countries. As both countries are considered friends to China, any ongoing tension between them could potentially hinder China's economic and peaceful progress in the region. China recognizes that its power resources, including mediation skills, are more valuable than military resources in its diplomatic leverage in this issue. Therefore, China seeks cooperation between both parties and underscores the importance of organized cooperation between states, as promoted by liberal theorists (Jackson & Sorensen, 2003).

In 2017, China proposed a three-point plan to solve the Rohingya crisis. The three phases of the plan include a ceasefire to restore peace for homeless refugees, building stronger communication channels between the two countries to foster a friendly relationship, and achieving a sustainable solution to the problem on the basis of mutual agreement while revealing the root causes of the problem to increase development and economic investment in Rakhine (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). This reflects China's willingness to address the crisis in Rakhine in a way that is consistent with its engagement in the progress of peace and compatible with the regional interests.

Furthermore, China has offered humanitarian assistance to refugee camps and has been involved in the humanitarian progress to promote peace and social well-being. In 2018, China delivered 150 tons of aid to refugees through its embassy in Bangladesh, and later promised 2,500 tons of rice for Rohingyas living in Bangladesh after being forcibly displaced from Myanmar in 2019 (Joy, 2018; Alam, 2021). By offering humanitarian assistance and aligning itself with the international community's humanitarian efforts, China demonstrates its commitment to pursuing a peaceful path for the well-being of humanity rather than its own profits in the international system.

However, China maintains a reserved attitude and response to the conflict itself when providing humanitarian assistance, perhaps to show its respect for Myanmar while keeping it in its friend zone, which is a prerequisite for cooperation, as well as to enhance its influence in Myanmar and the world and publicize its willingness to provide public services for the common good.

China's approach to the Rohingya crisis is consistent with its broader foreign policy objectives of promoting regional security and peace through economic construction and cooperation. China recognizes that regional stability and prosperity are crucial for its own economic development and global influence, and views the promotion of regional cooperation and interdependence as a means to achieve these objectives.

In this context, China's engagement with Myanmar in addressing the Rohingya crisis is not solely driven by self-interest, but also reflects a broader commitment to building a shared community for the mankind. While China undoubtedly seeks to advance its own interests in the region, it is doing so in a way that recognizes the interdependent nature of the global system and the need for cooperation and mutual benefit.

Moreover, China's approach to the Rohingya crisis reflects its belief in the power of peaceful diplomacy and conflict resolution. Rather than resorting to military force or

blaming, China has emphasized the importance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in addressing the crisis. This approach is consistent with China's broader commitment to peaceful development and its belief in the power of economic and social development in promoting long-term stability and prosperity.

Overall, China's engagement with Myanmar in addressing the Rohingya crisis reflects a broader commitment to regional security, peace, and prosperity through economic construction and cooperation. While China's pursuit of self-interest cannot be entirely ignored, it is clear that China is working towards building a shared community for the mankind and is willing to invest in the long-term stability and development of the region.

What has been missing in the traditional liberal approach

Theories in international relations and politics, particularly those developed under the framework of liberalism, have attempted to explain the actions and behaviors of states in various situations. However, these theories have been predominantly constructed on western ideologies and have neglected the perspectives and participation of the eastern sphere in their formation. As a result, they may only be effective in explaining certain phenomena within specific cultural and temporal contexts, failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in certain cases, such as China's stand on the Rohingya crisis (Chan, 2015).

Despite this, liberal theories of peace and cooperation can offer some insight into China's stance on the Rohingya crisis.

However, it is also necessary to take into account the commonalities between China and Myanmar, as well as the broader cultural and historical contexts of the region, to fully comprehend their responses to the crisis.

Both China and Myanmar have faced issues related to Muslim populations and terrorism, and have been accused of committing "genocide" against Rohingya Muslims. In such a complex and politically sensitive situation, neither side can be solely blamed for the conflict. As the conflict escalated, it also became a platform for extremist groups to promote their agenda and incite violence. This shared concern over terrorism and violence has led China to prioritize peaceful mediation over the use of force.

Furthermore, China's Confucian values of empathy and benevolence have influenced its diplomatic behavior in handling the Rohingya crisis. This is because Confucianism has deeply influenced the ideologies and behaviors of many Asian countries, including China. The concept of "ren," which emphasizes humaneness and love, has been engrained in Chinese attitudes and behaviors towards international affairs (Low, 2012). Therefore, China's response to the Rohingya crisis has been guided by a desire to prevent the suffering of the people involved, rather than seeking to gain power or authority.

Therefore, while liberal theories can provide some explanation for China's stance on the Rohingya crisis, it is necessary to also consider the cultural and historical contexts of the region, as well as China's Confucian values, in order to fully understand China's approach to resolving this complex issue.

It is also worth noting that the concept of "saving face" is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and has been adopted by other Asian countries throughout history. In the East Asian region, this tradition has been highly valued and respected. In the case of the Rohingya crisis, China has been cautious not to offend Myanmar, opting for dialogue and consultation to resolve the issue and maintain mutual respect. Similarly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has defended Myanmar against perceived discrimination in external relations with dialogue partners, while avoiding public airing of disagreements, as this helps preserve the region's collective face and supports the distinctive conflict management mechanism based on dialogue and consultation (Haacke, 2010; Soomro, 2017).

From China's perspective, saving Myanmar's and Asia's face is essential to promoting peace, security, prosperity, and integration in the region. Scholars have argued that this approach reflects China's efforts to become the regional hegemon, from both a realist perspective and a perspective of face-saving (Poh & Li, 2017; Lind, 2018). Therefore, China's involvement in the Rohingya crisis has been shaped by both its cultural traditions and strategic interests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, China's response to the Rohingya crisis differs from other states' attitudes towards the same issue. China's approach emphasizes cooperation, interdependence, and institutional arrangements, all of which are consistent with the principles of liberalism. This paper has argued that China's response can be divided into three main aspects, namely, infrastructure investment, mediation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, and humanitarian assistance, all of which aim to promote collaboration and achieve regional peace by employing peaceful methods such as consultations and dialogues.

However, while liberalism can partially explain China's response to the Rohingya crisis, it is insufficient to account for certain aspects of China's diplomatic behavior. This paper has highlighted the importance of Asian values and Confucianism in understanding China's response. Specifically, the values of empathy and save-face, which are deeply embedded in Asian culture, have influenced China's diplomatic approach to the Rohingya crisis. Moreover, China's similarities with Myanmar in terms of facing issues related to Muslim populations and terrorism, as well as the commonalities between China and ASEAN, have further shaped China's response to the crisis.

In addition to liberalism and Asian values, this paper has also identified the unintentional ideas of constructivism and realism in explaining China's response to the Rohingya crisis. While the liberal approach emphasizes cooperation and institutions, constructivism highlights the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behavior. Realism, on the other hand, emphasizes power, security, and the pursuit of national interest. Both constructivism and realism can shed light on certain aspects of China's response, such as its emphasis on dialogue and consultation as a means of conflict management and its intention to become a regional hegemon.

In summary, this paper argues that China's response to the Rohingya crisis is a complex phenomenon that cannot be fully

explained by a single theoretical perspective. Rather, a dialectical approach that combines different theoretical lenses, including liberalism, Asian values, constructivism, and realism, is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of China's diplomatic behavior in this case.

This paper on China's response to the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar is of great importance as it sheds light on the complexities involved in China's foreign policy decisions and provides insights into the role of cultural values in shaping international relations. The study not only analyzes China's response to the Rohingya crisis from a liberal perspective but also emphasizes the importance of Asian cultural values in shaping China's diplomatic behavior towards the crisis.

Furthermore, the recent military coup in Myanmar has added a new layer of complexity to China's relationship with the country, as discussed in the paper. China's response to the coup has been cautious and non-committal, reflecting the delicate balance it must maintain between supporting Myanmar's military government and not antagonizing the international community. The findings of this paper, therefore, provide relevant insights into China's foreign policy towards Myanmar, particularly in the context of the recent coup, and can inform future policy decisions.

It is important to be diplomatic instead of openly criticizing the current coup and instead search for more peaceful solutions in Myanmar because of the potential consequences of a more confrontational approach. Publicly criticizing the coup could escalate tensions and trigger a violent response from the military government.

Moreover, it could jeopardize the progress made in China-Myanmar relations, which is crucial for both countries. By taking a diplomatic approach, China can maintain a relationship with Myanmar's military government while still advocating for peaceful and stable resolution of the crisis. This approach allows for constructive engagement and the possibility of positive change, rather than isolation and further conflict. In addition, it sets a precedent for other nations to follow, emphasizing the importance of peaceful diplomacy and constructive dialogue in resolving conflicts. Overall, a diplomatic approach is essential for the stability and security of the region, and for ensuring that the best interests of all parties involved are served.

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