

## Original Paper

# Literature Review on the Foreign Policy of China

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### Abstract

*This literature review offers a comprehensive synthesis of existing research on China's foreign policy, identifying the driving factors, strategic objectives, and implications for the global order. The analysis begins with how China's foreign policy is formulated and is divided into core, middle-range, and long-range and then delves into theoretical frameworks, including realism, constructivism, and liberalism. Also, this paper will highlight in this literature review how a leader's choice, national compromise, and the system pressure deeply influence the foreign policy of China. The strategic objectives of China's politics, military, and diplomatic initiatives, along with the role of leadership in maintaining world peace, diplomatic influence, and foreign aid, are also examined. The review concludes with an assessment of the implications of China's rise for regional stability, international order, and power dynamics among major players. By critically evaluating the literature, this review provides valuable insights for policymakers, academics, and practitioners seeking to understand China's growing influence on the global stage.*

### Keywords

*foreign policy, strategic objectives, theoretical frameworks, policy implications*

### 1. Introduction

The foreign policy of a country constitutes strategies based on the self-interest of the sovereign state selected rationally by the state itself in order to safeguard the national interests while at the same time attaining state goals as a result of interaction with other sovereign states. In dealing with foreign policy, some critical actors are the state actors and the non-state actors in the international relations field (Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2016). The state is a major actor in international relations. However, as a result of deepening globalization levels coupled with the respective transnational undertakings, the states, as major actors in foreign policy formulation and implementation, are compelled to work with the non-state actors. Some of the non-state actors include international organizations like the United

Nations (UN), the media, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations, influential personalities like Jack Ma and Bill Gates, and terrorist groups (Nešković, 2019).

According to scholars like Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne (2016), national interests are dominant; thus, foreign policy formulation takes place at the highest echelons of the government hierarchy in a sophisticated decision-making matrix. There is, thus, a symbiotic relationship between the state and the non-state actors at the international level in the practice of foreign policy. It is imperative to emphasize that national interests are the motivating factor in foreign policy. The primary national interests are national security, trade and commerce, environmental issues, human rights, and culture. As such, the foreign policy implementation is geared towards the attainment of the aforementioned interests. Sovereign states have various tools which they use to implement their respective foreign policies like military, foreign aid, sanctions, diplomacy, and deterrence (Rochefort, 2016).

This paper seeks to do a critical literature review on the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China. The literature review analysis of China's foreign policy will be based on the three-level analysis proposed by Kenneth Waltz (1979) individual-level analysis, state-level analysis, and systems-level analysis. Additionally, the paper will seek to do a literature review on the determinants of the foreign policy of China as espoused by different scholars, the foreign policy orientation of China, and the goals or objectives of Chinese foreign policy. The paper will also delve into the theoretical foundations that influence the foreign policy of China, the various aspects of Chinese foreign policy, and the implementation mechanisms. Finally, the paper will emphasize the current state of China's foreign policy and its positive significance to the world.

## 2. Argument

Foreign policy is as important as the domestic policy of a state. Chinese pursuit of foreign policy is to build on the domestic foundations in order to strengthen their coexistence among Chinese nationals. The foreign policy of China is majorly anchored on economic development (Zhang, 2010). To develop the economy of China, other parameters come in handy, like security and peace. At the core of this argument, the research will highlight in this literature review how a leader's choice, national compromise, and the system pressure deeply influence the foreign policy of China. As such, the following are the critical determinants that have been able to indicate what direction and foreign policy position China makes on the international stage. The geographical location of China affects the population, the level of technology, military capability, and the political system (Yinhong, 2015). International power structures, international law, and international organizations have also been critical determinants of Chinese foreign policy.

Wang (2008) states that China is the most populous country on earth, with a vast geographical location sounded to many other countries. The foreign policy of China must thus reflect the aspirations of the people to be able to achieve their life goals and quality of life. The surge in the economic growth of China has also been imperative in determining the foreign policy position on economic matters in order

to be able to feed the population (Liang, 2019). National security ensures the state is safe from danger. However, it is imperative to mention that other international factors like international organizations-UN which China is a member, and international operational laws influence the foreign policy positions of a nation-state.

### 3. Existing Literature Review

Various literature has categorized the foreign policy of China into three distinct categories. Vital or core foreign policy objectives ensure the existence and survival of the state, medium-range, and long-range categories (Larik, 2016).

#### 3.1 Vital/ Core Foreign Policy

According to certain scholars, the core foreign policy objectives of China are fundamental to the survival of the state and its existence. The core objective of foreign policy is thus to ensure the state exists and functions on the basis of its responsibilities from which it exists to perform. Under the vital categorization, the scholars have identified various contestation issues in the foreign policy of China that they seek to achieve. Territorial integrity, political independence, sovereignty, economic independence, national security, and the citizenry (Kang, 2008).

##### 3.1.1 Sovereignty and Political Independence

The driver of this foreign policy is ignited by the system pressure due to the need for national security and interests under international laws. The system established and operated by the Chinese acknowledges the importance of the political system's independence and the will of the Chinese to choose their system of governance. Sovereignty gives the People's Republic of China the power to self-determine their course of action in their domestic affairs and international relations with other countries. China protects this sovereignty and political independence in China's Inherent Territory. Literature reveals that China does not engage in bilateral relations with nations that do not recognize one China (European Union, 2015). This is China's mission to protect national sovereignty and territorial integrity, which cannot be violated.

##### 3.1.2 Territorial Integrity

This is right China has over its land and other water bodies to administer self-rule on. It is the substantial form of the state which can be set and establish boundaries that stipulate the powers over which China can employ its constitution. After experiencing the Second World War, China cherishes a peaceful and stable environment and always respects and values the territorial integrity of other countries. As such, the foreign policy of China is driven by the system pressure to ensure that the security of the nation is tight against any other state that would interfere with the local happenings within the geographical locations of China.

Territorial integrity informs on the Chinese attitude towards the India boundary, which has been disputed over the years (Al Jazeera, 2020). Accordingly, the contested South China Sea and the Island of Spratly, to a large extent, inform the foreign policy element of peace within the Chinese. But China

has always defended its territorial sovereignty, which is sacrosanct.

### 3.1.3 Economic Independence

China strives to feed the population and get a number of the citizenry out of the poverty line. This foreign policy category is seen to be the building block of China's foreign policy. China is the most populous country in the world. The government has a responsibility to ensure that the population can access basic services like education, healthcare, and social amenities and enjoy cultural heritage freely. As such, China seeks to dominate the global economy as the leading economic powerhouse through cooperation with other sovereign states.

According to Liang (2019), the Belt and Road Initiative was launched by President, Economic development is at the heart of the initiative. China has also challenged other global monetary institutions like the IMF and World Bank to change the voting system and reform the institutions. World Trade Organization has also felt the impact of China's economic growth on the need to resolve economic disputes for market access. China has partnered with other countries like Russia and India to create the Development Bank as an alternative to the Breton Woods institutions.

### 3.1.4 National Security and Citizenry

The national security of China becomes a concern in order to secure political independence and territorial integrity and enhance economic independence. Accordingly, the geographical location of China and its neighbors like North Korea makes it critical for the national security of China to be enhanced (Freedman, 2004).

## 3.2 Middle-Range Foreign Policy

The middle-range foreign policy of China, according to some scholars, constitutes the ability of China to convert its massive economic power into global influence is that it is also a member of the United Nations Security Council. At this point, China is seen to invest heavily in foreign aid, culture, humanitarian interventions, and the sports and film industry (Rahman, 2020). China is thus attempting to have a global influence. This also aligns with China's goal of peaceful development and increasing international influence in the context of great power strategic competition.

## 3.3 Long-Range Foreign Policy

Foreign policy scholars and analysts have opined that China is seen advancing on the long range to make the world live in a manner influenced by China (Blanchard & Lin, 2013). The Chinese values and ideology would thus change the world in a technologically driven, cooperative, and peaceful. Long-range foreign policy is driven by state compromises and the system pressure to ensure the prosperity of the Chinese state.

## 4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Existing Literature

The literature is rich and indeed strong in giving a clear categorization of the foreign policy China based on issues that drive the state to make the policies and implement such policies. Scholars can thus give a critical examination and make predictions on global actions in the direction in which China

might make a decision. Additionally, the foreign policy literature on China isolates the entire conundrum of what constitutes the foreign policy of China. As such, the leader's choice as a foreign policy driver or the national compromise of system pressure can be critically evaluated and placed into context.

However, the categorization has not factored into the historical development of China toward foreign policy. It has been futuristic literature with current and future trends dominating the foreign policy of China.

## 5. Review of Research

### 5.1 *How China's Foreign Policy Is Built*

There are several techniques that are involved in building foreign policy. It is critical to mention that the foreign policy of a state comes as the road map that the nation wants to follow to achieve the objectives of the state. These objectives can be vital or core to the natural survival of the state and include political independence, territorial integrity, national security, and the citizenry. The other objectives of foreign policy are medium-range objectives which include how the state wants to be perceived on the global stage. The third objective of foreign policy would be from the systems level on how the state views the world as it is and how it ought to be.

According to Rochefort (2016), in building foreign policy, both the state actors and the non-state actors are involved directly or indirectly depending on the policy position. As such, the formulation of foreign policy in China is informed by the leader's choice. But this is not just the result of individual decisions, but collective wisdom and democratic political consultation. As the leaders, and in this case, Chinese leaders would make policy decisions that govern the whole state. Other influencers to policy building come from the national compromises, which include other state actors, and also the pressure of the system, which calls for the national interests in relation to global events and how to counter or position for such global events.

In building foreign policy, the critical steps are six. The first step is the identification of the policy problem area (Bardach & Patashnik, 2019). What is the main problem that needs the policy to tackle it? When is it a problem, and who is affected by the problem? These are some of the critical questions to ask in problem identification. The second step is agenda setting, where the issue is brought to the general public. The third stage of foreign policy building is policy formulation. This step involves designing a response to the problem identified in the first step. The fourth step in policy building involves policy legitimization, then policy implementation, and finally evaluation of the policy.

### 5.2 *Problem Identification*

In any scenario where there is a need to solve a problem, scholars like Hudson (2002) have advanced the need to identify the problem and define the problem accurately and critically. By problem identification, policy analysts have advanced that there is a need to determine the root causes of the problem. The root causes of the problem will thus help to determine how long the problem has indeed

been a problem and the magnitude of its effects. Identifying the problem will help in solving the problem since the scope of the problem shall have been established. At certain times, problems can be identified by the general public, activists, the media, or foreign parameters under non-state actors. In some instances, the problem can be identified through the state actors who are the leader of the nation, the judiciary, or even the legislatures. Consequently, once the problem has been identified, then the agenda is set.

### *5.3 Policy Agenda*

#### *5.3.1 Agenda Setting*

Agenda setting in foreign policy involves making the problem public and inviting public discourse on the matter (Blankshain, 2019). Once the issue has received the limelight, the discourses can help see the best cases on how to solve the problem by floating different alternatives. General criticism and acknowledgment of the problem happen in this stage.

#### *5.3.2 Policy Formulation*

Hudson (2002) asserts that the Formulation of policy involves consultation and raising possible scenarios that can help solve the identified problem. Several solutions are floated and debated so that the best policy response is selected. Under the selection of the best response, the rational choice theory can be used. Can the policy select maximize utility at the least cost possible? For instance, when China wanted to solve the economic growth conundrum in the country and to put China on the global map, several formulas were derived both the long-term and the short-term goals. The best policy was thus selected to gain more economic growth for the country in a sustainable manner.

#### *5.3.3 Policy Legitimization/Adoption*

Policy legitimization is the process where the government selects the best alternative from all the floated solutions and makes it legal and operational within the confines of the law.

#### *5.3.4 Policy Implementation*

Policy implementation is then the next step, where the relevant authorities operationalize the law or act in order to achieve the desired foreign policy position. The decision of China to sanction the US senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz for meddling in China's political independence in Chinese territory was thus implemented by the migration officials to ensure the two senators didn't go to China.

#### *5.3.5 Policy Evaluation*

To what extent is the policy formulated giving the best result or answering the problem it was intended to solve? How effective is the policy? These are some fundamental questions that are raised when evaluating the policy to know if there is the maximization of the policy benefits or if the problem is being fully solved by the policy formulated.

### *5.4 Theoretical Foundations of China's Foreign Policy*

Various foreign policy scholars and foreign policy commentators opine that China's foreign policy is anchored on several theoretical underpinnings. The two critical theories which have been proposed are the rational actor's model and the institutional model. However, other commentators have been able to

postulate that liberalism and realism theories have to a great extent, also influenced the Chinese approach to their foreign policy. As such, there will be inadequacy when only one theoretical underpinning to the study of China's foreign policy, thus the combination of the multiplicity of the theories.

#### 5.4.1 Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory has been advanced by different scholars as a critical tool for foreign policy analysis. It helps to establish the reasoning or rationale behind the decisions and actions which sovereign states make in their international relations in foreign policy (Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2016). According to the rational choice theory, the main actors of foreign policy are always rational citizenry who have the capacity to make calculated and informed choices that have the capability of enriching the state with maximum benefits. The state is thus advanced as the primary unit of analysis. The context of the analysis is based on interstate relations. The theory makes the assumption that the state is a unitary, monolithic actor. The model also makes an assumption that the actions taken by the policymakers are after sufficient information is provided in order to optimize decisions (Bueno De Mesquita, 2009). Another assumption postulated by the proponents of the theory is that the actions which the actors make are coherent and consistent. As such, the adherents of the theoretical advances that the process of making the decision is composed of problem identification, the definition of outcomes desired, evaluation of available choices, decide on the choice with the most outcome maximization at the least cost.

While the proponents of the rational choice theory have advanced that the model is critical in the understanding of the foundations which influence the foreign policy of a state, there is certain criticism that has also been leveled against the theory. The rational choice theory has been criticized on the assumption that actors make rational decisions based on the availability of sufficient information (Alden, 2017). However, in the contemporary world, there are cases where decisions would have to be made, yet information is not sufficient. Additionally, the theory has been criticized by other skeptics like Tripp's (2020) model that the theory has failed to mention the emotional behavior, mental, or physical health behaviors of foreign policy actors or policymakers after they have been fed the information on which a decision is to be made.

#### 5.4.2 Institutionalism Theory

The institutionalism model of foreign policy is a critical theory in understanding the theoretical foundations which influence the foreign policy of China. Institutional structures like rules, norms, schemes, and routines shape social behavior and foreign policy to that effect (Scott, 2013). The assumption of the theory is such that in a well-established institutional system, individual leaders have little influence on foreign policy. The theory assumes that the institutions will have checks and balances to produce foreign policies from the structures of the institution to respond to national interests. The bureaucratic institutions which have been set up help in the development of policy and to some extent the generation of the policy. Accordingly, the individual leaders working within the institutions will

have little choice but to follow institutional structures to get an outcome of a policy (Bojang, 2018). The institutional structures included the legislative aspect, the judicial structures, and the executive branch, which work together for checks and balances to produce a desired outcome.

However, it is critical to mention that the theory has been criticized for failing to acknowledge the influence individuals have within the institutions (Peters, 2019). While the institutions have structures to influence the outcomes of policies, the individuals have the power to influence the institutional structures and how the institutions come up with certain parameters for formulating and or implementing foreign policy.

When talking about institutions, it is imperative to mention that democratic institutions will produce more open and foreign policy formulation mechanisms that involve many influences like the non-state actors (Peters, 2019). However, when the institutions are nondemocratic, the processes and structures of policy formulation and implementation would not necessarily reflect the participatory aspect of the general public.

#### 5.4.3 Realism Theory

Realism theory is one of the oldest theories which have been used to illustrate the happening at the international relations stage and specifically the motivations behind the various foreign policy decisions and positions which states take. The theory has been advanced by certain scholars to have its roots in the Thucydides in the Peloponnesian war in the aggression of states. Later, Niccolò Machiavelli, in his book *The Prince*, advised the sovereign that the national security of the state is paramount. Machiavelli illustrated that a king needed to be both a fox and a lion. The fox is for the king to act with wisdom and decorum to attain good leadership for the state. By acting as a lion, the sovereign ensured peace and national security were enforced at all costs. As such, he suggested that leaders needed to be good men to the best of their ability and violent too, in the same measure to ensure the security of the state is guaranteed.

Thomas Hobbes also came up with the concept of the state of nature. He asserted that human beings were in a state of nature that was full of conflicts and thus needed a sovereign to enforce law and order (Waltz, 1979). In the state of nature, the man was in perpetual conflict with each other. As a result, the man entered a social contract to surrender the rights to the sovereign to ensure man lives in peace and orderly manner. Later, Hans Morgenthau was a proponent of the international system as being in a state of anarchy (Morgenthau, 1973). As such, there was no global body that could enforce the law on other nation-states. A simplistic explanation of the concept is that within the international system, whenever there is an emergency, then there is nobody to call.

#### 5.4.4 Assumptions of Theory

One of the major assumptions made by the adherents of classical realism is that the international system is anarchic (Farooq & Javaid, 2019). As such, there is no global police or law enforcement body that reigns over all sovereign states. Accordingly, the proponents of the realist theory advance that the states are the principal actors in international relations. However, the theory recognizes the presence of



other non-state actors within the international system but affirms the critical role of states as the major actors. Another assumption made by the realists is that decision-makers within the international system are rational decision-makers, who will act in the best interest of the state to ensure national security, power, and prosperity.

#### 5.4.5 Application of Theory

Realism theory has been judged by certain scholars and thinks tanks as a foundation that informs Chinese foreign policy. According to Jervis (2017), perception matters a lot in international politics. China is on the rise to creating perceptions and developing norms within the international system. As a leader's choice and national compromise, the President of China, who echoed the China Dream, which was meant to rejuvenate the Chinese population. Certainly, this is not just the choice of individual leaders, but the collective wisdom of the Chinese leadership. Accordingly, other commentators on foreign policy picked the phrase which was mentioned by Colonel Liu Mingfu, a retired Peoples' Liberation Army of China, where he called for China to build the greatest world military power (Hudda, 2015). These sentiments have indeed acted as fodder to the realism analysts of foreign policy.

Realists have opined that the rapid economic growth in China has been accompanied by a massive buildup of the military through increased spending in the military budget and cutting-edge technological advancement (The Economist, 2012). According to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in their 2013-year book contends that China increased its military budget from the period of 2003 to 2012 by a margin of 175% (SIPRI, 2013). According to the research institute, this was an increase of more than any other country in the world. In monetary language, this was an increase from the 30 billion US dollar budget in 2008 to \$170 billion by 2012. The Economist (2012) also projects that by 2035 China will outspend the US in military expenditure.

It is imperative to mention that the economic surge in China which is also associated with increased military spending is not just about realism theory that informs on the foreign policy of China but also other domestic issues like protecting territorial integrity and political independence. According to Hua (2019), China uses the economic aspect to trade with neighboring North Korea but also uses economic sanctions to withhold trade deals and benefits whenever China feels threatened by North Korea's missile tests. The same increased military spending is vital to the United Nations, where China has deployed a number of military personnel for peacekeeping across the globe. For such contributions, the researcher believes that China aims to seek a stable and peaceful national environment.

#### 5.5 Relationship between Rational Choice and Realism Theories

The two theories of rational choice and realism are critical in the foreign policy of China. Rational choice espouses that. Indeed states act in their best interests after assessing the available information, thus making a decision that will maximize utility for the state. For rational choice theorists, the decision made is to help the state make the maximum benefit from available situations in the international arena or to achieve a foreign policy position. On the other hand, realism theorists assert that state actors are always rational. By their rationality, the realists contend that the actors will be inclined to naturally act

in the best interest of the state for the benefit of national security.

### *5.6 Liberalism Theory*

#### *5.6.1 Proponents and Assumptions*

Liberal institutionalism theory is a significant theoretical underpinning that explains the reasoning behind the various foreign policy positions that China pursues at the international level to meet domestic needs. Liberalism theory has scholarship origins from Immanuel Kant, John Lock, Adam Smith, and Joseph Nye. These scholars have made a contribution to liberal theory by making assumptions that international institutions like the United Nations are critical in the corporation of states (Johnson & Heiss, 2018). The theory also makes an assumption that economic corporations among states are critical to enhancing corporations. Economic interdependency between and among nation-states makes it difficult for countries to go to war. The theory also makes an assumption that democratic values are good in enhancing interstate cooperation. The theory assumes that democracies do not go to war with fellow democracies (Keohane, 2011). The main foundation of the theory is the assumption that the sole responsibility of the state is to protect private property and life. However, the theory has been criticized that while democracies do not go to war with other democracies, they tend to be aggressive toward other non-democracies.

#### *5.6.2 Application of Liberalism*

Liberalism theory influences the foreign policy positions which China undertakes to safeguard its interests. One of the integral aspects of China's foreign policy is pegged on peace and economic cooperation, according to certain scholars like Yan (2018). To guarantee peace, China has heavily invested in economic cooperation in multilateralism and bilateral engagements with other foreign states and organizations like the European Union (Christiansen, 2016). For instance, China trades with neighboring North Korea. As such, economic interdependence helps to constrain the aggressive tendency of North Korea towards China due to economic benefits through a soft power approach (Nye, 2008). The Belt and Road Initiative have been a critical component of the economic cooperation with other states. The establishment of the Development Bank and being a member of other international institutions like the UN has played an influential role in the foreign policy of China. Being a member of the UN makes China respect the territorial integrity of other states, political independence, and sovereignty of all nations besides acting within the international laws.

### *5.7 Aspects of China's Foreign Policy*

China has pursued an unswervingly independent peace-oriented foreign policy. As an aspect of China's foreign policy, the People's Republic of China believes that peace is central to the economic development of the country.

#### *5.7.1 Political Independence*

Accordingly, China has an aspect of political independence. As an aspect of China's foreign policy, political independence makes China be principle within the international arena. China thus determines an independent position relevant to foreign policy and state interests without yielding undue pressure

from external forces. The political independence of China also informs the motivation of the state to protect the interests of the state against cohesion from other powers like the USA (Mughal, 2009).

#### 5.7.2 World Peace

China invests in global peace as a precursor to political and economic developments of the state, which are at the core of the nation (Weissmann, 2015). China believes in peace and avoids military conflicts while also promoting peaceful mechanisms of conflict resolution like negotiations. To maintain global peace, China doesn't participate in nor encourage an arms race. The People's Republic of China, in its foreign policy, doesn't support hegemony nor seek military expansion. On the other hand, China is critical in promoting the sovereignty of nations and doesn't encourage countries to interfere with the internal affairs of other states, be it political or cultural exchanges. The territorial integrity of the states is thus imperative in maintaining global peace according to the foreign policy of China. By maintaining political independence and territorial integrity, China does not encourage the violation of international law under the pretext of human rights or undue application of the responsibility to protect.

However, it is imperative to mention that this element of peace postulated by the Chinese has been criticized for how they seek global peace while still violating the rights of their own citizens and oppressing fundamental rights (Lewis, 2016). Accordingly, China will never renounce the use of force to resolve territorial and sovereignty issues, which is in China's national interests. Additionally, the South Sea China contestations and building of military capability show that China is already mobilizing for a possible future war with its neighbors.

#### 5.7.3 Cooperation and Friendly Relations

China believes in its foreign policy and objects to cooperation. The liberalism theory explains the reasoning behind Chinese-friendly relations and cooperation. China hopes to see through cooperation with all countries based on peace elements and advance shared goals on an equal partner basis (Kang, 2007). Accordingly, friendship, according to Chinese foreign policy, should not be based on ideologies, social systems, or religion. On cooperation, China has signed trade deals with developed countries and underdeveloped states. China tries to enhance its friendship with its neighbors through many consultations and negotiations to solve contentious issues of conflict.

#### 5.7.4 Implementation of Foreign Policy of China

There are numerous methods that the Chinese government has been able to employ to implement its foreign policy goals. Some of the techniques which have been used range from military, foreign aid, diplomacy, sanctions, deterrence, trade, and commerce. The choice of method to be used is often influenced by the leader's choice, the national compromise, or the systemic pressures. On the other hand, there are certain influencers, like the timing of the instrument of foreign policy to be used. In the case of military intervention for the implementation of a foreign policy, national compromise and systemic pressure help to make such decisions as opposed to the leader's choice. Accordingly, in the case of negotiations, the leader would make a choice, but the approach of the diplomatic engagement and the magnitude of the case involves both national compromise and systemic pressure. Foreign aid

analysis constitutes systemic pressure. The sanctions will involve national compromise and systemic pressure. Timing of the decision made on the foreign policy implementation plan, coalitions, and the respective specific foreign policy influence the implementation strategy of China.

#### 5.7.5 Military

In the implementation of a foreign policy, the military has often been used. There is the actual use of force by deploying soldiers on the ground, the threat of using force, or the mere show of military capabilities. According to Reuters (2017), the Chinese President is developing capabilities and modernizing the Chinese military to expand their bases away from home; hence the Chinese People's Liberation Army has since developed a support base in Djibouti in Africa. China will benefit from power projection or the show of capabilities thus increasing the dominance of military activities away from mainland China (Downs, Becker, & Degategno, 2017). Djibouti will help China to access easily the Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa. China has maintained a long-standing friendly relationship with African countries, which is also an important manifestation of China's peaceful diplomacy.

According to Zaka (2020), the South China Sea is another contestation in which China has openly used the military to either protect its territorial integrity or to pursue the power politics of dominance and assertiveness. China claims a territorial share of the South China Sea, which has huge economic significance and is influential in the geopolitics of the area. The presence of military activities by the People's Liberation Army has been criticized sharply by the US. The US is standing in solidarity with other weaker powers which are entangled in the dispute, like the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. According to the Council of foreign relations (2020), the South China Sea was able to attract \$3.37 trillion in trade within the locality in the year 2016 alone. In 2017, about 40% of global liquefied gas transited the disputed area. As such, the economic and strategic location of the disputed area gives an incentive for contestation. Military has thus been deployed by the People's Liberation Army to achieve China's foreign policy interests in the area.

In other instances, China has taken a leading role in the non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons and also in the trade of small arms and other light weapons (Burnay et al., 2015). According to these researchers, this commitment shows the level of global responsibility China has taken as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. China is actually a strong supporter and advocates for actions towards non-proliferation regarding weapons of mass destruction. China thus calls for a nuclear-free zone and has committed never to use or even threaten to use its nuclear power capabilities to any other country which doesn't have nuclear power.

#### 5.7.6 Diplomacy

Another instrument which has been used by China to implement her foreign policy is Diplomacy. According to some scholars (Okhovat, 2012), diplomacy is critical to the national development of China and is at the heart of foreign policy, where peace is the cornerstone of foreign policy. As such, China has been involved in numerous negotiations to achieve various foreign policy issues. The fundamental component of diplomacy is too soft power principle.

### 5.7.7 Negotiations

Negotiations have been used by China to advance its foreign policy positions on the global stage. For instance, China engages the European Union to ensure economic cooperation between the two actors. Similarly, China calls for a lead negotiation with North Korea to ensure peace and prevent an arms race. However, China has been criticized for aggressive and assertive mechanisms which contradict the negotiation efforts. In most cases, this is an injustice to China.

### 5.7.8 Public Diplomacy

As a building block of old Diplomacy, public diplomacy is critical in the implementation of China's foreign policy. Public diplomacy involves targeting the population of foreign citizens who are residing in their foreign countries with messaging and targeted ads in order to have a particular view or perception that favors a country like China (Wang, 2008). China has often felt misjudged in the world at a time when the country is taking a more robust major power player role on the global stage. China thus wants to project an image of a cooperative, trustworthy, developing country and peace-loving nation which has been able to take harmonious care of its huge population and is a responsible player within the international community (Zhao, 2015).

In the quest to advance public diplomacy, the economic surge in China has created a lot of debate and opportunities to exercise public diplomacy and assert authority as a global player. Accordingly, the protection of sovereignty and the respective policy of not interfering with the internal affairs of other nations have also earned the country much reputation at the international level (D'Hooge, 2007). In Africa, for instance, China is admired for economic development and the loans it gives to African countries with little conditionality, like the structural adjustment programs which accompanied the IMF and World Bank loans. Accordingly, the Chinese government does not meddle in the political affairs of African states like the Western countries led by the US. As such, the reputation of China has grown in its public diplomacy campaigns. According to Pew Research Center (2019), most African countries had a favorable view of China. Nigeria had 70%, Tanzania 74%, and Russia 71%. This indicates the progress of public diplomacy strides the Chinese government has invested in her foreign policy.

Certain scholars contend that to achieve public diplomacy, China has invested heavily in the Confucius Institutes to spread the Chinese language and culture across the globe (Hartig, 2016). The Confucius Institutes are thus established across universities and colleges to help in spreading a positive view of Chinese culture to the foreign public. Student exchanges and the media have also been critical in the spread of the Chinese value system.

However, it is important to mention that the implementation of Chinese foreign policy from the point of view of diplomacy has also faced substantial hurdles. The perception which China has created of the violation of human rights in China has cast many doubts on the policy program. In addition, the surge in the economic development of China makes other countries uncomfortable and read mischief with the growing economic influence of China on the global stage. Additionally, many countries do not know enough about China, so their understanding of China is still in the past, and they naturally have some

misunderstandings about China's rise.

#### 5.7.9 Sanctions

Sanctions have been used by China to advance foreign policy positions as a result of systemic pressure and state compromise. The timing of such sanctions is sometimes abrupt and is always retaliatory. When the US government under President Trump sanctioned four Chinese officials, China was forced to retaliate with counter-sanctions. China also sanctioned US Republican Party Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz over their remarks on the Chinese territory protests, which angered Beijing. This is a positive response that China should make. The national compromise comes in when members of China are slapped with sanctions. The systemic pressure is also seen from the fact that China has to prove that it is a major global player in the international community and cannot be bullied by other powers easily. As such, certain actions to retaliate sanctions come to protect the sovereignty of China and the political independence which have existed since the Westphalia treaty.

It is imperative to acknowledge that other scholars have noted that, indeed China does not like sanctions. In fact, China is currently still under constraint by the sanction it was slapped with by the European Union and the US over the arms embargo. As such, China has always approached sanctions with caution in cases where certain countries have been found to be in breach of international laws and obligations. However, this has been contradicted by Chinese actions to support stricter sanctions on Iran and North Korea whenever the countries were established to be a threat to global peace. As a systemic pressure, China must approve such sanctions since the foreign policy of China depends on international peace and stability for their economic development. This is China's responsibility to the world as a major diplomatic power and aims to maintain peace and stability in the international community.

#### 5.8 Foreign Aid: Chinese Aid

Foreign aid has been used as an instrument to implement foreign policies of a nation-state and China is central to this through the established China Aid (Lengauer, 2011). China Aid has been used from the systems pressure and national compromise. As a form of system pressure, China Aid is used to expand the Chinese influence and dominance at the global level to rival USAID. Additionally, it is used to advance the public diplomacy instruments used by China in other parts of the world. China aid is often packed with developmental assistance or humanitarian help to the vulnerable, human resource capacity building, assistance in the medical field, debt relief, and technical cooperation (Kitano & Harada, 2016).

China aid according to analysts of foreign policy like Welle-Strand and Kjøllesdal (2010) contends that China's foreign aid comes in different forms be its military assistance, food help, or development loans and concessional grants. Welle-Strand and Kjøllesdal postulate that China has been able to change the narrative of traditional foreign aid which was prevalent post the Cold War period. They state that China has changed the concept of the donor to a recipient by encouraging equal partnerships. China has also eliminated the conditionality attached to the aid allowing for non-interference with local issues and the

sovereignty of states. Foreign aid has been significant in helping less developed countries and in helping humanitarianism across the world thus putting China on the global map of leading foreign aid contributors.

It is however imperative to mention that Chinese foreign aid has been criticized as being part of the neo-colonization of impoverished countries. While the loans China gives are unconditional, it becomes very difficult to repay, thus giving the debt burden to impoverished countries. China is also accused of human rights violations in places they have offered aid. However, China has responded that they do not force countries to accept their aid and often engage in open discussions to upset loan burdens for impoverished countries. The researcher believes that such a good deed should not be groundlessly accused but should be evaluated fairly and objectively after an in-depth understanding of China's foreign policy.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, China's foreign policy is driven by the leader's choice, national compromise, and system pressure. It is vital to summarize that the categorization of literature regarding the foreign policy of China is based on vital components of political independence, economic independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, military, and population. The middle range categorization postulates the approach China gives to the rest of the world through foreign aid, culture, humanitarian assistance, sports, and film. The long-term categorization of literature established that China views the world, thus spreading Chinese values through the Confucius institutes.

The surge in economic growth is established to be the major driver of Chinese foreign policy. As such, the elements of peace and friendly relations inform why peace is a precondition to facilitate the economic pursuit of China's foreign policy. At the heart of economic growth is the BRI which has seen most countries embrace, thus giving China a foot in the competitiveness of the international system.

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