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HARAÇ SİSTEMİNDEN KUŞAK VE YOL
İNİSİYATİFİNE

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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**HEGEMONY IN CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS:
FROM TRIBUTARY SYSTEM TO BELT AND ROAD
INITIATIVE**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Asım DOĞAN

Supervisor
Dr. Mevludin IBISH

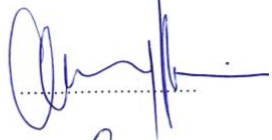

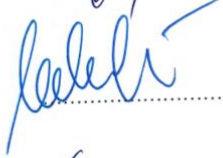


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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

To the Institute of Social Sciences,

This research is hereby approved by this jury as a PHD THESIS in the field of Department of Political Science and International Relations by majority of votes / by unanimity of votes.

Examining Jury Members:

	Title and Name	Signature
Supervisor	Dr. Mevludin IBISH	
Member	Prof. Dr. Ömer ÇAHA	
Member	Prof. Dr. Michelangelo GUIDA	
Member	Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kemal BAYRAM	
Member	Assoc. Dr. Erhan İÇENER	

Approval

I approve that the signatures above belong to the academic members specified here.

Prof. Dr. Ömer ÇAHA
Institute Director



DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that this PhD dissertation titled “HEGEMONY IN CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS: FROM TRIBUTARY SYSTEM TO BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE” is my own work and I have acted according to scientific ethics and academic rules while producing it. I have collected and used all information and data according to scientific ethics and guidelines on thesis writing of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. I have fully referenced, in both the text and bibliography, all direct and indirect quotations and all sources I have used in this work.

Signature

Asım DOĞAN



ÖZET

ÇİN TARZI HEGEMONYA: HARAÇ SİSTEMİNDEN KUŞAK VE YOL İNİSİYATİFİNE

Asım DOĞAN

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler
Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Mevludin IBİSH
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Bu tez, Çin'in imparatorluk çağı "Haraç Sistemini" ve "Kuşak ve Yol İnisyatifi", Uluslararası İlişkiler hegemonya teorileri, özellikle Neo-Gramscian hegemonya teorisi bağlamında ele alıp, analiz eder. Tezin sorunsalı, Kuşak ve Yol İnisyatifi bağlamında Çin'in hegemonya anlayışı Haraç Sisteminden beri ne tür bir değişimden geçmiştir? Diğer bir deyişle Haraç Sistemi ve Kuşak ve Yol İnisyatifi arasındaki değişkenler ve süreklilikler nelerdir? Bu analiz ışığında gelecekte Çin'in nasıl bir hegemon olacağı beklenebilir? Sorularıdır. Araştırma stratejisi iki hegemonya sistemi arasında değişkenler ve benzerlikleri, tarihsel dönüşüm ve felsefi arka planları ile analiz edip, ortaya çıkarmak üzerine kuruldu. Araştırma sonrası bulgular, iki sistemin farklılıklarla beraber birçok benzerlikler de taşıdığını göstermiştir. Çin'in dış politikada imparatorluk anlayışının bazı politika ve değerlerini günümüze adapte etmek ve kaçınılmaz şekilde bazı yönlerden modernleşmekle beraber, hala büyük oranda eski politik mantık ve stratejilerini devam ettirdiğini, Kuşak ve Yol İnisyatifinin sadece bir ekonomik hamle olmadığını, bölgesel yoğunluklu olmakla beraber, global çapta ve kapsamlı bir hegemonya kurma çabası olduğunu teyit etti. Bu "Çin Tarzı Hegemonya", benzerliklerinden ötürü, "Yeni-Haraç Sistemi" olarak adlandırılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Haraç Sistemi, Kuşak ve Yol, Tianxia, Çin Rüyası

ABSTRACT

HEGEMONY IN CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS: FROM TRIBUTARY SYSTEM TO BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Asim DOĞAN

PhD Dissertation, Department of Political Science and International Relations

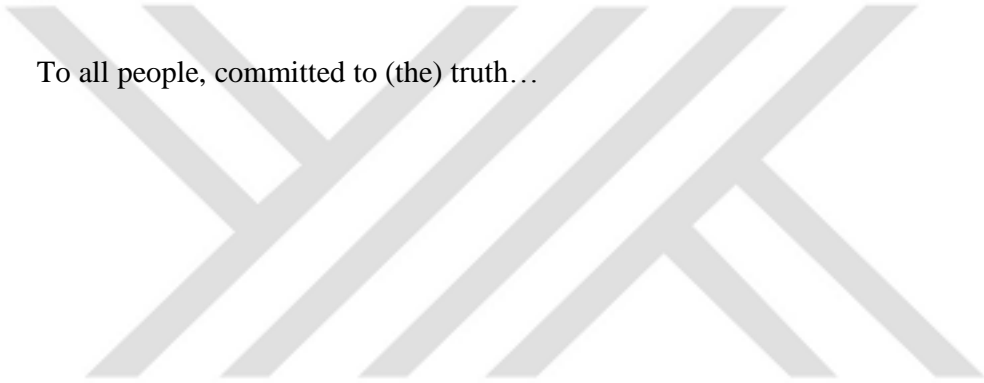
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This study examined and analyzed the Chinese imperial Tributary System and Belt and Road Initiative in the context of theories of hegemony, specifically the Neo-Gramscian hegemony. The main question is; in the Belt and Road Initiative context, what is the Chinese perception of hegemony, evolved since the imperial Tributary System? In other words, what is the divergence and persistence between the two hegemonic systems, Tributary and Belt and Road Initiative? In the light of this analysis what kind of hegemon China is going to be in the future? The research strategy was to find the divergence and persistence between the two systems, by analyzing their historical and philosophical backgrounds. The findings confirmed that, besides divergences, there are a lot of similarities between the two systems. China, adjusting some of its imperial policies and values to the modern age and in some aspects being inevitably transformed by modernization, is still carrying significant characteristics of its historical political mentality and strategies. Therefore, Belt and Road Initiative is not a simple economic cooperation plan, but an attempt to construct a regionally intensified, but globally extended, comprehensive Chinese hegemony. This “Hegemony in Chinese Characteristics” can be named as “Neo-Tributary System”, due to the similarities it shares with the historical one.

Keywords: China, Tributary System, Belt and Road, Tianxia, China Dream

To all people, committed to (the) truth...



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July 2019

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IR	International Relations
The USA	United States of America
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
HST	Hegemonic Stability Theory
IMF	International Monetary Fund
EU	European Union
WTO	World Trade Organization
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
AIIB	Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank
SRF	Silk Road Fund
CDB	China Development Bank
EIBC	Export-Import Bank of China
ABC	Agricultural Bank of China
BOC	Bank of China
CCB	China Construction Bank
ICBC	Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
NDB	New Development Bank
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, China, South Africa
HSBC	Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
SOE	State Owned Enterprises

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chinese Civilization is one of the oldest and profound civilizations on Earth. It has emerged in a special geographical and social environment and it has had special development style since its very beginning, i.e. around 3000 BC. China's geographical isolation from the rest of the world is the most significant factor, shaping its agrarian social structure. This social structure caused a special historical development style which was based on the idea of keeping the old values and returning to the old policies in every social and political depression (Kissinger, 2015: 27).

Chinese called their own country “Zhong Guo” (中国), the “Middle Kingdom”, which actually means China is the center of Earth and the only civilized country, while the rest of the world consists of marginal “barbarians”. During the long history of the Middle Kingdom, there wasn't even a slight doubt about this belief until the 19th centuries. Isolation from the rest of the world was providing a calm environment for the development of such a special civilization as well as its preservation by limiting the interaction with the rest of the world.

Chinese state and social mentality in the 19th century, when the imperialist powers arrived, was still carrying heavy influence of the philosophy of the Spring and Autumn Era (春秋时代) “Chūn-qiū Shídài” (771-476BC) and the Warring State Era (战国时代) “Zhànguó Shídài” (476-256BC). Imperial China, in the beginning of 19th century was still highly isolated from the effects of important developments in the rest of the world, including Renaissance, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, capitalism, democracy, constitutions and so on (Dillon, 2017: 41).

This frustrating situation created a dilemma in the relations between China and the rest of the world. Chinese and the foreigners were finding it too challenging to understand each other. This situation was putting China in a special position with mysteries. These mysteries have not yet been completely explained. China and the World led by the

West, are still trying to understand each other, though mostly they keep having many biases and mistakes against each other. Chinese scholars and officials, in their relations with the world, do still believe in the so-called “Chinese Superiority” in the essence of their evaluations and perceptions. The west is still described as “selfish”, “barbarian” and the values they represent, like democracy and individualism, are looked down on. Even some Chinese prominent scholars do not have a deep understanding of the world, could not free themselves from the Sinocentric thinking and the fury of “Century of Humiliation” (百年国耻) “Bǎinián Guóchǐ” (1839-1949). On the other hand, the Western world is still deeply divided over many basic issues about China, having problems in understanding Chinese culture, state mentality, leaders’ minds, appreciating Chinese philosophy, food, language, etc.

These understanding problems are still evident in the evaluation of Chinese contemporary foreign policy. After the amazing development in the last four decades, “China Rise” became one of the hottest topics in the world on the evaluation of which the world is mainly divided into two camps: the camp of “China Threat” and the camp of “Peaceful China” (Ming X. , 2013). The evaluations are usually scattered between these two odd perceptions and seldom there are evaluations that actually describe the realities on comprehensive bases.

1.1 Research Questions

This research is about one of those hot topics that the world is divided on, but controversially did not become subject of comprehensive literature. “Chinese Perception of Hegemony”, namely “Hegemony in Chinese Characteristics, From Tributary System to Belt and Road Initiative”.

“Hegemony” is a term, carries negative annotations for Chinese people. It has the meaning of “immoral tyranny” (霸权) “bà quán” (Denisowski, 1997). That is why using “China” together with the term “hegemony” in one sentence will immediately raise objections from the Chinese side. However, its definitions in modern Social Sciences does not involve with “morality”. Hegemony is a natural outcome of disparity in power relations and it is examined in this context in modern Social Sciences and International Relations discipline. This issue is also proving how the Chinese and Western perspectives differ on certain topics.

The world is repeatedly assured by China that Belt and Road Initiative is a peaceful win-win economic cooperation model and that China does not have any political aims with. However, the first five years of its implementation has proved that this argument is not entirely true. Theoretically, the economic cooperation brings a hierarchy between the investor and the debtor. Eventually, this relation will bring dependency and finally with hegemony on behalf of the stronger one. This fact is valid for BRI as well. Practically, it is seen that many debtor countries are already in disadvantaged positions, they could not pay their debts and had to make political or economic concessions to China. The hot debate on “Debt Trap” and the allegations of bribery in some countries against loans provided by China with unreasonable terms, prove that BRI is not a simple economic plan. China is well known for its strategy of turning the economic power into political, military and strategic power. BRI gives enough clues that, this transformation is aimed by the infrastructure projects and loan providing.

China is actually confessing the fact BRI is not a simple economic initiative by its own arguments. China declares quite often that, creating Community of Common Destiny is a well-known goal of the initiative and it has now found a place in China’s constitution as well (Rolland, 2019). In spite of its vague definition and use by Chinese officials, it implies some political projects around economic cooperation. China creates the Community of Common Destiny for more outcomes than economical ones. It refers to the aim of forming a new political bloc at first, then turning it to a Chinese international order, which transforms into a potential rival to the liberal world order led by the USA. These are the main reasons, the implications of which probably will be observed better later, to consider BRI as a hegemonic system in this research.

There are studies conducted on historical Chinese perception of hegemony, mostly referring and analyzing arguments of Fairbank (1968) who coined the Chinese imperial “Tributary System”. The researches and remarks on today’s Chinese perception of hegemony, usually depend on the evaluations of historical “Tributary System”. For the current perception of hegemony, researches usually analyze the foreign policy practices and the arguments developing around them. Belt and Road Initiative is a relatively new process and, as a result, researches in this area has been

limited, especially when it comes to carrying out an in-depth analysis of the process in the framework of “hegemony”.

This research takes Belt and Road Initiative as a hegemonic system and compares it with the historical Chinese imperial “Tributary System”, on the theoretical basis of hegemony theories in International Relations Discipline, specifically the Neo-Gramscian Theory. The main question of this research is as following. In the Belt and Road Initiative context, what is the Chinese perception of hegemony, evolved since the imperial Tributary System? In other words, what is the divergence and persistence between the two hegemonic systems, Tributary and Belt and Road Initiative? In the light of this analysis what kind of hegemon China is going to be in the future?

Countries like China, being highly traditional in every aspect of life, have a strong influence of traditions on their politics and international relations. For China perhaps this is more easily observable fact, throughout its long history. Chinese empires were mostly following the traditions, practices and strategies of the previous dynasties, regarding them as the safest systems. Even Confucius himself, when trying to find solution for the chaos and cultural erosion in his time, did not, in fact, bring something new. He strongly advocated the return to the ancestor’s mindset by learning and practicing their values. He particularly admired the King Wu of Zhou Dynasty (周武王) “Zhōu Wǔ Wáng”, presenting him as an ideal role model for the next generations of rulers (Confucius, 1861a: VIII/20/78).

Solving the present problems as well as searching remedies in the past practices of “wise ancestors” has been a patriotic act and a kind of religious practice in China. The reverence and worship of the ancestors naturally results in this. Eventually, it turns into an expectation that, China will show the same reaction of returning to the old values and practices, whenever chaos hits (Kissinger, 2015: 27). Chinese would expected to repeat this practice even in the 21st century as well. However, one should not forget that the modernization period changed a lot. Western values, including Marxism, have influenced Chinese culture in an extend that seldom seen in Chinese history. Chinese, for the first time in history, became doubtful about the superiority of their culture. Modernity has changed most of people’s perceptions irreversibly.

Chinese state mentality on foreign relations passed through some different stages during the modernization period, starting with the Century of Humiliation. The main puzzle in the initial stages, eventually left its place to the Maoist Era, with strong ideological characteristic and oppression of the old values. After Mao's death, with the Reform Era, a more pragmatic and relatively tolerant stage began. In this stage, Chinese people regained significant confidence, which had been weakening dramatically since the beginning of the modernization period.

For the people interacting with China from outside, it has always been difficult to understand the Chinese mind and anticipate their moves and strategies. There are specific reasons for this. The first one is the characteristics of highly authoritarian regime, inherited from the Maoist Era. Whether the Chinese state can still give the traditional reflexes after the ideological influence of the Maoism and its adversary to the old values or not. It may seem a difficult question to answer, but not for people who are familiar with China. This was due to the fact that even behind the devastating Maoist Era there was always a traditional face. Mao himself was highly traditional in many aspects. Consequently, the past and the traditions were not completely neglected in the state mentality, even in the Maoist Era.

The other difficulty in predicting Chinese state mentality and strategies is the vagueness of state moves and statements. This point explains why the world is so divided into two odd camps regarding China: the camp of "China Threat" and the camp of "Peaceful China" (Ming X. , 2013). The vagueness is perhaps the foremost characteristic of the current and historical Chinese politics. The secretive characteristics of Chinese politics and foreign policy preoccupy the weak neighbors as well as make it difficult for the related people to predict the eventual outcome of Chinese economic development in the future.

Another important factor challenging foreigners to predict Chinese moves and strategies is the complexity of the Chinese culture itself. Chinese culture is not only a lifestyle of an agrarian society. Chinese culture is deeply influenced by Chinese Folk Religion, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Cultures include religions and they affect each other vice versa. This is applicable to all cultures.

European cultures are affected by Christianity and vice versa, Christianity is affected by European cultures in different ways, depending on the location in the continent. The same argument is valid for Islam as well as other religions. What makes Chinese culture different is that it has the characteristics of a religion. That is to say, the culture is a set of values that are unchangeable and it includes everything people do, from how to eat to how to take care of a baby; from what makes a good society to what kind of girl is beautiful, thus resembling a religion. Many Chinese scholars are still defending the superiority of Chinese culture, but they do not question exactly in which way it is superior. What can it give to other people? The attitude of incontestability of the religious values, is presented by Chinese to the whole elements of Chinese culture. This strong dose of Chinese conservatism including and affecting political perspectives, decision-making process, perception of self and foreignness and so on, as well.

The authoritarian character of the state, its vagueness, and the characteristics of Chinese culture are the main factors that make Chinese moves and strategies difficult to predict. This difficulty is creating the main question for this research as well. That is why in this research the cultural and philosophical background of the Chinese political mentality will be examined well, which will lead the reader to get insight into the political mentality of Chinese statesmen.

The puzzle between the two camps of “China Threat” and “Peaceful China”, could be solved only if questions, like “how much is Chinese state traditional today?” or “is China going to return its historical values and strategies once more in the 21st century?” were answered correctly. Other questions include: “how will the Chinese hegemony be in BRI?” and “how much has the perception of ‘hegemony’ changed in China since the Tributary System? This research primarily aims to answer these questions. The answers can reveal the true characteristics of the contemporary Chinese state and eventually it will make its strategies predictable. Comparing the Belt and Road Initiative with the historical Tributary System will give us a reliable insight into the contemporary Chinese perception of hegemony.

The hypothesis is that Chinese state mentality and political philosophy, after the chaotic eras of Century of Humiliation and Maoism, still carries deep effects of the

imperial one, with some inevitable changes. As partially explained in the previous pages, China is one of the most traditional countries in the world, even after the Maoist attempts to diminish old values. The long historical practice and perceptions are assumed to continue to have deep effects on political mentality. The hypothesis includes the assumption that the more China will free itself from the mazes of Maoist ideology, the more it will find itself in the historical tracks. In the case of hegemony, the historical tracks directly indicate the Tributary System.

It does not mean that China is expected to set up the historical Tributary System exactly in the same principles and structure through the BRI. China, yet still a highly traditional country, is not the same country as in the Ming and Qing times. Besides, neither the old tributaries in Pacific Asia nor the rest of the world is the same as before. These realities are requiring some inevitable changes in Chinese perception of hegemony. Ultimately, the assumption is that, China getting out of the strong Maoist ideological frame and renewing its historical mind, especially recalling the Century of Humiliation and historical pride, will return to the old values and strategies with some inevitable changes brought by the imperialism at the beginning of their modernization period, by the modernity itself and by the West-led liberal system.

The research strategy is based on analysis of the historical (Tributary System) and current (BRI) examples of hegemonic systems, by finding out the divergence and persistence between the two. The divergence and persistence would provide a reliable base to evaluate the kind of hegemony China will be in the future as well.

Other important questions which are expected to get answers include: what were the ideological sources of Chinese perception of “others” and “self” and how has it been evaluated until today? How much does the current ideology and regime divert or use its historical perception of hegemony? Is China really a “threat” to the international community or is it just “a peaceful stakeholder”?

Most of these questions and more are anticipated to find answers in this research, as it covers the historical and contemporary major political and philosophical events of China.

1.2 Research Methodology

This research will be carried out by the methods of analytical review and content analysis. The process will cover a critical overview of extensive literature from Chinese and foreign scholars, review of Chinese official publications, official declarations, official meeting records, forum reports and related websites and overview of Chinese classical sources as well. The research will be carried out on a theoretical basis. Evaluation and comparison will be made in the theoretical framework of power and hegemony theories, in the field of International Relations discipline. Specifically, the Neo-Gramscian Theory of Hegemony will be firstly analyzed and then applied to the research topic.

This investigation was time-consuming and required patience since it involves an in-depth exploration of the historical and philosophical backgrounds of each system. The difficulties are not merely lying in the collection of extensive material and empirical evidence for analysis. The difficulties in comprehending Chinese philosophy, cultural experience, diverse opinions on discussion topics, the difficulties emerging from the different traditions of approaches of Western and Chinese scholars and the difficulty to apply west-originated theories to a country like China with totally different historical, political and philosophical experience, added extra confinement to the research process.

Another confinement is related to the Belt and Road Initiative's not yet matured or completed process. BRI as a system has not sufficiently developed or completed like the Tributary System. Nevertheless, the sound process of 5 years past provides enough evidence and clues on how it will look like from now on, adding the anticipations of the theories as well.

The reference material is chosen specifically to present Chinese official, academic and professional views and arguments on all of the topics covered. Academic material is also chosen carefully to present the standpoints of western and Chinese academics. Among the wide range of reference materials, the prominent Chinese scholars, Sinologists, and professionals are given priority.

China is the topic for a significant portion of discussion and attention of politicians, academics and professionals worldwide. Any good research carried out on China would not be neglected in the related field and by related people. The trend is implying that there will be a growing demand for research concerning China, especially on the topics that people do not have enough insights to evaluate. The topic of this research is one of those topics for which finding reliable information to evaluate is not an easy task to do. Besides, it requires combining the analyses of many topics together and reach attention-demanding conclusions.

The findings from this research will have particular answers to some crucial questions, specifically to those that have to do with the contemporary perception of Chinese hegemony. The answers can help students, professionals, academics and related parties, to have a better understanding of aforementioned issues, with their historical background. This basic understanding can help them develop their own arguments.

For the critical Chinese terms and names the common English version, the Chinese version in Chinese characters, and the romanization method of “Pinyin” are used.

1.3 Outline of the Research

The research will be carried out in five main chapters. Each chapter divided into sub-topics.

The first chapter is the introduction. It introduces and describes the topic, provides a background and discusses its importance. The main research question and related questions are described. The assumption (hypothesis), research method and difficulties addressed and a research outline is given.

The second chapter is about the theoretical base of the research. Firstly, the “power” and its theories are evaluated. Then the definition of “hegemony”, hegemony theories are covered, in the context of International Relations Discipline. Special attention is given to the theory of Neo-Gramscian Hegemony. Lastly, in order to clarify how the hegemonic relations took place in practice during history, supremacy methods in history are covered.

The third chapter is about Tributary System. It is divided into four main parts. The first part gives an insight into the origins of Chinese political philosophy, with detailed information on the historical developments and main philosophical schools. The second part is about the Chinese perception of “self” and “others”. In other words, a background of Chinese historical foreign relations. The third section covers an extensive evaluation of the Chinese imperial Tributary System. The fourth part is an analysis of the Tributary System in the context of Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony.

The fourth chapter covers the Belt and Road Initiative in three main parts. In the first part, the contemporary Chinese political thought is analyzed in the context of the changes since the Tributary System. The dramatic periods of Century of Humiliation, Maoist era and the stream of Nationalism and Rejuvenation, covered with their effects on contemporary foreign policies. In the second part, an extensive evaluation and an insight into the Belt and Road Initiative is given. In the last part, the Belt and Road Initiative is evaluated in the context of Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony.

The fifth chapter is the evaluation chapter. Firstly, a comparison of the theoretical evaluations of the two hegemony systems, Tributary System and BRI, is made and the findings of the research with their contemporary implications are explained.

Finally, in the last section, the conclusion and proposition that this research is suggesting is addressed in the conclusion section.

After conclusion the references are listed, followed by the appendices. In the appendices part, there are some important maps, charts, tables and pictures shared as well.

CHAPTER 2

HEGEMONY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The concept of hegemony in international relations cannot be separated from the concept of power. The two concepts are both extremely vague and intertwined that without comprehension of power it is difficult to locate the concept of hegemony appropriately. The scope and aim of this research are not to analyze both of the concepts in full extent, as each one is a wide-ranging subject. However, a certain extent of conceptual definition and analysis of power, hegemony and related topics, which are necessary to constitute the theoretical base of this research, will be covered in this chapter.

2.1 Power

Since the ancient Greek city-states and the records of Thucydides (460-400BC), “power” and “power relations” determine the major matters of International Relations (IR). Thucydides (1998: 49), in his records of The Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BC), describes the conflict between Athens and Sparta as the result of power competition. “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta”.

“Power” is one of the key terms in IR, not only in IR but generally as a concept, does not yet have a compact definition on which the scholars have consensus. This is because of the complex nature of the term. The complexity is mostly caused by the difficulties in detecting its sources and measuring it.

“Power” is intended to be usually analyzed in two approaches: Conceptual and Operationalist approach. Conceptual approach is to calculate the capability of a state by measuring its possession level of power factors in quantity and effectiveness. This is simply about what the actor has in terms of the possession of military, economic, geographic, industrial, production capacity, natural resources, population, etc. Operational method mostly depends on observation of relations and practices to make

predictions and conclusions about the power of an actor. The former method gives more reliable results compared to the latter (Özdemir, 2008: 116).

Despite the complex nature of the term, there are highly successful attempts to make it more comprehensible and useful. Robert Dahl is one of the most prominent scholars who studied the definition of power with his famous method of A and B actors. The dahlian approach is suggesting that power is the capability of an actor (A) to make another actor (B) do a certain action, if otherwise (A) is not capable of doing it (Dahl, 1957: 210). Dahl's formulation became the most notable formulation of power in the related literature and it is still the most important reference when it comes to defining power (Baldwin, 2016: 177). Dahl's effect can be seen in the most common definition of "power". It is usually defined as one's ability to affect the behavior of others.

In Max Weber's (1947: 152) formulation, power is defined on the basis of intentions: "the probability that, one actor within a social relationship, will be in a position to carry out his own will, despite resistance regardless of the basis on which this probability rests".

Power is a component of every single relationship, therefore there is not even a sole relationship that can be excluded from the influence of power. As it is a segment of the relationship, it cannot be distinguished in the whole as well (Organski, 1968: 122).

What makes a nation "powerful" to affect other's behaviors? To answer this question, we have to know the sources of power, which is also named as a dimension of power. Power is usually defined to have three dimensions: behavioral, material and normative power (Gill and Law, 1989: 475). The complexity of the term "power" shows itself as a big discussion specifically in this stage. Scholars form different theoretical schools emphasize different dimensions of power.

Behavioral power is briefly about threatening/punishment and rewards. In this way, an actor is using one or both of the methods to affect others behaviors. Soft Power is included in this category, although highly controversial. Behavioral Power is mostly stressed by liberal theories. Material power is to gauge the power of the state mostly by physical possession, military capabilities, economic structure, industrial capacity,

strategy development ability, etc. Realist theory strongly emphasizes the material power. Normative power is related to the moral values of an actor to influence others' behaviors. It is mostly emphasized by constructivist and critical theories (Kadercan, 2017: 323).

Power is an elusive mechanism. To influence the "behaviors of others" requires some sort of instruments to be used. The instruments can be weapons, money, men, natural resources, land, etc. Those instruments can generate power only if they are used. However, usage may not be enough in most conditions. They must be used effectively at the same time. According to the relative power approach, a nation can figure out its actual power by comparing its abilities with other nations' abilities as well. In some relations a certain number of specific instruments may not generate enough influence on the other nation's actions, while the same number and types of instruments can work in another case. Therefore, the exact influence of the instrument cannot be estimated correctly, if not considered the relative condition of the competitor as well (Organski, 1968: 111). Baldwin (1984: 497), clarifies further. According to him, power is highly subjective and contextual issue. It is hard to measure it out of interactions. Therefore, power must be analyzed only in specific cases, like in case of the actors, instruments, time, location, aim, cost, success level, etc. Only in this method power can be correctly measured. A nation can influence the actions of another nation by "persuasion, reward, punishment, and force". The choice of the method depends on the nature of the relation between the two sides, basically on the amount of agreement on the conflict and the level of friendliness between them. Organski (1968: 122), divides the power into two kinds: Negative Power and Positive Power. Negative Power is the "ability to prevent undesired actions by others" and the Positive Power is "the ability to bring about desired action by others" the latter of which he describes as unusual in practice.

Since the term "Soft Power" is invented by Joseph Nye in the 1990s, it has attracted great attention and it has made a significant contribution to IR literature as well as to the foreign policies of countries. The approach brought a new dimension to the discussions of "power". Nye shortly describes Soft Power as the way to get the desired outcome by attraction, rather than coercion or reward. He further evaluates that the

Soft Power for each country originates from its own attractions of culture, political ideals, and policies (Nye, 2004: X).

The definition for “Soft Power” was later evaluated into other terms, as it was not adequate to explain the “Soft Power” cases for some countries like China. Chinese “Soft Power” building methods require further explanations as its significant differences with what Nye defined. The Chinese Soft Power perception and strategy is criticized largely to be too much concerned with government policies. This criticism is carried on a theoretical base as well. Chinese Soft Power strategy is renamed as “Sharp Power” (Walker and Ludwig, 2017).

In short, power is a multi-dimensional, elusive, relativistic, dynamic, contextual, difficult to grasp and calculate, tough to formulate, measure and estimate, and depends on enormous unrelated instruments and factors. Power greatly depends on material possession and capabilities, like military power, economic resources, raw material capacity, industrial and technological capacity, human skills and land quality, and potentiality in all these factors. Besides, it depends on management skills of the sources, institutions, and instruments, depending on aims of usage, allocation methods and calculation skills. Furthermore, it depends on location, time, and geography. Last but not least, it depends on ideologies, cultures, norms, agreements and relations. The calculation of all these and even more factors will bring the most accurate, but still not precise, measure of an actor’s power. According to this calculation, nations in international system can be named as superpower, great power, middle power, regional power, small power etc. depending on the estimated level of power in sum.

2.2 Hegemony

“Hegemony”, “hēgemonia” and “hēgemōn” initially originated from the Greek word “hēgeisthai”, which means “to lead”. “Hēgemonia” literally means “leadership”, and it is derived from the word “hēgemōn”, which means “leader”. “Hēgemonia” was firstly used in English language in the mid-16th century and finally got into today’s final form we use, “Hegemony” (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018; Merriam-Webster Online, 2014; Kaymak, 2016: 66; Agnew, 2005: 20; Scruton, 1996: 219; McLean, 1996: 218).

“Hēgemonia” is compared with two more words in the Greek language by Triepel, one of the prominent scholars in the related field. According to Triepel (1938: 343), all three of them have similar outcomes in terms of meaning, but with different intonations. One of them is “arche”, which carries the meaning of a stronger power relation compared with “hēgemonia”. It is interpreted as “sovereignty”. The other one is “dynamis”, which is also being used in quite close meaning with “arche”. The two words stress stronger power relations, while “hēgemonia” has a relatively loose meaning, which is interpreted as “supremacy”.

Hegemony, as a term in Social Sciences, is often explained with the word “domination” in most of the sources. In Encyclopedia Britannica (Rosamond, 2016), for example, it is described as “the dominance of one group over another, by legitimating norms and ideas”. It is shortly defined as domination of a state or a group (Bealey, 1999: 153) or simply “domination of one state over another” (Safire, 1978: 324) respectively in different sources. Since “domination” is about the capability of the dominant actor, it is a result of power relation between weak and strong (Evans and Newnham, 1990: 153), although it does not give any clues about the nature of that relation, like how the domination is set up by the strong on the weak.

Hegemony is a softer form of domination. Domination may include coercion by use of material power (Shafritz, 1993: 333). When United States started the Marshall Plan in 1947, the aim was to help war-torn Western Europe to recover and prevent further advancement of Soviet invasion in the future. However, this was not the only result and aim of the plan. With the Marshall Plan, US established a matured supremacy over Western Europe. At this initial stage of the US supremacy, the Western European countries appreciated the plan, as they needed the provided funds to recover. At the later stages, the main incentive for Western Europe to accept the continuation of supremacy was their dependency on the US currency. US possession of nuclear weapons, for instance, was never a reason for Western Europe to accept US supremacy in Cold War era. That is because the US supremacy in Western Europe was not depending on power exercise, but mostly on “leadership”. In the same period, on the other hand, the Soviet regime was establishing its supremacy over a different region, that of Eastern Europe. In Hungary, Soviets sent troops to stop the economic and political liberal reforms in 1956. When it has invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, by

troops formed by neighboring communist states, the supremacy was again set up, though by coercion, and it was named as “the fraternal invasion” (Robertson, 2002: 78).

The method defines the nature of the supremacy and it defines the term to describe it. In the Cold War, the supremacy of US and that of the Soviet were of different nature. If supremacy basically depends on material power and coercion it is called “domination” (Shafritz, 1993: 333). Therefore, in the Cold War case, the Soviet supremacy over Eastern Europe is more appropriate to be called as “domination”.

In ancient Greece, the case between Athens and Delos city-states is a typical example of “domination” as well. In the famous Greek general Thucydides’ records, the legendary issue between the two sides started with Athens’ urge of Melos to join the Delian League and refusal of Melos. As the leader of Delian League, Athens threatens Delos to obey the command and join or they would be punished. Delos was destroyed by Athenian troops, males slaughtered, and the rest enslaved, upon failure of convincing Melos (Thucydides, 1998: 294-302). Power use is the key point in “domination”.

Münkler (2009: 21) defines “hegemony” as priority of a part, among equal parts. This definition quite matches with the definition expressed in the famous Roman sentence, “*primus inter pares*”, first among the equals. According to this definition, US supremacy in Western Europe in Cold War era can be defined as “hegemony”. He defines the harder stances of oppression, which are power use and creating satellites, as imperial practices of empires. What we have defined as “domination” is finding equivalent meaning in Münkler as “empire”.

According to Destradi (2008: 10), it is difficult to find a definition of “hegemony” in IR literature on which there is a consensus, compared to other power relations terms, like “empire”. She describes three reasons for this. Firstly, it is basically because of its use as a synonym of “empire” and “leadership”. Secondly, it is used by very different scholars from different theoretical schools. Thirdly, because it has become a speculating term in meaning, especially the one used to accuse US of transforming into an “empire” with selfish intentions.

“Hegemony”, as a term, is a part of lexicon since the term was used to describe the City-State systems and their power relations in Ancient Greece (Chernow and Vallasi, 1994: 1215). Although the word emerged so long time ago, it has not been frequently used until the modern ages. Machiavelli has used the term in Medieval age and it influenced the modern age scholars who had studied the term. Contemporary extensive use of the term is mostly associated with Realist school scholars, especially Charles Kindleberger and Robert Keohane (Snidal, 1985: 581).

Charles Kindleberger (1973: 305) defines “hegemony” in economic terms. He argues that the chaotic economic environment of the international environment needs a stabilizer to maintain the stability and security of all the states. Robert Keohane (1984: 35) describes “hegemony” as “a situation in which, one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations and willing to do so”.

In Realist School definitions, hegemony is firmly related to material power. Commonly, hegemony is strictly attached to the ability to access raw material, to possess capital and to control its flow, to access market and to control the production of high technology or high valued complex materials and products, to control and access new technologies (Payne, 1994: 151).

Each of these definitions represents the perspectives of different theoretical schools. In this part, the emergence of widely accepted definition of “hegemony”, i.e. the Gramscian one, will be covered. However, the scope of the coverage will be limited to Political Sciences. The Gramscian definition of “hegemony” applied to International Relation discipline, will be covered in the next section.

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist politician and philosopher, under the fascist regime of Mussolini. Gramsci suffered from political pressure and spent long years in prisons. Dying at the age of 46 from several illnesses caught in the prison, Gramsci wrote his ideas in his letters in prison, the importance of which would be noticed and will be organized and published later on (Vacca, 2010: 349). Gramsci has contributed to the political theory of modern age and because of his deviation from mainstream Marxist ideology, especially his criticism of economic determinism and

his adherence to absolute historicism, is considered to be one of the key neo-Marxists (Scruton, 1996: 219).

Gramsci was trying to figure out why communist revolutions were not taking place in Western societies and how the “bourgeoisie” could still continue its supremacy on the lower classes (McLellan, 1998; 204), while if Marx had not anticipated this situation would have continued longer. He finally formulated the reason in his definition of “hegemony”. According to Gramsci (1971: 161), the ruling capitalist class which is bourgeoisie and the official apparatus of the state, setting up hegemony on the lower masses by mainly getting their consent, rather than by coercion, economic force or punishment. Gramsci did not deny the role of power and coercion in this relation; however, he stresses that it is not enough to provide the hegemony and to continue the status quo. He argues that the ruling class’ success in continuing the hegemony and getting consent is evolving from the effective use of cultural means, like intellectuals, civil society, media and other institutions, to create a common ideology which is shared by the ruled class and themselves. In this way the ruling class will allow the lower class to benefit from the system, provided that they themselves be the major beneficiary. As long as the ruled class benefits from the system, even though as a small stakeholder, they will feel to be part of the system and provide the ruling class with consent to continue the capitalist hegemony. Gramsci further clarifies that the ruling class is setting up hegemony during all this process, by gathering consent through the combination of keeping coercion and threat ready to be used when necessary and providing them with intellectual and moral leadership (Ibid: 182). This mechanism can be shortly described as “coercion” and “consent”, and they are aimed to endure the status quo.

Gramsci’s definition of hegemony differs from the other definitions by the concept of “consent”. His description of consent and the formulation of the ways consent is gathered is the most distinguishable part of his definition of hegemony. In his definition, consent does not occur casually, on the contrary, is it deliberate and constructed by the ruling class. The ruling class which can produce its own sets and system of values holds the initiative to acquire consent, reproduce it, set up ideology and use the instruments, like media, intellectuals and state institutions on this purpose (Fontana, 1993: 140).

Hegemony is the last and most advanced of the three levels of consciousness in Gramsci's definition (1971: 180-195). He describes the first level as a consciousness of economic cooperation, which is related to a certain group's interests. The second one is class consciousness, which extends the scope to all classes but limited to economy only. The third one is hegemony, which is combining the interests of ruling class with all other class interests and combining them inside a universal ideological frame.

In order to secure the continuation of hegemony, the ruling class has to let the ruled class to get solid benefits, rather than provide promises in ideological frames. Only in this condition the ruling class can set up a real and enduring hegemonic system. Otherwise, the system would remain narrowly limited to an institution of occupational cooperation of a small group, rather than national coverage (Ibid: 161).

In Gramscian definition, unification of interests between upper and lower class is the crucial factor to create a stable and endurable hegemony. In this case ideology is functioning as cement between the two sides. Without ideology it is difficult to create hegemony, as it is a key factor to get the consent of the ruled class (Özgüden, 2015: 62).

Gramsci's definition of "hegemony" was meant to explain the domestic political conditions. This definition later would be further developed and adopted to International Relations as well, especially when the American supremacy was being questioned in the 1970's (Kaymak, 2016: 65). Gramsci has a great influence on IR scholars, even on non-Marxists (Gill and Law, 1989: 476). Gramscian definition of hegemony adopted in IR will be covered in the later sections.

"Hegemony" is presented in the Chinese language with the two characters 霸权 (bà quán) which literally mean "domination and influence" (Denisowski, 1997). However, when the character 霸 (bà) is considered in isolation, it does not have that simple and innocent meaning. In the Chinese language, 霸 (bà) alone means "tyrant, lord, feudal chief, to rule by force, to usurp".

“Hegemony” in Chinese language and in the daily usage does not carry a pleasant meaning. On the contrary, it carries “immoral” intonations. Therefore, it is not surprising when the Chinese government frequently states that China will never be a hegemon. Being “hegemon” is simply being “immoral, brutal tyrant” and setting hegemony is “setting domination in a ruthless tyrannical way” in the Chinese understanding (Cunningham-Cross and Callahan, 2011: 367).

Like most of terms, hegemony also has different interpretations in different cultural and historical backgrounds. The Chinese interpretation mostly comes from historical experience. Chinese modern history is a scene of unjust treatments from the “hegemons” of the modern era. Hegemons and hegemony carry immoral and brutal meanings, as the concepts were associated with the Chinese “Century of Humiliation”. Therefore, it is not surprising that all Chinese leadership, including Mao, is particularly stressing the point that they are not going to be a hegemon and they will always be standing against hegemonic rules and aims (Nordin, 2016: 207). This approach can be interpreted as Chinese authorities claim that they do not have the intention to be “immoral tyrant”, but that does not mean that they will not be seeking “hegemony” in the western meaning, which is “domination” or “leadership”.

2.3 Neo-Gramscian Hegemony

Neo-Gramscian definition of hegemony in International Relations is attributed to the father of the critical theoretical school’s prominent scholar Robert Cox (Moolakkatu, 2009: 439). Defining hegemony in Frankfurt School’s tradition, While Cox applies Gramscian ideas and terminology of hegemony from political and social sciences to the Discipline of International Relations. Like all critical scholars, he also uses Vico’s (a history philosopher) historical approach, which claims that historical events are never repeating themselves because it resembles a spiral flow, rather than a circular one (Bostanoğlu, 2008: 193).

Cox (1992: 140), describes hegemony in IR not just as rough supremacy of a stronger power over weak, but functioning in a more complicated way of using coercive power together with international institutions and ideological values. The values are meant to influence the whole international system, to tie them up with the hegemonic rules and manufacture the consent of the weak. In Cox’s definition of hegemony, the domination

which depends on power is not enough to set up a hegemonic system, the hegemon must get consent as well. Thus, consent and ideology are key factors in Neo-Gramscian definition of hegemony.

In Neo-Gramscian definitions, hegemony is not just a type of power relation between the states, but also a system of global economy working with a dominant mode of production and influencing the other countries, getting in connection with the sub production levels. It is at the same time a special kind of social relation network that connects the classes from different countries. The world hegemony is a social, economic and political structure. The hegemony cannot survive without any of them. All social, economic and political components must be working together to create a hegemonic system. Besides, there must be civil structures that operate beyond the nation-states supporting the hegemonic system as a whole by imposing its values to the other states. This can be done by universal sets of norms, institutions and mechanisms. Setting up such a huge and complex structure is a hard mission and can only be done by the countries that have had extensive social and economic revolutions which have changed domestic economic and political dynamics carrying big potential to influence the outside world as well (Cox and Sinclair 2016: 137).

Cox and Sinclair (Ibid: 57) describe historicism and positivism as the two main methods of interpreting history, and they choose to use historicism. Generally speaking, critical theories and Cox's approach of hegemony are built on historicism (Cox, 1981: 129). Cox's definition of hegemony shortly can be described as taking the interaction between particular process in consideration, focusing on changes in the production domain and abusive nature of the social relations and interpreting the whole as "continuing creation of new forms", rather than an unchangeable and explicit approach (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 86).

Historicism is a theoretical approach coming from Marxian and Hegelian tradition. It is the most significant methodological characteristic of the Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony, in general for all approaches of critical school as well (Devetak, 2013: 220). Historicism is a way of interpretation and it is commonly attributed to German philosophers, such as Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954) (Rand, 1964: 503). It suggests that all social

phenomena that are related to humans, like culture, language, history, politics etc., are fundamentally history-oriented (Troeltsch, 1923: 107). That means human mind is not the product of a permanent, fixed, intangible nature. On the contrary, it is built by changeable historical social relations, and therefore it is also changeable itself (Maurice, 1988: 134).

Historicism is in contradictions with positivism. Positivism was considered to be the sole reliable approach to reach the truth and true information about everything for a long time, since the very beginning of the enlightenment period. The fixed and indisputable facts derived from empirical evidence in the natural sciences, basically physics, are applied to whole branches of social sciences as well (Cox and Sinclair, 2016: 6). Positivism is still the fundamental approach today and the scholars are still trying to figure out the facts in social sciences, which has validity out of time, location and social influences. Shortly, positivism in social sciences is an effort to detect and define the social relations with the unchangeable definite rules of natural sciences, like physics, mathematics etc. Gramsci strictly refused the applications of pure positivism in social sciences. He claims that the application of pure positivism to social sciences means excluding human from the historical context, which will lead to delusions (Okur, 2010: 38).

According to Cox and Sinclair (2016: 7), positivism cannot explain the changing dynamics of the events as it is relying on observations, rather than history. It is observing a dynamic incident in constant and persistent change, which means it is also going to be changed in the future. So what positivism is going to observe is a small part of the whole incident, an incident which has not yet been completed and which will not be completed as long as the social relations exist. Positivism can be useful only when it is defined between certain time and in historical boundaries. Historicism, in Cox's understanding, is useful when it comes to discovering the regularities in certain periods of history, which are meaningful in the context of that period. However, Cox is unique in the methodology of using positivist approach in the cases of persistency and historicism in the cases of divergence (Ibid: 8).

Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony applies Gramsci's political concept of "historical bloc" into international context. Historical bloc, which means "binding and cohering"

different interest groups by the domestic hegemonic class (Morton, 2003: 159), expanding itself to international environment, just as the ruling class which has aggregated them, targets international hegemony as well (Cox, 1983: 171). This expansion causes formation of single classes stretching over the boundaries of nation-states and facilitates the ideological expansion as well. The formation of Hegemony is completed in two stages in this case. Firstly, completing the formation of historical bloc causing “social cohesion” in domestic society. Secondly, expanding this cohesion and certain “mode of production” (in American case it is “Fordist Production Mode”) to international sphere. This expansion will be smoothed with the support of the institutions that have “international characteristics”. Therefore, the first stage, that is the completion of the system in domestic society, carries crucial importance as it will be the sustenance point of the whole global hegemonic system. (Morton, 2003: 160). This is what the neo-Gramscian scholars are calling “internationalization of the state”. World hegemony is being established only after the establishment of hegemonic system in domestic society (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 93).

Gramsci’s historical bloc in inner politics finds itself in the forms of international institutions and organizations in the outer system. International institutions carry out important functions in the formation and implementation of hegemonic system. Their functions and features are potted in five items. Firstly, they create rules that smoothen the expansion of the hegemonic system. Secondly, they are themselves the products of hegemonic system. Thirdly, ideologically they legitimize the global hegemonic system. Fourthly, they integrate the elites of the other countries with the system. Finally, they reduce the effects of the anti-hegemonic movements (Cox and Sinclair, 2016: 138). The international institutions like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have played an important role in setting up the American hegemony. NATO is one of the most important institutions in this context. The USA set up its hegemonic rule against Soviet security threat by NATO. The problem was about security of the whole European continent. The sensitivity of the issue paved the way for the USA to set up the hegemony much smoother (Gamble, 2002: 132). Nonetheless, a clearly defined international society, which would promote the hegemonic system, does not yet exist in the system. The existing ones mostly have contradicting different agendas and they do not function coherently for the purpose of implementing the hegemonic rule (Gill and Law, 1989: 492).

Confirming the Marxist tradition and the methodology of thought, Neo-Gramscian hegemony considers that the production relations of the society are the starting point of explanation of the dynamics of the hegemony. Production cannot be minimized to the production of physical goods, that marketed and used. It includes “production and reproduction” of knowledge, social relations, morals and institutions, which creates the base for the production of the physical goods (Cox, 1989: 39). In this context, power in certain social production relations paves the way for formation of social forces, social forces become the forming dynamics of states and later states create the global hegemony (Cox, 1987: 4). Globalization of production relations causes the class relations to be influenced by global effects and this process links people that belong to the same class but live in different states (Gill, 1990: 46).

Ideology in hegemonic rule is a crucial factor that functions not only to manufacture consent but also to prevent the counter-hegemonic movements. Formation of these movements are prevented by the hegemonic educational institutions, like universities and international organizations. They create local elites with domesticated minds eliminating the dangerous movements and ideas as well as helping them transform into consent, if not assimilation (Cox, 1983: 173).

International institutions, ideologies, intellectuals, media, universities, international non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), international corporations, and many other means of hegemonic tools are all created and designed to generate consent of the ruled societies and governments. However, this peaceful picture does not mean the hard power does not have a function in the system, or that it will never be used. Neo-Gramscian hegemony does not deny the role and importance of the material power. On the contrary, coercion and consent are considered to be the two main pillars of the hegemonic system; mutually dependent in creating hegemonic system.

The idea of using coercion and consent to create hegemony originates from the Italian medieval political advisor Machiavelli. Machiavelli suggested the “Prince” to be furnished by two instruments of coercion and consent. He resembled the political power to “Centaur”, the half-human, half-animal creature. Centaur represented how the coercion and consent would work. The prince was advised to not hesitate to use

any of them, whenever needed. Coercion is always innate in the system, but it is only being used if there is a challenge to the system (Cox and Sinclair, 2016: 127).

Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony is theoretically and methodologically criticized in various points. The theory is contradictorily criticized to be too Marxist by some critics, while criticized as lacking Marxist consistency by others. The idea of “internationalization of the state” is criticized for reducing the function of the state to the level of a tool, in regulating the domestic economy for the requirement for the global economy. Another criticism is that the Gramsci’s ideas have not been evaluated in the light of historicism by neo-Gramscian scholars. If done so, the reliability of the historical concepts would have been tested and the consistency of the theory would have been improved. The fact that the role of the ideas is given equal importance with the role of production, is a point that has been criticized as well. Furthermore, it is criticized for not having mechanisms of engagements with the inventive challenges and possible alternatives to the existing order (Bieler and Morton, 2003: 5).

Critics are emerging sometimes from very different aspects, it is claimed that the Gramscian thought is limited into international political economy, to have broader use of it, it should be re-analyzed out of the “Coxian ontology” (Worth, 2011: 373). Persuad (2016: 547) argues that the neo-Gramscian theory is not sufficient to explain the world systems. The coercion-consent set of theory can be meaningful in western hegemonic relations, while it will not be adequate to explain the dynamics that manage hegemon-third world relations.

2.4 Hegemonic Relations in Theories

Hegemonic relations theories are the instruments to understand the usage of power in the international system. They provide us with useful methodological tools to analyze the risks and estimate the future. Here, the most significant ones will be discussed with some basic information on theoretical schools associated with them.

2.4.1 Hegemonic Stability Theory

The International Relations discipline ontologically depends on finding solutions for the problems emerging from the chaotic characteristics of international environment. The anarchical environment is basically producing an unstable and insecure

atmosphere for all countries. The elimination of this chaotic environment and providing all members with at least basic security to build healthy relations is the main anticipated outcome of the theories. Like most of the theories and arguments in IR discipline, the Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) is also affected a lot from the realist school's basic assumptions of self-interest, power maximizing and especially from the assumption of anarchical international environment (Waltz, 1988: 616). However, at the same time, it carries a strong institutionalist liberal influence as well, as the basic arguments of the theory depend on liberal economic order and institutions.

Hegemonic Stability Theory is firstly framed by Kindleberger (1973: 305). He basically argues that the chaotic international economic environment needs a stabilizer to keep the system endure. Kindleberger, as a political economist, mainly focuses on the economic stability for the sake of all nations, sharing the same expectations, "collective good". The term "collective good" in his argument is chosen because the system is supposed to benefit all states. Kindleberger was deeply concerned about the popular belief of the time, i.e. in early 1970s, holding that the US supervision of the international system was declining and there will be uncertainty after it (Strange, 1987: 556).

Although the father of the theory is Kindleberger, Robert Keohane is the name father and further developer of the theory (Snidal, 1985: 583). HST is commonly defined as for order and stability in a chaotic international environment, a single powerful hegemonic actor needs to provide order and safe environment for all nations. All nations are supposed to be in cooperation and under the coordination of hegemonic rule to provide desirable environment for themselves. It further defines that if there is no hegemonic rule, there will be anarchy and chaos in international environment, which does not bring desirable outcome for all the other states as well (Milner, 1998: 114). According to Gilpin (1987: 88), a hegemonic rule is needed for two main reasons: the existence of liberal economy and the necessity of peaceful and safe international environment.

Hegemonic Stability Theory was later divided into two versions. One of them is basically concerned with "collective good" as an economic version of it. While the other version focuses on security. While hegemonic rule supposedly provides a safe

and stable environment for the world economy, that environment would support the political stability and security concerns as well. Although there are differences of fields and aims between the two versions, there is a commonality in both points. In order to provide the stability, there must be a hegemonic rule and the hegemonic rule must continue to exist in order to get the desired results from the system (Keohane, 1984: 31).

Snidal (1985: 612) argues that the scope and applicability of the theory are very limited and can only fit in specific conditions. He further claims that the stability in the system may not need a hegemonic power. The stability can be provided by a collective initiative as well. Keohane (1984: 31), from an institutionalist point of view, shares similar argument in his famous book "After Hegemony". He claims that the hegemonic rule is necessary only at the beginning of the system setup. In later stages, cooperation does not require a hegemonic power as international institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Union (EU), the World Trade Organization (WTO) in order to be functional. They can continue to do the job they are created for, even can warn and put sanctions on states in case of any infringement of the international rules.

Buzan (1985: 290) criticizes Keohane for not being specific in detailed explanation of how the world economic system will work without a hegemon. There is no end of critics of the theory from various approaches and commentators. The theory is drawing a frame and making assumptions if all sides are fitting to the frame. In reality even though the hegemon enjoys the biggest share of the benefit from the system, it still does not guarantee responsible conducts of power. Therefore, the main argument of the theory, which suggests that hegemonic rule of a strong state over the international community will bring "stability" or "instability", is highly debatable in practice. In theory, only a hegemonic rule can set up a stable international system and can endure it (Cohn, 2002: 72). Nevertheless, in many works the hegemon is not credited much as stability provider in the field, rather it is deeply criticized to be false in reality, as it is the case with the US hegemony in the Middle East which is not source of stability, but rather source of instability (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2009: 11).

2.4.2 Power Transition Theory

Power Transition Theory was formulated for the first time by A.F.K. Organski in 1958. According to Organski (1968: 375), the world history has three periods. The first period is the one prior to 1750, which is the approximate time when industrial revolution took place and when none of the nations were industrialized. The second period extends from 1750 to a future date, a period in which industrialized and industrializing nations exist together. The third period starts when all nations are industrialized. He marks the second period, which we are in now, as power transition period. In this period while getting industrialized, the states are improving “in wealth, population and in the efficiency of the governmental organization”, which he counts as the most important determinants of power.

A similar three-stage power transition will pass in every nation as well. The stage of “potential power”, the stage of “growth in power” and the stage of “power maturity (Ibid: 376). While all countries are passing through these stages, there will be a member of particular “competing international orders” and changing between the orders will be very hard, as it will require enormous domestic changes as well. While these changes happen in domestic and international spheres, the most powerful state will form a league which it will lead, while some other “powerful and satisfied major countries” together with some “weak and satisfied and weak and dissatisfied, minor countries and dependencies” will also join. Peace will be “guaranteed” as long as the “satisfied countries” get the big share of power compared to the rest. However, if a growing “challenger” country, with the support of the “dissatisfied” countries, join them to challenge the system, usually the situation “results in war”. The Power Transition will take place in this stage though there is a chance of transition without war as well. He further evaluates that when the “challenger” nation is likely to become equally powerful as the leader; when its growth is fast; if the leader is unbending in its policies; if there is no any “friendship” relationship between them; and if the “challenger” is emerging with an “alternative international order”, the war is most probably inevitable (Ibid: 376).

The Power Transition Theory differs from the main realist assumptions in various points. Firstly, it describes the rules of governing domestic and international order in very similar ways and while the anarchy of international environment is essential in

realist theories. Secondly, it suggests hierarchical order between the states according to their powers. Lastly, while in realism the states aim to “maximize their power”, based on this theory, they “maximize their net gain” (Kugler and Organski, 1989: 172).

Power Transition Theory requires the states in the system to share the power asymmetrically. In other words, if the system consists of major powers in similar levels of power, conflicts are more likely to take place (Ibid: 194).

The theory has further developed the assumption of hierarchy from global level to regional levels as well. Hierarchy remains the most significant point of the theory. Evaluating the theory in the cases of China as “challenger” and US as “dominant” power, it is hard to anticipate whether the power transition, if it ever takes place, would include war.

The states are not constantly in rival positions, they have relations in complex forms, which is changing according to the historical ties, ideologies, cultural and religious matters, agreements etc. Thus, in the hegemon and the challenger relationship there is also a possibility of a smooth transition. For example, if the hegemon was the USA and Canada the challenger, the chances for hegemonic war would be minimal, while chances would be much greater if the challenger was North Korea.

Secondly, China seems not to have any problem with the existing order as it is gaining from the system a lot. Consequently, there is no alternative international order suggested by the “challenger”. The power transition occurs by means of war in cases when power transition is highly debatable. As we examine the power transition records of history, it does not happen that frequently. The transition between UK and US did not include any conflicts between them; the reason for the transition was the second world war, rather than US as “an industrialized challenger”. In current international conditions, the small powers are mostly alienated with major powers or superpowers, mostly for country’s pragmatic interests, rather than challenging the system on behalf of the “challenger”.

The theory is formulated upon the examination of power transition examples in history. However, drawing permanent rules from the historical events is also highly doubtful,

as each event has unique reasons and results and they do not guarantee similar events will work in the same way in different contexts. Going back to the case of China and US, it is not quite rational to think there will be a war between them just because there was a war in some similar cases in history. In the current nuclear age, it is not that easy to start a war, in which there will be no winner actually. So, context and time change the engagement rules.

2.4.3 Long Cycle Theory

Long Cycle Theory was firstly introduced by George Modelski in 1978. The theory mainly claims that there are regular “cycles” in world politics that repeat themselves in similar patterns, at least since the end of the 15th century (Modelski, 1978: 214-235). The practical methodology of the theory is to derive reliable facts from the historical experience of the power handover, which can be examined and used to predict the future changes and hopefully prevent incidents. Modelski describes the cycles as “recurrent pattern in the life (or functioning) of a system”, in which a world power exercises its power and creates its own world domination and somehow each is taking about a century (Ibid: 214). According to him, since the end of the 15th century, the world has witnessed a total of five cycles, four of which are full cycles and finished, while one has not yet finished. Those cycles named with the name of ruling powers are: Portuguese cycle (1494-1580), Dutch cycle (1581-1688), the first British cycle (1689-1791), the second British cycle (1792-1913) and the American cycle (1914-present) (Ibid: 225).

Long Cycle Theory, divides the cycles into four stages. In the first stage a “global war” takes place because of instability in the system and uneven distribution of resources. The war marks the end of a long cycle and the beginning of a new cycle. In the “global power” stage, the new global power has power concentration, asserting its own system and rules on the others. The power is unchallengeable and the legitimacy of its hegemonic position is unquestionable. In the third stage, the global power has “delegitimization” in its position. That is because of failure in its capacity to solve the political problems in the system. In the fourth stage, while the system set up by the global power is still functioning, there will be the formation of rival camps and decline in influence of the global power so the next stage will be the beginning of a new cycle (Thompson, 1983: 42).

In Long Cycle Theory, the sea power has a special place in establishing and maintaining the global system. Simply, the most important requirement of being a global power is the ability to control the oceans (Modelski and Thompson, 1988: 3). The theory is particularly emphasizing the role of the nation-state in the cycles in two points. Firstly, the world powers are all proven to be nation-states. Secondly, the nation-states are described to be “effective units” in the “global war” and in the implementation of the system (Modelski, 1978: 230).

Long Cycle Theory resembles Ibn Khaldun’s description of the rise and fall of states in stages. Ibn Khaldun (1958: 313), basically describes the formation of the state by the term “asabiyah”, by which the special tie between the people formed in the first stage and power is gained by violence, similar like the first stage in the Long Cycle Theory. Later, through good leadership, prosperity comes with social transformation, which resembles the “global power” stage. In the next stage, the power and prosperity make people corrupt, greedy and materialist, which brings along the loosening of the system, decline and perish by another new ascending power. Khaldun, describes the life span of states just like human life: birth, grow up, decline and death. He formulates the ideal life span for a state as four generations, while in Long Cycle Theory it is three generations. First generation “builds”, the second generation “consolidates” and the last one “loses control” (Modelski, 1978: 232).

The theory’s assumptions boldly depend on historical observations in modern times. This point is highly elusive, though it is one of its most important characteristics. Theories are tended to be formulated in positivist methodology to define the most accurate rules that are valid in every circumstance and time. Deriving rules from empirical historical events in this aspect is not desirable as the historical events are accepted to be unique and the repetition of any of the events is not guaranteed to occur in the same fashion. On the other hand, applying the methodology of natural sciences in social sciences is also highly criticized as the subject in social events is the human being having emotions and conscious, rather than a physical object.

2.4.4 World Systems Theory

World Systems Theory is one of the most significant multidisciplinary approaches to the economic, social and political development of the world since the sixteenth century. The theory aims to explain the dynamics and nature of the “capitalist world economy” (Wallerstein, 1974: 328). World Systems Theory was firstly coined by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1974. It basically assumes that the world capitalist economy, which has started to form after the discovery of American continents in the sixteenth century, is an indivisible whole and consisting all the world with a complex network of interdependency, economic exchange and social interaction. This comprehensive system basically depends on a three-level hierarchy: “core countries”, referring to advanced countries; “periphery countries”, referring to poor countries; and the “semi-periphery countries”, referring to the countries that constitute position in the middle of the system.

The position of a country can change in time as the system is described in a dynamic character, which means, while the system is working some members in periphery may advance and change the status to semi-periphery or a core country may lose the status down to semi-periphery as well. The hierarchical system depends on the means and nature of production, possession level of technology, size of capital possession, share in the market, the size of trading network, raw material access, possession and skills of finance and military power, and so on. The wealth flows if it runs from periphery and semi-periphery to core. The system principally runs on exploitation of the other countries by the core countries (Wallerstein, 2011: 326-334). Wallerstein, putting the interdependency theory at the center of his definition, refuses Lenin’s and Bukharin’s approach to development of capitalist system by the definition of imperialism (Kaymak, 2016: 67). As a neo-Marxist, Wallerstein (1974: 415) stresses that the system is global-sized capitalist system and currently there is no socialist system to challenge it.

Core countries are basically benefiting from the system more and they are developed countries, better organized in management and bureaucracy, holding surplus capital for investment, possessing high technology, big share in the market and well-developed armies (Wallerstein, 1974: 303-407). While the periphery countries are basically in the opposite condition, with disadvantages of capital, technology, land,

and skillful labor force. And finally, semi-periphery is a kind of layer between the two, making the capitalist system to work efficiently (Ibid: 403). For Wallerstein, the unit in international environment is the world system, rather than the nation-state, as most of the international relations theories suggest, especially realists.

The world system is managed by a stronger capitalist hegemonic core country. Wallerstein (2011: 38) describes hegemony as “short moment in the time when a given core power can manifest simultaneously productive, commercial and financial superiority over all other core powers”. While Wallerstein’s definition of hegemony more resembles dominance, the other important contributor of the theory, Giovanni Arrighi (1993: 150), describes it in Gramscian way with consent and ideology, which imported Gramscian approach to the World Systems Theory.

There are three examples of the capitalist hegemonic rules in the world history since the sixteenth century: United Provinces (1620-1720), England (1815-1873) and the USA (1945-1967). The three of these states share some common features. One is that they all reached a certain degree of agricultural industry and then they repeated the same success in commerce and finance. Secondly, they share the same tendency to support liberal economic system on global scale. Finally, their military superiority depended on the strong naval power (Wallerstein, 2011: 39).

Geographic location and size, the well-organized government structure, being advanced in technology, possession of excessive capital, advanced labor force, developed agricultural production are the main factors which can ascend a core country to the position of hegemony over the other cores (Overbeek, 2011: 1070).

World Systems Theory basically gets criticism for its approach in terms of being economy-oriented, state-centric and neglecting culture and the role of international institutions in the global affairs (Robinson, 2011: 741). However, it still preserves its unique function and place when it comes to interpreting the world economic interaction and hierarchical positions of the states according to their relative power, in IR.

2.4.5 Theory of Hegemonic War

Theory of Hegemonic War is a realist approach to war, at the top of the power pyramid between the dominant state and the rising challenger, which changes the status of the hegemon of the system. Gilpin (1988: 591) as the father of the theory, got the main pillars of the theory from the realist ideas of Thucydides. In his book *Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides (1998: 49) was setting a power-oriented interstate relationship while writing his opinion about the reasons for the war. “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta”. This evaluation was an unusual one, as usually in his contemporary time these kinds of events would be attributed to some supernatural reasons. Thucydides is accepted as the father of realist theory, for his realistic evaluations (Eckstein, 2003: 758).

Gilpin (1988: 593) proposes that there is an important difference between the usual wars and hegemonic wars, which Thucydides calls “great war”. What makes a war “hegemonic” is basically the fact that the hegemonic war is changing the international system. The international structure leads to a hegemonic war and the hegemonic war changes the structure afterward. The hegemonic war has three important characteristics that distinguish it from other wars. Firstly, it is on global scale, which means nearly all small and big powers would join it. Secondly, it is in all means and areas, which is aimed to change the structure of international system by all means and usually accompanied by religious, political and social disorders. Finally, the geographical scope it takes place is global scale (Gilpin, 1981: 199-200). Briefly, the theory’s core argument is that “the hegemonic war historically has been the basic mechanism of systemic change in world politics” (Gilpin, 1988: 209)

The hegemonic power initially sets up its own order over the others based on a hierarchical manner, with an outcome of a relatively stable and peaceful environment. However, as time passes a second state grows in power excessively and gets in the rival position against hegemon. The struggle between this state and the hegemon leads to polarization in the system. Eventually, this condition worsens and results in war, which brings a new hegemon and a new international system (Ibid: 595).

Thucydides’ evaluations were depending on the assumption that human nature is selfish and interest-oriented with the tendency of violence. Gilpin draws attention to

the fact that although the world has changed a lot in every aspect since the Peloponnesian Wars there is no evidence proving that human nature has changed. Human still struggles for power and wealth in selfish manner. Nuclear weapons have not made wars impossible, economic interdependency cannot guarantee it will overcome conflicts when they emerge, perhaps most importantly, the anarchy in international environment continues. Under these conditions it seems that the possibility of hegemonic wars cannot be denied, which evidently have and have had the conditions to repeat themselves even since the time of Thucydides (Gilpin, 1981: 230).

According to Gilpin (1988: 606), there are three wars in the modern history that can be regarded as “hegemonic wars”, which have fundamentally changed the international structure. The first one is the Thirty Years War (1619-1648), which has profoundly changed the international rules by the Westphalia treaty. The second one is Napoleonic Wars which took place in the early nineteenth century and finished with the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 and brought power balance system to Europe. The final one is the First World War (1914-1918) which lead to the collapse of empires and setting up of national states together with the organization of Union of Nations. All of these wars took place in large scale, including both the big powers and most of the small powers of the time. They had profound reasons and participants demanded structural changes with a variety of motives and the wars took place geographically in a large area.

Hegemonic War Theory is a realist theory, and therefore, like most of the other realist approaches, constructing assumptions on power struggle of selfish nations states in an anarchic international environment. In this regard, the criticism of realism, in general, is valid for the theory as well. For example, the international environment cannot be regarded as anarchic as many other theories brought reasonable alternative explanations, like international community, interdependency, international institutions etc. Most notably, the hegemonic wars, if ever happen, do not always cause system change and system changes are not always a result of hegemonic wars. If so, it would be hard to explain a lot of wars between challengers and hegemons that did not bring any change to international relations. For instance, the Second World War changed the hegemon but did not change the system a lot. The war which changed the world

hegemony from England to US did not take place between the two, rather they were allies. Similarly, in the US and China example, the hegemon and challenger may have different methods to struggle, like trade wars, rather than military confrontation.

2.4.6 Balance of Power Theory

Balance of Power Theory is another realist theory. The theory examines the states' reactions when under threat or when there is a potential for that. Realist theoretical school formulates this in a logical way. The national security of each state will be improved if the total power in the system is distributed fairly among the states or the camps (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2005: 503). The states behave in two major ways when they are under a threat. They align with another power to create a counter block against the threat, which is called "balance", or they just align with the source of the treat, which is called "bandwagon" (Waltz, 1979: 126). For the weak states aligning with a stronger or victorious power in advance of the conflict, may seem reasonable to expect good treatment. However, there is no way to verify this. Therefore, it is much wiser if the weak one chooses strategy of balance rather than bandwagon (Donnelly, 2013: 61).

Walt (1987: 147-181), in his book "The Origins of Alliances", assesses the case in the Middle East from 1955 to 1979 and concludes that for the states, balancing is more accurate choice; in the survey he also found that balancing occurred much more commonly than bandwagon in that period of time in Middle East.

Balance of Power Theory is based on the main assumptions of the realism about human nature and its reflection in political science. In realist theory, politics is determined by the systematic laws in human nature; power and interest are the determining factors in international relations and they do not depend on time and location. The moral values are not applicable to international politics and international politics is an independent domain that should not be evaluated with the rules of other domains (Morgenthau, 1954: 10-35). States live in a constant anarchical environment and have to build power for self-protection as there is no guarantee of safety. That is why all nations are in a fierce power competition, each aiming to get stronger than their rivals in the areas of military strength, geography and economy (Mearsheimer, 2001b). Balance of power politics can be expected only when two powers reach their interests. That is when the

system is anarchic and the members of the system worry about the existence (Waltz, 1979: 121).

Power is not good or evil in nature, it depends on who and for what purpose it is used (Organski, 1968: 102). Mearsheimer (2001a: 46-61), the father of offensive realism, advocates that there are two alternatives to classical power balancing. One is to let another power deal with the aggressor state. For this, he suggests taking the attention of the third state to the aggressor, while keeping good relations with both. This method of balancing is called “buck-passing”. The other method is called “bloodletting”, which is described as letting the two rival states, though one may not necessarily be a rival, to struggle with each other, so the result would be the elimination of two rivals, or one rival and another potential one.

Balance of Power Theory, as most of the realist assumptions, has been criticized especially by the idealists to be too much power and violence oriented and having a lack of morality. Rather than power and its balancing, idealists are focused on international institutions and laws to prevent the threats in international relation (Smith, 1987: 190). The constructivist theory has a different approach as well. According to Alexander Wendt (1999), power is not totally related to material to engage with each other, but the “identities” which are built upon special relations also counts.

The Balance of Power Theory is labeled as not useful to explain the reality in international relations by other scholars as well. According to them, the unipolarity of power, which is the theory’s main problem to deal with, is not unusual and surprising in human history since it has always been in practical life nearly in all history (Wohlforth, et al., 2007: 179). The concentration of power is considered a security problem for the system, while unipolarity is proven to be more stable and safer for most of the nations. Offensive realists admit that unipolar world system provides more security and it is not likely to cause wars between big powers in such a system (Mearsheimer, 2010: 78).

Organski (1968: 298) voices criticism of the theory as well. According to him, not all nations aim to maximize their power capacity, they can have other goals as well and power is just one of them. Nations cannot be regarded powerful in sense of military

and material possessions only; they can have other ways of power that cannot be subject of balance of power. Nations do not have many choices to align with any nation they want; they usually have many other reasons and constraints to keep or choose an ally. Nations may pursue their national interest and it may look like balancing, but it simply may not. Nations are not primarily motivated to seek balance. Power concentration may not always bring treat to others, sometimes the established powers secure the system, while new emerging challengers sabotage it, like between 1815-1914 and after and finally, the balance of power will not bring peace, as the world has seen many times before, the balanced unions are getting in destructive wars soon after they formed the power camps (Ibid: 299).

2.7 Complex Interdependency Theory

The term “Complex Interdependency” is invented by Raymond Leslie Buell (1925: 5), referring to the complex nature of economic and social relations among states, which was starting to form in early 20th century. It is further developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1987: 725-753), who mainly claim that the interdependency between states creates a big force of effects in international policies. The theory primarily uses liberal arguments, usually in sharp contradictions with the strict and pessimist realist arguments. Liberal theorists believe that the only force which can stop wars is the free trade between the states (Howard, 1978: 37). In a broader sense, Complex Interdependency Theory claims that the relationship between states, especially the liberal economic relations, keep them in a context of a mutual interdependency. This interdependency binds them with various conditions that need stability and secure environment, which leads to diminishing power use, conflicts and wars (Burchill, 2013: 96-97).

Complex Interdependency Theory brings an alternative to the realist assumptions of the state power, its intentions and the nature of the international atmosphere. In realist approaches states are characterized as aiming power maximization in an anarchic zero-sum game environment (Mearsheimer, 2001b). Nevertheless, Complex Interdependency Theory refuses this sharp argument and suggests that the mutual benefits of the international trade can bring the states to work together for a mutual aim. While the military power is still important in international relations the mutual complex interdependency helps the states to cooperate rather than compete. States do

not always aim power maximization, but in fact, they simply credit their benefits to be maximized also. In some conditions the relations can bring zero-sum situations, but in most of the cases it is actually a win-win situation as well. Therefore, the anarchic international environment does not always bring competition and struggle, but also peaceful cooperation. The nature of the outcome can be sometimes war when the zero-sum situations escalate the tension further, but it can be peace as well (Nye and Welch, 2015: 350-367).

Liberal institutionalist scholars suggest that complex interdependency can be regulated by international institutions. The free trade regulations and supervision by the international institutions will create a much more stable environment in anarchic international atmosphere. International institutions, international corporations and organizations are affecting the domestic and international policies, pushing the states to implement more peaceful strategies to attract investments. This trend is going to reduce the absoluteness of state power and its role in international relations as well (Burchill, 2013: 97). Liberal institutionalists have developed the debate further and suggest that the international institutions can take the place of a hegemon in case of no existing hegemonic power (Keohane, 1984: 31).

The Complex Interdependency Theory is mostly criticized by the realists. Realists claim that there is a considerable effect of the international institutions on policies of the states and it does make the anarchic environment more stable. However, this situation can continue only to the boundaries of the core interests of the states. When the states worry about their core interests, none of the organizations or institutions can change the steps it would take. Thus, the final and actual actors in international relations are still states. Furthermore, the cooperation, interdependency and international institutions do not change the hegemonic power relations between the states as the distribution of benefit is not equal, rather the hegemonic power benefits from it more than all others. The unequal distribution of wealth and power always carries the risk of conflict and war (Burchill, 2013: 100).

Democratic Peace Theory can be classified in the same category as Complex Interdependence Theory. The theory suggests that the democratic states, because of normative democratic values and the accountability of their rulers, are likely to have

more peaceful relations with each other as wars with their devastating results are hard to get consent and support from the public (Levy, 1988: 661). Dating back to Kant's Perpetual Peace Theory (Doyle, 1983: 216), the proponents defend it based on the empirical evidence of the low conflict rates between the democratic countries in the last century. However, the critics, especially the realists, stress the necessity for peaceful cooperation, around the common interests, rather than the democratic values (Gelpi and Griesdorf, 2001: 45). It goes without saying, they found Kant's theory too utopian.

2.5 Supremacy in History

History has a lot of examples of supremacy relations, no matter if the definition is taken as hegemony or not. Hegemony is just one kind of supremacy. In any case of a stronger and weaker states' interactions, naturally there will be a hierarchic power positioning of dominating and dominated sides. In this aspect, four kinds of different supremacy types, namely hegemony, empires, imperialism and colonialism, are worth defining in this section.

2.5.1 Hegemony

While addressing hegemonic relations, IR scholars usually tend to refer back to ancient Greece. However, looking from a global vision, the same type of relations can be found in China, India, Middle East and Africa as well. While most of the states were using power in "empire" mindset, the specific relations carry characteristics of different types of power relations as well.

In the medieval era, Romans, Sassanians, Umayyads, Abbasids, Seljuks and so on; later, Ottomans, Venice, Mughals, Ming China, Holy-Romans, France and many others had hegemonic relations with neighboring states, no matter it was in a form of domination or leadership. Imperialism and Colonialism are mostly modern terms addressing modern types of relations, though it does not mean that there did not use to exist certain types of relations exactly matching one of these terms or concepts.

Hegemony in The World Order scale, however, is a rare phenomenon that has occurred in history. Before the modern ages, there were massive empires, some of which stretching over two or three continents, such as Roman Empire, Hellenic Empire,

Mongolian Empire, Byzantium Empire, Abbasid Empire, Ottoman Empire etc. Nevertheless, none of them could establish a comprehensive social, economic, political world-scale hegemonic system under its leadership, until the modern ages.

According to Modelski and Thompson (1988: 5), the hegemonic world order starts in the fifteenth century. It starts with the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and the hegemonic power was Portugal. The power and system depended on the control of the sea routes. The system was not necessarily in world range, but it was covering the most dynamic trade zones. Portugal and Spanish hegemony mostly depended on the explorations of the sea routes and the colonization in the new continents. The initial flow of gold and trading surplus, and later new lands, new raw materials resources, working force resources brought a new condition of struggle that each powerful state in Europe would find itself fighting for in later time. This struggle shifted itself to other areas like Africa, India, Middle East and Pacific Asia. The world-scale struggle affected the European continent as well. The age of colonialism, imperialism and hegemony continued until recent times and occasionally caused big wars. Hegemony, imperialism and colonialism are the names that, explaining the new dimensions of power relations the world intensely witnessed during this power struggle and sharing of resources.

The Portugal-Spain hegemonic role ended in 1585 with the war against the Anglo-Dutch alliance (Ibid: 5). Thus, Netherland's hegemonic status was basically established in Atlantic. Arrighi (1993: 150) claims that Netherland's hegemonic rule was commenced mostly by the crisis of feudalism in Europe. This period marks the beginning of absolute monarchies, which can be described as proto nation-states. Netherland period was significant for the rest of the history because it provided a safe environment for free trading, for the private entrepreneurs. This system provided a free zone for development of international trade and supplement of weapons for the protection of absolute monarchies. The environment Netherland offered to Europe was helping the monarchies to consolidate the power against Pope (Wood, 2003: 102). Nonetheless, it did not last long time as it was challenged by the rising sea power of that time, Britain.

Netherland's hegemonic status finished in 1689 and Britain was the next hegemon (Modelski and Thompson, 1988: 5). Britain was not yet an industrial country in the

early first period, and it had two periods of hegemony. At this stage, it was mostly focused on power concentration, territorial expansion and setting up trading colonies. In the later periods of the century, it would start industrialization. Britain was challenged mostly by France during the late eighteenth century and the clash was inevitable (Organski, 1968: 355). The devastating Napoleonic wars destroyed most of Europe until they ended by the help of British armies and general Wellington, in 1815.

The second period of Britain's hegemonic rule started with the end of the Napoleonic Wars and Vienna Agreement in 1815 (Modelski and Thompson, 1988: 5). This period was going to end with the First World War 1914-1918. During this period, England set up a comprehensive world order, basically depending on free trade and gold standard in a scale that the world had never witnessed before. The great military strength, huge economic power, massive land expansion throughout the whole world, enormous industrial capacity to feed the whole channels of the world trade and well-established financial system, allowed it to be a real hegemon in global scale. England, by 1900, had 12 million square meters of land and population of 360 million and was the greatest empire on Earth spreading its culture and language to the whole world (Organski, 1968: 355).

England had had great economic and political changes before setting up such a massive power and influence in international system. It had changed the feudal structure transformation into production and trade-based capitalism significantly. The emerging bourgeoisie had political power and could direct the policies protecting its interests. Therefore, the formation of private capital ownership was completed. On the other hand, economically agriculture-based mode of production decreased in favor of production and international trade (Gökten, 2013: 102). These two structural changes helped England to be more flexible and more successful in the formation and implementation of hegemonic dynamics.

England hegemony is characterized as "domination" rather than "leadership". Its massive, unrivaled sea power facilitated the protection of its interests all around the world. England, while supporting free trade and while there was growing liberal public opinion in its mainland, was not tolerant to any of the movements against its interests,

in the colonies or in trading partners (Kaymak, 2016: 80). The threat and use of force were the main characteristics of British hegemony.

British hegemony started to decline with the new emerging big powers challenging the hegemonic system. Germany, Japan, and the USA eroded England's amazing status of sea power and this led to power rivalry in the continent, as balance of powers strategy gradually collapsed. England lost its hegemonic balancing function in this process and the rivalry turned into massive wars (Arrighi, 1993: 176).

The last and pending hegemon is the USA and its hegemonic status started after the Second World War 1945 and continues today (Modelski and Thompson, 1988: 7). The USA was the successor of England in all hegemonic dominions, after the Second World War in 1945. The USA hegemony replaced British hegemony in every place, most importantly in the Middle East. The USA was not alone in the hegemonic rivalry at the beginning. Soviets had been competing with it for around 40 years and it would continue until the Soviet demise in 1990 (Münkler, 2009: 16).

The USA was not a colonialist hegemonic power like England. On the contrary, it had anticolonialism attitude exposing itself. The USA had a colonial experience, as it was a colonial part of the United Kingdom (UK) before. This reason was one of the main incentives behind "self-determination" principle it advocated. Self-determination principle and anticolonialism makes the USA fundamentally different hegemon compared with UK (Gamble, 2007: 38).

One year before the end of the Second World War in 1944, in the US leadership, the new world system was established. The system was economically depending on Bretton-Woods system, equalization of dollar to gold and detecting the values of the other currencies with dollar. The system was further consolidated with the establishment of IMF and World Bank and all were in US control (Ibid: 41). Politically, the West was united under US hegemony. Marshall aid in 1947, helped the West Europe to recover, while politically connected the continent firmly to US. This correlation was further consolidated militarily, by the establishment of NATO (Gamble, 2002: 132). Consolidation was causing similar progress in the Soviet block and the "Bi-polar" world hegemonic system was established as well. The US

hegemony from the beginning is not defined as “domination”, like UK experience, rather it is defined as “leadership”.

US hegemony enjoyed the golden age from 1945 to 1971, the year (i.e. 1971) when Bretton-Woods system collapsed. This collapse triggered new discussions about the future of the world. In this period, arguments about hegemony reached their peak. Some arguments were suggesting the end of US hegemony and chaos, while some others were more optimistic, suggesting institutional hegemonic system (Agnew, 2005: 26). In this context, Mearsheimer’s famous “Great Power Politics” does not favor a system without hegemon. Mearsheimer (2001b: 29) states that hegemony provides the best security environment in a multi-polar environment, all powers would try to be the sole hegemon and this would result in rivalry and finally more effort to get the hegemony; none of the big powers can stay out of this “vicious circle”.

The recovery of US power in the Reagan period and the collapse of Soviets in 1990 made the US de-facto hegemonic power. In this “Uni-polar” system, US is accused of shifting into an empire from a consent-based hegemony. Rise of other powers, like China, Germany, Japan, India etc., indicated the beginning of a new system named “Multi-polar” system. In the post-US hegemonic scenarios multi-polar system is getting power gradually as the gap is closing gradually at the top of the power pyramid. However, the offensive realists, like Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer, 2001b: 2), do not give a chance to peaceful co-existence of the big powers in the system of multi-polarity. According to him, the nature of states requires to be the hegemon rather than sharing the status with others. If he is right, the world is expected to be less secure in the absence of US hegemony.

Nye (2016a: 239) argues that in the absence of US hegemony the world will not be an easy place to prompt the collective action, though the international institutions and agreements are promoting to do so. A self-denying benevolent hegemon needed to uphold the “public good” in international system and push the other to act in this direction. In the anarchic international environment without such power it is hard to expect the collective action. According to Nye, US is very different compared to UK in this aspect, because UK prioritized the use of hard power, while US prefers soft power. As an answer to the discussion of US hegemony’s future, Nye (2016b: 125)

advocates the idea of endurance in the US leadership. He claims that the US leadership has not ended and will not end in the near foreseen future. It will continue for some time but with some differences. Those differences are about paying more attention to the demands of rising powers and the changing systems' dynamics.

Cox and Sinclair (2016: 135), different from Modelski, initiate the world hegemonic period from the nineteenth century. They argue that the world hegemon must first establish a universal system so that the system can be called a world hegemonic system. Further, hegemony does not mean the establishment of a system for exploiting others. It requires the system to allow all participants or at least the states under the hegemonic rule to benefit from it, as long as this is not in contradiction with hegemon's benefit. From this neo-Gramscian perspective, the last one and half century had some short periods in which world hegemonic system was established. These periods are called hegemonic periods. In short periods there could be no hegemonic rule in fact, so it is called non-hegemonic period. Therefore, there are four periods since 1845.

The first hegemonic period is the British period (1845-1875). In this period the British hegemony is in universal range with, mutual benefits, gold exchange and free trade, but serving to national interests mostly. The hegemonic style is dominance and use of power and this is quite often and normal (Ibid: 136). The second period is a non-hegemonic period (1875-1945). The British hegemonic rule eroded and the power balance in Europe collapsed. The gold standard is abandoned and free trade suppressed the protective economic setups. These changes and chaos led to two big world wars. The third period was the US period (1945-1965). The hegemony set up by US closely resembled that of UK. However, in details the institutions and ideologies are refined according to the new complex situation of the world structure. The nature of the hegemony is leadership rarely has coercive interventions. The fourth period was from 1965 to today. In this period the hegemonic system under the US leaderships is proved to be insufficient to handle the world order.

In the neo-Gramscian approach, there are important structural differences between UK and US hegemonies. The UK hegemony depended on a massive naval power, but not land power, while US power involves both. Domination was the characteristic of the UK hegemony while leadership that of the US hegemony. While there weren't any

international institutions in the UK hegemony, in US hegemony there are. Besides, in the UK hegemony, the ideology played no role, while in the US hegemony it has an important role (Cox and Sinclair, 2016: 103).

The western scholars' dominance and their neglect of the rest of the world are not allowing the political sciences to create global visions. However, there are many attempts to bring new visions. Black (2008: 116) suggests that while there were hegemonic relations in the western world the rest of the world was not in constant stagnancy. The actual weight of the western powers on world hegemony does not depend on that long tradition. Although the acquisition of sea hegemony started in the fifteenth century, it was not accompanied by land hegemony. The peak of western power, which included land hegemony, was in the period of 1740s-1940s. Even more accurately it was from 1850s to 1940s.

2.5.2 Empires

Empire is a very complex term which originates from Latin and it is difficult to define. The shorter it is defined, the more accurate it is. When getting in more details, it becomes vaguer. Empire shortly means, "supreme rule, absolute power and dominion" (Agnew, 2005: 21). Empire is often used in the meaning of "colonial rule based on oppression and exploitation" (Zielonka, 2011: 770), whereas the definition may not apply to every example.

In some definitions, it is characterized by its land size, population, power, dominant culture, people or race. In some definitions it is the origins, like the tribal founders, ruling group etc., that are taken into consideration. Empires also can be characterized by administration structure, the ultimate authority is ruling the whole, or by autonomous rulers. They can be characterized by a theory in aim of "universal jurisdiction", endorsed by a religion, law or ideology to unify the entities across the boundaries as well. It is stated that the main characteristics of the empires are to ignore and disrespect the authority of the weaker political entities (Scruton, 1996: 164).

Empires are usually specified by the nature of the relations between the "metropolis" and "periphery". In some empires, the relation between the two sides may depend on coercion whilst in some others on incentives, or in some cases maybe on both. Some

metropolises have quite a tight control on the peripheries while some are too loose. In some cases, metropolis is exploitative, while in some cases sharing the richness. In some examples, inhabitants of empires are divided in hierarchy, in some examples, like Roman Empire, they are all represented as “citizens”. Some empires maybe stretched over oceans and had trader appearances, some others may have been totally engaged in land acquisition and agriculture. In some cases, metropolis controls the periphery with central governments while in some other cases the periphery has its own government body (Ibid: 771).

Empires are usually governed by some morals, religious or ideological values, and try to impose them to the whole land they conquer. In most of the cases, the insiders are “civilized” and outsiders are “barbarians”. And the barbarians are quite often being targeted as “civilized”. The empires usually had the mission of changing the periphery or even the world (Okur, 2010: 10), while Münkler (2009: 37) defines the imperial powers as not binding themselves with morality, but use it as a tool for the imperial aims. That can be sometimes by force and annexation, sometimes by establishing hierarchical relations. Hierarchical relation is a common relation type in empires.

There are fundamental differences between empires and states. Empires do not have clearly defined borders; they are quite transparent in border regimes. They do not consider the neighbors to be equal to them, which means there is no equality in relations. Empires have differences with imperialism as well. The most significant difference is the absence of grand strategy in empires. The grand strategy will form by occasions, whereas imperialism is a planned grand strategy, sometimes done from the metropolis and sometimes happened on peripheral invitation (Ibid: 19-24)

In many occasions, the US is accused of being a modern empire, while the common opinion is that the empires ended at the beginning of the twentieth century. Münkler (2009: 15) does not have any hesitation about this and suggesting that actually remaining as hegemon was better serving its interests. Perhaps if Münkler had written the book in Trump’s time, he would have emphasized it more.

Hegemony and Empire are two terms that are often used as synonyms, which make the meanings blurrier. Doyle (1984: 78) describes Delos-Attica as an empire, while

Spartan's Peloponnesian league as a hegemony. This is mostly because the Athens' brutal suppression of Delos shows empire characteristics, while Sparta did not have this kind of power exercise in the league. Heinrich Triepel (1938: 89) puts it more clearly; he argues that hegemony is just a way of expression for an imperialistic policy. The most important feature is that the power restricts itself.

Münkler (2009: 74) turns the attention to the arbitrariness of hegemon's decision to be hegemon or an empire. He claims that making a choice between hegemony and empire is up to the desire of the superpower. Hegemony is a sovereignty depending on rules, but an empire would not have any rules. He further evaluates that Kissinger uses empire and hegemony as synonyms (Ibid: 75), so it proves the closeness of the terms, and at the same time, the arbitrariness of choosing any of them. Münkler (2009: 5) asserts that globalization is kind of neo-Empire, serving hegemonic rule. Although the terms hegemony and empire have such a similar use, it is safe to say that the difference between them is about the nature of power use. In the case of neo-Gramscian definition of hegemony, a softer power exercise is suggested, besides the important "consent" factor.

2.5.3 Imperialism

Imperialism is an imprecise term, the same as an empire is. It is mostly used as synonym of colonialism as well. The shortest definition of imperialism is "effectual supremacy of one political community by another" (Lake, 2015: 682). Doyle (1984: 19) explains it as the progress of creating and preserving an empire.

Imperialism, as a term, is firstly used by Disraeli in 1872. The term started to be widely used after Hobson in 1902 (Bealey, 1999: 160). Hobson (1902) evaluated imperialism as a struggle triggered by economic interest. It was an overseas expansion of capital and workforce, therefore was not anticipated to bring favorable results for the motherland countries. The most famous definition of the term is perhaps Vladimir Lenin's. Lenin (1947) shortly and famously described imperialism as "the highest stage of capitalism". For Lenin, imperialism was inevitable, as the growth of the capitalist economies would require them to invest overseas in search of better conditions. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "land" was at the center of production. The annexation of land meant new sources of peasants and agricultural

harvest. Later, it was seen as the source of coal, iron and food supplies as well (Rosecrance, 2006: 32). This explains the competition of the western industrial countries in colonizing the third world.

A very different interpretation suggests that imperialism is stemming out from the minds of rulers, and the efforts to be protected from the “pre-capitalist social structure”, mostly related to the psychology of the rulers, has not much to do with economic reasons. Imperialism is defined to have “push” factors, some of them stated above, as well as “pull” factors. One of the pull factors is claimed to be the crisis that induces interventions and the other factor is cooperation of the local elites in the peripheries (McLean, 1996: 237).

Imperialism is mostly used to define the modern expansions of the capitalist western states to the rest of the undeveloped countries. However, the imperialist conducts were carried out by various empires during the whole history. China, France, Mughal Empire, Roman and Holy Roman Empires, Ottomans, Mali and Mayan Empires are some of the examples (Grovoqui, 2011: 1154). Imperialism is widely accepted to be the imperial conducts of the empires. Therefore, it constitutes a position not close to hegemony. Imperialism mostly depends on the selfish interests of the dominant party and power use. Münkler (2009: 40) claims that imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the wildest exploitation in human history and in fact, the outcome was not meeting the expectations from it in most of the cases as well.

According to Cox and Sinclair (2016: 106), the meaning of imperialism carries different implications, conferring in different times and conditions, and therefore, it should be defined flexibly. The dynamic transition in the meaning of ‘sovereignty’ and ‘supremacy’ as terms does not allow us to define the term imperialism in a permanent form. While evaluating the situation of the expansions in the nineteenth century, Cox (1981: 141) shows us how he uses this method. He named the British hegemony from the beginning of the 19th century to 1870s as the period of “liberal imperialism” and named the period between 1873 to 1945 as “new colonialism” or “colonial imperialism”.

The decolonization period brought new discussions about imperialism. The core of the discussions was whether it had ended or changed into new forms. The later term of “unipolarity”, describing the sole superpower status of the US after the Cold War era, is often interpreted as an empire and imperialistic. The Iraq war was another turning point in the perception of US power. It was often referred so as to accuse the US administration to be imperialist as well (Lake, 2015: 684).

The concept of “informal imperialism” is defined to turn the attention to the continuation of imperialism in new forms. The new form of keeping the social, economic and financial structures in the old colonial societies, highly dependent on the old motherland countries, is claimed to be mostly managed by the international corporations and the rules. Particularly the neo-Marxists argue that imperialism could manage to survive even after decolonization, besides, still exploiting the third world by indirect controls of political situation through economic and social means (McLean, 1996: 237).

Globalization is also a term mostly explained in this context. Despite the persistence of its vagueness, it is mostly defined to be the new form of imperialism (Kiely, 2005: 1). What the main characteristics of Globalism is the fact that the nation-states are losing absolute control and sovereignty (Linklater, 2001: 617), on behalf of international capital and its apparatus, with the help of advanced communication, information flow and facilitated transportation, the target markets and states becoming more vulnerable to the imperial appetite of the big powers. As capital, people, and commodities are gradually freed from the political borders, the situation creates an illusion of borderless world in which the powerful exploit the poor more effortlessly in exchange for a relatively small gain for the poor. In a more peaceful way of getting the consent of the exploited states, Globalism matches well with Lenin’s description to be “the highest stage of capitalism”. In this aspect, one of the target markets, China, was not supposed to be gaining from this order as it does. The Globalization as a whole is serving China more than it was anticipated for any countries in its category.

2.5.4 Colonialism

Colonialism is a term that has quite similar use and meaning to both ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’. However, all three terms have different meanings indeed. The most important difference is that colonialism is usually understood as “exploitation” (Fourchard, 2011: 302). The exploitation can be for the benefit of the colonial power or for the benefit of the community settled in the colonial land. The factor that leads exploitation is an unequal relationship, depending on the hierarchic power positioning. Colonialism depends on two main pillars of definition. Firstly, the land which is considered to be “colony” should not have political independence from the colonial power. Secondly, the nature of the relation should be exploitative on behalf of the colonial power (Robertson, 2002: 89).

In the modern ages colonialism is defined to be the result of an ideological or moral mission in some occasions. The superiority and inferiority were the fundamental features of relationship between colonizing and colonized parties (Organski, 1968: 229). The colonial powers legitimized the exploitation and asymmetric power use in the argument of “bringing the civilization” to the “uncivilized” colonial societies. In the British case, this was a kind of sacred mission given by fate or by God to the colonials, which in some cases it is briefly defined as “white men’s burden” (Shafer, 1988: 46).

Organski (1968: 230) divides colonies into four types; point colonies, territorial colonies, exploitation colonies and settlement colonies. The point colonies are the dot-sized cities or stations on the maps, usually created for the transportation hub or a colonial station in the region, like Hong Kong, Singapore, Gibraltar etc. The territorial colonies, as the name itself indicates, are just largely colonized lands. Exploitative colonies are usually not for settlement, but for exploiting the natural and human resources, while settlement colonies are for those people coming from the “motherland” to settle and live.

Colonialism is commonly referring to the condition of the world, which was shared between the western occupier countries in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Nevertheless, colonialism is a practice that can be seen in the whole history. The first

colonial powers were Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, implementing expansionist strategies around the cities of Mediterranean and Black Seas coasts.

Colonized lands gradually got their territorial freedom mostly after the Second World War. By the beginning of the 1960s, there wasn't any colonial country around the world (Fourchard, 2011: 304). Ironically, the ideas of independence and nationalism were also exported from the "motherland", though the political independence did not bring full independence. Old colonial regions stayed tightly connected to the motherland with economic and social ties up until today. Neo-Colonialism is the name of this reality. In this context, Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah's book "Neo Colonialism: The Last Stage of Capitalism" is worth mentioning. He argues that the states subject to neo-colonialism, in fact, are not sovereign as they seem; their political systems are managed through their dependent economies, by outsiders (McLean, 1996: 237).

Colonial territories were not totally in loss in the relations with their exploiters. They had some benefits as well. Unifying their primitive political entity, development of resources, skills and facilities, development of transportation and health institutions can be counted, although it needs to be noted that they could fully benefit from these welfares only in the absence of the colonial rulers (Organski, 1968: 228).

2.6 Theories, West and the Rest

At the end of this chapter, it is necessary to make a general evaluation of the theories, terms and definitions that have been mentioned so far. It is a fact that, like all disciplines of social sciences, the discipline of International Relations also originated from the West, more specifically from US (Biltekin, 2015: 570). This fact is important to be clearly underlined if the topic is not about western countries or societies, just like this research topic. Most of the theories that have originated from western countries cannot explain the events of the rest of the world (Ibid: 517).

The Western world experienced a big intellectual clash between the conservatism and the modern philosophers in the "Enlightenment Era". The denial of most of the traditional, religious and cultural values in the social life and especially in education and intellectual fields was the result of that big struggle. The Europeans suffered too

much during the centuries of feudal darkness. The harsh attitude of the modernists could be understood in this aspect. However, this great struggle may have led them to overreact against old everything and overemphasize the new everything. Positivism and Empiricism developed in the enlightenment period, as the new guides in the way to lead human, instead of old values, religions.

The founder of Sociology, Comte, suggested that the methodology of physical sciences must be used in Sociology (Bostanoğlu, 2008: 44). In this trend, Social Sciences firstly separated from religions and then from philosophy to create their own independent fields. Social scientists are trying to detect the universal scientific principles of the social phenomenon, which is valid out of time and space conditions. Positivism is a method for this aim. Nevertheless, analyzing the social events in the methodology of natural sciences got some objections later. According to the alternative methodology, the social sciences examine special phenomena that have exclusive relations with its aims and meanings, and therefore, they must be analyzed by exclusive methods, rather than positivist methods (Ibid: 42). The discussion between these two methodologies has not yet ended, but the second one, which is Hermeneutics or Historicism, gained wide acceptance.

Kuhnian approach to the issue suggests that scientifically all results have historical dimensions and that means a specific result may be correct today, while tomorrow may not. In science subjectivity is inevitable. Science examines the phenomenon or objects of “now and here” and both of them are built in historical processes, which means they do not carry the characteristics of timelessness, predictability and accuracy, as positivism suggests or looks for. Human’s social actions are loaded with values and therefore cannot be examined like an object. The loaded values and meanings are affected by time and conditions, thus the values of different societies which have developed in different times and conditions; as a result, the same rules cannot be applied to all. Thus, physics should not be analyzed like sociology and vice versa. In the light of quantum physics, it is revealed that the Newtonian sharpness and predictability is questioned even in natural sciences (Ibid: 58-77).

Gramsci rejects the application of the principles of natural sciences to social sciences (Okur, 2010: 39). In this way he is in contradiction with Marks. A generation of US

International Relations researchers has grown up in Kuhnian ideas as well (Cox and Sinclair, 2016: 13). Critical theory and neo-Gramscian perspective advocate hermeneutics and historicism. Cox and Sinclair state that the ontology and values are changing in many country's historical journey (Ibid: 29). No social discipline can be independent of the environment it is born in. In his famous statement, Cox (1981: 128) says that theories are for somebody and some aims, which means the theories are not free from the social, intellectual and political conditions of the place they were born.

All these facts are proving that while a society is examined, especially a very different society like Chinese, it is crucial to remember the facts that the western methodology and theories may not fully match to explain or to understand the actual dynamics of the phenomenon. The reasons for creating local International Relation's theories in various countries as well as in China are actually about this reason. Chinese society did not have the same historical, social, political and intellectual experience as the western societies. Therefore, while applying the terms, definitions and theories of hegemony to the Chinese society, a researcher must be very cautious to analyze the case very well. In the next chapters, these facts are going to enlighten the way of this research. While Chinese society and political events are being evaluated, the special attributions will be given to its unique historical, social and political experience.

CHAPTER 3

TRIBUTARY SYSTEM AND HEGEMONY

Tributary system is a term given to imperial China's specific concept of foreign relations, based and developed on its unique imperial political history and values. In order to understand the tributary system, the sources of Chinese political tradition and the conception of world order in imperial China must be examined well.

3.1 Chinese Imperial Political Philosophy and Tradition

Just like in any political case, or generally in any social case, the sources of a certain political tradition cannot be fully revealed. Political tradition or philosophy gets its meaning, structure and shape in a continuous evolution in time. During this evolution there will be myriad of factors affecting it. Chinese imperial political tradition is not an exception. It is not possible to fully describe and define the causes behind the several thousand years of old political tradition in a few points. However, analyzing its main pillars will provide valuable insights.

Chinese imperial era has finished in 1911, with the proclamation of Republic of China (中华民国) “Zhōnghuá Mínguó” (1912-1949). However, the modern political thought had started to influence China earlier than that. The First Opium War (1839) (第一次鸦片战争) “Dìyīcì Yāpiàn Zhànzhēng” and the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) (南京条约) “Nánjīng Tiáoyuē”, which brings it to an end, is usually considered to be the beginning of modern age in China. In this research also, “Imperial China” will refer to the long period before these events. Chinese political thought emerged and developed gradually along with Chinese culture.

The emergence of Chinese civilization can be traced back to third millennium BC, although the inhabitation had started and simple types of communities had formed much earlier in Yellow River (黄河) “Huáng Hé” basin, which had been considered to be the cradle of Chinese civilization (中华文明) “Zhōnghuá Wénmíng”. Oracle Bones Scripts (甲骨文) “Jiǎ Gǔ Wén”, (Figure II) the oldest written evidences of Chinese

scripts found until now, are dated back to the middle of Shang Dynasty (商朝) “Shāng Cháo” (1600-1046 BC). However, the emergence of the writing system should be much earlier, maybe in Xia Dynasty (夏朝) “Xià Cháo” period (2070-1600BC), or even earlier, as the Oracle Bones scripts shows that the writing system had already got certain degree of maturity at that time (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 62).

Chinese political thought will be well understood if the main historical events, the main beliefs and philosophical schools related to it, are examined well. Especially the Chinese Folk Religion, from which the Chinese political tradition and philosophy has emerged and developed, will be examined firstly.

3.1.1 Chinese Folk Religion (民間宗教)

The beginning of Chinese political order is quite intertwined with the primitive religious system of the Chinese Folk Religion (民間宗教) “Mínjiān Zōngjiào”. Chinese Folk Religion is further considered to be the source and base of Chinese entire culture and political system (Clart, 2014: 407). The deities and semi-deities of this primitive religion are believed to be the old pre-historic tribal rulers, military or cultural heroes or a deified virtuous person that turned into a part of the religion in time (Overmyer, 2009: 36-37).

Though there was no common conceded name in history, Chinese Folk Religion (民間宗教) “Mínjiān Zōngjiào”, is a quite complicated primitive religion, mostly not accepted as a mature religion, but called a variety of sects of indigenous cults of China (Clart, 2014: 393). It has a lot of branches with complicated, not systemized backgrounds and philosophies (Fan and Chen, 2013: 5-6). However, there are some common features between these sects of cults. To summarize the essence of the beliefs, there are several theological, cosmological and moral common concepts. The common concepts can be briefly counted as: the Heaven (上帝) “Shàngdì” or (天) “Tiān”, as source of moral and creation; Qi (气), “Qì” as the energy that enlivens the cosmos; the ancestors worship (敬祖) “Jìngzǔ”; ethical justice (报应) “Bào yìng”, fate (命运) “Mìng yùn”; fateful coincidence (缘分) “Yuán fèn” (Ibid: 21-23) and the foundation of order in universe in polarity, Yin-Yang (阴阳) “Yīnyáng” (Adler, 2011: 13).

As there is not a clear distinction between the initial historical political figures and religious deities, it would be more comprehensive to analyze the pre-historic and early historic developments of Chinese political thought, under the title of Chinese Folk Religion. This will enlighten the background of the concepts and beliefs of philosophers, later will emerge.

The beginning of political order in Yellow River basin is believed to have started with legendary, semi-deity figures, Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors (三皇五帝) “Sān Huáng Wǔ Dì”, dated back to circa 2852-2070 BC (Hucker, 1995: 22). This is even earlier than the first known Chinese state, Xia Dynasty. The three Sovereigns were believed to be the gods and semi-god kings or deified kings that created human and initiated life on Earth with introducing some basic skills to improve life on Earth. Alternatively called as Sage Kings, the five kings are listed as Yellow Emperor (皇帝) “Huáng Dì”, Zhuānxū (顓頊), Emperor Kù (嚳), Emperor Yáo (堯) and Emperor Shùn (舜), in Records of the Grand Historian (史記) “Shǐjì”, written by the famous ancient Chinese historian, Sima Qian (司馬遷) “Sīmǎ Qiān”, (145-85 BC). According to Chinese legends, these figures were the ancient rulers that made great contributions to the emergence and development of Chinese society and political identity. They are believed to be the initiators of farming, writing, using fire, medicine, calendar, building houses and producing silk etc. (Morton and Lewis, 2005: 14). Sage Kings later will be presented to Chinese society as the ideal rulers, furnished with great morals, legendary wisdom, benevolence and power to have great sovereignty over their people.

Among these rulers the most famous one and according to Chinese, their first ancestor, the first emperor, and at the same time the first person started to use Chinese scripts, is the legendary Yellow Emperor (皇帝) “Huáng Dì” (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 255). Yellow Emperor had a great influence at the beginning of the Chinese political tradition. According to Sima Qian (1993a: 9), in the “Records of the Grand Historian”, the Yellow Emperor was a tribal leader in the heart of the cradle of Chinese civilization, the Yellow River basin. He was from a nomadic origin in some legends, that is from northwest of today’s China, had eliminated his rival the Red Emperor (炎帝) “Yán Dì”, who was leading a settled clan. The Yellow Emperor was the first person united the divided small clans under his flag. His administration was so beneficial to the public that he could transcend the differences of the nomadic and settled tribes, creating a

common identity, by generating belongingness around his administration. Both of Yellow and Red Emperors will be considered to be common ancestors of all of the tribes formed that common identity, even today. This is the point of formation of the Chinese identity (Dillon, 2017: 7). This common identity in later dynasties will be strengthened, transformed and developed until today.

After the legendary Five Emperors, another ancient ruler who had great impact on the formation of the Chinese political tradition was going to take the stage, the legendary tribal leader Yu the Great (大禹) “Dà Yǔ”. Yu the Great was the last archetypal of the semi-deity kings. According to some controversial information, Great Yu was the founder of Xia Dynasty (2070-1600BC), the first known semi-legendary dynasty of China (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 532). Great Yu’s biggest success was to control the water flow of the Yellow River. Yellow River’s floods were causing big damage on Chinese people who were mostly peasants. During the long history of China floods are one of the major natural calamities that an emperor and citizens should worry about. Great Yu’s successful struggle with the Yellow River’s floods gave him a unique reputation. His great morality, spirit of public service, benevolent and dedicated character together with his successes in ruling the country made him one of the ideal Sage Kings in later period. Great Yu and his predecessors would choose, train and prepare their successors and finally they would leave their thrones voluntarily. This system is called Abdication System (Dillon, 2017: 9). The Abdication System could not survive long. Nevertheless, it was enough to put a permanent mark in the Chinese political history with praises, even today.

Xia Dynasty, about which we do not have sufficient evidence, was followed by Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BC). It had great prosperity in most of its approximately 500 years of sovereignty. However, during the late Shang period, aristocrats became increasingly corrupt and decadent. The dynasty shrunken in power gradually and inner endless struggles weakened it further. It was this time the hereditary father to son power transition system was initiated in hope of finishing the endless throne struggles (Ibid: 14). Finally, when the last king, Zhòu Xīn’s (紂辛) reign, became unbearable due to his brutal and corrupt personality in addition to other internal problems, Shang Dynasty was ended by a revolt led by King Wu of Zhou (周武王) “Zhōu Wǔ Wáng” (Shaughnessy, 1999: 301). King Wu was the first king and founder of Zhou Dynasty

(周朝) “Zhōu Cháo” (1046-221BC). Zhou Dynasty (Map I) was going to rule in one of the most important periods of Chinese civilization. During this period most of the elements of Chinese political ideology also emerged.

There is an important difference between Shang and Zhou societies. Zhou was not as spiritual as Shang. Shang society and rulers were highly spiritual, giving extraordinary importance to the beliefs and divinations, asking guidance of the spirits for most of the things they did; sacrificing animals or even humans was an important aspect of life as it could be very clearly seen in Oracle Bones (甲骨) “Jiǎgǔ”, the precious historical evidence of very early Chinese history – the divinations were written on turtle shells. Zhou, on the other hand, was much worldlier and more materialistic respecting the beliefs, but preferring to focus more on earthly things and human affairs (Dillon, 2017: 43). Therefore, the political system they matured from Shang was more systematic and more realistic. This earthly characteristic of Chinese society initiated with Zhou Dynasty, would continue during all history, it continues even today.

Shang to Zhou dynastic transition was not an ordinary transition for Chinese political tradition. To legitimate his sovereignty, King Wu of Zhou claimed that his power was legitimate because the Heaven, “The Supreme God” (上帝) “Shàngdì” or (天) “Tiān”, granted Mandate (命令) “Mìnglìng” to his father, King Wen (文王) “Wén Wáng”. Further he claimed that Shang rulers lost “Mandate” because they were morally corrupted and were not capable of ruling the country on good terms (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 530). The doctrine, which has traces from Shamanic perception of the king, being the axle of earth and sky (Feuchtwang, 2016a: 146-147), gradually expanded to all power transitions. King Wu had to generate this concept because Shangdi, the supreme God, was worshipped and claimed to be their ancestral origin by Shang Dynasty rulers (Didier, 2009: 145) (Figure VII). This was the source of Shang’ legitimacy (Hinton, 1998: 23). Revolting against and bringing down the Shang Dynasty, needed to be explained in such an extensive religious concept. When the doubts were raised about Zhou Dynasty kings, whether they still held the Mandate of Heaven or not, it was further evaluated that the Mandate of Heaven could be taken from Zhou Dynasty as well, same as it had been taken from Xia and Shang dynasties before (Ibid: 531). Newly formulated, this ideology was going to be the core of Chinese imperial political system. Mandate of Heaven (天命) “Tiān Mìng”, in other

sense “The Consent of God”, was the central ideology to legitimate any power ruling the country afterwards (Adler, 2011: 5).

Religion and politics were intertwined in Chinese history from the very beginning. Chinese society was a polytheist society worshipping plentiful deities of Chinese Folk Religion. The spirits of both nature and human were worshipped to get protection. Besides rivers, mountains, clouds, winds etc., the semi-mythical ancestors, pre-dynastic kings and dynastic kings and their families, even cultural heroes and other subjects from myths and legends, were also worshipped (Eno, 1984: 53). People believed that spirits and ancestors had somehow power to protect their family members, who were alive, from any kind of menace. Therefore, the sacrifices to them could bring the satisfaction of those spirits to get good luck and security (Eno, 1990: 20). However, Shangdi, later later to be called “Tian” in Zhou Dynasty (Chang, 2000: 47), was the highest deity, “Lord on High”, over all others (Yao, 1996: 31). In Shang Dynasty, although Shamans were the religious clergy specialized in religious activities and divinations, they were still considered to be in lower status than the royal family. The right and power of sacrificial ceremonies to the highest deity Shangdi belonged only to the kings as they were believed to be the direct descendants of Shangdi. That is the reason they believed Shangdi is accessible through their ancestors’ souls.

The kings were the chief mediators between the realms of spirits and the material earth (Ching, 1997: 20). Chinese kings were the highest authorities and figures in both political and religious domains. Morality and authority were intertwined in Chinese political tradition since the very beginning of civilization (Konior, 2009: 62). The religious authority and rituals legitimized the earthly authority of the kings. As Son of Heaven (天子) “Tiānzǐ” the king was a semi-deity ruler approved by the Heaven (Dull, 1990: 59). He was supposed to be an ideal human being and a ruler who performed ceremonies in right conducts, avoid any managerial and personal mistakes so that the “Mandate of Heaven” could continue (Kissinger, 2015: 38). If the “Mandate of Heaven” was lost, the floods, droughts, earthquakes or all kinds of calamities would strike the kingdom. And if any of these devastating natural events ever happened, they would be interpreted as signs of this loss. Simply put, it was believed that the disasters were taking place just because the king was not favored by the Heaven any longer. When the loss of mandate was widely assumed, people morally (not legally), could revolt

(Dillon, 2017: 63). The doctrine of Mandate of Heaven unofficially granted the people the right to revolt in cases when the Heaven was dissatisfied. If the revolt was not successful, the revolting people would pay it with their lives. Nevertheless, if it was successful, the new ruler, who got the power by revolt, without consideration of his origins whether he was from a royal family or was a peasant, could be immediately regarded as the new Son of Heaven, bearing Mandate of Heaven (Kissinger, 2015: 39). The evidence for this was his victory over the previous king.

The ruling of Zhou Dynasty is divided into two periods: the first about three centuries, called Western Zhou, and the rest was called Eastern Zhou. In Western Zhou Dynasty (西周朝) “Xī Zhōu Cháo” (1045-771BC), the Duke of Zhou built the city of Luoyi (today’s Luoyang) and named it The Central Plain (中原) “Zhōng Yuán”, which was referring to its political centrality compared to the old capital. The tribes who dwelt in The Central Plain were named as Glorious or Splendid Xia (华夏) “Huáxià” (Ibid: 7). Huaxia people, later on known as Han People (汉人) “Hàn Rén”, by integration of various tribes, were the first united community in Yellow River basin. At the same time, the name had the intention of separating the settled and more civilized, i.e. “The Central Plain” (Han) people from the “nomadic barbarians” in the periphery. This distinction tendency was basically depending on the lifestyles and etiquettes of the two sides (Shi and Chen, 2014: 57). The Central Plain people, otherwise known as Han (Hua) people, were sedentary people with relatively more civilized lifestyle, etiquette and societal order. On the other hand, the tribes behind the frontiers were having nomadic life who were depending on animal breeding and migration, with not much in need of a societal order and etiquette that the sedentary life style required. Nomads were looked down upon by Han people, just the same as ancient Greeks approached the others. They were named uncivilized barbarians, Yi (夷) “Yí” (Pulleyblank, 1983: 411). This division is termed as Civilized-Uncivilized, Hua-Yi Distinction (华夷之辨) “Huá-Yí Zhībiàn”. Although, some historians draw attention to the plenty of similarities between the two sides and denying this distinction (Shelach, 1999: 222), it is widely accepted that the Hua-Yi distinction existed from the very earlier stages of the Chinese civilization and became more visible in Eastern Zhou Dynasty (东周朝) “Dōng Zhōu Cháo” (771-221BC) (Ibid: 223). Hua-Yi distinction will be one of the main issues of Chinese universalism and main point of obsession of cultural superiority, and that continues even today. Besides, it would produce systemized sets

of strategies in later stages of the Chinese history, on how to deal with “others”, which will be also the gauge of Chinese imperial foreign policy. The name Middle Kingdom (中国) “Zhōng Guó”, though is it hard to clarify in which time of period, what was it exactly referring to (Wang E. Q., 1999: 286), today it is still being used by Chinese people as “China”, also generated in Zhou Dynasty, to refer the lands of the main duke the Zhou King, compared to the other kingdoms. Later in Qing Dynasty (清朝) “Qīng Cháo” (1644-1911) the term was used to refer to all Chinese land (Wilkinson, 2000: 132) where the people culturally shared the same values.

All of earliest three big dynasties of China, Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties were feudal and confederations in structure. The system was consisting of autonomous states, supervised by the king of central state, the Son of Heaven. Each of the autonomous states were managed by their own Lords (诸侯) “Zhūhóu”. The lords were responsible for the central king who was providing the unity and legitimacy in exchange for revenue and defense from the lords (Chung, 2017: 37). Western Zhou Dynasty had successfully carried the leadership of the confederation for a long time. The small kingdoms were enlarging their territories and revenue capacities, especially towards the north and north-west, eventually strengthening the Zhou Kings.

For better transportation and efficiency of military campaigns, Zhou built a road from the capital city Louyang (洛阳) “Luòyáng” to the deep south, named with a dynasty name, Road of Zhou (周道) “Zhōu Dào” or King Road (王道) “Wáng Dào”. Using the King Road, Dynasty’s famous King Zhao (昭王) “Zhāo Wáng” (reign 977-957 BC), who has remarkable impact on Chinese political thought, decided to conquer the southern neighbors of the confederation, south of the Yangtze River (长江) “Cháng Jiāng”, for its valuable copper resources and land. However, the military campaign for this colonization project did not work as planned, he was drowned and his army was destroyed. After this catastrophic event the Western Zhou Dynasty could never recover again until its demise in the year of 771 BC (Shaughnessy, 1999: 322). Nevertheless, the disastrous event positively entered in the Chinese minds and political thought. The campaign of King Zhao, later commemorated as King Wen’s Way (文王之道) “Wén Wáng Zhī Dào”, and it was supposed that the campaign brought the south barbarians in King Wen’s Transforming Influence (文王之化) “Wén Wáng Zhī Huà”. The combined meanings of the Zhou Road and Transforming Influence symbolized into

the term of King Road (王道) “Wáng Dào” or Kingly Way and it got the meaning of ideal ruler and civilizing mission for the great sake of Moral Transformation (德) “Dé” of the barbarians into civilization (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 531). In this way Western Zhou Dynasty had set up a state ideology of “Civilizing Mission” and the term “Kingly Way” was referring to this mission, rather than the original connotation to the road built to south.

The political thought was reflecting itself in the (practical) highly idealist life, in every stage of the ruling segment and society. Morality was in the center of the relations. The emperor was firstly a supreme moral model and secondly a ruler; the officials were firstly regarded as teachers then as magistrates; people were ashamed if they had done anything wrong and punishment was for those who were not ashamed (Martin, 1944: 20). This format of the morality-based society and politics later will be idealized by the thinkers when the society have deep moral erosions, especially in the second period of Zhou Dynasty. The great sage Confucius (孔子) “Kǒngzǐ” (551-479BC) will idealize The Way (道) “Dào” in a moral concept of The “Proper Way”; the founder of Taoism, Laozi (老子) “Lǎozǐ” (6th century BC), will use it in a more philosophical meaning; Dao (way) as “the principle of universe” and others will use it in different meanings (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 531).

Eastern Zhou Dynasty (东周朝) “Dōng Zhōu Cháo” (771-221BC) was set up after the collapse of Western Zhou. Eastern Zhou continued for about five hundred years, approximately the first half of which was called Spring and Autumn Era (春秋时代) “Chūn-qiū Shídài” (771-476BC). The other half was called Warring State Era (战国时代) “Zhànguó Shídài” (476-256BC). Spring and Autumn Era is characterized with the weakening power of Eastern Zhou kings, causing excessive autonomy of the subordinated lords. In this period, the bureaucratic class, the formation of which matured in Western Zhou Era (Li, 2008: 3), got to its heyday. The weakening of the central power resulted not only in strengthening the lords, but also the bureaucratic class in the whole system. The ministers were claiming that they were not the subjects of the rulers but were the shareholders in the state administration. Their loyalties claimed to be not to the rulers, but to the “Altars of the Soil and Grain” (社稷) “Shèjì” (Pines, 2009: 164). Unusually, the Chinese rulers had to bear the status of sharing

power with their subordinates, to be “*primus inter pares*” or the first among equals until the Warring States Era. In Warring State Era, the bureaucratic class will step down to its magistrate position and the rulers will deploy them to enforce their power, rather than share power with them. Namely, “bureaucratic autocracy” set up in this period (Pines, 2009: 164) was mostly going to continue to be in effect during all the rest of Chinese history, and it continues even today.

Bureaucratic uprising in Spring and Autumn Era created further chaos in the system. Deterioration of hierarchy in the political structure gradually caused the collapse of the system creating rivalry and wars between the lords for further enlargement of their territories and revenues. This would lead to a fierce struggle between the small states, causing turmoil, insecurity, chaos and instability in a long period, Warring States Era (Map III). During the Eastern Zhou period of five centuries, Autumn and Spring Era and Warring States Era, the instability, moral erosion, wars and chaos initiated a wide consensus over the need of “Great Unity” (大一統) “*Dà yītǒng*” (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 532), of the “Huaxia”. Whenever divided, the Chinese all power holders no matter small or big would have this ideal in mind: to be the one, the country that found its Great Unity under his authority. Great Unity of the country would be one of the major political goal and value in all Chinese history. This actually explains why after every disunion the country somehow finally found a peaceful and prosperous long period of unified strong state, under a single ruler, regardless foreign or domestic.

Endless wars and chaos paved the way for the emergence of scholars and philosophers to produce remedies (Wen, 2017: 19). During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Eras, from roughly 600BC to 221BC, the political instability, wars and social chaos somehow created a fertile environment for ideas to be produced and freely discussed from different schools of thought. This era is specifically named as Hundred Schools of Thought (諸子百家) “*Zhūzǐ Bǎijiā*”. Addressing to the clash of ideas in this era, it is described as “Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought” (百家爭鳴) “*Bǎijiā Zhēngmíng*” (Cao and Sun, 2016: 39). Although there were considerable development of ideas and institutions of political domain before, this era is known to be the era of construction of the foundation of the Chinese Civilization (Dillon, 2017: 77). In this era, the famous Chinese philosophers emerged, nearly simultaneously with the emergence of Buddha in India and Socrates, Platon and Aristoteles in ancient Greece.

Namely, the great sage Confucius (孔夫子) “Kǒng Fū Zǐ” (551-479BC), the founder of Taoism, Laozi (老子) “Lǎozǐ” (6th century BC), the second sage of Confucianism, Mencius (孟子) “Mèngzǐ” (372-289BC), the founder of Mohist school Mozi (墨子) “Mòzǐ” (470-391BC), Confucian sage Xunzi (荀况) “Xún Kuàng” (310-235BC), the founder of legalism Shang Yang (商鞅) “Shāng Yāng” (390-338BC), the sage of legalism Hanfeizi (韩非子) “Hán Fēi Zǐ” (280-233BC), and others, like Zhuangzi (庄子) “Zhuāngzǐ” (369-286BC), Li Si (李斯) “Lǐ Sī” (280-208BC), Sun Tze (孙子) “Sūnzǐ” (544-496BC) and so on. This period with its thinkers did not put a permanent mark only on the Chinese history, political thought and culture, but also had great influence on the most of the East Asian societies.

During the reign of Eastern Zhou dynasty (Spring and Autumn Era and Warring States Era), the Chinese political philosophy gets its classical age maturity. Before this happened, the Western Zhou Period had been considered to be formative to the Chinese state (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 533). The concepts and institutions of political order were mainly created, but not yet found their mature forms as in the imperial era.

The Chinese philosophy has different characteristics compared with the Western philosophy. It is usually described to be a photographic way of comprehension, through pictures and symbols referring to the Chinese characters, rather than through logical and metaphysical one (Ko, 2003: 116). Chinese are described to be talking about what they see, while westerners are described to be talking about what they think (Konior, 2009: 63). Therefore, it is not easy for Chinese to understand western philosophers and concepts, as it is regarded too notional, while the westerners find the Chinese philosophy not mature enough due to its structure, composed of expressions in forms of practical abstracts, mostly as a guidance for living in harmony with others and nature, rather than a compressive, all included, systematic political philosophy. This argument is concluded by some as Chinese produced a political culture during its long history which cannot be called political philosophy (McLean, 1996: 63). It is obvious that there are differences in structure and methodology between the two traditions of philosophies. These differences are producing too different societies and political understandings, as it can be observed today.

Chinese Folk Religion, serves as the basis of all of the developments in the Chinese philosophy, culture and politics. It was so for the philosophical age of Hundred School of Thought as well. All the schools that emerged in this era also depended on the Chinese Folk Religion as an initial basic source of their ideas (De Groot, 1892: 1912). The Chinese Folk Religion is intensely rooted in the family and public life of Chinese people, rather than being represented by an institution, like the “Church” in the west (Fan and Chen, 2013: 4). The basic criteria to participate in the Chinese Folk Religion was not believing in the religious dogmas, but about being a part of communities of local units of the religion, like community institutions, village or kinship with their gods and rituals (Ibid: 5). This was not a universalist attitude until Confucianism took the culture in the center, rather than civic and ancestral ties.

Having summarized the initial foundation and development of the Chinese imperial political thought and Folk Religion, it is necessary to have an insight into the main philosophical schools, to describe it more comprehensively. Although there were a lot of philosophical currents that had a certain degree of influence on the Chinese imperial political thought, it was predominantly affected by Confucianism (儒家) “Rú Jiā”. Besides, Taoism (道家) “Dào Jiā”, Legalism (法家) “Fǎ Jiā”, Mohism (墨家) “Mò Jiā”, School of Yin-Yang (阴阳家) “Yīnyáng Jiā” and School of Names (名家) “Míng Jiā” are the other main philosophical approaches had big or small roles in shaping it, as Sima Qian (1993a) also listed them in his *Shiji*.

3.1.2 Confucianism (儒家)

Confucianism “School of Scholars” (儒家) “Rú Jiā” was the most effective school of thought in the ancient and imperial China. Any remark about Chinese, society, philosophy, culture, history, ethics, politics cannot be regarded as “complete” if the Great Sage, Confucius (孔夫子) “Kǒng Fū Zǐ” (551-479BC), is not mentioned. He put such a deep and permanent mark on nearly Chinese “everything” (Wen, 2017: 25). He had considerable effect on Pacific Asian societies as well.

Confucius was born and grown up in the Spring and Autumn Era of chaos, moral corruption, social and political disorder. He was aware of the problems of the society and politics of his time and produced his remedies from the old values (Kissinger, 2015: 27). Confucius was one of many thinkers in his time who thought of these problems

and tried to find solution. He had strong sense of mission to serve the values he was believing in. He appealed that a human being is essentially good and able to learn and improve (Tay, 2010: 102). He was apparently a conservative, teaching his students classical texts, to protect the tradition, however he was a revolutionary in interpreting them (Bai, 2012: 29). He was a mastermind of ancient ritual system and classics. He indeed did not create a new philosophy depending on his own formulation, but tried to restore the previous order (Wen, 2017: 23). Therefore, he actually reinterpreted the values of Chinese Folk Religion, those related to the earthly life. He took the attentions to the times of “Sage Kings”, referring to the legendary kings, such as Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu, Emperor Ku, Emperor Ya, Emperor Shun; as well as some other figures, like Yu the Great and especially his hero Zhou Dynasty’s King, Zhou Wu etc., to remind people about the righteous conducts of Chinese legendary kings, their virtues, and the old “glorious values” of the society and ruling class, especially those of Western Zhou Dynasty (Ibid: 30). In Confucius’ mind, he sage rulers’ ideal administration methods and their pure values were the ways, to create a coherent and prosperous community. As a “melioristic” philosopher, Confucius combined ethics with politics (Chang C, 2012: 42), commonly called “virtue politics” (Zhao, 2007: 162).

Confucius was aware of the fact that his ideas could be only effective enough if implemented by a ruler (Figure I). He was appointed as Minister of Justice in the State of Lu (魯國) “Lǔ Guó” after doing series of minor works, but could not be successful in finding an opportunity to apply his ideas (Dubs, 1946: 275). Decided to leave his state, he struggled for most of his life to find a ruler in the divided Zhou system, to understand him and adopt his values (Ibid: 276). However, he could not find any support and sometimes he was even laughed at. After a long period of interstate journeys of seeking support, he returned back to his own kingdom at the age of 69 and decided to continue teaching his students in his hometown Qufu (曲阜) “Qūfù” (Ibid: 277) (Figure VIII).

Confucius’s main remedy for the social disintegration and political chaos of his time was to create a society and politics depending on virtues. In Confucian approach, virtue is essential for personal self-esteem, social solidarity and political order, on the contrary to wealth and power which were the most respected currencies in his time. The essence of Confucian values is mentioned together in one paragraph;

Zixia said, “if a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty and applies it to the love of the virtues; if in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if in his interaction with friends, his words are sincere; although men say that, he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has” (Confucius, 2005: I/8/20).

Confucius depicted an Ideal Ruler, (君子) “Jūnzǐ”, who has all the virtues while he was expressing his ideas. Junzi literally means “Son of the Ruler”, so it refers to a member of the aristocracy or a “prince” or sometimes interpreted as “gentleman”, but usually interpreted as “man of honor” (Lin, 2017: 145). The ruler was a role model for society (Ibid: 33). He merely suggests that the ruler must be an ideal person first, and if the ruler is an ideal person, the society would take him as an example and follow him; thus, all the society would get rid of the problems in this way (Okay, 2017: 30). In other words, the virtues of rulers create the order (Ford, 2010: 33). The rule of virtue was preferred to rule of punishment (Lin, 2017: 131). Upholding benevolence and virtues in government conducts and approaching to the subjects compassionately is the “Kingly Way” of Confucius (Kim, 2014: 426), particularly referring to the legacy of Zhou Dynasty’s King Wen.

To be a Junzi, a person needs to cultivate virtues and become a “Virtuous Person” (道德) “Dào Dé” (Ibid: 47). Virtues can be fostered by self-cultivation of certain sets of moral values. The most important one is love of human; benevolence, humanness (仁) “Rén”. The other important values are: obedience to the parents and being good descent; filial piety (孝) “Xiào”; obedience to the ritual rules, rite (礼) “Lǐ”; keeping away from the loudness, modesty (中庸) “Zhōng Yōng”; being in proper manner according to own status, propriety (正名) “Zhèng Míng”; being honest and fair, righteousness (义) “Yì”; harmony (和) “Hé”; loyalty (忠) “Zhōng”; forbearance, forgiveness (恕) “Shù”; trust (信) “Xìn”; wisdom (智) “Zhì”; aspiration (志) “Zhì”; bravery (勇) “Yǒng” (Ibid: 1-77). Confucius regarded all humans as being very similar in nature but their environment and upbringings make them different. Therefore, he strongly advocated that all people need education and moral cultivation and the government must be responsible of educating people (Ibid: 101). For this reason, he is

still considered to be the first teacher in China today and his statues are still erected in school gardens to commemorate him (Okay, 2017: 20).

Personal cultivation of morality is at the center of the Confucian ethical system and this is supported by social, religious and political principles as well. The crucial political and religious concept of Mandate of Heaven emerged in Zhou Dynasty and it is an essential concept in Confucian thought as well. The fundamental duty that Confucius was playing, restoring the order of Zhou, is obvious in this subject. In the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Eras, Zhou's legitimacy was highly eroded together with the concept of the Mandate of Heaven. Each of the states, struggling for power, needed to legitimate their claims over another. This need led each state to organize ceremonies of communicating with Heaven, which was in the monopoly of the Zhou Dynasty kings (Didier, 2009: 36). Any power strong enough to conquer some land could claim the right to do the rites, to legitimize its own political ambitions. Break of the divine rights of Zhou caused a political legitimacy chaos and mistrust of the public to the political system (Ibid: 37). Confucius's effort was to correct this morality gap in the society with self-cultivation of virtues. Benevolence and the propriety in rites would restore the previous ritual order. The principle of rituals, Rite (礼) "Lǐ, was so important for Confucius that he claimed it to be a way of proving the benevolence (Wen, 2017: 26). Rituals, or correct conduct of rituals, were regarded as fundamental to reestablish the old harmonious society, depending on hierarchy. Rituals are the source of social order and the mutual understanding in Confucian thought (Lin, 2017: 23). It is the most effective way to clearly define the eroded responsibilities of the superiors-inferiors, and the ideal conducts of ancestors could be materialized only in this way (Wasserstrom, 2011: 27).

In some interpretations, Confucianism is regarded as the continuation of the Chinese folk culture which has not changed since thousands of years in the past, depending on spiritual worship of numerous gods, at the top the cult of the "Supreme God", Shangdi, later named Tian (Chen, 2012: 105). What Confucius was trying to do is to restore the previous morals, religious and political system and every time, whenever Chinese civilization had trouble, they would repeat the same habit of returning to the old values (Kissinger, 2015: 27), corresponding with the Chinese understanding of cyclical conception of time flow (Wen, 2017: 38).

Confucius' portrayal of ideal ruler "Junzi", "the man of honor", stressed on the moral values he was furnished with and it was the duty of state to educate the individuals, furnish them with moral values (Lin, 2017: 121). Combining it with the proposal of education for all people and giving the opportunity to enter ruling class without any discrimination (Confucius, 2005: XV/39/313), the meritocratic bureaucracy system was created later, forming the Mandarin "官" (guān) bureaucratic class. Enrollments were accepted through Imperial Examination (科举) "Kējǔ" and almost completely depended on measuring knowledge of Confucianism (Kracke, 1967: 251) (Figure XII). The system survived long from initial setup in Han Dynasty (汉朝) "Hàn Cháo" (202BC-220AD), later developed in the year of 605AD, in Sui Dynasty(隋朝) "Suí Cháo" (581-618AD) and fully implemented in Tang Dynasty (唐朝) "Táng Cháo" (618-907 AD), until its abolition in 1905 (Paludan, 1998: 79).

The system created scholar bureaucrats (Mandarin), replacing the military generals. For centuries, the Imperial Examination system played the function of releasing a certain amount of the social and political tension against the rulers, which would potentially arise from the unsatisfied regions or classes. The system also provided the rulers with a highly educated loyal bureaucracy, serving the integrity of the country directly (Fairbank and Goldman, 2006: 105). Besides, the examination was building a sense of belongingness and fair opportunity, providing a certain level of participation in the government, offering equal opportunity to whole talents and uniting them in single aim of serving the country (Ibid: 106).

Confucius placed family at the center of social and political order, if not universe. Filial Piety (孝) "Xiào", the principle that described the duties of a virtuous son to the parents and ancestors, was one of the most crucial values a person should have. Filial piety was considered to be so important virtue that the physical body of a person should be kept in good conditions and not being damaged, just as it comes biologically from father and mother (Israeli, 1977: 299). The family members are supposed to apply the morality of family relations to the whole society. Family reverence is accepted to be the root of all humane feelings (Wen, 2017: 24). It is quite interesting that the Chinese character for "home" (家) "Jiā" is getting the meaning of "everybody" (大家) "Dà Jiā", if added "big" in front of it. Everybody equals the big family is closely matches with Confucian understanding of family-community and family-state relations. Family is

described as the smallest unit of society but carrying a relationship prototype of the whole state. Among Confucius' Five Fundamental Relationships (五倫) "Wǔ Lún", three of them are related to family, emphasizing on the importance of hierarchic family relations, for an orderly community and state. They are namely, Ruler and Subject (君臣) "Jūnchén", Father and Son (父子) "Fùzǐ", Elder and Younger Brothers (兄弟) "Xiōngdì", Husband and Wife (夫婦) "Fūfù", Friend and Friend (朋友) "Péngyǒu" (Feuchtwang, 2016a: 146). Each of the five basic relationships carries obligations to both sides. From the elders to youngsters' protection and blessings, from the youngsters to elders, the attitude should be obedience (Wasserstrom, 2011: 27). Only friend to friend relation depends on equality, while all others are hierarchic in which respect and obedience is essential. The Five Basic Relations are actually the expansion of the principle of Filial Piety (孝) "Xiào", out of the family borders, covering the whole society until the rulers establish order (Ibid: 147). The final aim is to put the society on its tracks, by restoring the correct forms of the relations, duties and responsibilities. This proposal is clearly formulated by Confucius:

Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about government. Confucius said, "let the ruler be ruler, the minister be minister, the father be father, the son be son". "True indeed!" said the Duke, "If the ruler is not ruler, the minister not minister, the father not father, the son not son, although the abundant grain was there, could I get enough to eat?" (Confucius, 2005: XII/11/233).

In this dialogue Confucius connects the establishment of state and social order with clearly defined duties and responsibilities of the individuals (Kissinger, 2015: 37) as well as their commitments to play their roles inside every hierarchical order they are standing in (Lin, 2017: 123). It is connected with justice as well. In his rationale, in a society that the responsibilities are not undertaken and relations are not based on virtues, it is not realistic to expect fairness and justice as well.

Moral and religious connection of the subjects to the state and the ruler put the ruler in a unique position acting on behalf of the Heaven and Earth. Chinese rulers did not have any counterparts in Europe or anywhere else in this aspect as he was considered to be the highest person of the whole human beings (Kissinger, 2015: 38). It was a radically monist system of governance that, with the ruler at the center furnished with

the power of Heaven, Earth and Man combined (Ford, 2010: 35). In the imperial political system, the authority of defining the borders of morality was a big credit given to the rulers, stemming from the religious position of the ruler, the Son of Heaven. This peerless position was also acquiring peerless loyalty as well, which is endorsed by Confucianism. It can be argued that what made Confucianism for the rulers of China so attractive was the morality system of it, endorsing loyalty of the subjects to whoever superior or elder, especially to the ruler. Therefore, it was the government protection, rather than human devotion which kept it too effective until now (Tarling, 1967: 26). Perhaps as a historical instinct, even today, just as laws define the pets as the owner's personal belonging in China, some Chinese people will not consider killing the pet much problematical, as the laws indirectly allowing it. This is an example of loyalty that intertwined with moral values and which Chinese rulers enjoyed for centuries. However, this loyalty often found its borders when there was a common conviction that the ruler lost the mandate of Heaven (Kissinger, 2015: 39).

In Confucian political description, the name of “others” is “barbarians” as well, identical to the previous Chinese approach. Chinese developed a sense of belongingness to a common political, social and cultural identity during the chaos of Zhou dynasty. But they were not quite willing to except there could be other nations on Earth that have the same status with their own country. Confucius was in the same mindset as well. In Confucian terminology there was only one country on Earth and that was China. Therefore, there is no concept of “International Relations” in Confucian world. Indeed, there is no other nations as well. The whole world is considered to be one community (Ford, 2010: 36). The name of that country on Earth under the rule of Son of Heaven was “All Under Heaven” Tianxia (天下) “Tiān Xià”, which was being used in the meaning of both “China” and “Earth” (Pines, 2002: 134). In that single political jurisdiction there were tribes that did not live in the same geography but in periphery, in addition to not sharing the same cultural and political identity with civilized “Huaxia” people, i.e. Han Chinese. However, they were still considered to be in the responsibility of the Chinese ruler who was in fact responsible for all humans on Earth. As Zhaoguang Ge (2018: 11) argues, “expansion of ancient ‘China’ was an endless process of conquering, immigration and merging”.

Chineseness and non-Chineseness were identities defined by cultural stance, rather than blood kinship. Between inner and outer identities there could be transitions (Ibid: 11). The interiors could be exteriors and exteriors could be interiors, if their cultural identity changed accordingly. Barbarians could become civilized and the civilized could become barbarians. Confucian approach of dealing with non-Chinese is divided into two tendencies; pacifist and militarist (Yang, 1968: 24). The pacifist tendency considers the non-Chinese were the “others” of the same community who needed to be civilized by the virtuous rulers of China. So, the attractiveness of the virtuous ruler was the first power to “civilize” the barbarians. The ideal ruler should be truly a universal ruler (Ibid: 26). This is the mainstream approach to deal with the non-Chinese in Confucian political thought.

“The Master Said, He who rules the country by virtue can be compared to the Polestar, which holds its own with a multitude of stars revolving around it” (Confucius, 2005: II/1/14).

“The governor of She asked about government. The Master answered, make those near you happy and those far away will flock to you” (Confucius, 1861a: XIII/16/133).

For the states in the Chinese feudal Zhou system, he suggests: “It is by good faith that a small state serves a big one and benevolence is seen in a great State’s protecting a small one” (Confucius, 1872: 814).

Confucian ideal of harmony has strong relation with hierarchy and observance of one’s proper place in relations. In Confucian approach hierarchy is the way of nature (Wang, 2013: 211). In Confucian thought, his understanding is valid in relations with the world as well. Confucius binds the harmony at home to the order in nation and peace in the world, all of which initially emerge from the virtues in hearths.

“If there be righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there be beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there be order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.” (Confucius, 1861b: 263-264)

The militarist tendency was in effect when the “barbarians” are not attracted and not willing to be “civilized”.

“Those distant people have nothing to do with our great land; those wild tribes must not be permitted to create disorder among our flowery States” (Confucius, 1872: 777). *“The Jung and Ti know nothing of affection or friendship and are full of greed. The best plan is to attack them”* (Ibid: 424).

“To advance when you see advance is possible, and withdraw in face of difficulties, is a good way of moving the army; to absorb weak states and attack those that are willfully blind, is a good rule of war” (Ibid: 317).

The Confucian approach to the foreigners tended to be more pacifist and idealistic. However, coercion and persuasion were generally equivalent methods to be used in practice (Yang, 1968: 27). Confucius advised that the peaceful stance must be backed up by a military power (Dillon, 2017: 61). Confucius had the cultural pride while trying to produce remedy for its illnesses. This pride was not generated by him, but he contributed to it.

“The rude tribes of the east and north have their princes and are not like the states of our great land, which are without them [China is better even without a prince, in anarchy]” (Confucius, 1861a: III/5/20).

China’s relations with the neighbor tribes and societies were driven by assumption of superiority in culture during all of its long history. This assumption was somehow effective to pacific societies, but not much to the northern and western tribes. Northern and Western tribes did not regard Chinese culture as superior and worth to embrace, but instead, had long and fierce struggle with it (Suzuki, 1968: 180).

Confucian modelling of Chinese political tradition did not finish with Confucius. After Confucius, the second sage of Confucianism, Mencius (孟子) “Mèngzǐ” (372-289BC), and the other important sage Xunzi (荀况) “Xún Kuàng” (310-235BC), the Neo-Confucnists (理學) “Lǐxué”, Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤) “Zhōu Dūnyí” (1017-1073AD) and Zhu Xi (朱熹) “Zhū Xī” (1130-1200AD), have influenced it with new interpretations.

Mencius (孟子) “Mèngzǐ” (372-289BC), rightfully named as “The Second Sage”, is one of the most important philosophers in Chinese history (Dillon, 2017: 64). Lived a century after Confucius and being thought by Confucius’ grandson Zisi (子思) “Zǐsī” (483-402), Mencius is the person who systemized Confucianism (Chan, 1963a: 49). He has a similar life story with Confucius: born to a poor family; lost father in a very young age and brought up by mother; travelled a lot to find a sponsor for his teachings; returned home with disappointment; died in hometown Zoucheng (邹城) “Zōuchéng”, 20 km south of Confucius’ hometown, Qufu (曲阜) “Qūfù”; and finally his teachings were composed by his students (Ibid: 50). Mencius is so influential that, one of the Four Books of famous Confucian classics “Four Books and Five Classics (四書五經) “Sìshū Wǔjīng” named Mencius (孟子) belongs to him. However, this reputation did not acquire when he was alive. He was discovered in Tang Dynasty (唐朝) “Táng Cháo” (618-907AD) (Dillon, 2017: 64) (Map X).

Mencius was a great proponent of Confucian teachings. Nonetheless, he had some approaches that differed from Confucius’ ones. Mencius clearly defines the human nature, which was not much stressed by Confucius, as “good” (Kim, 2014: 432). According to him, the people are naturally born good, but bad habits are inherited from the environment. That is why all people need education (Dillon, 2017: 64).

Mencius’ political ideas are mostly common people oriented, while Confucius was focused on the elite and the ruling class. Mencius expresses it clearly in his conversations:

“The people are the most important elements in a nation; the spirits of lands and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest. Therefore, to gain the peasantry is the way to become the sovereign; to gain sovereign is the way to become a prince of a state; to gain prince of a state is the way to become a great officer. When a prince endangers altars of spirits of land and grain, he is changed and another is appointed in his place” (Mencius,1895: VII/2/14/483-484).

Mencius in this discourse points to the importance of the common people, their ideas and welfare as the base of the political system. The old system of Mandate of Heaven

is granted to a new ruler by the consent of the people first. The heaven watches the ruler by the people's eyes and ears, which means the benefit of people should be observed and they must be kept happy to keep the right to governance. "Heaven does not speak. It simply indicated his will by his personal conduct and his conduct of affairs...heaven sees with the eyes of its people; heaven hears with the ears of its people." (Ibid: V/1/5/356-357).

Mencius got a step ahead of Confucius, describing the ruler-subject relationship like father-son relations and gave the right to change the rulers to common people, provided that the rulers have lost the mandate (Wasserstrom, 2011: 44). The common people get the right to observe the ruler if he rules the country in right conducts, the conducts which are closely intertwined with the interest of the common people. If the people are not content with the ruler, for any sensible reason and trying to change him, the Heaven will not protect the ruler and allow the change. Mencius legitimized the revolt as just in cases when the ruler and subjects are not in consent.

"King Xuan of Qi asked, 'Is it the case that Tang banished Jie, and that Wu struck down Zhou?' Mengzi responded saying, 'There are such accounts in the historical records.' The king said, 'Is it acceptable for subjects to kill their rulers?' Mengzi said, 'One who violates benevolence [ren] should be called a thief. One who violates righteousness [yi] is called a mutilator. A mutilator and thief is called a mere fellow. I have heard of the execution of a mere fellow called Zhou, but I have not heard of the killing of one's ruler'" (Mencius, 1895: I/2/8/167).

In this context, Mencius is regarded to be populist and promoter of democratic notions by some writers, although what he describes is not a complete democratic stance in modern understanding (Wasserstrom, 2011: 45). Mencius puts common people at the center of the administration, which was the ruler till his time, nonetheless he defends that, "the people who work with mind, should govern the people working with the body" (Wen, 2017: 31). In this approach he is in contradiction with common people's advocacy.

Mencius strictly defends benevolence, morality and rites in administration, observing people's approval and aiming to win their hearts (Cao and Sun, 2016: 369). This ideal ruling is generally described by him as "Kingly Way", used by Confucius as well. Mencius' description of Benevolent Rule is opposed to the Hegemonic Rule (霸道) "Bà Dào". Hegemonic rule is characterized as interest oriented and serving the personal interests of the ruler. Mencius does not approach personal interests, to be evil and eliminated, which was not tolerated by Confucian moral codes (Kim, 2014: 429-430). Rather, he combines the personal interest of the ruler with public interest. In other words, if the benevolent ruler wants to have property and material power, he needs to share it with people, which will make it acceptable by the Mencius (Mencius, 1895: I/2/4, 157-158).

Mencius on the other hand, while defending the idea that the role of the government must be limited in people's lives, shows a quite liberal stance (Peta, 2016). He depends his limited government definition on Confucius' sentence: "The requisites of government are that, there should be sufficient of food, sufficient of military equipment and the confidence of people to their ruler" (Confucius, 1861a: XII/7/118). He further evaluates that "The root of kingdom is in the state. The root of state is in the family. The root of family is in the person of its head" (Mencius, 1895: IV/1/295). In another sentence he defends tax exemption: "there were inspections but no levy at border stations and market places" (Ibid: I/2/154). Mencius advocates the limited intervention of the state as the people are rational, good in nature and able to learn, being in the bottom of the state body.

Mencius' response to Mohists was quite an expected one, as a Confucian, believing in importance of family ties and hierarchic community structure. Mohists' advocacy of human love to all people without observation of personal ties and social status is rejected by Mencius. He claims that treating of a stranger the same as one's own father means treating one's own father as a stranger (Ibid: III/1/257).

Xunzi had great influence on the Han Dynasty (汉朝) "Hàn Cháo" (202BC-220AD) politics but in later history waned away (Knoblock, 1982: 29). What makes Xunzi famous is his thesis about man's nature. Xunzi believed that man has evil nature:

“Mencius states that man's nature is good, but I say that this view is wrong. All men in the world, past and present, agree in defining goodness as that which is upright, reasonable, and orderly and evil as that which is prejudiced, irresponsible, and chaotic. This is the distinction between good and evil. Now suppose that, man's nature was in fact intrinsically upright, reasonable and orderly - then what need would there be for sage kings and ritual principles? The existence of sage kings and ritual principles could certainly add nothing to the situation. But because man's nature is in fact evil, this is not so. Therefore, in ancient times the sages, realizing that man's nature is evil, that is prejudiced and not upright, irresponsible and lacking in order, for this reason established the authority of the ruler to control it, elucidated ritual principles to transform it, set up laws and standards to correct it, and meted out strict punishments to restrain it” (Xunzi, 2003: 162).

Xunzi described the human nature as bad, evil and selfish and he proposed education, rituals, laws and study of classics to curb and improve it. Otherwise, there is a constant chaos would wait for the society (Wen, 2017: 56). Xunzi was arguing that the heaven and the Earth have their own rules. So, a human need to act according to the nature. Xunzi was representing a materialistic approach of Confucianism (Dillon, 2017: 64) and he is named to be “Chinese Hobbes” (Wen, 2017: 56).

Convincing himself that it is difficult to apply Confucianism to the state management, he returned to his hometown and wrote books in his old age. Xunzi proposed that all of the personalities are set up by the society, even the family reverence is also thought by family and society and it is not natural (Ibid: 55). The ideal government should be ruling through, “Kingly Governance” combined with rule of law and strictly followed by rites, conquest of territories by force, and maintenance of the order by corporal punishment. However, people are still important and all these must be done to take care of people (Dillon, 2017: 65). Xunzi thought that “great national unity”, which was a popular concern at his time, would be established by the Qin Dynasty (秦朝) “Qín Cháo” (221-206BC) as they were ruling with the Legalist (法家) “Fǎ Jiā” approach (Ibid: 65) (Map VII). Unification ideal was a natural result of the chaos in the long-lasting Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. During these long periods succeeding each other, Chinese society suffered too much from the states fighting for

power and land, endless political conflicts, countless bloody wars, social chaos, moral decay, that the unification of country became a natural goal for all the states, whenever there was a similar condition of fragmentation. The divided land is always considered to be the main reason of all problems, and solution was regarded to be the most important agenda.

Unification under a sole ruler was firstly achieved by the legendary “First Emperor” of China, Qin Shi Huang (秦始皇) “Qín Shǐ Huáng” (259-210BC), the founder of Qin Dynasty in 221BC (Dillon, 2017: 82). He succeeded in uniting all fragmented Chinese feudal kingdoms under his flag, set up the first Chinese empire with multi ethnic society (a highly centralized political system), and finished the feudal system which had continued since the beginning of the known Chinese history until his time. The feudal system was never going to come back to Chinese political life again after him. Xunzi had indirect relation with this unification as the prime minister and the political advisor of Qin Shi Huang, Li Si (李斯) “Lǐ Sī” (280-208BC) was his student. Also, the other important sage of Legalist school Hanfeizi (韩非子) “Hán Fēi Zǐ” (280-233BC) was Xunzi’s student as well. Xunzi’s belief of evil human nature let him develop a notion, suggesting a ruler appearing to conduct rituals outside and following laws inside (Wen, 2017: 56). These ideas were compounded and turned into an administration philosophy by Lisi and Hanfeizi. Qin Shi Quang was the first ruler to implement this philosophy.

Confucianism became the state ideology in Han Dynasty, which was succeeded by the first dynasty of united China, the Qin Dynasty (Map VIII). The seventh emperor of Han Dynasty, Emperor Wudi (汉武帝) “Hàn Wǔdì” (140-86BC), accepted Confucianism as a state ideology (Dillon, 2017: 63). From then on, Confucian values dominated the Chinese society and became the main political philosophy until its abolition in 1905 (Paludan, 1998: 79).

Confucian thought stayed mostly intact during all that long history, except the Neo-Confucian (理學) “Lǐxué” influence, during Song Dynasty (宋朝) “Sòng Cháo”, (960-1127AD). The main figures were Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤) “Zhōu Dūnyí” (1017-1073) and Zhuxi (朱熹) “Zhū Xī” (1130-1200). Neo-Confucianism was a philosophical movement which expanded on a time period from Tang Dynasty to Song Dynasty. As

their main argument was the “heavenly principle” (天理) “Tiān Lǐ”, which they described to be the soul of all universe; the name of the school literally meant “school of li” (Dillon, 2017: 414).

Zhou Dunyi, who was one of the most important Neo-Confucians, combined the ethical system of Confucianism with the cosmology of Taoism (道家) “Dào Jiā” and tried to add a metaphysical dimension to Confucianism. Although, some scholars argue that Neo-Confucianism was the result of turning inward, after the tragedies the Song Dynasty suffered from the northern nomadic Jurchen (女真) “Nǚzhēn” Later Jin Dynasty (后金) “Hòujīn” (1115-1234), the ancestors of today’s Manchus (滿洲) “Mǎn Zhōu” (Liu, 1988: 24), the main motivation behind the Neo-Confucian movement was to encounter the challenges emerging from the comprehensive systems of Taoism and Buddhism (佛家) “Fó Jiā” (Dillon, 2017: 415).

Zhuxi is one of the most influential Confucians. He created a coherent synthesis of all Neo-Confucian thoughts and added it to the classical Confucianism, created a concrete vision of Confucianism influenced by Taoism and Buddhism (Berthrong, 1998: 110). Zhuxi is the one who created Confucian canon of nine books, categorized them into “Four Books and Five Classics” (四書五經) “Sishū Wǔjīng”. The Four Books (Analects of Confucius (论语) “Lún Yǔ”, The Mencius (孟子) “Mèng Zǐ”, The Great Learning (大学) “Dà Xué”, The Doctrine of The Mean (中庸) “Zhōng Yōng”) and the Five Classics (The Classic of Poetry (诗经) “Shī Jīng”, The Classic of History (书经) “Shū Jīng”, The Book of Changes (易经) “Yì Jīng”, The Classic of Rites (礼记) “Lǐ Jì”, The Spring and Autumn Annals (春秋) “Chūn Qiū”) are the main books representing Confucianism in a comprehensive set, since Zhuxi’s edition until today (Chan, 1963b: 589).

In Ming Era Confucian set “Four Books and Five Classics was accepted to be the canon of Official Examination (Cao and Sun, 2016: 378). In this aspect, Zhuxi has unmeasurable influence on Chinese political thought as roughly from the fourteenth century until the end of the Imperial Era, all of the official bureaucrats’ minds were shaped by his own perspective (Berthrong, 1998: 110).

Confucianism was state ideology for China for around two thousand years. The concepts of Mandate of Heaven, Son of Heaven, Kingly Way, benevolent ruler, education for all, rights and duties in five relations, description of the ideal person (junzi), adherence to middle way, importance of rites and rituals, harmony in relations, filial piety, bureaucratic selection on merits, civilized culture, importance of fairness in laws, propriety, good intention, describing human being in good nature, right of changing ruler, separating tyranny from the ideal ruling, explaining the relations and universe in the principle (li) and so on, are the important concepts that Confucianism did not invent mostly, but put them in coherent conceptual frameworks and kept them in the China's agenda for nearly two millennium of imperial political life.

Confucianists did not invent most of the arguments they advocated. Most of them had been invented and been part of Chinese social, religious and political life much earlier than Confucius, like the concept of Son of Heaven, Mandate of Heaven, Kingly Way etc. However, Confucius was so successful to formulate them and draw attention with them and the time was so chaotic and thirsty to order that the Confucian reinterpretation become affective, though not as early as Confucius himself expected.

Confucianism is actually a reinterpretation of Chinese values that existed before Confucius himself. So, it is a new interpretation of Chinese folk religion in an earthlier way or only dealing with the earthly side of it. Confucius was not interested in metaphysical issues much. He was rather focusing on earthly matters. Though the Neo-Confucianists added the cosmological connections of this earthly philosophical school and made it more like religion, the debate of whether Confucianism is a religion or not, is still a great volume of discussions today. The discussions range from describing it as “bureaucratic religion” to “a set of non-religious moral values” (Yang C, 1961: 26), from “a religion of good citizens” to “not a religion at all” (Ming, 2013: 31). In fact, Confucius was not promising paradise, not showing an aim to illuminate others for the sake of God. Confucianism did not have most of the concepts that Abrahamic Religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and other popular religions (Buddhism, Hinduism etc.) have, like life after death, sins, holy books, religious missions to non-believers etc. Due to this fact, most of the thinkers are labeling it “non-religious” and even think that Chinese people were never religious. It is surprising that these ideas are defended even by Chinese scholars themselves (Chung, 2017: 60). Shi and Chen

(2014: 62-63), hold Chinese society to be unreligious as well, but concluding the same paragraph in controversy:

“...China was never a religious nation, but as an unreligious society, where the worldly imperial authority surmounted religious authority. The ruler might sometimes accept the influence of some religious leaders, the state policy was still decided by the emperor centered worldly regime. This does not mean China lacked religious activities, in fact, all kinds of religious organizations and religious ideas are always active in China”.

In a political system that the ruler is getting the authority from Heaven, people are obeying him as a semi-deity figure just because they believe his authority is endorsed by the Heaven, he rules all the humanity -not only China- on behalf of the Heaven; people always join and organize a lot of religious activities, but Chinese were still not a religious nation and they were never a religious society. Perhaps what they refer by religion is Abrahamic religions, that is to say visiting Mecca, praying five times a day or going to Church every Sunday. If people are regarded “religious” only in this way, then Chinese were not religious and what they believed in was also not a religion. But Chinese were in fact religious; if you look closely on what they believed was a religion, but different from popular religions. This point is important to be illuminated because the intentions of Chinese imperial politics against the other societies needed to be clarified if the intentions and policies were generated from a belief system or just from practical politics. The fact is that Confucianism was the earthly part of a whole religion which was named Chinese Folk Religion. It was an old unorganized and primitive religion that depended on worship of nature and ancestors, exorcism of evil forces and the belief of relations between nature and human and the rulers and their interactions (Teiser, 1995: 378). It mostly depended on ancestral worship, to be protected by them against the calamities of evil souls. The religion was quite confusing and loose in relations that it is hard to grasp a complete structure of a belief system. It was a polytheistic religion with a lot of figures from legendary events of the prehistoric stories and politics, mostly giving an impression of stories of legendary characters in Chinese mythology (Overmyer, 2009: 51).

Ancestral reverence was the backbone of the religion, together with the belief of spirits and divination and auspiciousness. It was a primitive religion which gave an impression of immaturity; however, it does not mean that it was not a religion and the followers were not religious. In an earthly understanding of religion (Kissinger, 2015: 35), Chinese people never felt mistaken to blend in different religious concepts of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. Chinese liked to make trading with deities for benefits in a mindset of “Gods must be serving to the earth and human” (Shi and Chen, 2014: 69). Chinese society was a quite religious society and today, even after Maoism they are still very religious. Chinese people still actively perform religious activities, like ancestor worship, divinations, fengshui, believe in luck, visit temples etc. They still have strong sense of obedience to the hierarchic state and social norms and they are still very devoted to the family and filial piety which are actually pillars of the Chinese folk religion.

There was a religious belief in Confucianism, but it was not in the focus. Confucius himself always refers to God (Heaven, Tian) when he talks about many issues, but he avoids dealing with the Heavenly issues. Chinese do not have the same religious concepts with the popular religions we know today. Chinese folk religion which includes Confucianism, is a kind of religion with Chinese characteristics. The famous modern thinker Ku-Hung Ming (2009: 52-55) (1857-1928) explains it very well. He summarizes the western religions and compares them to the Chinese folk religion. He discovers that people need religion for two main reasons: security from the unknown everything and the desire of infinity. He argues that the Chinese folk religion or Confucian system satisfies these needs in an earthly system. The need of security is satisfied by making the society safe for all people with love and respect to each other and the need of eternity is satisfied, by ensuring the people that they will be remembered and respected in the hearths of their remaining family members.

Ming’s argument is not quite satisfying, as people’s need of security is not much about the physical security but rather for the unknown future. The desire of infinity cannot be satisfied with any system on Earth if people are still going to die one day. However, it can prove that Chinese people were religious in their own understanding of a religious-political system, though the religion did not resemble the religions we know. Thus, being a citizen of a “state of religion” (Ibid: 64), Chinese were practicing the

requirements of the religion from the subjects to the ruler in imperial China. Obedience to father, rulers and emperor, adherence to the social norms and being a responsible part of the society meant fulfilling the requirements of an earthly religion that embodied in an emperor and state. This earthly religion could not serve more to the interests of ruling classes, which explains why it was so vigorously kept as state ideology and protected for millenniums.

3.1.3 Taoism (道家)

Taoism “School of Dao” (道家) “Dào Jiā” is a belief system or a religion that was formulated by the ideas of Lao Tzu (The Old Master) (老子) “Lǎozǐ” (6th Century BC), in the book of Tao Te Ching (道德经) “Dào Dé Jīng” (Figure XIII). Daoism also has a lot of concepts reinterpreted from the Folk Religion. Although Laozi is one of the prominent philosophers and even a deity, he has big influence on Chinese and Asian cultures, politics and beliefs, although there is not much information about him. The most reliable source is Sima Qian’s Records of the Grand Historian (史記) “Shǐjì”. Lao Tzu was a state bureaucrat of Zhou Dynasty, responsible of sacred books. When he lost hope of order in Zhou system he decided to leave China to India, traveling on an ox back towards west of China. At the gate he gives the guard a book which is known as Tao Te Ching, the sacred book of Taoism. Although there is a controversy about it, most of the sources admit that he lived at the same time with Confucius; he was older than him and there are stories about their meetings as well (Robinet, 1997: 26)

The very essence of Taoism (or Daoism) are the concepts of “the way” Dao (道) “Dào” and Yin-Yang Concept (阴阳) “Yīn-Yáng” (Figure III). Dao is “invisible, indescribable, immaterial force or energy that is the source of all that exists or happens” (Dillon, 2017: 66). Dao was believed to have created the cosmos, including humans, and that all the creation shall return back to it (Ebrey, 2010: 47). Ying-Yang is the positive and negative material energies, seemingly opposite forces, but in fact complementing each other, materializing all the things in forms of objects by cycling around each other (Feuchtwang, 2016b: 150). Taoism suggests that the actions and principles should be in harmony with nature, otherwise the natural way of Dao will be interrupted and create problems. All the things have relations with each other and they are interdependent at the same time. Human inactiveness Wuwei (无为) “Wú Wéi” will let all the things work in its correct way, the way Dao works (Dillon, 2017: 66).

Yin Yang concept supports the cyclical concept of time, contrary to the western linear concept. It brings the understanding of the only essential motion is returning. Everything is returning to itself, or its initial form (Zhen, 2016a: 38). Perhaps this is the explanation to why Chinese return to their old values (Kissinger, 2015: 27), whenever they have a trouble with the contemporary developments.

Contrary to Confucianism, which advocates ruler and subject active and positive interaction to create a harmonious and coherent society based on benevolence and other virtues, Taoism strongly advocates private life, separation of private and public affairs and freeing the public life from the ruler's interference (Ebrey, 2010: 46). It is idealized as:

“The highest good is what that of water. The goodness of water is that, it benefits the ten thousand creatures; yet itself does not scramble, but is content with the places that all man disdain. It is this that making water so near to the Way (Dao)” (Tzu, 1997: Chapter 8/8).

Advancement in human relations and material usage takes people away from the original way Dao works. So, the best reform or policies are to return to the far past and catch the pureness of the beginning (Yitik, 2014: 217). The principle of Wuwei is applied to the management also:

“Act by means of inaction; deal with matters by means of not being meddling; taste by means of tastelessness. The big stems from the small; the many is based on the few. To overcome the difficult should begin with the easy; to accomplish what is big should begin with the small. The difficult things in the world must originate in the easy; The big things in the world must take root in the small. That is why the sage can accomplish what is great by never attempting to be great. Light promise-giving, light promise-breaking; the easier one considers things, the more difficult things become. That is why the sage never meets with difficulty because he always considers things difficult” (Tzu, 1997: Chapter 63/66).

Laozi suggests Wuwei, “non-interference” to the rulers to achieve the best governance. Wuwei does not mean simply doing nothing or non-action. It means: not acting in a forceful way to change the ideas or wills of the people; to respect people’s natural wish to do things; to let them fulfill their desires (Zhen, 2016a: 118). The best ruling is also based on not informing the public much, that is not let the public know much but make sure they are healthy (Wen, 2017: 42). In this aspect Taoism advocates a liberal environment for people in a hierarchic ruling and ruled classes structure, and not much democratic. In Confucianism, Wuwei works differently. The rulers guide without coercing or asking, they just show the right way (Zhen, 2016a: 118).

Laozi suggests the governors should be like “water”. Water does not compete and confront with others, but rather it acts “accordingly” (Leyton-Brown, 2016: 79). This is one of the most effective principles of Taoism on Chinese society and state mentality. What can be called “water ethics” suggests a decent and humble stance, but an inner strong commitment to the aims. Laozi does not suggest presenting the values or declare the aims the ruler has, but following the conditions and requirements of the statuesque to get the desired result. Laozi’s “water ethics” is vulnerable to arbitrary interpretations as well. Interpretation can lead to legitimize adopting opportunist and deceptive methods and using all possible means to achieve the target, without presenting a firm stance of some values and disclosing the real aims.

Another important Taoist sage is Zhuangzi (庄子) “Zhuāngzǐ” (369-286BC). Being the second sage of Taoism, his ideas are collected in the book carrying his name Zhuangzi, which became the second fundamental source of Taoism. Zhuangzi praises the harmoniously, anarchic social orders in the pre-society times and blames the kings to be the destroyers of that ideal society of nature. He argues that “in the age of perfect virtue” the communities of different states knew each other but did not have any relations. However, after the sage kings started to rule them, they fragmented and strive started (Ford, 2010: 41). Zhuangzi blamed the sage kings for all the problems of society, whereas Confucius described them as “ideal rulers” in the formulation of “Kingly Way” he suggested the rulers to rule like them.

Zhuangzi is a typical individualist while defending personal freedom from the state interference and even societal bondage, while chasing his own desires that goes along

with the nature and Dao (Wen, 2017: 45). The story of butterfly and his refusal of prestigious position in the kingdom support his ideas.

Zhuangzi explains the rulers' approaches in an example of two swords. Firstly, he describes "the sword of a feudal lord" as a sign of good government in a feudal state. In a feudal state, the use of the sword would bring power struggle and fragmentation. The second sword is "the sword of Son of Heaven" and it can bring unity and submission of all on Earth (China) if it is used properly (Zhuangzi, 2017: Chapter 30/315-319). Although there are conceptual conflicts between the two sides and it caused tensions for some time, Taoists and Confucians came to the same points of agreeing on hierarchy and ultimate unification. The rulers who will govern the Middle Kingdom must be obeyed by all people (Ford, 2010: 42).

Taoism was not officially implemented as state ideology for a long time. It can be argued that it was more religious and not realistic enough to encounter the emerging problems compared to Confucianism. Taoism was implemented during the first years of Han Dynasty until Confucianism was accepted as state ideology. Although Taoist approaches have sometimes been criticized as non-progressive (Dillon, 2017: 66), it has had great impact on Chinese culture, society and politics.

3.1.4 Legalism (法家)

Legalism "School of Law" (法家) "Fǎ Jiā", was another important school in the "Era of Hundred Schools of Thought". Legalism was set up by Li Si (李斯) "Lǐ Sī" (280-208BC) and Hanfeizi (韩非子) "Hán Fēi Zǐ" (280-233BC), both students of Xunzi. Hanfeizi is known to be the person who formulated Legalism in a system (Figure IV). However, all three were affected by the ideas of Qin Dynasty's famous statement Shang Yang (商鞅) "Shāng Yāng", whose military reforms paved the way for Qin armies to conquer the rest of China and unite it for the first time (Ebrey, 2010: 51). Shang Yang (or Lord Shang) argued that strong personal desires are the obstacle of creating order in the society. "If people live in humiliation, they value ranking; if they are weak, they honor the office; if they are poor, they prize rewards" (Yang S., 1928: 154). Based on the belief that "orderly state brings strength, disorder brings weakness" (Ibid: 155), Legalism basically advocates an authoritarian system of ruling by laws, which does not leave any space for individualism (Ebrey, 2010: 52).

Legalists reject Confucian concepts of “Virtuous Sage Ruler” and Taoist “Non-Interfering Sage Ruler” as they think both do not provide enough strength to keep the order in society. Instead there should be pure punishment and reward system, based on clearly defined rules, keeping all people in the line of properly doing their jobs according to their positions (Droit, 2014: 155). They also suggest the ruler must be a “Sage King”, however, their sage king should not be involved in daily political issues or to deal with the order in the palace, which all should be handled by the ministers, but instead he should be busy with discovering the “regulatory principles” of Dao, which are arranging the worlds of both nature and human (Wang and Chang, 1986: 9). When the right laws in harmony with the cosmic principles are proclaimed then what remains is everybody’s obedience to those laws, which reminds Max Weber’s model of “rule bound bureaucracy” under a charismatic head (Black A, 2016: 111). Ministers are chosen by merit-based laws and the king must just follow them to make sure they do their jobs correctly, do not let them control the ruler but the ruler must “take hold of the handles of government (minister) carefully and grip them tightly” (Han, 1967: 18). If they do not do their jobs correctly, they must be strictly punished. The ruler in a Taoist non-action mode, the world gets in complete order. It actually proves that legalism’s connection with Taoism, as Hanfeizi also names the laws and regulations as “The Way”, Dao (Pines, 2009: 101).

Lisi argued that there is nothing wrong or correct if the rule is consolidated, it can be by any way, which means result justifies the means (Dillon, 2017: 69). In this aspect he is resembled to Machiavelli (Mosher, 2000: 20). Xunzi’s notion, suggesting that the ruler must govern as ritual outside, law inside (Wen, 2017: 56), is a method being applied in Legalist administration, as ritualist outside, legalist inside. The best and the only truly Legalist administration is extremely autocratic Qin administration, under the rule of Qin Shi Huang, the legendary emperor, united China and being the first emperor of a highly centralized administration system.

The concept of a single monist rule and a single unified state, that corresponded with the notion of Tianxia (Ford, 2010: 51), created an ideal concept of country-ruling system for Chinese people, which they had been waiting for and formulated it as Great Unity and never questioned it until today. Qin Shi Huang was under direct effects of

the Legalists, Shang Yang, Hanfeizi and especially Lisi, being his minister (Dillon, 2017: 69). One of the most important achievements is changing the aristocratic feudal system to a centralized merit-based bureaucracy (Mosher, 2000: 26). However, the brutal reign of the first emperor created such a haunt in Chinese society that the same doze of Legalism has never been implemented again. Nevertheless, Xunzi's notion, from outside Confucian while inside legalist, was applied for two thousand years during the imperial era, from Han Dynasty to the end. Legalism, seemingly being applied in short Qin Dynasty only, but actually it was the hidden face of the Chinese imperial political mechanism, entered Chinese DNA with Qin Dynasty (Ibid: 28) and continues with the current regime, which is also defined to be legalist and not hidden at all. People were seemingly treated in Confucian way, but the emperors were very ruthless in punishing them.

3.1.5 Mohism (墨家)

Mohism "School of Mo" (墨家) "Mò Jiā", has got its name from its founder Mozi (墨子) "Mòzǐ" (470-391BC). Mohism can be described as a religious group with political nature (Dillon, 2017: 68). Mozi posed one of the biggest challenges to Confucianism the same as Legalism and Daoism. Some of his basic ideas were in contradiction with Confucianism.

He criticized the basic Confucian value of Benevolence (Ren) to be wrongly defined, as Confucians defend the idea that love should be given to the parents first, then to the others by the order of inner to outer affinity. However, Mozi extends benevolence impartially to the level of "Universal Love" (兼愛) "Jiānài". For Mozi, discrimination in love is not done by the Heaven. Heaven loves all humans the same, and therefore humans must follow Heaven's way (Mozi, 1967: 50). Mozi criticized Confucian emphasis on rituals, like that of mourning for deaths. He thought that it is not necessary and a waste of time and recourses as he approaches the things from the consequence of it (Ebrey, 2010: 55).

One of the biggest principles of Mozi is Just War supported with non-aggressiveness, social solidarity and communal help (Dillon, 2017: 68). Mozi personally tried his best to stop many wars (Okay, 2017: 21). He was firmly against aggressiveness. He walked between the fighting states bare foot until he couldn't and until he lost his hair. When

he could not stop a war, he would choose to fight on behalf of the weak side or non-aggressive side with his students. He defended the idea that “heaven desires, powerful state, family or individuals should not attack or oppress the weak one; that the strong help the weak; that those who understand ‘the way’, will teach the others; and that those with wealth share it” (Black A., 2016: 101). This was the point closest to that of the Abrahamic ideas, any Chinese thinkers could formulate.

Mozi defended the notion of “confirming upright” (商同) “Shāng Tóng”. He argued that in the absence of state or political power, people cannot know the right and wrong. This would cause conflicts and struggle. Therefore, the rulers must be talented so they can set the norms and people can follow them, benevolence alone is not enough (Zhen, 2016a: 97).

Mozi used the rationalists’ methods of argumentation. He used rational calculations rather than empathy as a way of moral judgement. In this aspect, he is the starter of systematic debate in China (Graham, 1989: 36). He can be considered to be the “most modern-Western of ancient China thinkers” (Black A., 2016: 101).

There are some other schools of thought that have not had much effect on Chinese imperial political thought, but they are still well-known. These are: School of Yin-Yang (阴阳家) “Yīnyáng Jiā”, School of Names (Logician) (名家) “Míngjiā”, School of Agriculture (农家) “Nóng Jiā”, School of Diplomacy (纵横家) “Zòng Héng Jiā”, Za School (杂家) “Zájiā” and School of Small Talks (小说家) “Xiǎo Shuō Jiā”. Among all in this category, perhaps the most important ones are the religions that came to China from outside, but had very little or no effect on political thought of China, like Islam (伊斯兰教) “Yī Sī Lán Jiào”, Christianity (基督教) “Jī Dū Jiào” and Buddhism (佛教) “Fó Jiào”. They have had nearly no effect on Chinese imperial political thought, while they have a lot of followers and considerable influence on various aspects of the culture. Especially Buddhism, it has a reputable place in Chinese culture and society, yet it has little effect on Chinese imperial political thought (Ford, 2010: 49). Perhaps mostly because of its antisocial ascetic characteristics. Christianity and especially Islam have followers and long history in China but they are mostly isolated.

Chinese imperial political thought has deep roots in its historical experience and Folk Religion. Changes and developments by interactions has not much to do with Chinese imperial political thought. Chineseness is one of the most important characteristics of it. In Chinese cosmology, even the creator of the universe is a Chinese (Kissinger, 2015: 36). Thus, the strong Chinese characteristics of the imperial political thought is not actually surprising. Confucianism and Confucian values are in the heart of the imperial political philosophy. Taoism follows it with Legalism and Mohism next. Confucian values mostly are not created by Confucius himself. Mostly were known concepts in history before him, as concepts of Folk Religion. Mandate of Heaven, Son of Heaven, Tianxia, Meritocracy, Rule of Law, Virtuous Ruler, Kingly Way, Rituals are the most important aspects of the political thought and tradition of imperial China.

Chinese imperial understanding of the ideal administration was based in a dual tenets, coercion and consent. While the ruler was believed to be an ideal human that could attract the compassion of the Heaven for his subject's sake, and that in the highest stage of virtue on Earth, on the other hand the laws and state power was hold in reserve against the subjects and they were used brutally in case of any disorder or disobedience.

The discussions between the different schools in the era of Hundred School of Thoughts are amazingly good in quality and diversity. It gives an impression of a highly confident society that enjoys large freedoms. The discussion topics and the ideas are highly mature. It is because of that matureness, when Chinese imperial political thought needed to be examined, the era of Hundred School of Thought is crucial to observe. After this era is examined there is nearly nothing more to add to the approximately next two thousand years. The Chinese society could pass the feudal system in that time and could adopt to a highly centralized absolute monarchic rule, that Europe could only do after the age of enlightenment, roughly two thousand years later. However, Chinese society being quite sure about the advancement of the culture, only observed for unity in the time of disunity, but they never questioned the system and could never bring an alternative. Also, as they were very sealed to the effects from outside for the most of its history (Shi and Chen, 2014: 62), they did not have the similar experiences with Europe or other places by interactions, philosophical discussions in the age of enlightenment, impacts of Renaissance, geographical discoveries, industrial revolution, reform and secularism, capitalism, French

revolution, emergence of aristocratic class that would challenge the system etc. Chinese were firmly sticking to the belief that the emperor is the Son of Heaven and that is the best decision of Heaven for their goodness, even when the emperor is changed by a foreign invader. This result is stemmed from characteristics of the culture that suggest obedience, non-interference, strict observance of hierarchy etc.

For a European the act of the King or Emperor was questionable, the rules they enact could not define the borders of the morality and it could be questioned as well. Morality was defined by the Church, Holy Books and God, but laws enacted by rulers could be right or wrong. Those rules and the ruling system were made by people that can be changed or that they were maybe not very well thought or could be inadequate to cope with the changes when the conditions changed. Nevertheless, the emperor in China was the source of morality because the political system and notions were part of the Folk Religion endorsed by Confucianism. Morality and politics were so much combined that fairness and ethics were combined with obedience of public and social norms (Zhen, 2016b: 45). People were at the same time performing religious duty while obeying the emperors, officials, community, family and elderlies in a strict religious collectivist manner. The whole Earth had the duty to submit to the emperor as he was believed to be the sole ruler of All Under the Heaven. As Son of Heaven, he could act on behalf of God and could enact laws that had to be obeyed unquestionably. The hidden Legalist face actually ensured the obedience in physical ways as well. Besides other reasons, like geographic isolation, lack of interaction etc., these were the main reasons why Chinese society could not develop a revolutionary tradition and could not pass to a new stage after a centralized absolute monarchy to a democratic system or any other in two-thousand-year time period, while Europe could pass to democracy in a few centuries, after the era of Enlightenment.

3.2 The World Order of Imperial China

After examining Chinese imperial political thought and tradition and before starting to examine the Tributary System, it is necessary to analyze the perceptions of foreigners and foreign relations in Imperial China. Imperial China did not have the concept of international or interstate relations as the Chinese World order did not have any concepts of nation, sovereignty and equality, on which the contemporary western world system is based (Fairbank, 1968: 5). Chinese perception of World Order

matched with its hierarchical perception of domestic culture and society (Ibid: 2). So, there was actually one genuine sovereign political entity in the world, that was China. That is why referring to imperial China's foreign relations using the term Imperial World Order will not be wrong. There are two key concepts that must be analyzed to comprehend the Chinese Imperial World Order: Tianxia "All Under Heaven" (天下) "Tiān Xià" and Hua-Yi Distinction (华夷之辨) "Huá-Yí Zhībiàn".

3.2.1 Tianxia (天下)

Tianxia (天下) "Tiān Xià" means "All Under Heaven" (Figure VI). It is a special Chinese religious, political, cultural and geographical concept that practically refers to China but literally and theoretically and in religious sense refers to the whole world (Liang, 1899: 76).

"Shun had five ministers, and the empire (Tianxia) was well-governed. King Wu said, 'I have ten able ministers'. Confucius said, 'Is not the saying that talents are difficult to find, true? only when the dynasties of Tang and Yu met, were they more abundant than in this of Chau, yet there was a woman among them. The able ministers were no more than nine men. King Wan possessed two of the three parts of the empire (Tianxia), and with those he served the dynasty of Yin. The virtue of the house of Chau may be said to have reached the highest point indeed". (Confucius, 1861a: VIII/20/78)

The owner of the famous Tianxia theory, Zhao Tingyang (2012: 59), makes three definitions of Tianxia. The first one, as an ordinary meaning, refers to the whole land under the sky which is actually the physical Earth. The second one refers to the Confucian interpretation of a "common or public choice made by all people", reflecting their common ideal wills. The third one represents Zhou Dynasty and also Confucius' wish, the political system of the world, that is responsible for managing all people. In Zhao's definition, the term represents physical, psychological and the political world. Interestingly, Chinese scholars skip the religious meaning, but it is obvious that the term has actually emerged from religious concept of the division of the cosmos, in earthly and heavenly realms. It directly referred to the realm left to the emperor to govern, on account of Heaven, while the other realm is governed by Heaven

itself, so it is a religious term as well, referring to “ecumenical claim” (Wang E. Q, 1999: 287) of Chinese rulers.

The term emerged in Shang Dynasty but became common in Western Zhou period (Mosher, 2000: 16). Shang kings were utterly ruling with religious authority, as they were believed to be the direct descendants of Shandi, the Supreme God. Zhou kings did not come from the lineage of Shang kings, so they changed it to “Mandate of Heaven”. But the concept of ruling the earth on behalf of the Shangdi, now Tian, did not change. According to Zhen (2016b: 112), when the term Tianxia first emerged it referred to “monarch, state power or the nation”, while later it referred to the whole World. The concept of Tianxia is crucial for the understanding of imperial China’s perception of the foreign relations and World order. The concept reflects the theoretical inclusiveness of Chinese perception of world order. It is the expression of Chinese Universalism or Cosmopolitanism. A semi deity emperor, furnished with sagely virtues and fatherly concerns to the whole humanity, is afraid of losing the mandate of Heaven if does not treat people well, does not govern the universe in virtues, including the foreigners. The idealistic frame is perfect and promises lot to the neighbor nations and tribes. However, the practical application is not that bright.

The impression of Tianxia is recalling a peaceful approach of Chinese universalism, like all humans are treated equally on behalf of the Heaven. However, it suggests hierarchy in international domain, the same as it does in domestic relations. In Fairbank’s (1968: 315) description, in the first circle around the emperor there were the Han people who were considered to be the “civilized” and essential circle. In the second circle there were minorities who were under Chinese administration but not yet fully embraced by the Chinese culture and regarded to be “semi-civilized”. In the last circle there were the “barbarians” out of the Chinese borders, not yet “civilized”. The determinant factor in civilization level was the adoption level of Chinese culture, in such an extent that, in Qing Dynasty (清朝) “Qīng Cháo” (1644-1911), British King George was a king of “barbarians” as well (Kissinger, 2015: 65), as they had nothing to do with Chinese culture (Map XI).

The centrality of China and its culture was actually announced in its name, China “Middle Kingdom” (中国) “Zhōng Guó”. This term got its final meaning in Qing

Dynasty, by the name Chinese were actually referring to their country, as the center of the civilization or the only land worth to be counted by Heaven, compared to the “barbarians” around (Wilkinson, 2000: 132). The ancient Chinese did not have convincing reasons to have little doubt about their centrality. On the contrary, they had strong causes to believe in that they were the center or the only civilized part of the Earth and the Chinese culture is superior to all others, just comparing themselves with any of the neighbors.

The cradle of Chinese civilization, the Yellow River Basin (黃河流域) “Huánghé Liúyù”, used to host a highly advanced life style and political tradition compared to the surrounding areas. Sedentary culture brought a more prosper life, organized community, regulated management, advanced moral and political system. On the other hand, the surrounding communities were mostly living primitive, nomadic or semi sedentary life styles, too divided in tribal units, had lack of civic advancements, and did not have much improvement in culture to compete with Chinese Huaxia community. This was a factor that supports the perception of centrality and self-supremacy of Chinese people (Fairbank, 1968: 37).

Geographical determinism is a respectable way of explaining the different perceptions and lifestyles emerged in different societies. Lattimore (1940: 25) suggests that the environment has effects on development of society while climate has effects on communal activities. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun’s theory suggests that physical environment determines the non-physical factors (Gates, 1967: 415). Montesquieu was also believed to be influenced by Ibn Khaldun on account of his theory of environmental effects on human nature and societies (Ibid: 422). Chinese statesman, Guang Zhong (管仲) “Guǎn Zhòng” (720-645BC), who lived a century before Confucius, connected the physical features of the rivers with people’s character, arguing that the harsh and twisting rivers make the people of frontiers greedy, rude and warlike (Guanzi, 1998: 106).

Geographical condition of China was one of the biggest determinants of perception of centrality of their country and supremacy of their culture. The flat and fertile geography with a mild climate they were living in provided the finest conditions for them to develop a sedentary lifestyle and a refined community. Besides, their

perception of being central was also determined by the geography that surrounded them (Kissinger, 2015: 36). When the ancient Chinese encountered the surroundings, what they were seeing was a huge ocean on the east; infinite high mountain ranges, large deserts and bared lands with nomadic, unfriendly people in the north and west; endless hills and forests, and primitive cultures in the south (Shi and Chen, 2014: 6). This fact confirms that they are the center of civilization and their culture is superior just simply because there weren't any others around that have the same or better level of development. They had some information about Roman and Indian civilizations during the Han and Tang Dynasties, and later in medieval periods, and they had direct contacts and trading with advanced Islamic civilization as well (Kissinger, 2015: 29). In fact, when Chinese Shang Dynasty started to use scripts, the ancient Egyptian (Ibid: 26) and Mesopotamians were at the peak of their civilizations. However, all these were limited interactions and did not bring much change to the perception superiority, especially to the ordinary Chinese.

Chinese Tianxia Universalism with strong sense of Sinocentrism does not show much difference with the other universalisms. Abrahamic universalism depends on conversion in a salvationist approach. Salvation for the “infidel others” is the conversion into the beliefs they suggest. Measurement is whether or not adhering the values. European universalism was furnished with “white man’s burden”, bringing freedom and “civilization” to the Earth (Shafer, 1988: 46). Salvation from “barbarianism” was to adhere the white man’s values.

Chinese universalism was said to be peaceful and did not have salvationist instincts (Zhao T., 2012). However, history does not confirm this. In fact, imperial China was not much different than any other imperial power in the history. They also fought for land and expansion as well as imposed their values to “barbarians” with mission of “civilizing” them. Chinese expanded their lands towards any direction possible and they stopped when the expansion was not possible anymore and when the country reached the natural borders (Shi and Chen, 2014: 6). Natural borders were defined by the geography: ocean in the east; Himalayas on the west; deserts on the north and mountains and forests in the south. The north was further closed by Chinese themselves, by the Great Wall (长城) “Chángchéng” (Ibid: 7) (Map XV). Managing a country between these borders was bringing self-sufficient economy, prosperity and a

reasonable convenience to manage it. Out of these natural borders it was difficult to manage, and more importantly, there wasn't much need for those areas, both economically and politically. Their non-aggression and peacefulness, if possible, their obedience was much more than enough.

Salvationist instinct of Chinese universalism was the spread of Chinese culture. When Chinese culture is considered, one should not forget that its values mostly stemmed from the Chinese Folk Religion. Confucianism was just a revitalization of earthly chapters of those religious values. Spreading the Chinese culture, “spreading civilization” to the conquered lands, which means spreading Chinese Folk Religion as well, was one of the basic duties meet in conquered lands. This explains how a civilization, initially covering the Yellow River Basin (Ge, 2018: 6), in a very short time expanded to a much bigger area, to Vietnam in the south, Tibet in the east and Mongolia in the north. Ge (2018: 5), found out that the “periphery” of China was always changing and it was because the old periphery, later become part of China on continues conquests. At the beginning of Chinese civilization, the Yangtze River (长江) “Cháng Jiāng” was a border. In the south were “barbarian” lands, while later in Han Dynasty the river was in the middle of the “civilized” country.

Chinese Salvationism was requiring to “civilize” the “barbarians” by converting them to superior Chinese cultural values (Ibid: 11); this also explains why all those ethnic minorities gradually blended culturally with Han people in the Yellow River basin after the conquests. Chinese Salvationism was visible in the eras of initial conquests, in Qin and Han Dynasties until it reached the natural borders. Afterwards, the Chinese lost interest in advancing further and kept that attitude until the rule of Mongolian Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century. Jared Diamond (1997: 352) expresses this fact in his famous book *Guns, Gems and Steel: “Environment, molds history”*. Chinese expansionism, mission of civilizing and Salvationism were not visible, but later it reached its natural borders. After this stage China became introvert. The geography had effects on introverted and conservative characteristics of Chinese culture and society as well. This view is shared by Shi and Chen (2014: 7) in different expression:

“There are two obvious characteristics of the Chinese mainland, the land is huge, and neighboring conditions are severe...which makes Chinese culture

an introverted culture in a strict sense. China's agricultural and natural economy and Confucian culture have strong features of closed development.

Peacefulness is a very assertive theory for a culture, having strong sense of supremacy and looking down on others. Only during the Spring and Autumn Era of two and half centuries that 483 wars broke out in China between the rival states (Mosher, 2000: 17). Besides, the endless wars with Northern and Eastern tribes, with Vietnamese, Manchu tribes, Mongolians, Tibetan tribes and even with Koreans, Japanese, Ceylon, Romans and Arabic empires despite being too far, history does not support the Imperial China's peacefulness theory, as Callahan (2008:15) also suggests. The inner endless struggles in the two-millennium period after the Warring States era are not even included in these evaluations.

As a very special exception, Tianxia universalism, adopted in the era of Tang Dynasty (唐朝) "Táng Cháo" (618-907AD) and in the two fragmented periods before and after it, was the closest to the ideal meaning. The founders and initial emperors of the dynasty themselves were foreign blooded (Chung, 2017: 121). The first and only woman Emperor, Wu Zetian (武则天) "Wǔ Zétiān" (624-705), ruled in Tang era. Chinese culture had never been open to interaction that much until that time and would never be in the future as well. Tang was not xenophobic, but xenophile, with nearly no signs of Sinocentrism (Ibid: 122). Tang era was the formation period of Confucian international system (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 584). Chinese culture got a lot of elements from steppe cultures. Foreigners could enter China, settle, trade and practice their religions and cultures freely. Even they could take place in government by passing Civil Servant Exam and even there were some foreign generals in the army (Dillon, 2017: 230). Tang was a true superpower with cosmopolitan cities and friendly approaches to foreigners and it had a thriving economy by international trade, especially the Silk Road (丝绸之路) "Sīchóuzhīlù". Besides, having relations with 300 countries (Ibid: 225), cultural interaction was at its peak and religious tolerance paved the way for the introduction and spread of Manichaeism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Nestorianism and wide spread of Buddhism in China (Ibid: 231). Confucianism was spreading to neighboring Asian countries as well in such a peaceful and tolerant environment of interaction (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 584). Chinese emperors were using coercion and consent together to manage the relations with the aggressive

neighbors (Ibid: 581). Prosperity and peace not only benefitted China, but also the partners in such an ideal application of Tianxia universalism.

Antony Black (2015: 12) suggests the Confucian values of humanness and harmonious international relations, as the world ideology, if one needed. Nevertheless, in the practice of most of the history, Tianxia universalism presented features of convert-Salvationism, similar to the universalisms in other cultures, like Rome (Ibid: 6). In the both systems outsiders could become insiders by adopting the “culture”, otherwise they were simply labeled “barbarians” (Feuchtwang and Steinmüller, 2017: 18). Having different characteristics in jurisdictions, geography, different moral sets and cosmology, does not make them different in attitude to the others. It would be unrealistic to defend that, as Zhao Tingyang does (2012), China was never a religious state, Chinese society was never religious, there were no expansionist and salvationist instincts of Chinese culture, religion and state and it was peaceful all the time. Chinese contemporary scholars mostly cannot think arid of the contemporary Chinese official ideology (Ge, 2018: 11), which is pumping too much antipathy against religions and too much of Chinese nationalism with clear signs of cultural chauvinisms. Their analyses and opinions are mostly in the extreme lines of “self” admire and false “others”, “civilized” collectivist Chinese heritage, “aggressive” selfish individualist others. This negative instinct and attitude have a relation with the never forgotten “Century of Humiliation” (百年国耻) “Bǎinián Guóchǐ” (1839-1949) as well (Adcock, 2010: 1). Whatever the reasons, these are the obstacles of Chinese scholars to overcome and analyze the notions and history on a realistic base.

3.2.2 Hua-Yi Distinction (华夷之辨)

Hua-Yi distinction (华夷之辨) “Huá-Yí Zhībìàn” is an important historical concept to understand the characteristics of Chinese imperial foreign relations. Chinese attitude to foreign communities varied on the base of their affinity with Chinese culture. If the foreign communities had embraced the Chinese cultural values, like Vietnamese, Japanese, Koreans, the relations were mostly peaceful and regulated by the Confucian values of hierarchy, respect, rites etc. However, if the foreign community had no relation with the Chinese values, they could usually have relations, but they were generally described in frame of “civilized-barbarians” relationships. Hua (华) “cultured-civilized” which was China, Yi (夷) “barbarian-uncivilized” (Pines, 2005:

59), which mostly referred to the northern and western nomadic tribes, but in theory it referred to all foreigners. It was the ideological formulation through which Chinese were handling relations with “non-Confucian” societies.

The civilization level was not measured with the blood relationship or tribal affinity, but it was a matter of adhering to Chinese cultural values or not. In imperial Chinese world order there was no foreign state or society in equal status with China. The equality was between the foreigners, but not including China. There was impartiality between foreigners in Chinese approach. All foreigners in theory were considered to be equal to each other (Wang G, 1968: 61). China was believed to be always peerless, over all. Besides, a tribe or state could be “civilized” if adopted the Chinese culture or could turn back to “barbarian” if converted to another culture. There were two ways transitions between being “civilized” and “barbarian”. So, Hua-Yi distinction stressed the superiority of Chinese culture, but also implied that others could join (Arrighi, 1996: 20).

Although, even in Sima Qian’s *Shiji*, many of known Chinese ancestors were nomadic, like Yellow Emperor, Yu The Great, Qin Shi Huang etc., (Xu, 2016: 36) and the nomadic people contributed a lot to Chinese civilization (Hei, Zhao, and Ma, 2016: 442), the duality of Chinese and “barbarian” nomads started in second millennium BC (Fiskesjo, 2012: 61). The clear distinction of Hua-Yi started in Zhou Dynasty (Li and Zheng, 2001: 116). Though Qiang (羌) “Qiāng” people were the first people that used scripts, but they were also considered to be “barbarians” (Fiskesjo, 2012: 62). In theory, Chinese culture and political system included the foreigners through the Tianxia and Mandate of Heaven concepts (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 18). It was formulated simply as the emperor was the head of the Tianxia while the barbarians were the feet, but still inside Tianxia (Ibid: 545). However, in practice mostly it was not like that.

Chinese approached the “others” in a very xenophobic attitude. For Chinese, there were only three kinds of living beings on Earth, Chinese, barbarians and beasts (Ford, 2010: 88). “Barbarians” were often named with Chinese characters that associated with animals, like dog, beast, ape, bug, worm etc., (Fiskesjo, 2012: 57). In southern China the slang “ghost” (鬼老) “Guǐlǎo”, was being used for British people at the beginning, but now applied to all foreigners. Some “barbarians” were named “cooked

barbarians” (熟) “Shú”, if they had certain degree of affinity with Chinese culture and submitted to Chinese authorities, while the ones that did not live in Chinese jurisdictions, sometimes doing corvee labor and not being applied Chinese laws, were called, “raw” (生) “Shēng” barbarians (Fiskesjo, 1999: 143). All people who did not look like Chinese, in culture or in ethnicity, were looked down on by Chinese people as inferior beings (Pulleyblank, 1983: 411). In Confucian definitions, having virtues is not enough to be regarded as human. Besides, the person must be participating in a Confucian society, after all only meaningful one on Earth. The people outside the borders were barely human, but beasts, as in Confucian thought those people did not have “rites” (礼) “Lǐ” (Ford, 2010: 87). The rites referred to the ones in the context of Confucian definition. Not belonging to a Confucian society, made anybody “barbarian” inevitably.

Among all the “barbarians”, the most troublesome ones were the northerners. They were in constant conflicts with China during all known history. They established states and empires in the steppes, attacking Chinese border towns, sometimes plundering deep inner cities, sometimes conquered partially or whole China, Like Northern Wei (北魏) “Běiwèi” (386-534AD), Yuan Dynasty (元朝) “Yuán Cháo” (1279-1368), Qing Dynasty (清朝) “Qīng Cháo” (1644-1911) and influenced China in many aspects as well (Kang, 2007: 25). Chung (2017: 99) suggests that China was governed by foreigners as much as the locals . The nomadic people in the steppes did not have sense of belongingness to the Chinese world order and mostly did not accept its superiority as well. They had their own cultures, religious and political systems, compatible with their nomadic lifestyle (Kang, 2007: 25), but mostly different with Chinese ones.

At the beginning of Chinese civilization, or in pre-Confucian era, a philosopher did not know what advanced civilization actually is, but they knew Chinese civilization is better than barbarians (Wang G., 1968: 36). They were not “civilized” and not friendly, posing threat to China’s public order as well (Mittag and Mutschler, 2010: 20). There were convincing reasons for Chinese to find a permanent strategy to solve problems coming from “barbarians”. As Sima Qian commented, exhibiting power and virtue in central Asia is too costly, the land does not deserve to be conquered (Ibid: 39). Besides, the expensive military campaigns were causing financial and social instability. Consequently, the views to deal with “barbarians” competed and varied from conquest

and assimilation by force, attracting by virtues, pushing out those who resisted, lord-vasal relationship with those accepting it, or a total refusal of denying to deal with all barbarians (Ibid: 37). Initially, the most adhered policy was to attack and destroy or assimilate if possible. However, this policy later proved that it cannot solve the problems permanently.

In Zhou, Qin and Han Dynasty eras, the Turkic Huns (匈奴) “Xiōngnú” (4th Century BC-Late 1st Century AD) was a strong state of northern “barbarians” which did not also accept Chinese superiority, even posing their own superiority over China (Ford, 2010: 85). In Sima Qian’s (1993b: 129-163) *Shiji*, they are described as a tribe with long history, strong traditions and fighting skills. There was still no single accepted foreign relation form until the big conflict of Han and Xiongnu (Wang G, 1968: 40). Xiongnu was the first neighboring “barbarian” that forced China to revise its policy of foreign relations.

In search of solutions, Ban Gu (班固) “Bān Gù” (32-92AD), the Han Dynasty historian and politician, was the first to set up a theory of imperial foreign relation. He suggested a relation type inspired from history. He thought peace and aggression are not permanent solutions. He suggested an engagement strategy called “five submissions” (五賦) “wǔfù”, which consisted of five degrees of hierarchical relationships; he defended to be defined by nature and geography. In an approach of “inner” and “outer” division, the outer one would be neglected, with no formal relations and no wars. They would be controlled, when they were close and secured against, when they were far (Ibid: 41). Moreover, there were “five traps” to engage with them. For their eyeservice, giving nice clothes and carriers; to close their mouths, giving nice foods; to close their ears, giving music and women; to fill their stomach, giving grain stocks and slaves. And finally, when they came to surrender, indulge them with food and wine feasts in emperor’s presence (Yu, 1967: 37). This was a relatively peaceful strategy and it was applied whenever Chinese face a foreign force. Even in Qing Dynasty, when British and Portugal forces came, Chinese applied this strategy of indulging them to make sure they are do not pose a threat.

When Xiongnu forces surrounded the Han Emperor Gaozu (汉高祖) “Hàn Gāozǔ” (247-195 BC) in 200BC, Chinese understood that “barbarians” are not that easy to

destroy on military attacks. Five strategies were developed to deal with barbarians (Yu, 1986: 450):

1. Harmonious kinship strategy (和親) “Héqīn”; to establish peaceful relations with “brotherly states”, annual “gifts”, which was actually a tribute given to Xiongnu. Also, marriage alliances were established which were actually thought to be humiliating for Chinese emperor to accept.
2. The coercion policy of attacking the enemy with a strong army in order to destroy had totally collapsed. It was taken out from the options.
3. The defensive policy was developed and would be the major characteristics of Chinese engagement with “barbarians” after that. Standing armies, wall building, establishment of military colonies (屯田) “Túntián” and concept of “Punitive Expeditions” (征伐) “Zhēngfá” were introduced.
4. The concept of “loose reigns” (羈縻) “Jīmí”, referring to noninterference and free trade with nomads, was developed.
5. The strategy of “controlling barbarians through barbarians” (以夷制夷) “Yǐyí Zhìyí”, was developed. When British got trading rights after the Opium wars, Chinese easily granted the same rights to other forces, like French, Russians, Americans, as well. It was the strategy of controlling “barbarians” through other “barbarians”, by creating the conditions of rivalry and finally conflicts among them.

Zhaoguang Ge (2018: 13) describes the wars between China and Xiongnu as “international war”, despite some are defining it, as “civil war”. It was kind of Balance of Power system between the two strong sides, though Chinese never accepted it. However, the collapse of Xiongnu changed the balance on the behalf of China. For Chinese the last obstacle had gone, to firmly believe in their superiority (Wang G, 1968: 41).

The strategies developed before the Confucian era mostly were used in Confucian era as well. However, those strategies do not have complete Confucian characteristics. The basic characteristic of Confucian approach to the “barbarians” was to attract them with virtues and benevolence, but not neglecting the necessity to keep power in the reserve. Indulging strategy could go well with Confucian values, but calling a “barbarian” brother was not compatible with hierarchy, backbone of Confucian values. The final form of relationships with “barbarians”, was formulated with motives of

superiority, well-suited with Confucian values. Later it would be called, “Tributary System” (朝贡制度) “Zhāo Gòng Zhì Dù”.

Sinicization or Sinification (汉化) “Hàn huà” is the name of the process of spreading the Chinese values to non-Chinese ethnicities within and outside Chinese borders. Spreading the cultural and religious values to others is not an incident, it can be observed only in imperial China. By a more radical name “assimilation”, it can be seen in many cultures and geographies in the past and present. Sinicization is another way of handling the “barbarians”. It is an acculturation process of non-Chinese people. When Chinese failed to defeat the foreign invaders, they chose Sinicization as the final method of fighting (Wang E. Q, 1999: 288) and protection. This is the reason why every time China was conquered by a neighboring “barbarian” it ended up with assimilation and integration of their new rulers. As Kissinger (2015: 26) points it well, the new conqueror had to obey the Chinese values and the way of government to legitimize himself; otherwise it was nearly impossible to manage such a unique country with his own values and methods. Chinese values that needed to be adopted firstly were: the “Confucian ideology, Civil Servant Exam, sedentary life style (after the Tang Dynasty), agricultural economy” (Wang E. Q, 1999: 289). In this sense, the conqueror did not actually add China to his country, but added his own country to China. China got the biggest conquests by Mongolian Yuan Dynasty and Manchu Qing Dynasties. They had the biggest contribution in terms of land including their own countries to make what we call “China” today.

Sinification is approached in different ways by some scholars. Evelyn Rawski (1996: 835) argues that it is much more complicated than simplification of assimilation and draws attentions to the Chinese effort of protecting their culture as well. On the other hand, Ping-Ti Ho (1998: 133) in a counter argument defends the Sinification process to be through “barbarian” practices. However, in further research, it is commonly accepted that both Chinese and non-Chinese have given contribution to the development of Chinese civilization (Wang E. Q, 1999: 289). Especially Qing, which was a multiethnic empire with assimilation policies not only in the conquered areas but inside China as well. Sinification was not only because of rhetoric of “superiority”, but also it was useful for governance (Ge, 2018: 18).

Sinicization also shows difference in theory and practice. In theory, Tianxia concept included the whole world to be ruled in harmony and attract the “barbarians” by values, while in practice, non-Chinese were bullied and humiliated as long as they were not converted. They were excluded and were often humiliated. Zhaoguang Ge (2018: 11) summarizes the whole process in three steps. Firstly, the place was conquered. In the second step the mass immigration of Chinese ethnic to the new area was carried out and the area was dominated, or the Colonialization process finished and then the new land became “China”. Lastly, the gradual Sinicization policies pushed the locals to change their culture and their way of life as well as turning them into “Chinese”.

The Chinese soldiers in the armies of the conquests were also inhabiting to the new areas in Qin, Han, Tang, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties. In Sinicization, they also played an important role by being pushed to marry the locals and the descendants mostly converted into Chinese way of life, as happened in many places, especially in the south regions (Wang et al, 2011: 319). The final imperial Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, conquered mass lands and turned China into an empire of five nations: Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan and Hans. However, they could not yet be integrated into Chinese society religiously, ethnically and institutionally. That is why today’s China’s political and cultural borders are not overlapping (Ge, 2018: 11).

3.3 Definition and Structure of Tributary System (朝贡制度)

Tributary System (朝贡制度) “Zhāo Gòng Zhì Dù” is a western name given to the specific relationship type China developed with the neighbors, on Confucian values. The term was coined by the famous American Sinologist, John King Fairbank, in 1960. In Fairbank’s (1968: 1) short definition it “was a set of ideas and practices developed and perpetuated by the rulers of China over many centuries”. The framework of Tributary system is not enough to take all relations that China developed with all foreign states in all times (Wang Y, 2013: 213). In theory, it covers a period of more than two thousand years of history of relationship. However, its ideal definition is contented with the historical period of Ming and Qing Dynasties, specifically matured between the years of 1425 and 1550 (Wills, 2009: 2325). Since the term was invented later, until that time there wasn’t such a concept in theory, neither in China nor in western terminology. In Chinese language and history there was no equivalent term as well. Fairbank (1941: 137) named the relationship type he observed to be in a system

of values and rules that China developed in East Asia, “deserve attention as one historical solution to problems of world-organization”. Fairbank’s definition created a large literature with some critics and add-ons, but it is mostly accepted by the scholars of related field.

Fairbank (1968: 1) draws attention to the Sinocentric and hierarchic, non-egalitarian characteristics of the system. The region, which Europeans called “Far East”, was a Sinocentric world for China. China was able to set up a Confucian world order among the East Asian states that were geographically isolated from the rest of the world and which shared some basic common social and political features with China. China, naturally being the center of cultural influence in the region, has influenced those societies, namely Korea, Vietnam, Japan and the small island kingdom of Ryukyu, by its advanced culture. Among these communities, the shared common values developed on time were mainly: “Chinese ideographic writing system, the Confucian classical teachings about family and social order, the official examination system”, and the imperial Chinese monarchic and bureaucratic administration system. Fairbank (1941: 137) further explains:

“the tributary system was a natural outgrowth of the cultural pre-eminence of the early Chinese, came to be used by the rulers of China, for political ends of self-defense, in practice it had a very fundamental and important commercial basis and served as a medium for Chinese international relations and diplomacy”.

Fairbank (1941: 138) argues that the basic tenets of the system were hierarchic non-egalitarian Chinese structure of inner politics, being applied outward and Chinese perception of cultural superiority over “barbarians”. The causes of superiority for Chinese were basically “embodied in Confucian codes of conducts and the use of Chinese scripts”. If those “barbarians” want to come and be transformed (来-华) “Lái-Huá”, and then benefit from the outcomes of Chinese civilization, they must recognize the unique, utmost position of the Chinese Emperor who was Son of Heaven and responsible of all people Chinese and “barbarians”. Devotion to Chinese way of life was a natural acknowledgement of accepting the Emperor’s political and religious status as intermediary between the human and the rest of the cosmos (Ibid: 139).

Since, there was no clearly defined and effective way of dealing with “barbarians”, the method of interaction with them was also unclear from the beginning of confrontation in ancient times. Therefore, when the Chinese Emperors accepted the foreign envoys they followed the procedures of the ceremonies of inner feudal lords, submitting tributes (Wang G, 1968: 37). This was the mentality of ancient Chinese, reflecting the domestic structure to out, due to the Tianxia concept of unity, the jurisdiction of which covered the entire Earth. The non-Chinese rulers or envoys on their behalf, if want to join the Chinese world order of Tributary System, they had to follow some symbolic rules and rituals. The acceptance of rituals was very important, signifying the Confucian principle of rite (礼) “Lǐ”, in their encounter with Son of Heaven. The symbolic ritual was three kneeling and nine prostrations, “kow-tow” (磕头) “Kē-Tóu” (Ibid: 138) (Figure XIV). The formalities would be as follows: the non-Chinese ruler would be granted a patent of appointment and an official stamp for use in correspondence, they would be granted a noble rank in the Chinese state hierarchy, they would start to use Chinese calendar and dynasty’s reign title, they had to “present a symbolic tribute memorial of various sorts on appropriate statutory occasions”, they needed to present a symbolic tribute of a local products from their country, their convoys would be accompanied by the imperial posts to the imperial court, after the kowtow, they would receive imperial gifts in return and they were granted some rights of trade, at the borders and in the capital city (Fairbank, 1968: 10). Any ruler that followed these procedures could take his place in the Chinese World order.

Tributary system was an advanced relationship type, if compared to the previous Chinese methods. The earlier Chinese methods of dealing with the barbarians, as defined in the section of Hua-Yi Distinction, varied during the long history of their confrontation. Attacking and destroying them, attracting with virtues, indulging them, using one against another, ignoring them but being cautious, loose reign and finally assimilation, were the most common methods used (Yu, 1986: 450). In order to comprehend the tributary system, its historical process from the beginning until it became clearly observable must be examined.

Han-Xiongnu conflict finished with the collapse and submission of Xiongnu. Han benefited a period of having no rivals and the perception of superiority was further

consolidated. After Han demise in 220 AD, Chinese world divided between the rival states again. This division was finished by Tang Dynasty in the year of 618 AD, which had strong rivals as well. Tributary System initially emerged in a simple form in Tang Dynasty when the cosmopolitan administration structure allowed many countries to get in contact with China, although some date its beginning back to Zhou dynasty (Yang Z, 2011: 292).

Tang Dynasty could manage the “barbarian” relations with the “loose reign” policy (Wills, 2009: 2326). Tang culture was not too far to the northern neighboring cultures, unlike the later Chinese dynasties (Ibid: 2325). The envoys were received and given feasts while their presents were displayed in front of the emperor. For the specific political condition of Tang period, if the envoy was from the strong rival states like Tibetan, Uighur and Turkic, the ceremonies were added “extra splendor”. In the powerful circle of the neighborhood, Tang China was using the tributary ceremonies for the service of its own survival actually (Ibid: 2326). Tang’s success in managing foreign relations would not continue by its successors, after its demise in 907 AD.

After Tang Dynasty, there was one more fragmented period. In this period the “barbarians” Later Jin Dynasty (后金) “Hòujīn” (1115-1234) founded by nomadic Jurchen (女真) “Nǚzhēn”, were so powerful that they destroyed the Northern Song Dynasty (北宋朝) “Běi Sòng Cháo”, (960-1127AD), which had united China after long struggles. Jin troops captured the capital of Bianliang (Kaifeng) (开封) “Kāi Fēng” in 1126 AD and looted, destroyed and took the palace residents, including the royal family, together with 14,000 people and left to their capital, selling and using them in prostitution and in their harems. This was a big humiliation for Chinese, something that they had never seen before. Called “Humiliation of Jingkang” (靖康之恥) “Jìngkāng Zhī Chǐ”, it had deep effects on Chinese attitude towards the “barbarians”. The capital was moved to Lin’an (Hangzhou) (杭州) “Hángzhōu” and the Southern Song Dynasty (南宋朝) “Nán Sòng Cháo” (1127-1279) was founded (Map VI). It was the first time that the cradle of Chinese civilization was not in Chinese political jurisdiction (Wang Y.K., 2013: 223). In this period Song, Jin and Khitan (辽朝) “Liáo Cháo” (907-1125), were possessing similar strength and there was a balance of power strategies in a multi polar-system. The agreements between the Song and Khitan did not give any superiority to Song, rather they were formally equal. The agreements of Song and Jin

were even worse, with clear humiliation of Song. Song payed tribute to Jin (Dillon, 2017: 284). Chinese were pragmatic in leaving the claim of superiority when it comes to the matter of political survival. In this period Chinese understood that power was the determinant, not Confucian values (Ibid: 216). Finally, Song and Jin were united against Khitan and defeated it, but Jin attacked and destroyed Song also (Ibid: 217).

Song's attitude to foreigners was truly Confucian. The treatment to the foreign comers was generous, without calculating the value, granting them honor without demand. If they came there was no rejection, if not, there was no persuasion. After the Jin destroyed the capital Kaifeng, Song cut the relations with the north and developed relations with South Asian countries, but those countries were not equally obedient as before, as Song was not in the same strength (Wang G, 1968: 47). They constructed a strong navy, but did not use it for conquests. Southern Song did not survive long as well, before the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty overrun all China in 1279 (Map V).

Mongolians utterly applied conquest policies. They set the rules by wars, and if they were not useful, then applied traditional Chinese methods, but did not have any coherent foreign policy (Wang G, 1968: 49). They attacked all neighbors of China, like Korea, Vietnam, Japan and others (Dillon, 2017: 301-311), which Han Chinese rarely did. Finally, they reached an extent of territories that China had never reached until that time. They treated Chinese as lowest class in the empire. But they also could not survive long with suppression policies. Around a century later they demised in 1368. Song focused on virtues but neglected power and it resulted in a disaster. Yuan was just the opposite, he had strong power but no virtues and he also did not survive long. The later dynasties would learn lessons from this.

The Chinese perception of superiority, which was in both sense of Han ethnicity and culture, lost its unity in Song tragedies (Wang E. Q, 1999: 302). Chinese came to the point that the central lands of their civilization could be managed by non-Han ethnics, and they could represent Hans as well. So, the superiority belief came to be limited to the culture, excluding ethnicity. This new conviction became a forever fact, after the Yuan Mongolians ruled China. Chinese would refer to the cultural superiority, in their superiority rhetoric after that, not to the ethnocentrism of Han anymore. Under the rule

of Mongolian Yuan and Manchu Qing, the name Han turned into a cultural name (Ibid: 303).

Founding Ming Dynasty (明朝) “Míng Cháo” (1368-1644), Chinese began reconstructing what they had lost in Song and Yuan eras through the invasions of the north “barbarians”. From the Song regime onward, Chinese tended introvertly to accept that it is difficult to deal with aggressive “barbarians” (Wang E.Q, 1999: 301) without an effective formula of permanent solution. Chinese culture and political thought had the remedy of “Sinification”, in case Chinese state becomes weak in physical power. Indeed, it was mostly working, but it did not guarantee independence. This fact, proven with the tragedies of Song and Yuan, brought Ming rulers to the point of formulating the foreign affairs in a softer framework, while keeping power, strengthening fortresses for deterrence. Softer strategy was attractive for its low cost also (Ibid: 297).

Physical power within virtual framework was not inappropriate to Chinese traditions (Wang G, 1968: 49). This new synthesis was going to re-create a solid model of Confucian East Asian order which was going to be named as “Tributary System” by Fairbank later. The power backed a culture-based system and was a model of soft conduct of foreign relations, recalling the “loose reign” principle, formulated in Han Dynasty (Wang E. Q, 1999: 296). It was not a totally new strategy, but it was matured (Wills, 2009: 2325), being put it in the practical center of relations. Chinese over-emphasis of culture in the international relations was named as Culturalism by Alastair Johnston (1995: 66) which he describes to depend on three basic components: “war is inauspicious and to be avoided; the enemy is not necessarily demonized, it can be acculturated and pacified, though not exterminated or annihilated; violence is a last resort”. For Alastair, the alternative to this Culturalism is realpolitik and Chinese had proven to use it a lot. Ming’s acceptance of the centrality of power, as the former Mongolian Yuan rule did, was a policy of realpolitik as well, legitimizing Mongolians (Wang E.Q, 1999: 297).

Ming Dynasty created a rich, powerful and centralized state. Upon the foundation, most of the neighboring Asian states sent envoys for formal relations with the new powerful Chinese Dynasty. The third Ming Emperor, Yongle (永乐) “Yǒnglè” (1360-

1424), played a significant role in solidifying the Tributary System. He assigned his Muslim eunuch Zhenghe (鄭和) “Zhèng hé” (1371–1433) with a mission to visit all known coastal South Asian, Middle Eastern and even North East African countries. Later it would be termed as “Zhenghe Voyages” and nobody could exactly know the actual reason of those voyages (Map II). Fletcher (1968: 207) suggests that Yongle wanted to setup tributary relations with all known world, which is the most reasonable explanation. So, the main aim of the voyages was not commercial, but rather political. It was the highest stage of tributary relations (Fairbank and Teng, 1941: 136). After it, most of the East Asian countries got in tributary relations with China. There were four other reasons that is worth considering: show off power and superiority of Ming China, promote friendly exchanges between those countries and China, being attracted by ivory, spices and jewels, and possibly to find the rival of the throne, Zhu Yunwen, who was actually known to had died in fighting in China, but rumors were saying he escaped to south (Dillon, 2017: 336).

Zhenghe set up an enormous fleet of 315 ships, perhaps the world hadn't seen until that time, with 28,000 men, but the aim was not to conquer any place (Kissinger, 2015: 30). With that size of armada, he could conquer any place or could discover the sea routes or the new continents much before Europe. Around 70 years later Columbus, did much more worthy things, with incomparable smaller ships and power. These facts, together with the fact that the voyage records were all destroyed by the next emperor, makes the voyages mysterious (Kang, 2007: 30). Zhenghe made 7 voyages, collected and delivered gifts in every voyage and brought many envoys to present tribute to the Emperor. They were welcomed in China and given even more gifts and sent back. Zhenghe died in the last voyage and these voyages never repeated after him. However, the voyages had important results: (1) China started to influence South Asia more effectively by revival of relations, (2) Chinese started to carry their goods to the neighboring Asian countries by themselves, hindering the activities of Arabic merchants in China and South Asia (Fairbank, 1942: 142). This was the period when the overseas Chinese got their population increased in many neighboring countries. After the Zhenghe voyages, Ming China returned to inner issues with security concerns from the north and high cost of the trips, isolating themselves firstly in political sense, then in cultural sense (Mungello, 2013: 3). Chinese introvert manner would mostly continue till the end of the imperial era, leaving them isolated from the rest of the

world as well as keeping them unaware of philosophical, political, social and industrial developments of the modern age. Leaving Zhenghe heritage will later cost China, gradually losing the tributes as well, especially Japan (Tarling, 1967: 3).

Manchu Qing Dynasty, being the last imperial dynasty ruled between 1644 and 1911, was having important differences with Ming.

Firstly, they were not Han, but they have adapted to the Chinese values as a state ideology to unite the vast empire (Kang, 2007: 40). This was a common attitude of all nomadic conquerors actually. Qing, having different approaches to the three different spheres of relations, were expansionist in Central Asia, having Tributary relations depending mainly on trading with East Asians and a pursuing a type of diplomatic relations with Russians (Perdue P, 2010: 38). So, they inherited the Ming Tributary System but adjusted it to serve their interests better (Fairbank and Teng, 1941: 135).

Secondly, they were not looking out through Confucian values, though they used it as a mean of ideology. So, they pursued a nomadic expansionism, especially in the reign of the emperor Qianlong (乾隆帝) “Qiánlóngdì” (1711-1799) (Chung, 2017: 207). Most of Mongolia, Central Asia and Tibet were added to the empire with brutal methods of massacres (Zhao S, 2015: 967). Qing was called to be “colonist” as well (Perdue, 2015:968). The prove of policy change was showing itself in institutions also. They set up “barbarian control office” (理藩院) “lǐfànyuàn”, to manage the relations with steppe communities, before which was all under “Ministry of Board of Rites” (礼部) “lǐbù” (Mancall, 1968: 72). As a reaction to former Yuan dynasty, Ming divided the world into Chinese and non-Chinese, while Qing’s approach was on the basis of sedentary and nomadic relations (Ibid: 73). Nomadic people were different in the aspect of their relations with China; they were not accepting the superiority of Chinese culture. (Suzuki, 1968: 180). Qing used the name Middle Kingdom (中国) “Zhōng Guó” as the name of the country, including all ethnicities, referring to the cultural values to be the ties in between (Ang, 2015: 399). Manchus were anyway keeping their heartlands of steppes stronger always, as it would be the refuge location for them in any crisis (Tarling, 1967: 22). To serve this, they strengthened the Eight Banner System (八旗) “bāqí” in subject-monarch structure to further consolidate the Manchu

and Mongolian relations. Qing was actually first to take the Mongolians under control, so the steppes were having a peaceful period (Farquhar, 1968: 199).

Thirdly, Qing was a multi-ethnic empire since the rulers were with double roots; thus, it wasn't not purely ruled by the Chinese elites (Mungello, 2013: 5). The first Qing emperors were not counted to be "Chinese" yet (Fletcher, 1968: 224).

Fourthly, Qing preferred private trade rather than tributary one. At that time, the trade activities were carried out in two ways: by state to state relations and by the domestic state institutions (Kang, 2007: 33). Towards the end of Ming and the beginning of Qing, the traders gained more value than the scholars, earning money got more commitment in the society. However, Qing still believed that they did not need products and relations with the "barbarians", so they closed borders to all foreign activities, except to Guangzhou. Qing and Ming emperors had no idea about the developments in Europe or elsewhere (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 179).

In 1990's a big discussion on Qing history started upon the emergence of a brand-new school called "New Qing". New Qing scholars, Evelyn Rawski, Mark Elliott and Pamela Kyle Crossley, challenged the widely accepted idea that Chinese Sinicized their conquerors, Manchu Qing also being Sinicized and adapted themselves in Chinese values. Upon the newly opened Qing official documents in Chinese and Manchu language, they discovered that Manchus were actually very pragmatic in this issue. They had developed a sense of Manchu identity by managing the country in Central Asian style, as much as the Confucian one (Lee, 2016: 29).

It was a kind of Manchu-centric system in which Han China was a very important part, but still a part of the vast country (Elliott, 2000: 603), among the others: Mongolia, Manchuria, Central Asia and Tibet (Rawski, 1996). The new Qing interpretation has challenged Fairbank's theory of Sinocentric Tributary depending on the hierarchic and non-egalitarian Confucian base. New Qing challenges Fairbank further by suggesting: firstly, the name "China" no to be combined with only Chinese Confucian culture or identity as there are "others" in it as well; secondly, there is not a single form of Tributary relations, can explain the complex structure of relations changing on the base of time and region (Lee, 2016: 29). Pamela Kyle Crossley suggests that the Qing

emperors did not mold themselves in the typical Confucian “Son of Heaven” model. They were “Cakravartin” to the Buddhists, “Khan” to the nomadic Mongolians. They would change multiple identities, using each identity in the relevant region to make the ruling of those societies possible (Lee, 2016: 30).

Fairbank (1968: 2) describes the structure of the Tributary System in three circular zones from inner to out.

1. In the center there was Sinic Zone, “consisting of mostly nearby and culturally similar tributaries” like, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Ryukyu islands.
2. In the second circle there was Inner Asian Zone, consisting of “barbarian” nomadic or semi-nomadic people of inner Asia in periphery, like Manchus, Mongols, Uighur Turks, Tibetans, who were “not only ethnically but also culturally non-Chinese”, in the fringe of the Chinese cultural zone, though sometimes ruling over the whole.
3. In the last circle there was Outer Zone, consisting of “other barbarians”, in further distance with China, like East Asian states far from China, Europeans and the rest of the world, eventually included Japan also as it was not quite obedient tributary.

China was in the core with its values and imperial institutions, creating the center of the system. The political entities, inner or outer, were all completing a whole structure of Chinese world order, depending on hierarchic ranking. In another holistic perspective however, as the Tributary world is a unity in its own terms, a member in periphery can sometimes take the control of the center or the whole. That was another way to legitimize the rule of Manchu, Mongol and Turkic states over China (Ibid: 9), besides the criteria of losing and gaining Mandate of Heaven. Tributary system was a large “framework within which all sorts of interests, personal and imperial, economic and social” (Fairbank and Teng, 1941: 13), could find a way to express themselves.

Though in theory it was a Sinocentric order, emphasizing China’s special place and superiority of its culture, in practice it was quite flexible. It could carry different meanings for any of the members (Mancall, 1968: 65). For the Chinese emperor, it was a way of getting prestige firstly (Fairbank, 1942: 9). In another way, it was enlarging the concept of Mandate of Heaven out of the borders (Zhao S, 2015: 965). Being respected and obeyed by other kings, it was a way of confirmation of Chinese emperor’s legitimacy in inner society, as the emperorship in China requires to be

responsible for all people. On the other hand, “barbarian” attacks could bring legitimacy of emperor in question, as he could not prevent chaos, losing the favor of Heaven (Mancall, 1968: 70). Chinese inner politics cannot be separated from the outer and they were always intertwined, as the concept of Tianxia approached the Earth and its matters in unity. The emperor used principles of Rites (礼) “Lǐ” and Law (法) “Fǎ” in the domestic administration, while in the Tributary framework, he used only the principle of Rites. Therefore, the emperor theoretically did not use power in his outer jurisdiction (Fairbank, 1968: 8).

Another significance of Tributary System for China was to secure the borders in minimal cost (Zhao S, 2015: 964). Chinese had learned that encountering the security threats on all the borders of its vast territories were too costly. Deploying military in all corners of empire was not a practical way of improving the security of borders. Constructing a peaceful environment was a better way. Fairbank (1942: 137) upholds that the tributary system was used by China for “spying out the enemy, seeking allies and all manners of negotiations, including the threat of force”. This strategy was especially beneficial for the north and west borders. Engaging with nomadic “barbarians” and even following them to steppe heartlands, were too expensive and exhausting; the construction of Great Wall (长城) “Cháng Chéng” was also because of this difficulty and its highly cost (Yang L, 1968: 29) (Figure XI).

The Tributary System was beneficial for China in trading as well (Fletcher, 1968: 207). Though, in theory trade was not a crucial incentive for China to setup Tributary System, but in practice it was clear that China was benefitting from the trading activities in the created safe framework. Generally, the arrogance of superiority was not allowing to openly admit that China actually benefitted from trading. It actually reflects the attitude of Confucianism against trading as well (Mancall, 1968: 87). Confucianism does not favor trading and merchants, as they are chasing personal profit (Mungello, 2013: 6). Qing Emperor Kangxi (康熙帝) “Kāngxīdi” (1654-1722) admitted that trading was beneficial to China and encouraged it (Mancall, 1968: 89). It is ironic that Kangxi was regarded to be in favor of Buddhist values, more than Confucian, so he was regarded as reincarnation of Buddhist deities, rather than a Confucian master (Perdue, 2015: 1007).

Trading was not in focus also because the inner market was large enough to provide a stable economic environment. However, the richness of China was not only depending on its inner market. History tells us that when Chinese could do international trade effectively, like the one through Silk Road, they could get more prosperous, like Tang, Song and Ming dynasties. Though, not an intention of Chinese emperors, trade was part of the Tributary System, not only providing economic benefits but also it was used for the system to continue (Fairbank and Teng, 1941: 12).

Each of these reasons had some support from different scholars as being the main incentives of China to setup the system. Nevertheless, there is a different approach as well. According to Lee Ji-Young (2016: 62), besides legitimization of inner politics, it was a natural social process not created by one actor but socially created. Therefore, it emerged as a result of Confucian political interactions. In this case, the Tributary System is a sum of unplanned social behavior of East Asian States that are just being themselves in relations, which requires to be in Confucian way of interaction shared by all. However, this explains the relations of first circle, the Sinic Zone, not the later zones.

The Tributary System was in fact a concept of relationship accepted by all parts. So, any of the other states, except China, if found opportunity to set up its own hegemony around, would use the same framework. That means, it could be copied by any members (Mancall, 1968: 68). Vietnamese king called Cambodian king a “barbarian”, though also addressing himself as a “barbarian” in the letter he sent to Chinese emperor (Fletcher, 1968: 207). Siamese (Thailand) kings set up their own Tributary System in Buddhist values when they could, but if couldn’t, they adopted the Chinese one (Mancall, 1968: 68). Java could collect tribute from Brunei, while both of which were Chinese tributaries as well (Wang G, 1968: 53). As it is mentioned earlier, Chinese also paid tribute in many occasions to the northern “barbarians”. The tributary relations can be seen among the nomadic tribes throughout history as well. However, the Tributary System that China developed with East Asia was different to others, as it depended on Confucian values and lasted much longer.

Being at the center of the system, none of the other states could take China’s place. All “barbarians”, i.e. Japan, Vietnam, and even Korea called themselves “barbarians”,

when it came to comparing themselves to the “civilized” Hans, and thus were formally admitting the superiority of China. However, this still does not prove that it was simply because they admire Chinese culture and came to obey the emperor, as some Chinese scholars point out. The other members of the Chinese Tributary System had their own reasons to adopt the system. Those reasons were usually about economic and security concerns. For some it was not a sole economic activity, but also a symbolic ritual to formally accept the Chinese superiority, in exchange of the title of king, taken from the Chinese emperor as a mean of legitimization of that ruler, his autonomy and confirmed status for his inner politics (Lee, 2016: 49). Koreans were the most successfully Sinicized community. Confirmation of their king’s authority by Chinese emperor played an important role in stabilizing the country. The approval had political and religious meanings for Korean society (Ibid: 170). That is why the Korean attitude towards Ming and Qing was different because while Ming could represent the values, Qing could not. They did not recognize Qing’s rule, as they thought it was a “barbarian” rule and continued to use Ming calendar (Perdue, 2015: 1009). So, the domestic politics of China and the other member states played an important role as well in setting up and maintaining the Tributary System (Ibid: 34).

3.4 Hegemonic Characteristics of Tributary System

Tributary System is a hegemonic Sinocentric world order that it is hard to understand its operation scope and mentality. It is even harder to analyze it with western terminology of international relations due to the conceptual incompatibility. To make a correct analysis, the Chinese political thought and its sources, Chinese perception of world and world order, perception of foreigner and foreign relations and their historical applications in different eras, must be examined as it is done in this research. Due to distinctness of Chinese culture and political thought, it is not possible to understand its hegemonic mentality with the basic tenets of neo-Gramscian approach. Besides, power, consent ideology and institutions, the other unique characteristics of imperial China’s perception of hegemony will be analyzed to reveal its complete picture “in Chinese characteristics”.

It would not be a correct approach if Chinese tributary relations were to be evaluated as a whole. The relations in different zones, as Fairbank divided – Sinic, Inner Asia

and Outer Zones – have fundamentally different characteristics. That is why the best method is to analyze and evaluate each of the zones separately.

3.4.1 Power

In neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony, power, if possible with all of its kinds, is essential to setup hegemony. It is even the first condition of setting up a successful hegemony. Military and economic power plays a crucial role in imperial Chinese Tributary System as well. The clearest evidence is seen when the Chinese state was weak; it lost most of the tributaries, and when it was strong the tributaries got more in number and better in obedience.

Functions of power and its use in Tributary System differs according to the zones. In the Sinic zone, power and coercion were not often used, but they were important factors to set up and perpetuate the system. If the first conquest waves to neighboring areas, during Qin and Han dynasties are going to be regarded as exceptions, not only during the mature period of the Tributary System in Ming and Qing eras but actually during most of Chinese history, the relations with East Asian Sinic countries are generally without aggression. This fact can be explained in three ways.

Firstly, it was because of the introvert Chinese policies, especially in Ming and Qing dynasties, with nearly no interest in overseas expeditions. Tan Chung (2017: 53) explains it as turning the back to ocean, being one of the Chinese national characteristics. When Koxinga (國姓爺) “Guóxíngyé” (1624-1662), the famous conqueror of Taiwan island, talked to the Dutch colonials he was telling them that China did not need Taiwan until then, but then it needed (Campbell, 1903: 423). Even the closest strategic island, Taiwan was not worth of conquest until 1683. The introvert characteristics of China were clear in the canal construction between the rivers, while the sea routes from north to south could be used instead. Also, during most of its history, China did have a big city on the long ocean costs and never had a capital city there. With this mindset China was not expected to have power centered aggressive conquest policies against the East Asian countries. Military power was a mean of deterrence against the pirates and a mean of keeping the Tributary relations on tracks in East Asian Sinic zone.

Secondly, from the Sinic zone there wasn't a threat to China, due to the fact that none of the countries had that much power to challenge China. In the case of Japan, they had withdrawn from the system when they were strong enough (Lee, 2016: 170), claiming equality with imperial China and even occupied China in Second World War, when they had enough power. It also proves that it was not the Confucian values, though cannot be denied having a role, but it was the actual power that kept the stability of the regional order. History proves that the theory and practice always show contradictions on this matter.

Thirdly, the relations with Sinic zone was in Confucian characteristic, in content with Confucius' ideal relationship description. He suggested benevolent approach backed with power, in reserve. The reason behind the relatively peacefulness of Sinic zone was the deterrence of power. Yang Zewei's (2011:293) argument, the success of the peacefulness was because of no use of power, can turn into an illusion if the right question is asked "would there be peace if there wasn't a power imbalance on behalf of China?" or "Would there be peace if all East Asian states including China, were similar in power?". Even in Confucian Sinic Zone, it can be observed in many cases that imperial China did not refrain from invading them. Right in the best time of Tributary era, in Ming Dynasty, Java and Ceylon were attacked, Ceylon prince was captivated, Korea and Annam (Vietnam), who were in the Sinic Zone, were invaded by China (Mosher, 2000: 33-34).

Power in context of Inner Asian Zone, which is the second zone of the Tributary System, had much more currency and meaning. Nomadic neighbors mostly did not accept Chinese superiority, if not forced to do so. While some accepted it and being assimilated when they conquered China, in the case of Qing however, it was discovered by New Qing historians that they actually had their own superiority perception. For China, the Confucian values had nearly no use in dealing with the nomadic neighbors. Military power was essential for security of the borders, against the threat of invasions, also for punishing them with punitive expeditions when needed. China used power in the second zone as a proven fact for safety and stability. When China was weak and the nomadic neighbors strong, it was nearly a fate to be invaded by them, being subjugated or paying tribute to them. China used balancing strategies, by supporting one against another; also, it was about the structure of power distribution.

So, the relations in the Inner Asian Zone were nearly solely depending on power distribution, leaving no room to other determinants. In other words, there was power politics between China and Inner Asia Zone.

Economic power is another determinant in Tributary relations. In Sinic Zone the economic charm of China was an incentive for the other states to keep relations (Lee, 2016: 30). It was a determinant factor for stability. China was gaining from the Sinic Zone trading, but it was not the main incentive. In the Inner Asian Zone, economic incentives were valid to some extent. Some tribes were selling horses to Chinese administration (Zhao S, 2015: 964). Chinese armies needed this trading. Also, the Silk Road was important trading route for China. China was concerned with the security of the road. Chinese mostly chose to occupy the entire road all the way to Central Asia and fortify it as long as it was possible. These strategies were sometimes pushing China to cooperate with the small states in the Central Asia and sometimes making peaceful agreements with the nomadic tribes in the region. In the Outer Zone, in late Qing period, economic factors were causing aggression against China, by the industrial European powers. China having a weak defense, could not pose a military stance against them.

In the third circle, the Outer Zone of Tributary System, there was a similar power relation with the second circle. The most striking power relations in this zone shows itself with Europeans arrival in the late Qing period. Qing rulers finally understood that they do not have enough technology and military power to fight with British armies in the 19th century, after the Opium Wars. Imperial China was implementing balance of power strategy to deal with the powerful European states, firstly UK then France, the USA, Russia and Germany. The strategy was to make similar agreements with each part and let them fight each other in a competitive environment. This was a strategy Chinese were applying against “barbarians” since Han dynasty was supporting a nomadic tribe against another one and letting them weaken each other. Nevertheless, this strategy would not work and China would enter a century they called “Century of Humiliation” which would finish with Mao’s announcement of Peoples Republic of China (中华人民共和国) “Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó” in 1949.

Shortly, the economic and military power was the biggest determinant in Tributary System. In Sinic Zone, it was important factor of stabilization, providing obedience and deterrence against aggression. Whilst, in the Inner Asian Zone and Outer Zone, it was mostly a crucial factor of survival for all sides. In terms of power use in the system, it is safe to say that Chinese were Confucian in Sinic Zone but legalist in Inner Asian and Outer Zone. It is possible to recall Hegemonic Stability Theory also, as the stability of the system depended on the China's strength.

3.4.2 Consent

In the imperial Tributary system, the concept of consent in neo-Gramscian definition has closest meaning in the Sinic Zone, while it also displays contradictions in theory and practice. In theory, the Confucian values were expected to attract the others and "civilize" them, but in practice, there was attraction to some extent, but mostly driven by commercial and political factors hidden inside.

The Confucian countries had consent on the Chinese hegemony because it was functioning for their economic and political benefit also. In some cases, continuation of the system and China's leadership had more meanings than economic and political benefits. In the case of Korea, the Chinese emperor's approval and tributary relations meant religious legitimacy of Korean king also. Chinese culture and Confucian values were the factors that facilitate consent. Confucian culture was used by China for strategic purposes (Lee, 2016: 35), but not essential in creating consent, as some of Chinese scholars hold. If the values were the actual factor in creating consent, the coherency of the system would not change, in the time when China was weak and strong and China and other Sinic countries would not invade each other.

Consent for Chinese hegemony was rarely achieved in the other zones. Chinese hegemony in Inner Asian Zone did not depend on consent, but mostly on coercion. In some cases, for economic and military benefits, nomadic neighbors had consent to Chinese hegemony, but cultural attraction was not a factor that can be counted in these cases. The nomadic tribes and dynasties, which invaded China and being assimilated in time, seem relevant with attraction, but they were totally different cases. They were not actually attracted by culture, but by the richness. The rules of dealing with Chinese society and managing China, together with cultural interaction with adoption to the

sedentary lifestyle, assimilated them later after the conquests. It was not simply because they were attracted by the advanced culture and after the conquest they embraced.

The role of Chinese culture can best fit in the framework of imperial soft power (Ibid: 62). Soft power is a kind of “power”, but does not have clear boundaries of its usage and function and hard to assess its actual impacts in any occasions. It is also highly changeable according to the situations and the countries. A country’s soft power can be high in a society, but low in another. It can worsen while being good, also can get better while being bad. It is not a solid power, same as military and economic power. It can facilitate the interactions and pave the way for smooth relations, but cannot be depended on, in the time of interest crushes and other serious conflicts. It has not much influence to work in the case of crisis.

Chinese culture is also as a mean of soft power; it has dignity in Confucian Sinic Zone, but has low value in nomadic world of second zone and nearly no value in outer zone. It facilitated the relations to go smoothly, but it is hard to access the actual solid effects in any certain occasion. It could create a sincere environment of diplomacy, but did not have that much influence to suppress the political and economic interests, in case of crushes. Chinese culture’s role, as a mean of soft power for imperial China, cannot be denied but should not be exaggerated, just the same as situating the concept of Soft Power in international relations.

Confucian culture can be described as ideology in the hegemonic system of Tributary System. In neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony, ideology is a fabricated system of values that mostly serve the interests of the dominant side, but little to the dominated side as well, in order to give them as reason of obedience. The ideology in this context is supposed to be universal in applicability. It is supposed aim the distribution of resources and define the rights and obligations to best serve the common interests, like Liberalism, Marxism etc.

Confucian culture has similarities and differences with an ideology in this case. It is not applicable universally because it is simply imposing Chinese system of values. Except Sinic zone most of the communities did not accept and adopt the values rather

they have chosen to fight them, as in the case of Inner Asian Zone. Divinely appointed Chinese king, the superiority perception of Hans and the humiliation of their values by Hans Chinese mostly did not get approval from the nomadic tribes.

Chinese culture was not aiming to do the ideal distribution of resources and defining the rights and obligations of all parties to serve the common interests. It was a call for being part of the culture, but not around interests rather around the way of living and Chinese old religious values. Therefore, Chinese culture functioning as ideology in Chinese imperial hegemony does not have supposedly the same functions as neo-Gramscian are defining. Another important difference is that the ideology in Chinese system is not spread and supported by international institutions. Zhenghe voyages were the only serious and organized attempt by China to further develop and consolidate the tributary relations. But it does not have the same function as the institutions of IMF, World Bank etc., functions in American hegemony. However, Chinese culture, in terms of ideology, has similarities in creating a common agenda between the parts, creating a base for diplomacy and facilitating the stability.

3.4.3 Legitimacy

Tributary System is a special hegemonic system, as Ji-Young Lee (2016: 62) suggests in terms of providing legitimacy. Giving examples from Korea and Japan, he argues that the weak countries and rulers may have internal reasons of legitimacy, to join in a hegemonic system. The reliance on the powerful side would provide legitimacy in domestic politics and strengthen his hand to deal with the rivals. Using Tributary system as a mean of legitimacy for inner politics is not something new actually. Examples can be seen in Mughal, Ottoman, Russian, Qing and even today's France (Perdue, 2015: 13-14). In Neo-Gramscian definitions of hegemonic systems, the interaction would be among the established powers, legitimacy is not an intention and plays not much role in the system. However, in Chinese hegemonic system, the Tributary System, it is an important factor.

Legitimacy is not only an incentive for the weak states in the Tributary System. Chinese emperor was also actually benefitting in context of legitimacy. The Tributary relations and obedience of the neighboring kings was further consolidating the legitimacy of Chinese emperors as well. The Son of Heaven, responsible for the whole

Tianxia, naturally could prove this claim by the obedience of outer authorities. Though it was not the sole source of their legitimacy, Chinese emperors also needed consolidation of legitimacy by Tributary System. Chinese emperors were actually having the distress of domestic legitimacy. Any natural disaster or calamities could undermine his legitimacy and let the public to be easily manipulated by any rebellious movement. For consolidating the legitimacy firmly, the tributaries from Confucian states had an important function.

3.4.4 Hierarchy

Chinese imperial hegemonic system does not define the international environment as “anarchic”, as the western approaches do. The whole earth is under the sole jurisdiction of the Chinese emperor, as the sole ruler. The other kings and rulers are small leaders and are required to submit to him, but the emperor in theory lets them free in joining or not. In practice, it depends on the Chinese interests and importance of that kingdom. There is no single authority that can claim equality with the emperor in Chinese world order. Chinese emperor is the sole highest point of authority, over a hierarchic order of “all under Heaven”. The other states could be equally treated (Wang G, 1968: 61) but the hierarchy between China and them could not be questioned. Equality with Xiongnu, Khitan, Jin and others, were tactically and temporarily accepted (Zhang and Buzan, 2012: 17).

James C. Hsiung (2010: 10-17) argues that Chinese world order is formally hierarchic but informally equal, while western one is formally equal but informally hierarchic. This is a too pessimistic view for western world order, while occasionally it is true, too optimistic for Chinese world order, while it is true pragmatically and temporarily as can be seen various examples in history. Chinese imperial rulers, only could admit, there can be an equal power with them, after the disasters of “Century of Humiliation” and could establish equal relations only after that.

The conceptual lack of “anarchy” in international environment is closely associated with English School representatives, especially with Hedley Bull. Bull’s (1977: 13) definition of “international society” was developed on an assumption of an international order that consists of equal members, which bound themselves with some common rules in their relations and work together in common institutions. He further

denies the “anarchy” in the system developed on this view. Chinese Tributary System also resembled an “East Asian International Society” according to some scholars (Zhang and Buzan, 2012: 34). Bull’s definition stresses on mutual respect of sovereignty and cooperation through international institutions in the framework of common values. In this milieu, Tributary System is mostly respectful to sovereignties in Sinic zone. Confucianism is a common value, but the system is lack of international institutions. However, it is totally irrelevant considering the other zones, especially the relations with “barbarians”. Yuan-Kang Wang (2013: 208) explains it more realistically; he connects the structure with power symmetry and asymmetry. He argues that asymmetry in power causes hierarchic structure and symmetry in power creates diplomacy, bringing opportunity of solving the problems peacefully. Lee (2016: 62), on the other hand, suggests that the whole system was just the outcome of social interaction of Confucian states.

In this case Chinese hegemony, as Zhang and Buzan (2012: 26) also suggest, it can be named as “International Society” in Sinic Zone with the exception of China’s position as hierarchically over all, but was pursuing power politics in relations with the other zones.

3.4.5 Wuwei

Wuwei is a Taoist principle of non-interference in the things occurring in natural flow. It was applied to politics as to be in respect of the people’s natural wish to do the things, shortly, to let them fulfill their desires (Zhen, 2016a: 118). In Confucianism Wuwei works differently. The rulers guide without coercing or asking, they just show the right way (Zhen, 2016a: 118). The principle of Wuwei is usually explained as suzerainty by western lexicon, however, Zhang and Buzan (2012) opposes it because the concept of suzerainty requires to be independent in inner affairs but dependent in international affairs. The case in Tributary System is not the same. China mostly did not interfere the inner affairs of the tributaries (Zhao S, 2015: 973). Even when there was a conflict between the tributaries or between a tributary and an outer force, China mostly did not interfere as well. Like in many examples, in 1471 Champa and Vietnamese war, China chose not to interfere and Vietnam annexed Champa (Kang, 2007: 44). Non-Interference in all levels in a Sinocentric system makes the Chinese hegemony different from well-known ones, especially from the western ones.

3.4.6 Empire

China, with its long history, is difficult to define in a single term of political identity. Each of the dynasties could have specific characteristics defined by its composition, policies, neighboring composition, power structure etc. As an example, from the beginning Shang and Zhou dynasties were very different in mentality. Last two of imperial China, Ming and Qing in the mature period of Tributary System, were in different characteristics as well. That is why the scholars usually contradict each other when trying to make a definition of the system referring to its hegemonic characteristic. Over the discussion, whether Chinese dynasties were empires or not, there are various comments. Christopher Ford (2010: 81) states that China concluded the warring state period with a unification in characteristics of empire. “Empires have no interest in operating within an international system; they aspire to be an international system. Empires have no need for a balance of power”. Ford names the centralized system of Qin as an “empire”. While inevitably all of the dynasties setup after that could be named as “empire” as well, because they were the same in terms of system. For Fairbank (1968: 7), it was always imperial in structure, but before Qin and Han feudal, after that bureaucratic.

Mark Mancall (1968: 63) states that it is difficult to name it in western context; it was an empire without neighbors. Zhao Tingyang (2006: 39) approaches in a Chinese manner, he defines it as in terms of Tianxia, as more like “globalization”, compared to the “empires”. Peter Perdue (2015: 15) suggests that Ming and Qing were just usual empires, though the fact Chinese empires had some differences with others can be regarded normal. Perdue resembles some of the practices of Qing, as Colonialism as well, like the administrations they setup in Taiwan, Mongolia, Southwest China, Xinjiang and Java (Ibid: 16). Yang Zewei (2011: 1) defines it as a “celestial empire”. Zhaoguang Ge (2018: 22) evaluates that China was a changing entity during all of the history and has never been homogenous. Some of the dynasties did not show the characteristics of an empire but all of the others were empires with imperialist inclinations. Particularly Qing was a multiethnic empire with assimilation policies not only in the conquered areas but inside China as well. Sinification in a Sinocentric empire was not only because of rhetoric of “superiority”, but also it was useful for

governance (Ibid: 18). In an environmentalist approach, James Blaut (1999: 402) states that because of the geography China became a single state, an empire and despotic.

The short definition of an Empire as a “supreme rule, absolute power and dominion” (Agnew, 2005: 21), fits in all dynasties. While the definition “colonial rule based on oppression and exploitation” (Zielonka, 2011: 770), may not fit well with all, but matches with policies of Qin, Han, Yuan, Ming and Qing.

3.5 Chinese Imperial Hegemony

In short, Chinese imperial hegemony in Tributary System shows some characteristics of neo-Gramscian hegemony in Sinic Zone, while in Inner Asian Zone it is in domination characteristics of power politics. In the outer zone, especially against the European powers, China did not have chance to set up hegemony or domination. The relations can be explained with the policies of balance of power. The Sinic Zone’s neo-Gramscian hegemony, has some special “Chinese characteristics”, which can be summarized as its meaning for legitimacy of all parts, the non-interference attitude or wuwei, officially hierarchic structure, Sinocentrism, culture as ideology and lack of institutions to implement the hegemony. These are the elements of Chinese hegemony in Tributary System, making it different from the modern definitions.

Peacefulness is one of the most controversial issue about the Tributary System. Chinese scholars usually stress the peacefulness of Chinese values that reflected itself in East Asian politics, specifically in Tributary System. However, it is hard to evaluate any social and political event in such a wholistic approach. The system was peaceful as long as defined in the Sinic Zone and defined for the period of late Ming and Early Qing. While for the other zones and periods of time, peacefulness was temporarily and conditional.

The argument of “peaceful imperial China due to its peaceful values” is not seen to be that perfect in practice. The theories and practices do not usually correspond with each other in the Chinese history. Imperial China in its initial formation in Yellow River Basin was a multi-state entity. From that point until the modern ages, the struggle between China and those states who were not yet submitted and assimilated has continued and today the process is not finished yet. This endless struggle is not

different from the power and sovereignty struggle in Europe and Middle East which continued for centuries. China had already conquered the reachable geography to its natural borders, besides; geographical conditions of the Sinic states, the legitimacy concern of all parties, economic and political benefits and finally the Confucian values were the reasons for the relative peacefulness of Sinic Zone in the period mentioned. Therefore, the relative peacefulness of Sinic Zone cannot be explained only with Confucian values and China's peacefulness. It has a lot to do with realpolitik, economy and geography as well.



CHAPTER 4

BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) AND HEGEMONY

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (一带一路) “Yídài Yílù” is a leading strategy in Chinese present foreign relations. Foreign relations have deep connections with the domestic politics, culture, ideologies, identities and history. Before getting into its details, China’s modern foreign relations must be briefly examined. In this chapter the progress took China to BRI will be firstly summed up, then BRI will be analyzed in details.

4.1 Modern China’s Foreign Relations

Carrying strong traditional patterns and modern influence, China’s current politics and international relations can be figured out by correct examination of the Century of Humiliation digging out the ongoing effects of Confucianism, examining the outcome of devastating Maoist experience, understanding the strength and capacity of Nationalism and the argument of Rejuvenation. These major components are crucial to understanding Chinese thinking and move in foreign affairs and specifically to comprehending BRI.

4.1.1 Century of Humiliation (百年国耻)

China is a traditional state and has a highly traditional society. This statement may fuel suspicion on people who have an image of China from the recent history of Maoism and current authoritarian regime’s socialist rhetoric. However, it is not skeptical for the ones who know China well. China carries a lot of contradictions between the reality and image, the values and the practices. Most importantly, the long historical narrative takes researchers to the very beginning of this civilization every time, for nearly whatever the topic is. Historical roots and connections perhaps cannot be more helpful to understand the social and political mindset in another society, as it is in China. To understand the Tributary System, we had to go back to Warring State period in BC, and now to understand the motives that took China to the BRI, and in order to

understand the mindset of the political leaders who planned and implemented it, we have to rewind the story back to the beginning of China's modernization period.

Century of Humiliation (百年国耻) “bǎinián guóchǐ” (1839-1949), as Chinese call it, is one of the most important periods of time in Chinese history. It would not be wrong if compared with Warring State period in context of its significance. It has deep effects on the contemporary Chinese politics, culture, society, as a whole in Chinese mindset. Century of Humiliation starts with the First Opium War (1839) (第一次鸦片战争) “Dìyīcì Yāpiàn Zhànzhēng” and finishes with proclamation of Peoples Republic of China (中华人民共和国) “Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó” in 1949. Mao Zedong (毛泽东) “Máo Zé Dōng” in his famous proclamation speech announced that:

“Chinese have always been a great, courageous and industrious nation; it is only in modern times that they have fallen behind. And that was entirely due to oppression and exploitation by foreign imperialism and domestic reactionary governments... Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up.” (Mosher, 2000: 37)

The Century of Humiliation that Mao was declaring as its end was a chaotic period that started with the western imperialist intervention, continued with social, economic and political chaos, invasions, suppressions, poverty, endless civil wars, moral disappointment, ideological confusions, rivalries and loss of a lot of lives.

China was ruled by the Manchu Qing Dynasty when the British envoy Lord Macartney came to Beijing (北京) “Běi jīng” in 1793, carrying a letter from King George III. There were envoys from Holland in 1656 and 1667, from Russia in 1692 and 1720, from Vatican in 1720 and from Portugal in 1753, before Macartney. Yet, his diplomatic visit is accepted to be the turning point in China's relations with the world, especially with the West (Dillon, 2010: 49). All of the western envoys including Macartney have come to China to set up diplomatic relations between China and their countries, on the basis of equality and getting trade permission in Chinese territories. Portugal got permissions for trade in Macau; Russians had some trading privileges in capital Beijing, though none of them was successful in setting up equal diplomatic relations. China with the strong sense of superiority over the rest of the world was even treating

King George III of England the same as the steppe “barbarians”, coming to benefit from the prosperity of China. Emperor’s humiliating letter would not be delivered to King George III:

“...living far beyond the big seas, but still sending letters with your envoys to benefit from the benediction of our civilization... to prove your loyalty, you have sent gifts from your country... while I am ruling the whole world, I have only the aim of ruling in a perfect way... the magnificent benefits of our country has effected everything under the sky and kings of all nations sent their gifts through land and sea routes. As your envoy can see with his own eyes, we have all things... we do not need the things produced in your country.” (MacNair, 1927: 3-4)

This response was dramatic to show how Chinese were seeing the world. This disconnection with the world was going to delay China’s modernization and perhaps the chance for a peaceful industrialization and early integration with the world.

British response to this attitude was to spread the trade of opium in China (Figure IX). This is known to be the reason of the Opium War. However, the main reason for the war, even for the selling of opium in China, was the silver deficit that UK was giving against porcelain, silk and tea trade with China. Against these products they had to pay in silver and could nearly sell nothing to China in exchange (Dillon, 2010: 47). To balance the deficit opium was a good instrument. Therefore, as long as China continued the isolationist attitude, the war was inevitable, and the reason could not be opium but something else.

The First Opium War in 1839 was the beginning of a new era for China. It was not the first time China was defeated and invaded. For centuries China had been facing fierce attacks and invasions from their nomad neighbors in the steppes, Mongol, Turkic, Tibetan, Manchu etc. Chinese had so much blended with steppe nomads by these endless invasions that nomads had ruled China as much as Han Chinese did (Chung, 2017: 34). Nevertheless, Chinese confidence of self-superiority had never been challenged in any of these invasions. What makes the Opium War different is the fact that for the first time in history (Figure X) Chinese gradually started to understand that

something was wrong about their perception of superiority. Manchus did not question the Confucian cultural setting because they needed it to manage China, so they kept it and supported it. Therefore, Manchus were not a threat to Chinese values. However, Westerners posed a fundamental threat to Chinese identity and perception of superiority and pushed the Chinese elites to question it as well (Meissner, 2006: 43).

The questioning did not start immediately. It was a process expanding all over the Century of Humiliation. The beginning of this process was in a mix of feelings of anger, confusion and humiliation. As Meissner (2006: 44) describes it well, it is also the beginning of identity crisis and he divides this crisis into three stages, covering the Century of Humiliation.

The first stage took place from the first Opium War in 1839 and lasted until the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. The anger and blames targeted the Manchu Qing administration as much as “arrogant” foreigners. The main reason of the defeat was believed to be the weakness of Chinese government and the cruelty of Western imperialism. The first book written about foreigners were suggesting to “learn from barbarians to defeat them” (Dillon, 2010: 122). This strategy would be never forgotten, and even today, they still have a value in Chinese minds. It was reducing the superiority of the Westerners to the technology, weaponry and economic power, but bringing legitimacy to learn from foreigners. Cultural superiority was still believed to be belonging to China in this stage. Chinese values were essential but western knowledge and values were functional. Named “half modernization”, this method did not work (Meissner, 2006: 44). This method proved not to be effective in many areas and even the first factories built in this era did not work well.

In the second stage, there was the proclamation of Republic of China (中华民国) “Zhōnghuá Mínguó”, which Meissner (2006: 44) describes have taken place between 1895 and 1911. With the effect of the Japanese defeat, Chinese elite acknowledged that technical learning only from the West was not enough, but political changes were needed as well. In this stage famous reformers, such as Kang Youwei (1858-1927), Liang Qichao (1873-1929) and Tan Sitong (1865-1898) emerged. Especially with the works of Yang Kouwei, Confucius was presented as a reformer himself and the political reforms legitimized. However, this was still following the Confucian methods

of legitimizing the new with the old values. The developments continued with setting up universities, advocacy of constitutional monarchy and notion of equality with foreigners. In this stage the elites started to accept Chinese and Western equality.

The third stage covers the time period from 1911 to the proclamation of People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. In the republic era the interaction intensified with the foreign ideas and lifestyles. In the Colonial Divisions of the major cities, especially in Shanghai, Chinese were directly interacting with the ideologies, cultures, lifestyles, political and financial institutions. They were sending students to abroad and opening foreign language schools etc. (Dillon, 2010: 123). Chinese elites in the middle of values crisis were the ones who questioned Chinese values more intensely, which they were upholding since the Warring States Period. They were bitterly divided into ideological camps, nearly all agreed on the necessity of change and update of Chinese state mentality and cultural values. Some with radical solutions, some with more compromising solutions, Chinese elite produced solutions for the backwardness.

Intellectually highly productive in this stage, there were three main groups. Nationalists grouped around Sun Yat-Sen (孙逸仙) "Sūn Yìxiān" (1866-1925) and his Nationalist Party (国民党) "Guómíndǎng" (KMT). His famous Three People's Principles (三民主义) "Sānmín Zhǔyì" combined democratic western values with traditional Chinese values (Meissner, 2006: 45) by keeping the Chinese values superior but updated with western values, and this was the official ideology in Republic of China (ROC). Liberalism was the other main school, represented by Hu Shi (1891-1962), which suggested "total Westernization" (全盘西化) "Quánpán Xīhuà", including political liberalization, capitalist economy, federal divisions and democratization of Chinese culture as a whole. This was thought to be the only way to get China to the place where it deserves (Ibid: 45). The third biggest group was Marxists. Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Mao were the leading figures in this group. Following the Soviet model, Marxists were determined to destroy the "feudal" structure of the culture, especially Confucianism and set up a Marxist-Leninist socialist identity in China (Ibid: 45).

The famous May Fourth Movement in 1919 (五四运动) "Wǔsì Yùndòng" was a nationalist movement mainly against Japanese requests about Shandong province and

brought a significant change to the diversity of intellectual paths. It increased the nationalism and created a fertile environment for mass movements, which both the Marxists and Nationalists were going to use well (Dillon, 2010: 197). More importantly, Chinese culture became national identity. It is widely accepted that only by revising the Chinese culture China could catch up with the West (Meissner, 2006: 45). This was one of the ideas in Century of Humiliation, but became the main path after the May Fourth Movement. Marxists, benefitting from the nationalist wave the most, were going to be the winner of the competition with KMT and setup their ideal China later in 1949 with the help of conditions and the clumsiness of the KMT government.

Dramatic changes in politics, society and culture in this era transformed the perceptions, institutions and strategies in Chinese foreign affairs irrevocably. Firstly, China accepted the Westphalian system of equal relations among the sovereign states, but only by force, after the defeats of the Opium Wars in 1861. Before that, organized by Confucian values, Manchu China had contacted with Vietnam, Korea and other Sinic Zone Countries, through Ministry of Rituals, while managing their relations with the north “barbarians” by the Ministry of Conquests (Chung, 2017: 41). This setting was abandoned forever after 1861 by setting up Foreign Office (总理衙门) “Zǒnglǐ Yámén”, and later in 1901, it would be upgraded to ministry level and was going to become China’s first Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Secondly, the Century of Humiliation left a strong sense of victimization, insecurity and righteousness in foreign affairs (Shambaugh, 2013: 23). Feelings of humiliation became a part of Chinese mind (Meissner, 2006: 44). Humiliation and victimization are the main incentive behind the world view of China. It was an old wound, sometimes re-bleeding. When Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was bombed mistakenly by the USA during the Bosnian war, the reaction Chinese government and public showed was a clear sign of this victimization (Harris, 2014: 68). China does not accept foreign influence in country matters and strongly oppose the status of Century of Humiliation, and puts this sensitivity in the center of foreign policy (Dillon, 2010: 445). Sense of victimization keeps the sense of insecurity and distrust alive.

China strongly follows the realist or social Darwinist principles of keeping strong or die in international relations. Chinese never trust the West and never accepts that the nineteenth-century imperialism is over (Kaufman, 2010: 1). This cautiousness most of the time creates sensitivity and susceptible observations, against being fallen into a “trap”, in case of every major or minor step that the West, especially the USA is taking, which related to China directly, or indirectly. It also creates an exaggerated false image of Western values; which Chinese seldom doubt that the Western values are spuriously seen honest and beneficial to others, but actually designed to serve themselves only. Even in academic level, Chinese scholars often openly criticize or imply that notions like individualism, human rights, freedom serve selfishness; the western civilization is actually inhumane and not civilized compared to theirs own. Chinese also developed a habit of finding a scapegoat for every disaster. Traitor, betrayer, Japanese cooperators etc. were used a lot, especially during the Maoist period. Sense of insecurity sometimes brings sense of cruelty as well. Most of Chinese blame their ancestors for following benevolence too blindly and not exploiting the neighboring weak states, while they are “betraying” China now cooperating with the USA. Chinese would blame a soft but unsuccessful stroke, compared to a hard but a successful stroke (Dillon 2010: 30). Sense of humiliation, victimization and betrayal put successful results in front of morality, justice, righteousness and fairness.

Thirdly, Century of Humiliation is one of the main factors motivating China to stick to the principles of Westphalian sovereignty and advocacy of non-interference in inner affairs (Harris, 2014: 71). China’s hyper-sensitivity for sovereignty and non-interference in inner affairs creates reactions to any minor comments from outside about China, let alone to a real threat. Issues about Taiwan, Hongkong, Tibet, Xinjiang directly create sense of threat to the national security and sovereignty, no matter whether the topic is minor or indeed has the aim of interference. China does not hesitate to use its economic and diplomatic means to deter any foreign power or institutions and to take any actions they think is related to sovereignty and interference in inner affair. This action can be related to meeting with Dalai Lama or showing Taiwan out of Chinese borders on a T-Shirt. These are the reactions mostly due to the sense of victimization derived from the memories of Century of Humiliation.

Fourthly, the dramatization of Century of Humiliation is one of the most important legitimization ways of Chinese regime today (Shambaugh, 2013: 23). Chinese government often reminds how China had suffered under the merciless Western imperialists and Japanese invasion. They often emphasize the role of Chinese Communist Party (中国共产党) “Zhōngguó Gòngchǎndǎng” (CCP) and People’s Liberation Army (人民解放军) “Rénmín Jiěfàngjūn” (PLA) in finishing the Century of Humiliation while the conditions were terrible and the Nationalist Government (KMT) was behind personal interests, in negligence and treason. Chinese government often uses this argument to consolidate the public support. Leaders often defend the view that sticking around the CCP regime is the only way to ensure the humiliation does not happen again and that it is the only way to reach the bright future China deserves.

Lastly, whether the sense of victimization created a sense of revenge or not is a serious question that has not been asked and examined well. Chinese officials often like to emphasize the cruelty they have suffered from the Western imperialism in the past. Sometimes stating that the West must understand how China has suffered in the past (Callahan, 2004: 214). These statements are not enough to draw the conclusion that China wants to get revenge in the same way. However, it is worth thinking that what if one day China has enough power to do so, would it be the case?

Shortly, the Century of Humiliation was over long time ago; nevertheless, it has left such profound effects on Chinese society and political life that its spirit still haunts and still plays an important role in Chinese domestic and foreign decision-making process.

4.1.2 Maoism (毛主义)

Maoism (毛主义) “Máo Zhǔyì” has put a significant influence on three decades of PRC. Though not as much as those days, it still has effects on Chinese thought and international relations today. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) have done great achievements from the beginning in 1921 to 1949, the proclamation of People’s Republic of China (PRC). The successful organization and guerrilla fighting in Jiangxi (江西), the legendary Long March (长征) “Cháng Zhēng” in 1934-35, the synergy and spirit of years in Yan’an (延安) between 1936 and 1947, the faithful wars with Nationalists (KMT) government and Japanese

armies in spite of imbalance in the power equation, attracted many others from all around the country. All these factors, together with the unsuccessful defense of KMT against the Japanese invasion, the corruption, difficult situations created in rural and urban areas by the long wars and instability, the promising motivation of the leader Mao Zedong and the confidence of Red Army (PLA), were the factors that paved the way for the Chinese Communists' victory.

Mao Zedong was dreaming a China in the red dresses of Marxism. However, just like any other conquerors in the past, Mao was also aware of the fact that a highly conservative society like Chinese cannot be turned into another society that easily. Mao was a revolutionary, but his ideas and strategies had deep connections with Chinese culture and history. Mao was an isolationist, ideologic, pragmatist, and traditional (Harris, 2014: 36). He has adopted to the both conservative nationalist thoughts advocating that China should keep limited contacts with the outside world to avoid the cultural damage and also defend cosmopolitanism and modernity, to learn and benefit from necessary technology and development against aggression (Ibid: 27). In fact, his own ideology was also West originated, and in practice, he was adopting Western ideas to serve his country.

The father of communist world USSR (苏联) “Sūlián”, helped and guided CCP from the beginning. However, despite the Yan'an year's lack of support from USSR, Mao could win the civil war. After the proclamation of PRC, Mao was aware of the weakness of the regime and knew it was not possible to survive, without support from a powerful ally, especially when they were still in war with KMT nationalist government in Taiwan and its supporter the USA (Dillon, 2010: 293). Mao's “lean to one side” strategy made USSR the only reasonable choice (Ibid: 310) to solve all problems related to the government organization, financing of the infrastructure, technology transfer, technical support and a protection shield against capitalist adversaries. Mao was too traditional in foreign relations, ideologically leaning to Soviet side but pragmatically did not forget that one day China might need to setup relations with the West. However, the Korean war and the Taiwan issue delayed this rapprochement (Harris, 2014: 33). Mao was not a faithful comrade fighting for Koreans, but it was a request from Stalin, and more importantly, Mao was suspecting that NATO would target him next after Korea. Mao lost his own son in this war

together with more casualties than Korean casualties. PLA won the war because they had had war experience. However, Mao used all these to consolidate inner public opinion around the party. This caused United Nations (UN) to reject the claim of CCP for all Chinese territories and delayed China to join international community as a legitimate member (Dillon, 2010: 305).

Mao's foreign policy was strongly anti-imperialist, not just because of his ideology, but mostly due to the memories of Century of Humiliation. Just the same as the USA which was freedom fighter colony at the beginning and they did not set up UK style hegemony of military invasions and colonialism, China also adopted anti-imperial policies because of the country's experience in the past. However, colonialist and imperialist policies were not the affairs of capitalist countries only. Soviet Union was treating the other communist countries in the Communist International as the satellite or colonial countries. Mao gave the signals in his Moscow visit that he would not be that easy to accept that treatment. Stalin was a cruel dictator and Mao was his admirer, but Chinese imperial sense of superiority was persisting in the communist leader's attitudes, behaving like at least a partner rather than a colony. Mao was aware of the Soviet potential of imperial aims, though annexation of Tibet and Xinjiang were the clear evidence that Mao himself was also adopting the Qing China's imperialist policies.

Mao's Three Worlds Theory (三个世界的理论) "Sāngè Shìjiè de Lǐlùn" and his claim to be the revolutionary leader of Third World was a re-emergence of the historical Tributary mentality (Tarling, 1967: 9) in a different form. Mao and Deng developed the theory but did not join the Non-Alignment Camp (Harris, 2014: 34). China as a respectful country, with historical significance and cultural pride, was claiming its former respected place in this way, allowed by the day's conjecture. China continues this policy with Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) today. Though, the old Sinic Zone countries are not in China sphere of influence like before, China substitutes them with African, Central Asian, Latin American countries.

Bandung conference in 1955 was a turning point in this aspect. Maoist China defined the principles of its foreign policy with "The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence". The principles were: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and

sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. They strongly stressed the sovereignty, non-interference and common interests, reminding the sufferings of Century of Humiliation. By this policy China managed to solve the border problems with India (Ibid: 36). The principles would be the core of Chinese foreign policy later and they are still in effect today. Based on these principles, China could setup stable relations with the third world countries, especially in Africa.

China repeated the historical habits and traditions even in Mao period. The five principles could set a new sphere of influence, equivalent to former Sinic Zone in Tributary System. The targeted countries were relatively peaceful, weak states, beneficial to China, tied to China politically and economically, but not burdened to and not protected by China. Chinese hierarchic order showed itself with the relations developed around the five principles with the Third World Countries.

The violent face of the Tributary System, which was nearly a permanent relationship type with the steppe “barbarians” in Inner Asian Zone, showed itself in Mao’s time as well. Korean war was one (first) example. Wars with India and Vietnam, border clashes with Russia, annexation of Tibet and Xinjiang were the typical Chinese behaviors that can be seen during the long history of Tributary System in the Inner Asian Zone countries. China did not tolerate the disobedience to the Son of the Heaven under the sky. Any community, domestic or foreign, creating disorder and posing threat to the legitimacy and interests of China or Chinese hierarchical celestial system were punished hard. Mao period’s international relations does not carry the same international and moral orders. However, the relations were still being deeply affected by the past values and practices. China did not tolerate any actions, infringing with its own interests, questions its legitimacy or threatening its order. In this context, Vietnamese were not posing a serious threat to China, but it was a matter of prestige and legitimacy to “teach a lesson” to Vietnam in 1982. The 1950 Korean war was a threat to Chinese interests, to legitimacy of the regime and to its domestic and international prestige. Border clashes with India, Russia and territorial annexation of Tibet and Xinjiang are the cases related to Chinese interests and order.

Breaking up with Soviets after Stalin's death seems to have been an ideological issue. Revisionist Khrushchev was a betrayer in Stalinist Mao's eyes. However, it had solid relations with inner politics. When there were demonstrations against communist policies in Eastern European satellites, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1956, Mao was afraid of this wave in terms of his regime being hit as well. When Soviets crushed the demonstrations it alarmed Mao. So, developing independent relations and even creating own Communist ideology was a good way to get away from Soviet influence (Dillon, 2010: 324). The Escalation of tension turned into small scale border clashes and the final breakdown with Soviets came in 1960 (Ibid: 341). It was the years of developing more independent policies and criticizing both big camps. During 1960's Mao was not feeling safe as well, so the devastating Cultural Revolution (文化大革命) "Wénhuà Dàgémìng" (1966-1976) started in this period against the revisionist party cadres like Deng Xiaoping (邓小平) "Dèng Xiǎopíng" (1904-1997). In 1968, when Czechoslovakia was invaded by Soviets, Mao was terrified by such a ruthless, reckless action, against all potential reactions of international community. This event caused a deep insecurity in China and in 1971 first relations with the USA were set up and USSR was an endorsed "enemy". It was a surprising twist and hard to believe. But Chinese pragmatism was brilliantly showing itself. Chinese are highly pragmatic when needed and forgetting this fact would always surprise people. In 1971, China was admitted to UN. This was a turning point for the PRC. From then on, the revolutionary rhetoric and help to the revolutions in the third world was left aside and a normal diplomatic relation was set up with all countries (Harris, 2014: 37).

PRC's entrance to the UN finished the big problem of legitimacy in international community. CPRC was not the legitimate representative of China, rather it was ROC government in Taiwan until that time. PRC got legitimacy in international community, however, the legitimacy distress in the domestic politics would continue. After Mao's death in 1976, with Deng Xiaoping the ideological Cultural Revolution struggle left its place to economic concerns, national unity and sovereignty (Ibid: 36).

The Reform and Opening Up (改革开放) "Gǎigé Kāifàng" policies, which started in 1978 by Deng Xiaoping, diverted the attentions away from Mao's controversial and devastating policies. When Soviet Union collapsed unexpectedly in 1989, however, Chinese regime was haunted by a possible similar result in China. The Tiananmen

Event (六四事件) “Liùsì Shìjiàn” in the same year reduced the prestige outside and brought sanctions. The massacre saved the CCP regime, but caused a deep disappointment among Chinese society with one more leader, Deng Xiaoping, after the big disappointment of Mao.

Deng’s strategy for foreign relations was a new and highly pragmatic path for the CCP to follow even today. He has formulated his foreign policy strategy inspired by the Chinese traditional proverb, “Hide your strength, wait your time” (韬光养晦) “tāo guāng yǎng huì”. It was a highly pragmatic strategy to avoid confrontation with the reality of incomparably powerful the USA (Zhao S., 2013b: 32). Called “Low Profile Strategy”, Deng’s formulation carried China and CCP regime through a crucial period of economic development (Ibid: 33). China’s current foreign policy is still heavily carrying Deng’s “low profile” influence.

Chinese public have turned their back to politics today, busy with earning their lives in a vibrant economy that very few countries on Earth could have. However, the legitimacy distress is still haunting the CCP leadership. Capitalist economic and social development was anticipated to accelerate the demand of democratic rights. This have not taken place until now, but it is the biggest source of misery for the Chinese regime. Being questioned for its legitimacy is such a soft belly of the regime that all strategies and plans, domestic or international, are somehow serving to the number one issue of keeping the CCP in power. It would not be exaggeration if Chinese foreign affairs were described as knitted by the strategies, which directly or indirectly, finally serves the party’s legitimacy and holding it in the power. Missing this point while examining any strategy in Chinese foreign affairs will not bring the observants to the right conclusion.

4.1.3 Nationalism (爱国主义)

In the contemporary China, the strongest domestic and international political currency is nationalism (爱国主义) “Aiguó Zhǔyì”. For a nation like China, traditionally with a strong sense of superiority, pride and not faded effects of Century of Humiliation, nationalism is not surprising to be the strongest political ideology. In the end of Manchu imperial multicultural and multi-ethnic cosmopolitanism, Chinese sense of superiority, which was reflecting itself in Sinocentric order of Tributary System and

referring to the cultural values without ethnic reference, affected from the modern nationalism and transformed itself into a Han (汉) “Hàn” Nationalism, if not chauvinism. Western imperialism, that showed its ruthless face in the Century of Humiliation, was one of the crucial factors in this transformation. It is even as Callahan (2004: 200) describes, the essence of Chinese Nationalism.

Han Chinese had developed sense of nationalism during the Mongolian Yuan dynasty and Manchu Qing dynasties. The discrimination, humiliation, sometimes large-scale massacres against Han Chinese by both of these dynasties, took Han nationalism to a maturity level before the imperialism stroke China in the mid-19th century. The Opium Wars and the unfair treaties in the mid-19th century finished the Sinocentric Tributary System. For Chinese, considering the sense of superiority and national pride, they were big insults. In the age of imperialist expansion, many nations had suffered from western imperialist and colonialist policies. However, none of them deemed them as “shame” or “humiliation” as Chinese did. What was the reason for naming the military defeats and unfair treaties as “humiliation”? This was due to the strong sense of superiority, Sinocentric pride in chauvinism that Chinese were accommodating in their identity and drawing sharp lines between “self” and “others”. The nationalism developed during this period against Manchu and western imperialists found its meaning in protecting the “yellow race” from the “white invaders” (Meissner, 2006: 51).

Sun Yat-Sen (孙逸仙) “Sūn Yìxiān” (1866-1925), the leader of Chinese revolutionaries that overthrew the Qing rule and set up Republic of China in 1911, is known to be the father of modern Chinese nationalism. As the first (provisional) president of Republic of China, Sun coined his famous Three Principles (三民主义) “Sānmín Zhǔyì”: Nationalism (民族) “Mínzú”, Democracy (民權) “Mínquán” and Welfare (民生) “Mínshēng” (Ibid: 45). Today these principles are still constituting the main ideology of Republic of China ruling the Taiwan island. Nationalism in modern sense, entered Chinese political life with Sun Yat-Sen and Republic of China. Sun Yat-Sen was content with Western values but still believed in Chinese cultural superiority, so he combined both in his doctrine. Therefore, the strong sense of superiority developed during the long Chinese history, turned gradually into a strong nationalism with

Century of Humiliation, Republic of China and especially with May 4 events in 1919, upon Japanese requests for Shandong province (Dillon, 2010: 196) (Figure V).

Meissner (2006: 51) differentiates the western and eastern nationalisms in definition. He describes the western nationalism depending on liberal values and being “civic” but with deep arrogance and imperialist past and aims. While eastern nationalism, especially the Chinese one, depending on cultural and ethnic values and strongly sharpened against western arrogance and imperialism, which does not mean freeing the nation from their own autocratic governments but keeping the nation free from west. Therefore, it has strong tendencies of cultural, ethnic and even racist reactions, unlike the western nationalism, sensitive to protect liberal and individual rights.

Chinese nationalism has been shaping the Chinese domestic and international politics since the beginning of its modernization. This includes the tough ideological Maoist period as well. Maoists did not consider that traditional Chinese culture is part of Chinese identity. Instead they placed class division of Marxism, peasants, proletariat, petit and national bourgeoisie. Nationalism was in form of a party patriotism. However, after cultural revolution the ancient culture quietly and slowly was returned to its place (Ibid: 52). National pride was promoted around the export of revolution to the other parts of the world, defeating the imperialist powers in China and being the leader of the Third World against imperial aims. After Tiananmen Incident (六四事件) “Liùsì Shìjiàn” in 1989, the patriotism combined with socialism. In the panic after the Soviet collapse, for the party’s legitimacy and providing social stability, Chinese regime turned to cultural values to re-evaluate Chinese history and even extended it to the limits of racial nationalism (Ibid: 52). According to Meissner (2006: 53), racism was never foreign to Chinese politics and society. He suggests that, during the period of Republic of China, Chiang Kai-Shek himself described China not as a “nation”, but as a “race”. He further evaluates that Chinese identity combined cultural superiority with Darwinism and racism before the PRC. Therefore, racial nationalism was created and it explains why Chinese tend to explain the emergence of all nationalities from the Chinese roots.

Racial sentiments in Chinese nationalism can be hardly seen in the daily life and interaction with foreigners. However, it exists and it is promoted by the victimization

narrative of Century of Humiliation and foreign arrogance against Chinese food, script, cultural values, traditions and, in some cases, even in physical features. Chinese, in case of defending any values, intentionally or not, actually talk on behalf of the Chinese Civilization or even Yellow Race, rather than a nation-state or a culture. In Martin Jacques' (2009: 247) definition, China is a civilization-state rather than a nation-state. This is well in line with Meissner's (2006: 52) argument of Chinese racial nationalism.

Chinese central propaganda department is now busy with promoting nationalism (Callahan, 2004: 214), rather than Marxism. The misleading memories and exaggerated narrative of advancement and peacefulness of Chinese civilization before the West arrived and exaggerated victimization storyline of the Century of Humiliation, increases the populist nationalism in China. Chinese regime is under this pressure to restore the historical glory (Yu H., 2016: 72).

According to Bhattacharya (2007: 235), Chinese nationalism is motivated by the elements of nation building and getting its place in the superpower league. Chinese nationalism aims to achieve national salvation and get its rightful place back in the world order by removing the disgrace of Century of Humiliation. Bhattacharya further claims that China is using nationalism not only to achieve domestic aims, but also to create international order for its own interests. This is leading China to be more assertive, especially in the recent years.

Cleanse of national humiliation is the essence of nationalism in China. Nevertheless, there is an important detail that Chinese are not only commemorating the humiliation they have experienced by imperialists, but also drawing attention to their weakness at that time (Callahan, 2004: 202). Therefore, getting stronger and regaining the rightful place back is a direct pressure to the current regime. However, Chinese regime is skillful in using the nationalist feelings for political purposes. Especially against Japan and the USA. In the Sankaku and South China Sea islands issues, Taiwan and Tibet issues, the regime easily consolidates public support by stirring up the nationalist feelings. Chinese public opinion easily gets consolidated behind the regime by the sense of nationalism. By reminding the national humiliation, wars and destructions that CCP led the country to get out from, the regime keeps nationalism as an

important instrument in hand, available to use whenever needed. Nevertheless, the regime is also conscious that nationalism is a two-sided blade, that is, it can cause damage when used. Chinese masses could easily blame the regime for any of its shortcomings against the national interest being violated by foreign powers. Nationalism is fostered and effectively used by the regime, but it can constrain and endanger the regime itself as well. In short, Chinese government is beneficiary and at the same time can be a victim of the strong nationalism. Keeping the nationalist pressure in mind, would facilitate to understand China's over-reactions to international issues, especially those about regime's legitimacy, territorial integrity, sovereignty and any issue that has something to do or reminding the Century of Humiliation.

4.1.4 Rejuvenation (复兴)

Rejuvenation (复兴) “fù xīng” means “reviving” in Chinese language. It is used to mean “renaissance” as well. It gives the impression of the European Renaissance, yet quite different in meaning and practice.

Chinese society with the strong sense of pride and superiority could never accept the Century of Humiliation and its legacy. Accepting their own backwardness in that time, Chinese always aimed to get back to the strong and glorious times that they have experienced during most of its history. Chinese Rejuvenation is about getting China back to its “rightful” place in the international stage.

Chinese being a highly traditional society, whenever they faced a social or political chaos in history they would restore back the old values and order so as to solve the problems. Even Confucius himself restored back the “glorious past”, especially the Zhou dynasty values, to solve the chaos in Autumn and Spring period, prior to utter chaos of Warring States period. This habit has repeated itself during the long Chinese history and it continues even today. What rejuvenation means is to bring back the glorious days by advanced technology and developed, powerful and a rich country. However, in practice it includes the restoration of the old cultural values as well.

Chinese society, being disappointed by Communist leaders, firstly by Mao and then by Deng after the Tiananmen Incident, lost interest and faith in political and ideological values. Today, they are only busy with earning their lives. Marxist

ideology has not much things to give to Chinese society anymore. In such a period of “moral crisis”, rejuvenation rhetoric and associated policies paved the way for the restoration of the old values. Currently, Chinese society has an enormous curiosity and attention for the Chinese history, religions and especially the Confucian values. Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist temples are hosting visitors in crowds, they have not seen for nearly a century. Books and movies related to history and religions are in high demand. There are a lot of Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist schools or training centers, and private education all around the country. Chinese people are re-discovering the old values after the Marxist storm.

The Chinese government, that once have destroyed most of the historical and cultural heritage and tried to erase all traditional values especially the Confucian ones in the Cultural Revolution, now is sincerely promoting its revival. Callahan (2016: 24) explains this as a patriotic discomfort for the “money worshipping” society. Moral Crisis is an important reason for this attitude of the government. However, Confucian values advising obedience to elderlies and the state authorities and endorsing the hierarchical order are quite useful for consolidating and legitimizing CCP rule, while the same values were criticized in Cultural Revolution to cause inertia and to create a recessive society.

The biggest reason for the persistence of CCP rule, after communist regimes collapsed in Soviet bloc, is the obedient and collectivist structure of the Chinese cultural values. Confucian values, which are advocating the unequal, hierarchic rule and unconditional obedience, are well matching with the mentality of CCP rule. Reading it in reverse, CCP mentality is quite overlapping with old Confucian mentality that Chinese society did not actually feel a difference between an authoritarian government with Marxist values and the authoritarian Imperial rule with Confucian values. Collectivism in Chinese culture around the deified family concept is also matching with communal society and collectivist government mentality of CCP. This argument will be more content if it is remembered that the Chinese society could never have had experience of a democratic rule and values, so they can compare and know what they have lost and must fight for. Knowing these facts, CCP leadership must have appreciated the Confucian values for their functionality in legitimizing their rule and providing social stability.

Chinese aim of Rejuvenation got more popular recently associated with the new term of “China Dream”(中国梦) “Zhōngguó mèng”. China’s amazing economic growth after the Reform and Opening Up, started by Deng Xiaoping, continued for around 40 years, when current Chinese president Xi Jinping (习近平) “Xí Jìnpíng” took office in 2013 (Table I). The amazing uninterrupted growth created a miracle country with the second largest economy in the world. However, the growth rate was falling down and Chinese economy was facing threats of stagnation in the middle-income trap, risks of increasing unemployment rates and other profound economic problems. Xi, facing these serious problems, adopted more assertive domestic and foreign policies. Consolidating his power inside and lifting the term limit for presidency, in the same time Xi came up with the inspiring term of “China Dream”. This term covered the longstanding passion for Rejuvenation also.

After the economic crisis of 2008, the relative recession of the USA economy gave China a sense of confidence that it can now be more assertive (Zhao S, 2013a: 119). Rejuvenation and China Dream pathway changed Chinese foreign policy from a soft-passive line to a confident-assertive line. While Deng’s “Low Profile” strategy is still a major path, Xi has brought assertiveness and confidence to the Chinese foreign policy with the Rejuvenation instinct. Rejuvenation currently is one of the main objectives of Chinese state, more than it was anytime in the past.

4.2 Belt and Road Initiative

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is indicating a paradigm change in Chinese foreign policy. It is not just an ordinary strategy to develop economic and political benefits, but also has deep historical roots and meanings for China. It is a game changer move in international relations. While China is denying to have a “Grand Strategy” (Pillsbury, 2015: 198), BRI is a series of plans that can be regarded as grand strategy of China for the coming century, if not centuries.

4.2.1 Framework

Silk Road (丝绸之路) “Sīchóu Zhīlù” is the nostalgic name of historical trade routes that connected China through land to the Middle East, Anatolia and Europe. As the famous Silk Road scholar Peter Frankopan (2018: 3) describes well, the routes were

“the world’s central nerve system” due to their importance in transmitting the goods and ideas, finally shaping the cultures, religions, philosophy, languages and even food, clothing etc. The name “Silk Road” was invented by German Geographer Ferdinand F. von Richthofen who used it in his book “China” published in 1877 (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 530).

The emergence of trade routes in the region dates back to Han Dynasty’s capital Chang’an (长安) “Cháng ān”, today’s Xi’an (西安) “Xī ān”. Silk Road has helped East and West to interact during centuries. Western music, painting, dancing, sculptures, architecture, science and technologies, astronomy, calendric system, medicine and religions like Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam all came from Silk Road and had profound effects on China. Visa versa, Chinese technologies of textile, paper, printing, gunpowder, compass and porcelain making, Chinese painting, Confucianism, Taoism were introduced to the West. The Maritime Silk Road was even older than the land one and it has also contributed to the interaction as much as the land one (Ibid: 531).

Belt and Road Initiative, also called “The New Silk Road”, is claimed by the Chinese officials to fulfill the same function as its historical counterpart, not only serving to economical purposes but also to cultural rapprochements and people to people interactions and covering all historical Silk Road routes but not bounded with it (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015). Naturally, China is the side who defines the framework of the initiative, in the borders of which the cooperation will take place and the results will be obtained. Framework will define the rules of the game and the goals of the initiative as well. In the declaration of such colossal plans, as there will be wishes and optimistic calculations for the outcome, naturally the framework will be highly idealistic.

BRI is an ambitious and ambiguous proposal of infrastructure projects announced firstly by Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan on September the 7th, 2013. In his speech entitled “Promote People to People Friendship and Create a Better Future”, Xi proposed to “jointly build a Silk Road Economic Belt”. A month later on October the 3rd 2019, he proposed to “jointly build 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, during his speech entitled “Building China-ASEN Community of Common Destiny” in Indonesian Parliament

(Wang L, 2017: 1). Since then, the two proposals were shortly named firstly as “One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR)” (一带一路) “Yídài Yílù” and later shortened further to “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), corresponding with the official name as “The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (丝绸之路经济带和 21 世纪海上丝绸之路), “Sīchóu Zhīlù Jīngjìdài hé èrshíyī Shìjì Hǎishàng Sīchóu Zhīlù”.

The first official comprehensive document released by the Chinese government about BRI was released by The National Development and Reform Commission in March 2015. The document “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road” outlined the initiative. The document stated that the basic principles the initiative is based on the main principles of UN Charter, China’s most referred principles in international relations:

“The Belt and Road Initiative is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It upholds the five principles of peaceful coexistence: mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence” (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015).

These principles are “The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence” of China, declared in Bandung conference in 1955 and referred it continuously in international relations since then. On the Vision and Actions document the aim of the initiative was described as follows:

“The Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along The Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries. The connectivity projects of the initiative will help align and coordinate the development strategies of the countries along the belt and road, tap market potential in this region, promote investment and consumption, create demands and job opportunities, enhance people-to-people and cultural

exchanges and mutual learning among the peoples of the relevant countries, and enable them to understand, trust and respect each other and live in harmony, peace and prosperity”(Ibid).

BRI is officially defined to have five main objectives, which are: policy coordination, facilitating connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and finally people-to-people bond (Ibid). Beijing refers to these principles as “the new model of international cooperation” (Kulintsev, 2018: 197).

The first objective, i.e. policy coordination, is described to be mutually generating leading policies with cooperative manner and on equality base. The trust, consensus, cooperation and win-win outcomes are addressed to be the guarantee of the initiative.

Facilitating connectivity is explained to be the priority area of the initiative. It strongly stresses the respect to national sovereignties and security concerns, while implementing policies of building infrastructure projects in each country with final aim of reaching a smooth network of infrastructure through the routes of historical Silk Road and other areas, step by step (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015).

Unimpeded trade is one of the pillars of the initiative. The aim is to construct a trade network free from any barriers and facilitated as much as possible. Cooperation in trade agreements, custom tariffs, custom procedures, constructing free trade zones, by many ways that requires bilateral or multilateral cooperation, discussions and coordination. On one end of this huge trade network there will be one of the biggest developed economic entity of the world, Europe, on the other end there will be the new dynamic economic giant, China (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2019: 2).

The fourth objective, that is financial integration, is the inevitable result of the third objective. Developed unimpeded trade network will require financial integration in a certain degree. Implementing policies that facilitate financial integration, “building a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information

system in Asia” (Ibid), are the steps to be taken to reach financial integration in BR countries.

The final objective, people-to-people bond, is a byproduct of the whole infrastructure projects, economic and financial cooperation. It is more related to the social and cultural interactions and the result of those interactions. It is a supportive objective of the other objectives. Cultural, academic, personal exchanges and cooperation will create a suitable environment and support for the initiative. Finally, people to people link will create better mutual understanding which will reduce the chances of prejudice and conflicts.

Chinese officials and academics often mention the construction of “The Community of Common Destiny” via BRI projects. According to the argument, the common interests, “Community of Shared Interests”, will bring common responsibilities, “Community of Shared Responsibility”, and it will evolve into a shared destiny, “Community of Common Destiny” (Zeng, 2016: 517). Highly idealist, this aim was endorsed by Chinese government putting it to the PRC Constitution (Rolland, 2019) and it became one of the biggest claims associated with BRI. Su Ge (2017: 372) describes the concept of Community of Common Destiny as “China’s new Tao”. Highly vogue term, Community of Common Destiny is planned to be constructed by four main principles. The first one is that all countries should respect each other on equality base. Secondly, win-win cooperation will be the standard for mutual benefits. Thirdly, collaboration and sustainable security will be an important aim of cooperation. Finally, it promises inclusiveness and mutual learning among the civilizations (Wang L, 2017: 2). Community of Common Destiny recalls the utopic final stage of Marxism, which is Communism. Chinese academics while trying to explain the meaning, scope and methods of the final aim of Community of Common Destiny, they sometimes even end up with hazier image of it. It is mostly because of following the official arguments, which do not give much details and explanation about the terms. Nevertheless, through common sense it can be described to be the international community that has some common interests, common understandings, and common future prospects and finally developed some kind of belongingness to the same larger community, which were all developed by the BRI projects and activities.

BRI is not a plan that emerged spontaneously. It has deep historical roots going back to the Century of Humiliation. In that period when Chinese public opinion was frustrated with the aggressiveness of Western imperialism, they were aware of their weakness as well. So, throughout all the modern period of China, Chinese government and people were blended to regain those glorious days. This ambition became so inherent in the social and political agenda since the Opium Wars that today the regime's survival is also depending on the realization of this national goal. Rejuvenation and China Dream are exactly about this national goal. When Xi declared the ambitious plan of BRI, he was well aware of this national thirst and knew very well that serving and using this goal will unite the public opinion behind him.

The most striking fact in the framework of BRI is that China has not been this much assertive and confident in foreign affairs since the beginning of modernization period. Since the economic crisis in 2008, Deng Xiaoping's "Low Profile" policy has been evading gradually. BRI is the clear evidence that China is opening the doors of a new stage in foreign affairs. BRI started a new era that cannot be accommodated inside the Opening up and Reform Period, as its new phase. BRI is starting a new era after Reform Era on its own account that can be called "rearing era".

4.2.2 Motives

BRI is a compact, all-in-one solution for China's many problems or goals. China has major economic, financial, political, strategic and military motives to start a large-scale foreign affairs plan like BRI. Those motives mostly arise from domestic economic and political conditions. Foreign affairs are mostly interwoven with the domestic conditions in every country. However, in China this relation is much stronger and more complicated.

Economic motives are the primary forces behind the BRI. Due to its strong connection with all other motives, economic relations are creating bases for all other interactions and motives. Post-Mao China in the Reform Era with guidance of Deng Xiaoping started to integrate with the world economy. Since 1980s China has continually grown with amazing annual growth rates until recent years. It roughly means that a person age of 40 has never seen any economic downturn in his life and almost grown up witnessing amazing economic development. China, experiencing an amazing

economic development during the last 40 years, now finally came to the reality that most of the other countries have experienced. That reality is: the economies do not always enjoy high development rates, rather there are often recessions and downsizings as well. The reality that people sometimes need to sell their properties to pay their debts. The reality that they have to reach a certain level of product quality, create marketing strategies, pay for R&D, support innovation and setup institutionalization and so on.

Chinese economy has been slowing down since 2012. According to Wang Yong (2016: 457), the new development rates are becoming the “new normal” and the BRI was a remedy for this slow down. Chinese development strategy in domestic economy has highly depended on the infrastructure projects carried out by the government and today is presented as a model to other countries (Yang J, 2019: 13). Infrastructure driven economic development strategy had its first difficulty in 2012. China domestically had constructed giant airports, ports, highway network, high speed trains network, metro networks in main cities, electrical grids, cyber infrastructure networks, gas and oil pipelines, mega industrial zones, heavy industrial plants, constructions of gigantic estate projects, building new residential and business areas sometimes in a city size and so on. The infrastructure projects were carried out on the scale that settled up nearly all domestic need. The economic slowdown, if continues to be supported further by the decline in infrastructure projects due to the competition of the inner need, the result would be economic recession, if not chaos. To stop this foreseen destiny, Chinese government have thought to create new markets for infrastructure production surplus and move the production bases to those new markets. By doing so, the production facilities would not have to be closed down.

On the other hand, Chinese industrial production, after decades of rapid development, has reached to a middle-income trap level that needed to be supported by passing to the high-tech and innovations stage. In the slowing down, economic environment this would be difficult task to do. Opening up to new markets and moving production bases to the peripheral poor countries would help China to protect the dynamism of the industrial production and pass to the value-added new stage production in domestic market. BRI would be just a perfect solution for these problems.

Economic inequality between the regions and provinces is another problem China is suffering from, even after becoming the second economic power after the USA. Chinese coastal and neighboring provinces, like Guangdong, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Jiangsu, Hebei, Guangxi, Anhui, Jiangxi, Liaoning and the regions like the Pearl River Delta and Tianjin, Dalian, Shanghai have developed considerably. Whereas, the provinces and regions in the inner areas, like Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Guizhou, Yunnan, Heilongjiang, Ningxia etc., still remain underdeveloped poor regions. This big inequality gap between the provinces and regions are potentially carrying big risks for social and political stability. In the rapid growth period while the economy was dynamic the differences could be blended in time. However, if the economy is slowing down the gap may get bigger and become unsustainable. BRI is a perfect solution for this economic inequality, as it was thought to be. The new Silk Roads will mostly start from the inner regions that did not get much investments during the reform period. Especially Xinjiang, Sichuan, Chongqing, Yunnan and Guangxi are supposed to be fostered by the new trade routes that started or passed through them. These regions are planned to be the feeder regions of the demands from the connected routes in Asia, Europe and African markets. The success of BRI is crucial for the disadvantaged regions to reduce the economic inequality. One of the most important economic motives for China is to start BRI to close the development gap between regions in the country.

China is trading with Europe, Africa and West Asia, mostly through the narrow Malacca straight in South East Asia, the Indian Ocean and the man-made Suez Canal. Malacca straight route is passing from the disputed area of South China Sea islands. The region is always prompt to crisis or military conflicts, in case of which the busy sea lines will be affected badly. Malacca straight is a narrow and one of the busiest sea routes on Earth. China depends crucially on the super busy straight that even it is subject of the comments, namely “Malacca Trap” (Harris, 2014:186). Indian Ocean is another dilemma for China as it is the back garden of China’s biggest rival in the region, India. Besides the cases of piracy are seen very commonly recently in the Indian Ocean especially near African Horn. In the case of any serious conflicts with India, it is unclear how China will manage to secure the flow of trading through this region. Finally, the man-made Suez Canal is the route that may look not as risky as the other parts of the route but still it is in the Middle East that has potential risks. China depends

on this route not only for trading, but also for its raw material and energy supply. China heavily depends on this route to carry the Middle East oil, raw materials and other important import products from the source countries to China. Considering all these factors, China has to develop alternative routes for the safe flow of the mentioned goods. The historical Silk Road routes suggest good land alternatives (Map IV). Therefore, diversifying the supply routes for raw materials and energy is constituting a decisive motive for China to develop BRI projects.

China has accumulated considerable financial power during the last decades of vibrant economic development. China has not yet joined “Paris Club” (Hurley, Morris and Portelance, 2018:19), but currently it is one of the most powerful financial actors on Earth. China wisely wants to use this financial power for the sake of its economic and political interests. This constitutes another important motive for China to create BRI, by which it can use its financial power to generate capital flow, internationalize RMB and create other economic and political benefits.

BRI is serving and it is going to serve even more the domestic political conditions of China. Being a dictatorial regime, Chinese government does not enjoy the domestic legitimacy in democratic sense. The problem of legitimacy is the soft belly of Chinese regime. Since the collapse of Soviet Union, Chinese regime is haunted by having the same fate, in any minor or major domestic and international cases. Regime’s obsession of being questioned by mass public and being challenged for the issue of legitimacy forces it to be more aggressive and sharper in domestic and foreign issues, which has the possibility of creating public awareness of democratic rights or creating social unrest. Legitimacy issue is always the top concern of Chinese regime. Nearly all actions taken and plans made are somehow neatly arranged to support regime’s power and political stability. Through this perspective if BRI was examined, it would reveal itself that one of the major motives pushed Chinese government to take such a colossal plan in action is its concerns about political stability, regime’s safety and its legitimacy. By Chinese government it is well known that economic slowdown will finally result into questioning the government by the masses. BRI is a remedy that, if works well, it will create alternative markets and production bases and create a new dynamism to the cooling down economy. This economic success will finally turn to the regime as credit and further consolidation of its power.

Finding solution to the domestic political problems, such as regional discontents, separatist and terrorist activities are the other domestic political motives for Chinese government to invent BRI. The initiative is specially designed to eliminate or at least diminish the regional development inequalities and the tension it creates in those regions. In particular, Xinjiang Autonomous Region is a typical case for this situation. The separatist movement is getting roots in the Uyghur public mostly because of the economic inequalities, besides the political ones caused by regime's policies. Xinjiang is going to be an important transport, production and logistic hub for both Pakistan and Kazakhstan-Europe routes, in the plans of BRI. This economic vibrancy is thought to be remedy for the separatist movements and potential terrorist activities. Xinjiang is the best example for this case, but similar tendencies which may emerge from other regions are also planned to be eliminated by the development BRI will bring. Among those regions, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Yunnan, Tibet can be counted.

Besides economical and inner political motives, there are also international motives for China to create BRI. China has not been this much advantageous, strong, assertive and confident since the beginning of Century of Humiliation. Strong economic power backed by confident political decision making and relatively declining power of the USA under clumsy policies of Donald Trump have made China dare to air its dreams openly, contradicting to the paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's "Low Profile Policy". For the first time China became the leader and financier of an independent and highly ambitious international plan. This plan has not openly been declared, but it is well known that it has the target of diminishing the US influence in the South Asia and though it is not that influential but in Central Asia as well, if not in all the world as Michael Pillsbury (2015: 183) vigorously defends.

In Chinese regime's perceptions American hegemony in Asia is the biggest threat to the territorial integrity and social and political stability of China. Ideological differences and historical experience are causing a deep distrust and suspicion to the US presence in the region. China is being challenged by US in South China Sea islands dispute, in Taiwan problem, in the influence over the South East Asian countries, and in disputes with Japan and India. The US is also a potential rival in Central Asia, though not as much influential as Russia in the region. As the founder of historical

Tributary System, being accustomed to be the leader in its periphery, China could never get used to the US hegemony in its back garden. Especially the disputes of South China Sea islands and Taiwan, which pose a threat not only to the territorial integrity of China, but also by that way to the regime's survival as well. Highly nationalist Chinese public opinion could easily question the regime for not being able to save the core interests of the country, its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, BRI is a direct move against US hegemony in the region to increase Chinese power in the periphery and to indirectly secure the regime in power.

Close relations set through BRI with the target countries will give China various opportunities to improve relations to a better level. In this context China can easily set up military bases or security alliances with weaker countries. Military and strategic motives are the most refrained ones to be voiced, though it is not difficult to foresee it.

China has one more important motive with BRI, that is the quest of Soft Power. Soft Power is constituting an important agenda in Chinese policy making since the term was firstly used by Hu Jintao in 2012 (Shambaugh, 2015: 12). China is putting an enormous effort and resources to improve country's poor Soft Power. Public diplomacy means Confucius Institutes, Chinese language centers etc., are all operated in many countries for this purpose. However, it is hard to say all these efforts are fruitful. Joseph Nye is perhaps the most important scholar that criticizes Chinese way of creating Soft Power. Nye (2015: 14) thinks that the way Chinese regime does it is not successful because creating soft power is actually a job that should be done by civil society, rather than the bureaucracy of the government. Bureaucratic strategy is not getting attraction and mostly misunderstood by the target societies. Combining with Chinese way of oppression to prevent disfavored contents about the regime, makes it to be defined as "Sharp Power" as Walker and Ludwig described (Walker and Ludwig, 2017: 5). Facing this criticism, Chinese government is now taking an even bigger step with even much bigger capital backup to create a better Soft Power, first in the periphery then hopefully in the rest of the world. BRI is the biggest Soft Power project China has carried out until now. In the Vision and Action declaration (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015), the aim to create "People-to-People Bond" is directly serving to enhance the Chinese Soft Power in BRI countries and beyond.

Each of the BRI projects is planned and agreed mutually by the BR countries and China. Therefore, each of the countries also have incentives and motives to deal with China in the context of BRI. For each contractor countries and even based on each project, there can be a lot of different incentives and motives. For each country and each project this must be analyzed separately. Here it is important to remember that China is not the only decision maker and each country has their own reasonings as well.

4.2.3 Routes

BRI aimed to connect the geographies of China with Central Asia, with Russia and Europe, with Persian Gulf, with Mediterranean Sea, through Central and West Asia, with South East Asia, with South Asia and with Indian Ocean. The Maritime Silk Road connects it with Europe through South China Sea and Indian Ocean (Qin, Zhou and Luo, 2017: 74). The “New Silk Road” is the “belt” land route, “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” is the “road”, Indian Ocean Route. Besides there is a special route passing through North Pole, along the North Coasts of Siberia to Europe, which is called “Ice Silk Road” (Ibold, 2018) (Map XII).

Along the main routes there are six specific main economic corridors that are going to emerge. The first one is the “New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor”; the second one is “China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor”; the third one is “China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor”; the fourth one is “China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor”; the fifth one is “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor”; and the sixth one is “China-Myanmar-Bangladesh-India Economic Corridor” (Ibid: 75).

The New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor is the most important route of land connectivity by railway. Construction of this corridor depends on a modern international logistics coordination, of which the China-Europe railway logistics is the main facility. It is planned with emphasis on economic and trade improvement and production capability collaboration, setting up cooperation in energy and other resources and organizing a comprehensive regional market along the route (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2018). The rail connection starts from

the city of Lianyungang (连云港) “Liányúngǎng” in Jiangsu Province, on the Pacific coast of China, passes through the Gansu Province, the important traditional passage of the Historical Silk Road. After Gansu it is following the routes that passing from Xinjiang and arriving to Kazakhstan. The route further passes through Russia, Poland, Germany and ends in Madrid, Spain. This route shortens the transportation period. While by the sea shipment it takes 25 days from China to Rotterdam, it takes 15 days by railway, though it is relatively expensive. Along this main economic corridor, the development will be inevitable. Besides, the transportation is not only available for Chinese goods to be carried to Europe, but also it brings the European and Asian goods to China as well. European countries mostly were not interested in BRI at the beginning. However, this reality in practice softened their attitudes and pushed them to reevaluate their attitude to the BRI and specifically to the New Eurasian Land Bridge. Italy signed the partnership agreement with China in 2018. This event is seen as a clear evidence that European attitude is changing.

The China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor is an alternative arm of the New Eurasian Land Bridge. The rail connection starts from North East of China, Beijing and Dalian regions to Hohhot in Inner Mongolia, it passes to Mongolia and Russia and connected to Trans Siberia Railway, and finally joins to the New Eurasian Land Bridge (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2018). Mostly focusing in logistics and trading activities.

The China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor connects China with Europe through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey and Balkans. While other alternative sub roads are showing directions through Caspian Sea. This corridor is longer and requires more custom procedures and that is why it has not yet developed much. However, cooperation on energy is the main focus in this route. Besides, infrastructure, trading, investment, the high-tech areas for nuclear energy, aerospace satellites and new energy are the cooperation areas (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2018).

China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor is a connection plan for China and South Asian Countries. It is specialized in land infrastructure, border economy, railway connection of the countries in the region (The Office of the Leading Group for

Promoting the BRI, 2018). The cross-border trading has a good function of internationalizing RMB. Indochina Peninsula corridor is combining with the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road as well, as the route passes through the region. It is supposed to facilitate the cooperation between China and ASEAN as well (Xinhua, 2015). The Economic Corridor includes the construction of China-Laos and China Thailand railroads, the backbone of the regional integration.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is one of the most popular corridors. It starts from Kashgar in Xinjiang and end in Gwadar Port in Pakistan cost of Indian Ocean. It is an economic corridor that is described to be the “pilot zone” of the BRI. Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs described it as the “First Movement” of Belt and Road Symphony. It is a compact plan of projects that includes highways, railways, oil and gas pipelines and optical fiber channel (Qin, Zhou and Luo, 2017: 76). The route is crucial for bypassing the Malacca straight and connecting West China to Indian Ocean directly. By the transportation facilities and Gwadar port, constructed by China, it will facilitate the Middle East energy and raw material transportation to China in much shorter distance and it will be a safer alternative. China-Pakistan relations has strategic importance as well. By supporting Pakistan, China is containing its strong rival India in the region. It aims to benefit more than 3 billion people (Ibid: 77) (Map XIV).

China-Myanmar-Bangladesh-India Economic Corridor connects China’s relatively less developed South West provinces, especially Yunnan, to Myanmar, Bangladesh and India. The proposed backbone project is a highway that connects the four countries besides China-Myanmar pipeline (Prateek, 2016: 3). The facilitated transportation is going to integrate the region better in the field of border trade, energy, resources, industrial materials, raw material and develop the economy of the region (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2018). Chinese Yunnan province will have direct access to the Indian Ocean, bypassing the Malacca straight.

The Ice Silk Road is one of the most interesting and ambitious routes. It passes from north of the Siberia by sea routes in Arctic Sea. Although the route includes highly harsh natural conditions, such as cold and ice, The Ice Silk Road shortens the conventional sea route time period considerably (Ibold, 2018). Though not attracting too much attention nowadays, in the future it is a potential candidate to open a new

route that, handling the transportation between China and Europe, avoiding the Malacca straight and Suez canals (Map XIII).

Besides these main routes, there are plans to create a networking infrastructure in Africa as well. The transportation projects in Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Djibouti are the first steps of a large BRI project network in the African Continent. For the other regions, like South America and Australia, time will shortly show what will be the frame BRI fits in.

4.2.4 Implementation

BRI is not a single organized and planned project to implement stage by stage. It is a collection of projects, some are finished, some pending, some in plan and some may come to agenda later. The projects are multilateral, but progressed bilaterally throughout countries (Belt and Road Advisory, 2018: 8). BRI is officially managed by Chinese government and Chinese official institutions. The “constitution” of the initiative “Action and Vision” document was issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) with the contributions of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce of The People's Republic of China, with State Council authorization, the main executive body in PRC system.

In practice there are multinational and foreign institutions that are funding some of the projects. However, BRI projects are mostly funded by Chinese companies, Chinese led international institutions or directly by Chinese banks. According to the Financial Times report in 2016, only 2% of funding are done by foreign banks or institutions. China state institutions and banks are funding 98% of the project costs (Belt and Road Advisory, 2018: 16). Among these institutions Silk Road Fund (SRF), set up in 2014, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), set up in 2015, and China Development Bank (CDB) and Export-Import Bank of China (EIBC) are the leading financiers. The four institutions are funding more than half of the BRI projects costs, in 2016 data. The other institutions called “Big Four”, the four big banks of China are Agricultural Bank of China (ABC), Bank of China (BOC), China Construction Bank (CCB), Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) together fund 45% of the BRI project costs. Besides these China institutions, New Development Bank (NDB) set up by BRICS countries, which is includes China, is also a financier of the projects.

Furthermore, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) is financing or involved as an adviser for around 100 projects. The UK government also launched 1\$ billion funds to support the BRI.

China aims to finish the BRI plans in the centennial of foundation of PRC in 2049. In the first 5 years after its announcement in 2013, China has taken a considerable distance in implementation. Although, the Chinese government and institutions are not accountable and transparent in sharing information about the projects and the deals, the reports and news approve the amazing scale of projects and investments (Table II). Chinese State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) usually deal with the investment projects, while Chinese private companies usually run the trade activities. By the end of 2018, 42 SOEs had participated in 1,676 BRI projects and 9,000 subsidiaries in 185 countries (Belt and Road Advisory, 2018: 17). Among the 1,676 projects, 89% are running by Chinese companies, 7.6% by local companies, and 3.4% running by foreign companies.

In order to understand the volume and potential of the initiative it is necessary to check the BRI countries' volume and size altogether. According to Chinese official data, while China constitutes 15.6% of the world GDP, BRI countries totally makes 18.4 of it. While China is holding 19% of the world population, BRI countries hold 48%. While China is doing 12.1% of the whole world trading, BRI countries totally do 27.8%. China and BRI countries together constitute 34% of the GDP, 67% of the population, 39.9% of the trading volume of the entire planet. Adding the development and dynamic that the BRI will increase these numbers, it is obvious that China is affecting a considerable economic and political portion of the world. This prediction will be meaningful if it is considered that China is planning to invest more than 2\$ trillion to BRI projects only by 2030 (Ibid: 6).

China has taken the first step in many projects until now. Some are finished, some will finish soon and some have just started. In the New Eurasian Land Bridge route, China has finished the railway connection between China and Europe, connecting 108 cities and 16 countries. In this route, by the end of 2018, 13,000 trains had carried more than 1.1 million TEU's. Among the trains that departed from China, 94% were fully loaded, and among those departed from Europe, 71% were full (Office of Leading Group for Development of BRI, 2019: 15) (Map XVI).

After the “Vision and Actions” document, the first large scale BRI event was the first Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing in May 2017. The participants from 29 countries at leader level and representatives from 130 countries and 70 international organizations discussed about the opportunities and contributions of the BRI in two days roundtable meetings (The State Council PRC, 2017). The second forum took place in Beijing also, in April 25-27, 2019. The forum hosted 70 leaders, 5,000 participants from more than 150 countries and 90 international organizations (Portal, 2019). The numbers prove a great and growing interest in the initiative.

The second forum started in the shadow of some doubts about BRI loans, procedures and aims. The issue called “Debt Trap” especially raised a big question mark in people’s heads about China’s intentions, which it claims to be peaceful, win-win and having mutual respect, without any political and military expectations. Debt Trap issue was a fear and came to reality with Sri Lanka issue. China provided around 1\$ billion loans to the Sri Lanka and leased strategic Hambantota port for 99 years in exchange because the Sri Lanka government did not have power to pay the bill (Shattuck, 2018: 8). Similar scenario took place in Djibouti where China leased the port for military purposes for 99 years and setup its first military base abroad in exchange for the debit Djibouti government could not pay. China is likely to set up more military bases in this way (Economy, 2019: 2). Besides, Laos, Pakistan, Greece, Maldives and more are in the queue, more likely to be the next victims of what is called “Debt Trap” (Shattuck, 2018: 8). Debt Trap accusation caused concern in many countries and public opinion alerted against cooperation with China. In Malaysia, the newly elected Mahathir, suspended all Chinese projects for not being honest in aims (Balding, 2018: 1), though later changed attitude.

Besides Debt Trap, BRI projects are targeted not to be transparent in terms and not much beneficial to local economies, especially during the construction. China was blamed to give the loans deliberately in large sums and high interests, especially to the poor countries that do not have enough sources to pay it back. The loans do not have preconditions as the western countries do, like human rights violations etc., so the client countries could easily access the money, which paves the way for bribery and corruption as well (Balding, 2018: 1). Also, the contract terms are claimed to be more

beneficial to China even with some secret terms that the local officials cannot explain to their public. The project contractors are usually arranged to be Chinese companies and the supplying materials, workers, equipment etc. all are supplied by China. Locals do not have chance to work in the construction and local companies cannot join the process (Shattuck, 2018: 8). In response to these critiques, Xi has assured the client countries that China will uphold “the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits...open, green and clean approaches, as well as goals of high-standard, livelihood-improving and sustainable development” (Portal, 2019).

One of the most important development about BRI recently has been the surprising Italy’s involvement in the initiative. Since European countries have been usually keeping distance with the BRI, this was not anticipated. Chairman of China-Italy Chamber of Commerce Davide Cucino expressed "sooner or later, all countries will embrace the initiative" (Portal, 2019). Considering the recession in European economies, it seems like none of the European countries can keep neglecting the initiative and Italy’s embrace of the initiative is just the beginning.

4.2.5 Risks

As a gigantic set of projects, BRI is naturally not risk-free. Firstly, the development style is highly criticized to be not feasible in long term. China has heavily depended on infrastructural development style. Chinese central and local governments have been heavily investing in infrastructure projects, like high speed rail network, highways, ports, airports, industrial zones, production facilities, subway networks, power plants, cyber networks and so on. By these projects the government has injected large sums of capital to the market, through the large numbers of subsidiaries and suppliers. This development strategy has supported Chinese market for decades and constituted the driving force for the economy. However, the infrastructure needs of a country have limits. When the need is contented, like it is now in China, the huge production capacity will be left aside with deadly results on the economy. China is having exactly this problem now. The infrastructure needs of the country are mostly supplied and the overcapacity needs new demands. China is copying its own story to the BRI countries and is planning to write the same stories in BRI countries as well (Harris, 2014: 147). Nevertheless, the story is not that bright and carries risks.

Infrastructure is supporting economy, but without economic strength the infrastructure projects will not take place. Infrastructure is the outcome of a successful economic development and at the same time supporting it. They are too interrelated and demanding each other. So, in BRI countries if the infrastructure development is going to support economy then the economy must have enough dynamics to support infrastructure development. In China this was possible as the amazing 40 years' development created sound background for nearly every sector. So, in such a vibrant and profitable economy, investments in infrastructure will be more in numbers and more in profit. However, in countries like Sri Lanka, the economy could not carry and support the investment in infrastructure and China finally had to lease the port for 99 years, against the loans spent. Besides this risk, it is also well known that the Chinese state-owned companies are in big deficit and supported by the government to survive, the collapse of which can have deadly outcomes as well. Therefore, the success of the investment in infrastructure in China needs to be analyzed again, reconsidering these facts. If China cannot solve its own problems, the infrastructure-based development model may not be successful in other countries as well (Tsui, Wong, Chi and Wen, 2017: 44). From this perspective, it seems like China's experience was quite unique, due to its economic power of supporting the SOE's in loss, the chance of its success to repeat itself in another country does not seem promising.

Another risk for BRI may emerge from domestic sphere is the public opinion. Chinese society mostly does not have enough information or it is not interested in understanding BRI. The remaining informed portion of the society is divided into two. The optimistic majority believes that the BRI is beneficial to China and supports it. The remaining pessimist minority, yet increasing, thinks that the BRI is not necessary for China now. They think China still has a lot of problems to solve and spend money on, rather than spending in some poor countries full of risks. If this opinion, which is sometimes uttered by academics as well, gets more support in Chinese public opinion, it will bring a risk to implement the future projects, as public discontent is the soft belly of Chinese party-government. Another China related risk is that it does not have experience for such kinds of large-scale international projects and engagements with such various countries. Wang Yiwei (2018: 80), in his highly official stance and one of the best-selling books in China, admits this point and propose further necessary reforms to facilitate the implementation of BRI.

The risks that are not related to China itself, but related to the client BRI countries are numerous. They also change from country to country. Wang (2018: 81) suggests that the main risks can be political risks, security risks, economic risks, legal risks and moral risks.

Political risks are likely to be the most common ones. The argument of “Debt Trap” has already alerted public and governments of many countries. In some countries, like Malaysia, the concern and reaction has turned into political campaigns against China and finally the projects suspended, though later an agreement was reached. This example can repeat itself in many countries. Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sierra Leone are the countries that have already reevaluated the agreements they have made with China, as the debts are difficult to pay back and the other issues like environment, labor and governance are mostly ignored in agreements (Economy, 2019: 4). Political risks are consisting the unstable domestic or regional political environments of the BRI countries and the international new conditions that the initiative will create. BRI can damage the political and economic balance between neighboring countries and will eventually pave the way for conflicts. It can destabilize risk averse countries like it happened in Pakistan (Clarke, 2017: 78). Most of the BRI countries are weak in the aspect of domestic political stability and they are mostly in regional or international environment that are subject to harsh competition between big powers. Central Asian countries can be described to be under the pressure of three big powers: Russia, China and the USA. South East Asian countries are in a region that draw the interests of the USA, China, India and Japan. Middle East and Africa are the places where the fully-flagged competition started long ago. In this tight rivalry, the possibility of conflicts of interests among the big powers is highly possible. These risks may bring further competition, tension and eventually hostility and realignments, which may cause halting the BRI projects in the regions. Therefore, in reality BRI is not implemented in a safe and coherent domestic and international environment, but actually it is going on under a growing domestic and international tension against it (Balding, 2018: 1).

Security risks, which are closely related to political risks, are also the most possible risks that can be commonly witnessed. Although, in most of the countries or regions

“the traditional security threats like military, politics and diplomacy” does not seem to be matter of concern, except the regions like Middle east, but “the non-traditional security threats like terrorism, ecological pollution, information security, resource security etc.” can be the threats that risk the projects (Wang Y, 2018: 88).

Economic reasons can be the main reasons of triggering all other risks. The biggest problem that can be encountered is the unstable economies of the BRI countries which are mostly poor. For small economies it is difficult to pay back the heavy loans of large infrastructure projects. A recent research has showed that among the BRI countries there are 23 countries that have risk of debt distress, namely, Cambodia, Mongolia, Laos, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Ukraine, not even mentioning countries like Syria and Yemen (Hurley, Morris and Portelance, 2018: 8). Among these countries, for example Pakistan is applying to IMF to pay its large sum of Chinese debts (Balding, 2018: 1). Most of these countries are major partners in BRI, some have already completed some projects while in some others constructions are still going on. China and the contractor BRI countries have big risks of unprofitable projects, that the host country cannot pay the loans back. Besides, China does not have risk response mechanisms and experience to deal with them (Wang Y, 2018: 110).

Legal framework is the only way to implement projects safely in every country. However, due to the differences in legal systems, there are various risks that can be encountered in each country. BRI covers a large area, nearly all continents and in many different countries, some of which have very different laws and legal systems. Some countries use common law, some civic law, some religious law, some customized laws and some have mixture of a few of them. During the agreements and implementation stages there are a lot of risks of conflicts that need to be considered. The legal risks may arise due to the investments, labor issues, trade issues, environmental issues, poor managements and also due to imperfection of the laws in BR countries (Ibid: 112-120).

Moral risks cannot be denied for a healthy implementation environment of BRI. The biggest moral risk is bribery and corruption, that given and taken. Chinese companies are blamed of paying bribery to the local officials to get approval of high cost loans

and sign projects, specifically in Kenya, Zambia and Uganda (Balding, 2018: 2). This is a reasonable explanation of loans provided by China to poor countries with the highest interest rates compared to other loan sources. Besides, the moral defiance in handling the investments and trade, the ideological, historical, religious and cultural tensions that the local communities will have with China and Chinese workers, companies and officials, will cause a risk in front of the implementation.

After counting the major general risks that can arise in any country and project, it is necessary to remember that each country or project can have its own specific conditions and risks. According to a recent research “Critical Risk Identification in One Belt One Road Highway Project in Serbia”, there are following ten risks for a highway constructed in Serbia, as a BR project: cultural differences, language barriers, safety measures on site, inflation and currency exchange rates, water and soil pollution caused by construction work, majeure force, poor quality of materials, unforeseeable ground conditions, noise pollutions and different religious backgrounds (Andric, Wang, Zou and Zhong, 2017: 1).

Inevitably, China is going to be challenged by regional geopolitical issues between the countries, mentality problems (Kulintsev, 2018: 199), as Chinese experts warn, it is going to be challenged by countries’ complex social and political structures, local conflicts, terrorist attacks and jealous great powers as well (Rolland, 2019: 2).

4.3 Hegemony and Belt and Road Initiative

It has been not long time since BRI was initiated by China. However, the Action and Vision document, forums, first projects and the 5-year story can give enough idea about what it is and how it would look like when finished. Examining it through the Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony and trying to figure out how the modern Chinese hegemony will look like is not a simple job. Nevertheless, the historical background, the ideological fit, the direction of Chinese foreign policy evolution, domestic and international conditions, provide enough material so as to draw a complete image of Chinese hegemony in modern age and an insight of the modern mentality of China’s foreign policy.

4.3.1 Power

Power is an essential precondition and instrument in all hegemonic definitions. Military and economic powers are definite determinants in setting up and perpetuation of the hegemonic relations in all times. Modern Chinese officials and academics are strongly opposing the argument that China is going to set up its own hegemonic system, when it has power to do so. The reason of this strong reaction is that in Chinese literature “hegemony” is associated with “immorality”. In Neo-Gramscian definition, morality is not a factor in description of “hegemony”. It depends on bipod of material power and consent. So, the dominancy, in implication whether immoral or not, can still be hegemony. Chinese official’s rejection of aiming Chinese hegemony in the future does not mean that China will not have the hegemony in Neo-Gramscian definition. It just claims that China will not be imposing power on others “immorally”. Preserving the right to ask, in which definition is “immorality” and to which limits the “morality”? The rhetoric and reality are seen to always be in contradiction in Chinese history, as it is analyzed in the section of Tributary System.

China, even in the weakest times, had hegemonic relations with neighbors, including the modern period after the Tributary Era. China-North Korean relations cannot be explained by the solidarity of comrades in this context. It was a typical hegemonic relation, which was expressed in polite way of “brotherhood” and solely depended on Chinese military power.

Chinese have seen the importance of the material power in Century of Humiliation very dramatically. It was not the first time China was weak and invaded. The previous thousands of years had many examples of what happens when China is not strong enough materially. The nomadic neighbors could never let China forget the importance of material power. Xiongnu, Liao, Wei, Jin, Mongolians, Manchus once knew that they can invade China, they rode the horses deep inside China as much as they could go. The Century of Humiliation is the latest lesson Chinese got in this aspect. China once more has painfully experienced that the military, political and economic power are essential in protecting itself. China was busy to set up the first prerequisite of hegemony, “power” since that time. During the Mao time, “lean to one side” strategy was a temporary remedy for the weakness. It was not acceptable for Chinese to depend

on a country for self-defense. Getting stronger was a natural ideal for Chinese. Weakness was seen as just a temporary condition which will soon be changed.

In the Reform Era, China accumulated a considerable military and enormous economic power. Militarily, China is neither a peer to the USA, nor to Russia. However, it has an important military power with “nuclear deterrence”. According to Michael Pillsbury (2015: 45) in his famous book “The Hundred Year Marathon”, Chinese believe that the Soviets collapsed because the American trick took them into arm race, and that is the reason Chinese are not racing in military today. This argument can be supported by the fact that, for decades and even today, China has been following Deng’s “low profile” strategy of “Hide your strength, wait your time”. China can build a mighty military power with its enormous economic resources, but strategically it does not choose that way because it will provoke the superpowers and scare the weak nations, especially the South East Asian countries. For great leap forward of military strength, China is waiting for the right time, but the current military power is serving to the country’s basic security needs excessively.

China is undeniably an economic superpower today, solving most of its international problems with its economic power (Rolland, 2019: 2). Economy is China’s biggest instrument of power in the international relations. BRI is just about this. It is for transforming the economic power into domestic political power, international political, military and soft power.

China uses its economic power in BRI, rather than military or political power. The projects are mostly carried out in the countries that cannot finance and build such large projects. Such conditions will inevitably cause economic dependency for the coming decades, for some countries maybe even longer. Perpetuating economic dependency gradually increases political influence of the stronger country, which may easily turn into military and strategic alignments, setting up military blocks, air and sea bases. Finally, it can easily end up in being a satellite country. Chinese officials and academics are strongly opposing; however, this process is resembled to “Marshall Plan” also. Marshall Plan had two important reasons. The first one was to support war-torn European countries so that they could stand up against further invasions, especially the potential one that could come from USSR. The second important reason was to find

new market for the USA economy in order to recover the ongoing effects of the 1930's "Great Depression". After the aids were delivered by the plan, most of the countries became economically and militarily dependent on the USA. The USA recovered from the depression and reached a status of superpower, enjoyed using a strong political, military and economic influence over the Marshall Plan countries until today. Besides, using the rhetoric of "Soviet Threat", the USA setup and consolidated a "Western Bloc", prevented Soviets to grow further and created satellite economies and states.

Since the first time BRI was tagged as "Marshall Plan for Beijing" in New York Times in January 5 2009, Chinese officials and academics have strongly objected it in every platform (Wang Y, 2018: 39). They mostly object resembling BRI to Marshall Plan, just because they think western hegemony has "selfish and immoral" intensions of exploitation through imperialist methods. Western economic and political relations are often described as "zero sum game" by Chinese authorities and China is claimed not to have such culture and intentions (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2019: 2). These arguments are keeping China unquestionably clean from such "selfish and immoral" intentions and desires. According to Wang Yiwei (2018: 27), BRI has three seasons: firstly, to find a way out of the crisis for the post crisis world economies; secondly, to rebalance global distribution of wealth; thirdly, to create a new model of regional cooperation in the 21st century and "transcend" the Marshall Plan. While explaining why BRI is different from Marshall Plan, he skips the obvious resemblance but focuses on the differences in details (Ibid: 40).

China is on the same path of Marshall Plan setting up political alliance and dependency by economical means which will easily turn into a military alliance, but just because China is claimed not to be "immoral and selfish" so it is considered to be legitimate. In reality, China needs BRI to get out of the cooling down economic conditions, the same as the USA was trying to get out of the Great Depression. China uses its economic power which is beneficial for the BRI countries as well, but finally will end up with more political and military influence and more economic benefits for China, just same as the USA did in Marshall Plan. China is trying to reduce the influence of the USA in Asia, especially in neighboring countries, by stronger economic ties which will finally create a more integrated community of countries, excluding the USA, just the same as the USA did in Marshall Plan, consolidated the western bloc and excluded

Soviet from the that bloc, creating its own backyard. Chinese authorities, tactically or not, have mistaken ideas about an obvious fact that the western hegemonic systems are not always “zero sum game” as it is even implied in the Chinese government’s official documents (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2019: 2). In reality the target countries are also benefitting from the western hegemonic systems, but just not as much as the hegemon.

Michael Pillsbury (2015: 24), is even rougher elaborating that China is aiming to set up an authoritarian hierarchic international system in which the human rights and democratic values will not be respected. He claims that China is playing “low profile” just as Deng Xiaoping openly suggested and will show the real intentions more assertively as it grows stronger with a social Darwinist instinct. He further evaluates that Chinese hawks in the official ranks and their influence should not be underestimated, the method of “hiding strength, biding for time” has strong cultural and historical roots, like ancient war stratagems, depending on “deceptions” rather than confrontations. According to him, China is in a “Long Marathon” of seizing power from the USA, just as part of the strategy they learned from their history, they are not developing military power so as not to provoke the USA but they will do it as soon as they have conditions for that (Ibid: 23-220). Pillsbury based his argument on strong bases from history and culture. Though there is not much reasons to expect such a pessimist scenario, it is worth noting his perspective also. It is doubtful whether China has such an infinite hatred and deceptive strategy against western world since the Century of Humiliation, but it is obvious that BRI has the potential of Marshall Plan, transforming Chinese economic huge power into international political and military power.

China has set up its first military base abroad in Djibouti. Also, the port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka is observed to be partially used for military purposes. There is no doubt that China is going to add new overseas military bases soon (Economy, 2019: 2). China has long non-intervention tradition in foreign affairs. However, the first military bases have raised questions, whether it is the end of this pillar policy or not. Theo Neethling (2017: 4) argues that the Chinese military bases will not be used for intervention on others because China knows it does not give favorable results. For the stability of regime and territorial integrity, non-interference is an important criterion for China.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that China will leave it for short to medium term, but the reality is that it is not satisfying the needs of China anymore, as protection of nationals abroad has become priority in 2004 due to the principle of “diplomacy serving the people” (Duchatel, Brauner and Zhou, 2014: 57). During the Sudan events China hesitated to intervene for its interests. However, as Yan Xuetong also criticized the non-interference and suggested to build its own alliance (Godement, 2013: 12), in the following steps China will have to leave the principle of non-interference, especially for the protection of the BRI projects in the risky countries.

Increasing country’s poor “Soft Power” is another power related quest for China among the aims of BRI. Since coined by Nye, Soft Power is discussed among the scholars and there is no consensus reached about its reflections in practical world. How can Soft Power be measured and how can actors use it? There are not quite convincing answers for these important questions yet. However, soft power is taken seriously by most of the countries, though it is not easily transferable to material power, but good for increasing prestige. China has spent large amount of money and has put a lot of effort in the last decade, since the soft power concerns were firstly raised by Hu Jintao in 2007. Besides the public diplomacy attempts, Confucius institutes, Chinese language classes in many countries, student exchanges are the forerunner institutions and attempts to foster China’s soft power abroad. BRI will be even a bigger attempt. Through the story of successful economic development by successful implementation of infrastructure projects and public diplomacy in BRI countries, China is aiming to impress the third world countries, as the democratic countries has low interest in authoritarian regime.

In sum, material power is an essential base for the foundation of Chinese modern hegemony through BRI, in conformity with Neo-Gramscian definition of hegemony. Through BRI, China currently uses its strong economic power which will later turn into increased political, military and soft power in international relations. In other words, China is buying the political, military and soft power through BRI by its economic and financial means. Material power is going to play an irreplaceable role in foundation and maintenance of Chinese hegemony in the future, just as it was for all hegemons. While the material power is the main actor in setting up hegemony, it will also be increased during the hegemony period; so, BRI depends on Chinese

economic power, but it will boost all power parameters, like economic, military, political and soft power as well.

4.3.2 Consent

Hegemonic systems do not always depend on “consent” of the dominated parties. In modern international relations history, the liberal hegemony, specifically US hegemony, is usually associated with “consent”. Neo-Gramscian theory puts consent in the heart of the hegemonic system while explaining the settings of the current American Liberal Hegemony. Liberal ideology, institutions, academics, media, international trade, universities, etc., are the means of creating, spreading and supporting the “consent” worldwide. In the core, however, the biggest source that generate consent in international relations is “public good”. Ideology, institutions, media etc., actually support and re-generate the consent mostly created by the “public good” the hegemon and its system is offering. That means the more the hegemon can create “public good”, the more it can harvest “consent” and consolidate its power.

China pays attention to this point and it seems that it has noticed the importance of consent well. In nearly every document related to BRI, China declare that it is creating “public good” for all of the participating countries and beyond (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2019: 46). Also, to consolidate this point, tirelessly repeating and underlying the fact the cooperation in BRI will be in the form of mutual benefit, win-win cooperation, respect to territorial integrity, dignity, sovereignty, development path, social system, core interests and major concerns (Ibid: 50).

China has actually declared all these principles before. In Bandung conference in 1955, it declared the 5 principles of peaceful coexistence: “mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence” (Dillon M, 2010: 443). Peacefulness and non-aggression are the main theme of the Chinese foreign policy rhetoric.

China has also strong concern of consent because of its own historical experience, just the same as the USA was not willing to setup colonial empire as it was fighting with

colonialism in the foundation. The Century of Humiliation has still a strong impact on the Chinese ideas and evaluation of western world. Western civilization is still selfish due to its individualist settings; international relations are still based on zero-sum game due to its imperialist past. Chinese still think that the West is not reliable in aims; China represents a wise ancient civilization based on peace, but being treated unfairly by the West in Century of Humiliation. That is why, when the BRI is compared to Marshall Plan, they strongly reject it. Marshall plan was not solely for the benefit of the war-torn countries, the USA had a lot of benefits as well. However, it cannot be denied that the war destroyed countries could stand up and defend themselves against Soviet aggression and could re-setup their economies and armies by that plan and its implications.

Chinese scholars and officials are so much obsessed with the imperialist experience they suffered from that they cannot appreciate the benefits of the western hegemony, even though the recent biggest beneficial of western hegemony is themselves. China developed because it adopted itself with liberal international system under US hegemony, not because of socialist values and Maoism. As much as China gave up socialism and Maoism, it could benefit more from the system and all was depending on consent of China. BRI and the international system it will create is claimed to be different from the US setup liberal system because it will basically respect the sovereignty of the others and will not impose any social or political value, it is not a military or strategic alliance and not “China Club” (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2019: 2). China implies that it will be different hegemon in every platform, especially denying “hegemony” and putting the terms of “friendship cooperation” instead.

However, the world has enough reasons to suspect on this perfect peacefulness. Firstly, Deng Xiaoping’s foreign policy principle of “low profile” and the identical expression of “Hide your strength, wait your time” (韬光养晦) “tāo guāng yǎng huì” (Zhao S., 2013b: 32), has been guiding the Chinese foreign policy for decades, even today, and it does not guarantee trustfulness. A fully pragmatic and deceptive principle, it implies that Chinese foreign policy will change when it has enough confidence and suitable international and domestic environment. In fact, since 2008 and 2013 it has been changing towards a more assertive and demanding line. Even nowadays, non-

intervention principle is questioned by Chinese scholars themselves (Godement, 2013: 12). Therefore, it is not too realistic to expect the Chinese hegemonic system, that emerges with BRI, will be fully non-interventionist and completely peaceful cooperation of “equal friends”.

Secondly, as it is very common in politics that the rhetoric, official declarations and plans show differences with the realities in implementations, BRI is not an exception. In first 5 years of the proposed 30 years, the implementation of BRI has already risen serious concerns about the fairness and the transparency of the contracts, China’s final aims, Debt Trap etc. In Djibouti, Sri Lanka and many other likely cases may erupt soon; China is not credited as honest partner complying with “cooperation of friends, mutual respect, win-win cooperation”. The large amount and loose termed loans given to the poor countries do not have capacity to pay back. In African countries bribery given by Chinese firms to officials to make the high burdens of loans and projects accepted and other similar cases are rising other concerns about China’s intention and sincerity in observing the “consent” of BRI countries.

Thirdly, the soft power quest method of China is raising concerns. As David Shambaugh (2015: 107) puts it forward well, China, despite spending of billion dollars for boosting the soft power, country’s image is getting worse even in Africa and Latin America. The reason is China’s approaches to the construction of soft power, the same as it approaches constructing highways. In its soft power quest China is investing money and waiting for the result. Nevertheless, as long as China does not understand that soft power is not much a matter of the government, but matter of free human efforts, it will waste resources and time. Despite the world class cuisine, culture, capital, economic rise, China’s failing attempts are showing that soft power cannot be bought.

China is infamous for trying to curb the free expression and opinions about China and the regime in many western countries. As described by Walker and Ludwig (2017: 5), China uses various methods to do censorship, preventing disfavored contents from media, academics and officials which is regarded as not complying with the definition of soft power, but labelled as “Sharp Power”. As BRI is the biggest quest of harvesting soft power, China is expected to show the same attitude in BRI countries, which are

much vulnerable, to do censorship comparing to the western countries, using its economic power and political influence to stop any disfavored content produced in those countries.

Although, soft power is a mean of “power” which does not generate consent directly, but it can be an effective way of harvesting consent to the hegemonic system. Through BRI China stresses the mutual benefits, respect to differences, friendly cooperation, in rhetoric which implies the consent of the BRI countries; however, the inconsistent principles of foreign relations like “low profile”, the attitudes in some countries causing the concerns about “debt trap” and the “sharp power” it has been using in many countries are the important factors indicating the characteristics of the hegemony it will set up. From these factors it is difficult to say that China hegemony will enjoy a high level of consent from the BRI societies, but maybe from authoritarian and corrupt governments.

4.3.3 Legitimacy

Legitimacy can be a matter of discussion in hegemonic systems in two ways. The first one is the legitimacy of leadership of hegemon in the system which can be called as “international legitimacy”; and the second one is the relation of hegemonic system with the hegemon’s and dominated country’s “domestic legitimacy”. The first one depends on the hegemon’s values, political system and partially to the conditions of the international relations. If the hegemon’s values promote fairness, equality, solidarity and friendship, the leadership of hegemon will carry legitimacy. If the political system is democratic one, the hegemon will try to act in the boundaries of democratic legitimacy, institutional decision makings and lawfulness. If the international order is more stable and the system consists of legitimate governments of democratic countries, the hegemon will be more bounded to act in the limits of legitimacy. However, if just opposite, the values, political system and international order does not have imposition over the hegemon to act lawfully and legitimately, the hegemon may not carry legitimacy in its hegemonic system.

These examples can be observed in the US-led Liberal Hegemony. Just because the cultural and political values of the US, demands rule of law, fairness, respect to human rights, democratic norms and also because the government is complying with these

norms, the international hegemonic system the USA setup, is also depending on these values. So, legitimacy of any action in this system is sought by hegemon itself. That is why US is endorsed for its own decisions regarding any countries by UN and other international organizations. Also, the international order consists of democratic and non-democratic actors, which are all more or less participants of the liberal hegemonic system. US attitude towards European countries and that of North Korea is different mostly due to the nature of the political system and values it faces. However, this does not assure that the hegemon will always uphold the legitimacy. While supporting the democratic changes on the planet should be a default act by the US according to its political values, it did not support it in Egypt for example. It even supported a military coup against a democratically elected president. This situation is not an exception, rather it repeats itself when the hegemon comes to the crossroad of choosing the way of values or interests. Mostly the interest path will be chosen. US hegemony mostly depends on international norms and regulations and institutional policies, just because the political values and system upholds it. However, it can and often do acts out of these boundaries when the interests are the matter. Therefore, the international legitimacy of the liberal hegemonic system is relatively high if not excluded the one-sided, selfish decisions.

Secondly, the nature of hegemon's acts in its system can be also related to its domestic legitimacy. In the US case this is not a matter as the governments are domestically legitimate, being elected by the people and bounded with laws. However, the countries like China do not share the same situation. Chinese government is characterized by dictatorship of communist party, rather than democratic values. Thus, it does not enjoy domestic legitimacy in democratic sense. Chinese regime, being well aware of this, is obsessed with erosion of its domestic power and the ability of controlling public opinion. Chinese regime solved the problem of international legitimacy long time ago, since when Mao met Nixon in 1972. However, the domestic legitimacy is still a soft belly. For this purpose, the foreign relations are usually used as the way of boosting the legitimacy. Sometimes, pumping nationalist feelings to the public, through state-owned media, over an issue related to Taiwan, Tibet or disputed islands, or sometimes, diverting the public attention to an international matter, to cover a domestic issue has the potential of questioning by the citizens.

BRI, examined in the scope of the first criteria, complies with the international legitimacy. China is discussing the matters and signing lawful contracts with the counterparts in BRI countries and observing the international standard rules and regulations. Nevertheless, it has strong relations with domestic legitimacy problem of Chinese regime. Chinese regime is trying to find a remedy for the slowing down of economy which is a big threat to its possession of power. Regime's obsession with being questioned by mass public and being challenged for the issue of legitimacy, forces it to create more assertive remedies for the problems including the potential ones. What has persuaded the communist leaders, like Xi, to use a term like "China Dream" recalling liberal appeals, is the urgent need to consolidate the public opinion behind a high ideal, which will divert the attentions from the upcoming realities. BRI is described as a new a grand strategy of China by many scholars. For the regime, it has the function of legitimacy just the same as it derives legitimacy from argument of being the savior of the country from Japanese invasion. The regime is going to be the saver of the country from a big economic depression and present itself as hero, providing guidance to the country to realize its dreams. BRI in this aspect plays a vital role to be the source of legitimacy for the Chinese regime.

4.3.4 Ideology

Ideology is one of the key concepts in Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony. In the Neo-Gramscian definition the powerful hegemon sets up its hegemony with material power and consent of the dominated. The consent is gathered through ideology that hegemon produces. The ideology will be institutionalized and propagated by the means of international laws, institutions, media, education, universities, elites, etc. The ideology is the key instrument in consolidating the control and strengthening the system of hegemony by the way of convincing the dominated parties to think that their interest depends on the continuation of the system. Thus, ideology has a crucial role in convincing the masses to embrace the hegemonic system with its principles and values and in its survival.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski (2000: 21) describes it well, China is no longer a Middle Kingdom, a celestial empire, a humiliation victim or a Maoist revolution exporter, nevertheless, it is a key player in the future of Eurasia and the global system, at least the Chinese elites see it like this. Yet, there are deep effects of the legacy of "Middle

Kingdom” and celestial empire mentality, Maoism and Century of Humiliation on Chinese political culture and foreign affairs. However, none of them solely can explain today’s Chinese political mentality and foreign affairs.

From the Reform Era onward, China integrated with the world and perhaps it has never been in such an extent before. With the reign of Xi, China entered a new era in international relations. This time a more assertive and rule maker China. And since the beginning of Trump administration, China had presented itself as the defender of free trade and multilateralism, as US is the one ignoring it (Johnson, 2019: 3). China sees itself as the vanguard of the “second way” or an alternative to the liberal, capitalist democracy (Liao, 2017: 3).

Ideologically China is accommodating itself between Socialism and Capitalism, which finds its meaning in the Chinese expression “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”. And now under Xi, it is in a “new era”. Johnson (2019: 2) argues that the narrative of “new era” implies the new period of confidence to claim its rightful place in the world stage. Chinese has proved many times in history that they are pragmatic and more loyal to their material interests than loyal to ideologies or moral values. Xi, by claiming the “new era”, was going to follow a new line and he has proven it until now in his 7 years in presidency. China became more confident and assertive than any time in its modern history. However, the “new era” brought a new era of personality cult, an overdose of authoritarianism. Xi has become the new “red emperor” by concentrating all the power in his hands, abolishing collective decision-making process, eliminating time limits of holding power and rules of accession of power, all of which stabilized since Deng time according to the party’s tendencies.

China is the inventor of the biggest public surveillance system on Earth with 200 million cameras and social credit system, as well as internet censorship using Artificial Intelligence (Economy, 2019: 2). This authoritarianism is also exported to Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda to control media and constrain political dissent. CCP is involving in business and companies which made the international Chinese companies like Huawei to be suspected of being a tool of CCP (Ibid: 3).

By BRI China does not present a different ideological behavior. The promotion of free trade, respect to the sovereignties and non-interference are the most common and underlined principles in its BRI narrative. Another commonly expressed term is creating the Community of Common Destiny. It is the vaguest term but at the same time a term that directly recalls creation of a community of a hegemon which is now in the constitution of China (Rolland, 2019: 1). This community is going to be firstly formed around the economically shared interests and supported by people to people activities, which is the first level of being a community: Community of Common Interests. Then the Community of Common Interests is supposed to be turned into Community of Common Destiny as the highest of familiarity and connectiveness of a social group. It can be described as a group of people bundled together by common interests and fate, like political community, international community, moral community etc. (Zhang D, 2018: 197). Creating the Community of Common Destiny is one of the main concepts of Xi he uses very often. Zhang Denghua (2018: 204) states that the motives behind the term is to ease the tensions of neighbors on territorial disputes for short term. In long terms it will serve to sustain a favorable external environment for economic development in the first few decades of the 21st century that China needed for its further development. Creating the Community of Common Destiny and assertiveness together shows the two faces of the coin. While assertive in its core interests, it is ready for cooperation in no interest areas. However, he is still not sure about the exact meaning, as it is too vague.

Creating community of common destiny, besides all its vagueness, shows that the BRI is not just an economic cooperation, but has strategic and political meanings and aims also, if not military aims as well, as Yang Xuetong honestly proposes (Ibid: 198). Economically semi-capitalist, politically highly authoritarian and nationalist, China is presenting its ideological settings to the world as a model through BRI, though the liberal values of free trade and non-interference are in the showcase while the coercive and authoritarian principles are not in the eyesight. It is not an exciting model for the democratic countries, but for some underdeveloped third world countries with poor democratic culture, it is. The expert on China, Elizabeth Economy (2019: 4), argues that China is losing in all sides under Xi and she shows a poll results on this; asking people which country they would prefer to lead the world, the results indicate that 63% prefer the USA to lead the world, while 19% favor China.

Community of Common Destiny is a key term in creating a uniting ideology, and it is going to create the framework of the ideology of Chinese hegemony in BRI. Chinese hegemony in the reach of BRI will find its legitimacy through the idealized motto of “Community of Common Destiny”, just as the motto of “Brotherhood of Working Classes of the World” was the idealist showcase of the Soviet hegemony serving to legitimate it. In the future, it will reveal itself more in terms of how the Community of Common Destiny will be formed? Why is there such a need? For what purpose and to whom mostly will it serve? What values will they share? Until that time the vagueness will present one of the mysteries of BRI promising good things in the narratives, but raising the suspicion of the realists.

4.3.5 Institutions

International institutions are the physical evidence of the hegemonic system, generating consent, order, stability, legitimacy and endurance, set up by the hegemon. Institutions are so important in upholding the system that the institutionalist theoreticians, like Keohane (1984: 31) in his famous book “After Hegemony” suggests that the hegemonic rule is necessary only at the beginning of the system setup. In later stages, the cooperation does not require a hegemonic power as international institutions, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union (EU), World Trade Organization (WTO) etc., and they can continue to do the job they were created for. They even can warn and put sanctions on states, in case of any infringement of the international rules in the absence of a hegemon.

American hegemony was endured, maintained, stabilized and legitimized by economic, financial, political, military and social institutions. Among these institutions, IMF, World Bank, NATO and WTO are well known. Besides, educational institutions, media companies, film industry, large international corporations etc., are contributing a considerable coverage of influence.

China is not a power unfamiliar with hegemony. From its long historical experience of Tributary System China has hegemonic instincts in its political tradition. Just as most of Chinese believe, that the period started with Century of Humiliation as an unfortunate period of time caused by both the ruthless imperial powers and the

weakness of China, and that will finish soon and China will return as a great power in the world stage again.

Returning to the big power status “China Dream”, it cannot be realized without having political, economic, financial, military and social power. The institutions China set up during the BRI process are the clear evidences of an approaching complex hegemonic system. Though, Chinese officials and public are strongly rejecting the fact that economic and political engagements with poor countries will bring a complex political, economic, financial, military and social network and dependency, hierarchically managed by the hegemon itself. All these networks will naturally need certain institutions to be regulated, stabilized, legitimized and maintained. The institutions, which are set up to regulate each of these relations, are and will be the solid proves of that hegemonic system.

BRI is not arid of this sequence. It is a new system of relations of interests, set up, financed, regulated, maintained and managed by China. This complex network of relations and interests will be managed by institutions set up or led by China. The Silk Road Fund, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), China Development Bank (CDB) and Export-Import Bank of China (EIBC) are the leading financiers. The other financiers are the institutions called “Big Four” which are the four giant banks of China: Agricultural Bank of China (ABC), Bank of China (BOC), China Construction Bank (CCB) and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) are the other financiers.

Politically the biggest institution setup in the scheme of BRI until now is the Belt and Road Forum (BRF). Two BRF gatherings have been held since the beginning of the BRI. China currently coordinates the relations with each country on bilateral bases. This is the strategy that was defined at the beginning. The projects in each countries and regions will come to a level of connecting, feeding and completing each other. In that stage multilateral institutions will be required as well. However, having a look at the agreements and institutions set up and signed in the first 5 years of implementation, it is obvious that the structure will be completed with some roof institutions later on, when the need is in its maturity and international conditions are suitable. The important dialogues, declarations, cooperation mechanisms, forums, meetings and agreements

completed in the first 5 years which are going to be bases of certain multi-lateral, regional or global institutions are the following:

- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) declared support to BRI, July 2015, UFA declaration.
- G20 Leaders Communique, September 2016, endorsed the initiative to establish The Global Infrastructure Connectivity Alliance.
- UN, 193 member-states adopted by consensus a resolution, welcoming the BRI and other economic cooperation initiatives and urging the international community to ensure a secure environment for these initiatives.
- The UN Security Council, March 2017, resolution no 2344, calling on the international community to strengthen regional economic cooperation through the BRI and for the first time enshrining the concept of “a community of shared future for mankind”.
- Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), January 2018, adopted the “special declaration on the BRI”.
- The China-Arabic States Cooperation Forum (CASCF), July 2018, adopted the “declaration of action on China-Arabic States BR Cooperation”.
- The Digital Silk Road has become an important part of the BRI, “BR Digital Economy International Cooperation Initiative”, with Egypt, Laos, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Thailand, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.
- Long-Term Mechanism for Tax Cooperation Between BRI Countries, signed with 49 countries and regions.
- Joint Statement on Pragmatic Cooperation in the Field of Intellectual Property, August 2018.
- Forum on the BR Legal Cooperation, July 2018, which published the “statement of the co-chairs of the forum on the belt and road legal cooperation”.
- The BR Energy Partnership, October 2018, BR energy ministerial conference and 18 countries jointly announced building.
- Vision and Action on Jointly Promoting Agricultural Cooperation on the BR, announced by China, May 2017.
- Vision for Maritime Cooperation Under the BRI, June 2017.
- The establishment of International Commercial Courts, 2017, a “one-stop” diversified resolution mechanism for international commercial disputes.

- The BR Health Cooperation: Health Silk Road, August 2017.
- Silk Road International Exposition and the Investment and Trade Forum.
- The China-ASEAN Expo.
- The China-Eurasia Expo.
- The China-Arabic States Expo.
- The China-South Asia Expo.
- The China-Northeast Asia Expo.
- The Eastern China International Fair.
- Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism.
- Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation.
- Greater Tumen Initiative.
- Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting
- Silk Road Think-Tank Association.
- Silk Road Think-Tank Network.
- University Alliance of the Silk Road.
- China-Africa Cooperation on Poverty Reduction and Public Welfare.
- East Asia Cooperation Initiative on Poverty Reduction.
- Alliance of International Science Organizations.
- The International Coalition for Green Development on the BR.
- Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
- The Silk Road International League of Theaters.
- Silk Road International Museum Alliance.
- Network of Silk Road Arts Festivals.
- Silk Road International Library Alliance.
- The BR News Alliance.
- The Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network.
- The Chinese Government Scholarship – Silk Road Program.
- The Silk Road Tourism Promotion Union.
- Maritime Silk Road Tourism Promotion Alliance.
- Tea Road International Tourism Alliance

Source: (The Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the BRI, 2019: 1-48)

According to Michael Pillsbury (2015: 183), the challenger will delegitimize the hegemon for not obeying the rules of the current system, to legitimize itself and get support. China will try to delegitimize institutions, like UN and WTO to delegitimize US hegemony. Then it will put its own institutions instead. In the scheme of BRI, China is setting up a system of complex relations that covers nearly every field. These meetings, forums, agreements, initiatives are creating solid documents, regulating the fields related. When these relations become more complex and the volume gets bigger, it will be inevitable to set up large institutions to handle them in one overarching institution. Chinese hegemonic system through BRI, which nowadays is developing with forums and initiatives, will be more institutionalized, legitimizing and creating more consent.



CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS A NEW TRIBUTARY SYSTEM

In this chapter, there will be comprehensive details of findings from the theoretical evaluation of each of the chapters and from the comparisons of the Tributary System and BRI. Finally, there will be the proposition section. The previous chapters are composed of wide range of topics to dig out the roots and philosophy behind each system. While doing this, each chapter apparently and inevitably came into form isolated from each other. In this chapter, the analysis will bring the results of three previous chapters together, to find out what actually those chapter suggests for the main question.

Tributary System and Belt and Road Initiative are chosen to represent the historical and contemporary examples. This research aimed to find its own answers to many questions. The main question is, in the BRI context, what is the Chinese perception of hegemony, evolved since the imperial Tributary System? In other words: what is the divergence and persistence between the two hegemonic systems, Tributary and BRI? How much is the BRI carrying the characteristics of Tributary System and to what extent it differs?

The other important questions are: what were the ideological sources of Chinese perception of “others” and “self” and how have they been evaluated until today? After the long turbulence in modern era and regaining the former powerful status, what kind of hegemon is China today, and what is it likely to be in the future? Is China returning back to the old values and strategies, as it has repeatedly happened in the history? How much is the current ideology and regime divert or use its historical perception of hegemony? Is China really a “threat” to international community or is it just “a peaceful stakeholder”?

The research was carried out by the methods of analytical review and content analysis. The process covered critical overview of extensive literature from Chinese and foreign

scholars, review of Chinese official publications, official declarations, official meeting records, forum reports and related websites and overview of Chinese classical sources as well.

The research was carried out on theoretical basis. Evaluations and comparisons are done in the theoretical framework of theories of power and hegemony, in the field of International Relations discipline. In particular, the Neo-Gramscian Theory of Hegemony was firstly analyzed and then applied to the research topic.

Doing such an extensive research requires dealing with time-consuming exploration and demands patience, digging out of historical and philosophical backgrounds of each system. The difficulties were not just lying in collecting the extensive material and empirical evidence for analysis. The particularity of Chinese philosophy, cultural experience, diverse opinions on discussion topics, the difficulties emerging from the different traditions of approaches of Western and Chinese scholars and difficulty of applying West originated theories to a country like China, with totally different historical, political and philosophical experience, added extra hardship to the current research process. Another hardship was related to the Belt and Road Initiative's not yet matured or completed process. BRI as a system has not yet got its mature form or it is incomplete like Tributary System. Nevertheless, the sound process of 5 years past, provides enough evidence and clues on how it will look like from now on, adding the foresights of the theories as well.

5.1 Composition from Past and Present

In its contemporary political meaning, "China" is a nation-state with 55 minority groups inhabiting alongside the majority Han Chinese. However, historical dimensions of it have been far beyond the contemporary description. When "China" in historical context is matter of discussion, one should not forget that it is not comprehensible through the context of a nation-state, but a much larger entity, containing diverse communities, some had consciousness of distinctive identity, some did not. Comparing it to Europe, China was not equivalent to nation states, like France or Germany, but equivalent to "Europe" as a whole continent. What the main factory creating "European" identity was basically Christianity in the past, shared democratic

values and again Christianity today, disregarding the language and geographical location of each community inside.

For China, in the past “Chineseness” was associated with each community’s affinity with Chinese culture. Chinese cultural values mainly included Confucian moral sets and way of conducts and Chinese scripts (Fairbank, 1941: 138). Any community that embraced Chinese cultural values were regarded “Chinese” or “civilized” (Hua) (华), though they were sometimes of Mongolian, Manchu, Turkic or Tibetan origin. All the other communities out of the Chinese cultural boundaries were indivisibly called “barbarians” (Yi) (夷). This point is critical to understand why Chinese accepted their occupiers, like Mongolian Yuan, Manchu Qing, Turkic Northern Wei as “Chinese”. They were occupiers from outside, but had embraced Chinese culture after the occupation. Sharing the Chinese cultural values with locals, they were accepted as Chinese. That is why in contemporary understanding all the lands conquered by the Manchu Qing, which the Mainland China was part of, were accepted to be the legitimate part of China today, after the Qing’s demise. It is quite like, when France was occupied by Germany, after the war France could claim Germany to be part of France, just because recently they both were part of the same political entity, sharing the same religious, political and cultural values. This example demonstrates, the Chinese mentality on identity. Identity was not defined by kinship, but by culture and China was always at the center.

The Chinese emperors, bearing the title of Son of Heaven, were believed to bear Mandate of Heaven, the consent of God, being furnished with the legitimacy of power use and manage the Earth and Tianxia on behalf of God. The Chinese emperor had an extraordinary status that was not comparable with any of the European emperors or king, even with the Pope. He was more than a human, responsible for keeping the harmony between the physical realm (the Earth) and metaphysical realm (the Heaven). Thus, responsibility of managing the Tianxia (the Earth), which was equivalently used in the meaning of China as well, was indivisibly belonging to the emperor. All people, regardless of their political and social identity had to submit to the emperor, including the kings of other communities, in the same status as feudal lords in China.

Tianxia was a Chinese style cosmopolitan, universalist interpretation of the known world. The borders of China “Middle Kingdom” and the World, which were all thought to be in the jurisdiction of the emperor, were overlapping (Pines, 2002: 134). China could be called Tianxia, just as the World could be called so. So logically, all the World was China, and vice versa, China was the world itself. This is actually an effect of the geographical conditions in the Chinese political thought. China was surrounded by harsh deserts from the north and north-west, huge mountain ranges from the west, mountains and forests from the south, and a huge ocean from the east (Shi and Chen, 2014: 7). The north was further closed by Chinese themselves, the Great Wall (长城) “Chángchéng”. This geographical isolation shaped Chinese perception of the world, besides the perception of “self” and “others”. Ancient Chinese had little doubt about the absence of another noticeable land or society behind these natural borders. So, the world was that much, at least the world that, civilized and worth of governing, was that much. When Chinese became aware of the other civilizations, like Romans or Indians, they still could not have extensive information about them and the concept of Tianxia, the Sinocentric worldview was already settled long ago. Geography limited the interactions with other civilizations preparing thus conditions of isolationist, introvert Chinese characteristic, which has been apparent during most of the long Chinese history, especially during the Ming and Qing dynasties. In an environmentalist approach, James Blaut (1999: 402) goes further claiming that because of the geography China became a single state, an empire and despotic.

According to the Tianxia universalism, in theory there were no foreigners in Tianxia, or on the Earth, as the whole planet was under the jurisdiction of the emperor. This in line with Zhao Tingyang’s (2012: 59) description, defining Tianxia in “inclusive” and “peaceful” characteristics. The whole Earth (China) was in the emperor’s administration and there were just some neighboring barbarians with primitive lifestyle and visions, not enough civilized to furnish themselves with the wisdom of submitting to the emperor, the Son of Heaven. Emperor set them free to submit or not. He ignored them as long as they did not pose a security threat, and would welcome them when they peacefully wanted to come and be “civilized”.

Nevertheless, Zhao Tingyang’s highly idealist definition of Tianxia universalism with “inclusive and peaceful” features were not matching with historical realities. Culture

was the decisive criteria in Chinese history to define being “civilized” and “barbarian” (Ge 2018: 11). According to the level of affinity to the Chinese culture, the communities could be treated in different ways. Chinese approached “others” in a very xenophobic and discriminative way. They divided human beings on Earth in three categories: Chinese, barbarians and beasts (Ford, 2010: 88). “Barbarians” were usually entitled with Chinese characters, associated with animals like: dog, beast, ape, bug, worm etc., (Fiskesjo, 2012: 57). Some “barbarians” were called “cooked barbarians” (熟) “Shú”, if they had assimilated at some degree, while the others that were not yet assimilated were called “raw” (生) “Shēng” barbarians (Fiskesjo, 1999: 143).

All “barbarians” (foreigners) were looked down on by Chinese people, as inferior beings (Pulleyblank, 1983: 411), including the Europeans in the 19th and 20th centuries. In Confucian’s definition, having virtues is not enough to be human. Besides virtues, the participation in a Confucian society, after all the only meaningful one on Earth, was the other requirement to be entitled as “human”. The “barbarians” were barely human, but rather beasts as in Confucian thought they did not have “rites” (礼) “Lǐ” (Ford, 2010: 87). The “rites” were only valid when referring to the one’s Confucianism defines. Confucian basic methodology of relations with the “barbarians” was to attract them with wisdom, but keep power ready to use in case they did not submit.

This cultural arrogance has created a “Sinocentric” worldview, accommodating China in the core and all others in the periphery. Chinese imperial world order was a hierarchic one in which China was superior to all and equality was only between the “barbarians”. The clear Hua-Yi “Civilized-Barbarian” Distinction (华夷之辨) was the main ideology, defining the imperial Chinese foreign policy, created the backbone of system of Imperial Chinese foreign (barbarian) relations, the Tributary System.

Tributary System was the given name of the structure organizing the imperial China and “barbarian” (foreign) relations, created from the Confucian values, Tianxia universalism and Hua-Yi distinction. It had been matured throughout centuries and solidified with clear rules during late Ming and early Qing dynasties. During the long history, Chinese imperial vision of relations with “barbarians” has been carried out in the framework of the Tributary System, though it has not been consistent in all times, but gradually developed until the end of imperial era.

The father of the term of Tributary System, Fairbank (1968: 2), defines the structure of the Tributary System in three circular zones in each other.

1. In the center there was Sinic Zone, “mostly nearby and culturally similar tributaries” like, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Ryukyu islands.
2. The second circle was Inner Asian Zone, “barbarian” nomadic or semi-nomadic people of inner Asia, like Manchus, Mongols, Turkic Clans, Tibetans. They were “not only ethnically but also culturally non-Chinese”, in the fringe of the Chinese cultural zone, though sometimes conquering and ruling China.
3. The last circle was Outer Zone, the “other barbarians”, in further distance with China, like East Asian states, Europeans and the rest of the world.

The division was quite simple. The Sinic Zone was relatively peaceful, mainly because militarily, economically and politically they were not strong enough to challenge China and due to the stabilized hierarchic relations based on shared values of Confucianism. China was not interested in annexing them, mainly as it already reached the limits of natural borders, the largest lands could be managed effectively that time. The biggest benefits China was getting from the Sinic Zone was the legitimacy of the emperor and its domestic political system, the border security with low cost, and the economic benefits of trading with them. Chinese emperor was legitimate as long as there weren't any natural disasters, economic and social chaos. However, to be the Son of Heaven and responsible for all the Tianxia (Earth) required the other kings out of the borders to submit to him. Sinic Zone's obedience and submission to the Chinese Emperor was useful for him in terms of confirmation of legitimacy and his prestige, more than any other benefits. In Zhenghe's expeditions, it can be observed that Chinese emperors were caring the legitimacy and prestige obtained through the submission of the other country's kings, more than anything they can get from them. Zhenghe set off with 315 ships, enormous in size, perhaps the world has not seen till that time, along with 28,000 men, but the aim was not to conquer any place (Kissinger, 2015: 30). After years of wandering between the small kingdoms in South and South East Asia with his enormous armada Christopher Columbus could not even dream; Zhenghe returned to China with some symbolic gifts proving the submission of the kings he has visited. The Sinic Zone countries needed the system to stabilize the

relations with the biggest power and the neighbors in the region, to benefit from the trading and to use it as a tool of legitimization in inner power struggles.

For the second zone, namely Inner Asia Zone, the situation was not that simple. There was order and security in this zone as long as China or any other power was incomparably strong. However, serious problems emerged when there was no power balance, when “barbarians” (foreigner) neighbors did not have friendly intentions against China and when China was not strong enough to protect itself. The nomadic tribes in the north and north west were the biggest threat to China during most of its long history. Until the arrival of western powers in the 19th century China had been invaded and managed by nomadic Turkic, Tibetan, Mongol and Manchu armies many times. Nomadic people have contributed to Chinese civilization and managed China as much as Chinese locals did (Chung, 2017: 99). The dynasty of Qin, the founder of unified China, Tang one of the most prosperous and cosmopolitan dynasty, Northern Wei the Turkic, Jin the Jurchens, Liao the Khitans, Yuan Chinggis’ Mongolian dynasty, Qing Manchu and the last dynasty, even the Yellow emperor and the Yu The Great were all nomadic (Hei, Zhao and Ma, 2016: 442).

Nomads were having simpler cultural and societal structure. However, they mostly did not accept the superiority of the Chinese emperor or culture and even had their own superiority perceptions (Kang, 2007: 25). As the new Qing historians also proved, the last dynasty, Qing had not just invaded China and being assimilated by the attraction of Chinese cultural values, as nearly all Chinese historians defend (Rawski, 1996). They conquered China and set up their own Manchu-Centric empire, rather than becoming a part of Sinocentric empire. Although China was the richest, most precious and the most developed part, nevertheless it was a part of the Manchu-centric empire (Elliott, 2000: 603).

Chinese developed several strategies to deal with the threats from the nomads in the Inner Asia Zone during the long history. The one developed against the powerful Xiongnu Empire, during the Han Dynasty, is the most durable one, even used when the imperialist powers arrived in the 19th century (Map IX). When Xiongnu forces surrounded the Han Emperor Gaozu (汉高祖) “Hàn Gāozǔ” (247-195 BC) in 200BC,

Chinese understood that “barbarians” are not that easy to destroy on military attacks. There were five strategies developed to deal with barbarians (Yu, 1986: 450):

1. Harmonious kinship strategy (和親) “Héqīn”; to establish peaceful relations and marriage alliances, which was actually thought to be humiliating for Chinese emperor to accept.
2. The coercion policies were taken out from the options.
3. The defensive policy was developed and would be the major characteristics of Chinese engagement with “barbarians” after that.
4. The concept of “loose reigns” (羈縻) “Jīmí”, referring to noninterference and free trade with nomads, was developed.
5. The strategy of “controlling barbarians through barbarians” (以夷制夷) “Yǐyí Zhìyí”, was developed.

Zhaoguang Ge (2018: 13), describes the wars between China and Xiongnu as “international war” in contrast to some others who call it a “civil war”. It was kind of Balance of Power system between the two strong sides, though Chinese never accepted it. However, collapse of Xiongnu changed the balance on the behalf of China. For Chinese the last obstacle had gone to firmly believe in their superiority (Wang G., 1968: 41).

The Inner Asian Zone, nomadic tribes and states, seldom had peaceful relations with China; when they had it, it was usually due to the need of Chinese support in inner rivalry between the tribes or due to weakness, or sometimes due to the horse trade they were doing with China.

In the last circle of Tributary System, the Outer Zone, there was a similar relation with the second circle. The distant states were not having intense relations with China. The Central Asian states were the most active ones, usually in cooperation for the security of the Silk Road. In this zone, with the European arrival in the late Qing period, Qing rulers developed coherent relations with the powerful Russia, UK, France, the USA and Germany. They used the Han strategy of “controlling barbarians through barbarians”.

Tributary System was not just a simple structure organizing the foreign relations of imperial China, but also reflecting the Chinese perception of the “self” and “others”, the perception of the World order, Chinese cultural values and cosmology. China, being the birthplace and center of Confucian worldview, had the moral leadership in Sinic Zone to the Confucian countries as well; however, it is too simplistic if the whole Tributary System is solely explained in the Confucian values. If there hadn't been Confucianism, most probably there would have been a similar system due to the power and geography related realities.

China is not an imperial power or celestial empire anymore today. It is an authoritarian Socialist country with one party rule and having a strict control on society and its semi-capitalist economy today. Since the imperial rule, Chinese state and society have changed considerably in the modern age. However, the process, that brought these changes, was not very peaceful and smooth and left strong impacts on Chinese minds. China's modern age started with the arrival of imperialist European powers in the 19th century. With the Opium Wars, Chinese were forced to open their economy and society which had been closed to the world for a long time, in order to interact with the “barbarians” (foreigners). The political chaos aftermath brought the demise of the imperial Qing dynasty in 1911 and Chinese soon witnessed enormous political, social and economic chaos caused by the civil war of warlords, Western and Japanese imperial interactions, the Japanese invasion, the Second World war and the ideological civil war between the Nationalists and Communists. The devastation did not finish with the victory of Communists and proclamation of PRC in 1949. The new state suffered further by being the laboratory of ideological experiments for about three more decades, leaving an exhausted society with the clear memories of all what they had suffered since the arrival of “barbarians”. They have named it “The Century of Humiliation” (百年国耻) “Bǎinián Guóchǐ” (1839-1949).

A lot of countries have suffered from similar oppression and defeats during the history and especially in the same period as China. They all usually recall that bad experience with anger. However, Chinese sense of superiority and cultural pride shows itself again in this case, by calling the military defeat and colonization as “humiliation”. The sense of superiority was gradually eliminated. Firstly, by the defeats from the western powers and Japanese and further by realizing that many countries had actually

developed far more than China, especially Japanese with their successful Meiji Restoration. Chinese were defeated many times by the steppe nomads, Mongols, Turkic, Tibetans, Manchus, however, none of those defeats could be this much effective on changing Chinese state and society settings.

For the “humiliation”, Chinese were not only blaming the western powers and Japanese for their imperial aims on China, but also blaming themselves for falling weak and backward. This self-criticism, combined with erosion in the sense of superiority and the chaos they suffered, Chinese developed a strong sense of nationalism, a modern replacement of the cultural Sinocentric pride. This nationalist social tension put pressure on the governments to raise China to its “rightful place”, in the international stage.

Chinese were dreaming to be strong and respected as they used to be during the most of their long history, since they noticed they were not “Middle Kingdom” anymore. This is what Xi Jinping’s famous motto “China Dream” (中国梦) “Zhōngguó mèng” is about. Xi created a big excitement when he came out with these promises to lead the country realizing its dream, resembling western liberal politicians in this aspect.

Chinese state mentality on foreign relations also has changed drastically since the beginning of “Century of Humiliation”. China firstly had to forcefully accept the equality of all states and set formal and equal relations which formally finished the superiority claim and Tributary System. Until the foundation of PRC in 1949, China was formally under occupation with no unity and strength to develop a coherent foreign policy. With the proclamation of PRC, a new age started for Chinese foreign relations. The imperial cultural definition of “self” and “others” was changed into “class” division in the connected domestic and international realms. The Marxist-Maoist ideological trend aligned weak China with Soviet Union, following Mao’s “lean to one side” strategy (Dillon, 2010: 310).

China being the victim of imperialist policies, claimed to be in solidarity with the “Third World” countries, which was a Maoist doctrine. Chinese Communist experience against the imperialist powers was presented to the world and exporting the Maoist ideology to the Third World was the biggest mission in foreign relations.

However, to release the equivalent countries from their “China Threat” fear, China declared the 5 principles of peaceful coexistence in Bandung conference in 1955. The self-declared principles in international relations were: “mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence” (Dillon M, 2010: 443). Peacefulness and non-aggression were the main themes of the declaration and it has stayed like that in Chinese foreign policy rhetoric until today.

China has been pragmatic when shifting between the values and bitter realities. In imperial time when Xiongnu defeated the Han army they realized that, it was not possible to defeat them by military; Han officials developed a “heqin” policy to set up marriage alliances with Xiongnu, though it did not fit in superiority claim and it was even considered as “humiliation”. Similar cases occurred a lot in all history, especially in the Song dynasty. Mao was not different. When he felt Soviets had imperialist attitude and may interfere Chinese domestic politics, he quickly cut the relations with them and “leaned” to the USA surprising the whole world, though the ideological restraints were too strong to do so. Setting formal relations with the USA in 1972 allowed China to be recognized in international field joining thus the UN Security Council. Mao’s regime got legitimacy in international relations, reliving from the big pressure of “hostile capitalist world” and “evil Soviet Union”.

China started the reform period after Mao’s death. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, The Reform and Opening Up (改革开放) “Gǎigé Kāifàng” policies started in 1978. Since then China has developed with an amazing development rate for about 40 years. This consistent development trajectory changed China from a large Third World poor country, exhausted from political oppression and mismanagement, to one of the biggest economies of the world with confidence and large resources of capital.

The paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, who has opened the way of prosperity for his country, set new principles of foreign policy as well. He has formulated his foreign policy strategy inspired by the Chinese traditional proverb, “Hide your strength, wait your time” (韬光养晦) “tāo guāng yǎng huì”. It was a highly pragmatic strategy to avoid confrontation with the reality of incomparably powerful the USA (Zhao S, 2013b: 32).

Called “Low Profile Strategy”, Deng’s formulation carried China and CCP regime from a crucial period of economic development (Ibid: 33) without any confrontation.

Deng’s strategy kept its major role in Chinese foreign policy until 2008, the economic crisis, that put most of the big economies in recession. China got out stronger and more confident from the crisis and it could voice its priorities in a more assertive manner. However, Deng’s “Low Profile Strategy” was still the backbone of the foreign policy.

Chinese state and society, getting rid of Maoist strong ideological policies in domestic and international politics, integrated into the world in Reform Era more than any time since the Tang and Song dynasties. Chinese society, being disappointed by Communist leaders, firstly by Mao and then by Deng after the Tiananmen Incident, lost interest and faith in political and ideological values. Today, they are only busy with earning their lives. Marxist ideology has not much things to give Chinese society anymore. In such a period of “moral crisis”, rejuvenation rhetoric and associated policies paved the way for the restoration of the old values back. Currently, Chinese society has an enormous curiosity and attention towards the Chinese history, religions and especially the Confucian values. Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist temples are hosting visitors in crowds they have not seen for nearly a century. Books and movies related to history and religions are in high demand. There are a lot of Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist schools and training centers, and private education institutions all around the country. Chinese people are re-discovering the old values after the Marxist storm.

Chinese government once destroyed most of the historical and cultural heritage and tried to erase all traditional values, especially the Confucian ones in the Cultural Revolution, while today sincerely promotes their revival. Callahan (2016: 24) describes this inclination as a patriotic wariness of the “money worshipping” society. Moral Crisis is an important reason for these policies. However, Confucian values, advising obedience to elderlies and the state authorities and endorsing the hierarchical order, are quite useful to consolidating and legitimizing CCP rule, while the same values were criticized in Cultural Revolution to have caused inertia and to have created a recessive society.

Belt and Road Initiative emerged in a time when Chinese economy started to show clear signs of recession and decline while the society awakened to their past values and history. BRI is a paradigm change in Chinese foreign policy. It is not just an ordinary strategy to develop economic and political interest fields, but also has deep historical roots and meaning for China. It is a game changer move in international relations. While China is denying to have a “Grand Strategy” (Pillsbury, 2015: 198), BRI is a series of plans that can be interpreted as grand strategy for China for the coming century, if not centuries.

Belt and Road Initiative, being called “The New Silk Road”, is claimed by the Chinese officials to fulfill the same function as its historical counterpart, Silk Road (丝绸之路) “Sīchóu Zhīlù”. BRI not only serves economical purposes, as historical Silk Road did, but also to cultural rapprochements and people to people interactions. BRI is covering all historical Silk Road routes but it is not bounded with it (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015).

China, as the creator of the initiative, defines the framework and the rules of the game and the goals of the initiative as well. In the declaration of such colossal plans, as there will be wishes and optimistic calculations for the outcome, naturally the framework will be highly idealistic. Nevertheless, for a realistic evaluation, the implementation should be analyzed well.

Belt and Road Initiative is officially defined to have five main objectives, which are: policy coordination, facilitating connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and finally people-to-people bond (Ibid). Beijing refers to these objectives as “the new model of international cooperation” (Kulintsev, 2018: 197).

Chinese officials and academics associate BRI with the construction of “The Community of Common Destiny”. They claim that the common interests are going to create the “Community of Shared Interests”, which will bring common responsibilities “Community of Shared Responsibility” and finally will evolve into a shared destiny “Community of Common Destiny” (Zeng, 2016: 517). Highly idealist, this objective was endorsed by Chinese government putting it to the PRC Constitution (Rolland, 2019) and becoming one of the biggest objectives associated with BRI. Su Ge (2017:

372) describes the concept of Community of Common Destiny as “China’s new Tao”. Highly vogue term, Community of Common Destiny is defended to be constructed by four main principles. The first one is all countries should respect each other on equality base. Secondly, win-win cooperation will be the standard for mutual benefits. Thirdly, collaboration and sustainable security will be an important aim of cooperation. Finally, it promises inclusiveness and mutual learning among the civilizations (Wang L, 2017: 2). Community of Common Destiny recalls the utopic final stage of Socialism, which is Communism. Highly vague term, requiring further clarification by Chinese officials, it can be described to be the international community that has some common interests, common understanding and common future prospects and finally developed some kind of belongingness to the same larger community, which were all developed by the BRI projects and activities. This point is the clearest evidence that BRI is not just an economic initiative aiming to boost economic interests and benefits for China, but much beyond it. It proves that China is implementing BRI at the same time as a social engineering project in the BRI initiative societies, to create common features, the final stage of which is to create a shared common future and destiny.

China has major economic, financial, political, strategic and military motives to start a large-scale foreign affairs plan like BRI. Economic motives are the primary forces behind the BRI. Chinese economy has been slowing down since 2012 posing a big threat to the domestic economic, social and political stability. To stop this foreseen destiny, Chinese government has thought to create new markets for infrastructure production surplus and move the production bases to those new markets. By doing so the production facilities would not need to close down and the sustainable development could continue. The other economic motives are: to overcome the middle-income trap by passing to the high-tech and innovations driven economy, to transcend the economic inequality between the regions and provinces, to reach alternative markets, to move the environmentally undesired facilities out, to internationalize RMB, to create alternative routes for Malacca straight in South East Asia, the Indian Ocean and the man-made Suez Canal for energy and raw material flow and to construct alternative connections with the high-tech products and technologies supplier European economies.

The most important political motive is to consolidate and legitimize the regime's power and stability, by preventing economic breakdown and fulfilling the rejuvenation and "China Dream". This issue is the soft belly of the Chinese government and only the successful economic development can help. The other political motives are: finding economic solutions to the domestic regional discontents, separatist and terrorist activities, to transcend the regional development inequalities and to diminish the tension it creates in those regions, specially Xinjiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions.

The most important international strategic motive of BRI is to diminish the US influence in the periphery neighboring areas, especially in the South Asia, the region of historical Tributary System, South China Sea islands, Taiwan and Central Asia. To improve the opportunity of military presence in key strategic locations and develop political alliance and creating the strategic partners and to improve its Soft Power in the target countries are the other international motives.

Belt and Road Initiative has six main routes: the first one is the "New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor"; the second one is "China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor"; the third one is "China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor"; the fourth one is "China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor"; the fifth one is "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor"; and the sixth one is "China-Myanmar-Bangladesh-India Economic Corridor" (Qin, Zhou and Luo, 2017: 75). They are aimed to connect China with Central Asia, Russia and Europe, Persian Gulf, Mediterranean Sea, through Central and West Asia, South East Asia, South Asia and with Indian Ocean. The Maritime Silk Road connects it with Europe through South China Sea and Indian Ocean (Ibid: 74). The "New Silk Road" is the "belt" the land route, "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" is the "road" ocean route. Besides, there is a special route passing through North Pole along the North Costs of Siberia to Europe which is called "Ice Silk Road" (Ibid, 2018).

China has taken the first step in many projects until now. Some are finished, some will finish soon and some have just started. In the first Belt and Road Forum, held in Beijing in May 2017, the participants from 29 countries in leader level and total representatives from 130 countries and 70 international organizations discussed about the

opportunities and contributions of the BRI in the two-days roundtable meetings (The State Council PRC, 2017). The second forum took place in Beijing also in April 25-27, 2019. The forum hosted 70 leaders, 5,000 participants from more than 150 countries and 90 international organizations (Portal, 2019). The numbers prove a great and a growing interest in the initiative.

Belt and Road Initiative carries serious risks in implementation. As Wang (2018: 81) suggests, the main risks can be political risks, security risks, economic risks, legal risks and moral risks. Besides the major risks, like the effectiveness of infrastructure development strategy, increasing “Debt Trap” accusation from many countries, Chinese domestic opposition and the debt distress of many BRI countries, there are other minor or conditional risks, like cultural differences, language barriers, safety measure on site, inflation and currency exchange rates, water and soil pollution caused by construction work, majeure force, poor quality of materials, unforeseeable ground conditions, noise pollutions and different religious backgrounds (Andric, Wang, Zou and Zhong, 2017: 1).

China is going to be challenged by regional geopolitical issues between the countries and by mentality differences (Kulintsev, 2018: 199); as Chinese experts warn, it is going to be challenged by countries’ complex social and political structures, local conflicts, terrorist attacks and jealous great powers as well (Rolland, 2019: 2).

5.2 Old and New Hegemony

Comparing the Tributary System and BRI in the context of hegemony theories, requires a cautious process of evaluation of each system in their own framework and time period, as it is done in each related chapter. Getting the correct image of each structure is a prerequisite of detecting the components of Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony, power, consent, ideology, institutions etc., and the components that differs with it.

The first component of Neo-Gramscian hegemony is “power”. Power is actually essential to set up a hegemony, in any type. As in each related chapter examined, power plays an essential role in both the Tributary System and BRI. In Tributary System “power” appears in different characteristics in different zones. In Sinic Zone, China’s

military, economic and political power was keeping the system stable and enduring. The economic power was essential for attraction and military power was for the deterrence. Confucian values came after these two. They were shared values and it created a socializing environment for the Confucian Sinic Countries. Nevertheless, it was not the sole reason in the creation of the relations. Just as in Europe, France and UK shared Christian values in history, but it was not the main reason of peace; when they had it, though, it cannot be denied that Christianity played a certain role in relations. This fact could prove itself only when all of the Sinic countries were on the same level of power, or when China was not strong like it was. When China was not strong enough, as in the case of Song Dynasty, the tributaries were not willing to send tribute. Especially in Japanese case, when it was stronger than China, it claimed its own superiority, attacked Korea and even attacked and occupied China. Even in some occasions, Tributary countries set up their own tributary systems, the members of which were Chinese tributaries as well.

China used the military power neither to colonize and subjugate nor to exploit the Sinic Zone, yet it had wars with all of them, sometimes occupied under different dynasties. Chinese economic and political power was playing the role of insurance for the system in this zone. Confucian principle of “attract them with virtues but keep the power in the background” was applied most noticeably in this zone. In this regard, the attractiveness of the values and culture, which is “Soft Power” actually, was seen most obviously in this zone as well.

In Inner Asia Zone and Outer Zones, however, the Confucian values nearly had no functions at all. The relations mostly depended on rough military power. When China was too strong, it could dominate the steppes, when the steppes or Outer Zone countries were powerful, they occupied China. When they were comparable in power, there was Balance of Power strategies between them.

Similarly, Belt and Road Initiative almost solely depends on Chinese economic power, while military power and Soft Power (Chinese values) do not playing much role. It basically differs from the Tributary System in proactiveness of China and the role of Soft Power. China was an introvert country, showing nearly no presence in Tributary countries, while actively interacting with BRI. Whereas, imperial China’s Soft Power

was creating consent in Tributary countries, strengthening the poor contemporary Chinese Soft Power, it is an objective in BRI.

The second decisive component of Neo-Gramscian Hegemony is “consent”. Consent was generated in Tributary Sinic Zone by the economic and political incentives and Confucian values which were playing the role of legitimizing ideology but without any international institutions or means supporting it. Whereas in other zones, consent, ideology and institutions were not matter of concern and were irrelevant with the nature of the relations.

In BRI consent is gathered by China, not by its ideology or values, except in some poor and authoritarian third world countries attracted by Chinese political values and development story. BRI is generating consent by its production of “public goods”. In other words, the economic concerns play a major role for the consent of BR countries. Chinese state ideology and cultural values do not play role as much as the “liberal” values of free trade, non-interference and interdependency plays. China constructed the BRI on international liberal values, while its political ideology is not consistent with those values.

Legitimacy and prestige are noteworthy subjects not contained in the definition of Neo-Gramscian theory. However, they play an important role in both Tributary System and BRI. Legitimacy and prestige were the primary motives and gains for imperial China in Tributary System. It was a way of legitimizing the power of the emperor and of the other kings in their domestic societies. Similarly, in contemporary context, BRI is primarily serving the CCP regime to create a convincing legitimacy narrative and prestige in the fulfilment of “China Dream”, in addition to solving the serious economic problems.

Hierarchy is another subject, a matter of contradiction. It is the essence of Tributary System. Basically, Tributary System depends on submitting to Chinese emperor, accepting his and Chinese culture’s superiority and bowing in front of him. It is clearly and officially based on declaration of this hierarchic structure; which China is on the top. The tributaries were formally sharing equal status, but China was indisputably accepted to be over all. In modern hegemonic systems, however, including Neo-

Gramscian hegemony, the states in the system are officially equal and sovereign in their territories, whereas hierarchy actually exist unofficially. The hegemon and even the regional powers enjoy undeclared hierarchy. BRI is such a system as well. In all rhetoric, equality and respect to sovereignty is expressed, but naturally the loan provider and the loan taker are not equal in practice. BRI countries are in an undeclared, unofficial hierarchic order, just as it is the case in liberal American hegemony.

Wuwei is another important subject needed to be addressed. The term was used to refer the Taoist value of “negligence, non-interference” in international politics in this research. In Tributary System, China mostly did not interfere in the domestic and international politics of any tributaries. Besides, China did not interfere in the conflicts between the member states as well, like Vietnam and Champa war, as long as the conflict was not affecting itself, like Japan and Korean war. Yet, such an “egocentrism” was not affecting its status. In modern sense, the hegemon will be the guardian of the system and sometimes will exercise rough power against any sabotage, posing a threat to the hegemon’s authority, system’s peacefulness and stability. In BRI context, China is not likely to use power to interfere any conflicts between the BR countries. From the rhetoric of official declarations, non-interference is repeatedly assured. Nevertheless, if the conflicts are going to damage its “core interests” and if the international environment is suitable, China may not be that respectful to the principle of non-interference, as it has been seen in history, e.g. in Japan and Korea war and in Korea war in 1950. Non-interference is also openly criticized by Chinese academics nowadays giving serious signals of change in this principle.

While comparing the two hegemonic systems, Tributary System and BRI, the structure catches attention immediately. China in history and today pays more attention to its direct neighbors and vicinity. In Tributary System the Sinic Zone was the inner zone and the intense relations were seen in this zone. It was kind of a back garden for the imperial China. Any outer interference in this zone would catch Chinese attention, though they seldom did something to protect them. The outer zone and more distance areas were not much in the scope of Chinese attention, even (usually) totally ignored, as long as there was not a threat to China. In BRI the structure shows quite similar patterns. The closest circles of periphery draw most of the attention and investments from China. China considers Pacific Asia, South East Asia and Central Asia

historically in its sphere of influence and it is jealous of any other superpower's interference, such as the USA or Russia, in these regions. Africa is another circle of periphery that China surprisingly treat the same as the ones in neighborhood. The common point between the two hegemonic structure is that China did not aim a world scale hegemony in the history. It was more interested in the neighboring periphery, but mostly neglecting beyond it. BRI looks like a worldwide attempt, but the focus is regional. Thought the scope is the whole world, but it is regionally intensified.

Gramsci (1971: 180-195), divides "hegemony" in three levels of consciousness. The first level is the consciousness of cooperation limited to economy and to a certain group's interests. The second one is the class consciousness which extends the scope to all class, but still limited to economy. The third one is the matured hegemony which is combining the interests of ruling class with all other class interests and combining them inside a universal ideological frame. Throughout the context of this definition, Tributary Sinic Zone matches well with the third level of consciousness, which is the mature hegemonic system. The interests of hegemon were seen in compliance with their own interests, by the Sinic countries, in the frame of Confucian ideology. The other zones match well with the first level consciousness, as they pursue their own economic aims and do not have sense of shared common interests with a third part.

BRI however, is describable in the second level, the class consciousness of economic cooperation. The class refers to the related BRI countries because they complete each other by connectiveness. For instance, the success of BRI projects in Iran are important for Turkey as both are going to be part of the same economic corridor. So, Turkish actions in BRI context cannot be in the scope of the self-centered first consciousness level. Nevertheless, the third level of mature hegemony is not yet achieved in BRI. How China describes "Community of Common Destiny" is exactly referring to the last level of mature hegemony. In that level the hegemon and the other countries in the system are going to be in consciousness of belongingness to the same group. The shared ideology is "liberalism with Chinese characteristics" for now, but in the future, it may evolve in some other definitions.

Community of Common Destiny is meaningful in Gramscian definition of "Historical Bloc" as well. Historical bloc, which means "binding and cohering" different interest

groups (Morton, 2003: 159) for the formation of hegemonic order, corresponds with the creation of Community of Common Destiny. Formation of the community is going to be achieved by persuading each of the parts, they have common interests in the BRI. Thus, “binding and cohering” process, done by ideology, will end up with the “matured hegemony level”, the Community of Common Destiny.

Hegemonic Stability Theory is divided into two versions in terms of benefit: Collective goods-oriented version and Security-oriented version (Keohane, 1984: 31). Collective goods-oriented version is well applicable to Tributary System. However, as imperial China mostly was in “wuwei” attitude against the problems in the system, it is hard to defend the fact that the system provided security. BRI in current stage is providing public goods, but not security. When the Community of Common Destiny is formed, naturally there will be security alliances as well.

The World System Theory is applicable to both Tributary System and BRI. China had always stronger ties with the neighboring periphery countries, however, the economic relations were not intense as the World System Theory suggests. There wasn't a systemized and planned wealth flow or labor division. The economic relations were based on unorganized regional scale trading. With the BRI, besides the former peripheries, with intense and systemized economic relations, China has created distant periphery circles that in Tributary System were never aimed and achieved. These circles, like the ones in Africa and South East Asia, are creating core-periphery relation with China. Nevertheless, it very clear that China cares about the vicinity relations more than distant ones. This care makes China more proactive and more jealous of interference of the other big powers in the closer circles of peripheries. The definition of “core interests” will cover the neighboring periphery circles first and then distant ones soon, with the intense investments and political rapprochements.

China is undeniably creating a system of Complex Interdependency in BRI web. It has started with the economic relations, but it is going to end with the creation of “Community of Common Destiny”. This community will have complex social, economic and political relations, so that can share commonality from material interests to destiny. Interdependency was applicable to Tributary System countries as well, but

it was not that “complex” as the relations were not that intense compared to today’s relations under the globalization effect.

Imperial China was a typical empire and occasionally an imperialist and colonial power in the Ming and Qing dynasties, but only limited in Inner Asia Zone. Whereas, empires, imperialism and colonialism are not applicable to BRI in today’s context. BRI is carried out in the climate of globalization which is described to be the new version of imperialism. However, the system has not yet matured in all relational dimensions, to evaluate it comprehensively and detect its final nature, in this context.

The main requirement of this research was to describe Chinese perception of hegemony in imperial Tributary System and Belt and Road Initiative by analyzing and comparing them in the context of hegemony theories of International Relations discipline, specifically the Neo-Gramscian theory. The primary goal was to detect the divergence and persistence between the two systems which would reveal the contemporary perception of hegemony in “Chinese characteristics”. To achieve this goal, the imperial Tributary System and BRI initiative had to be examined in their historical and philosophical contexts which was done in the previous chapters. There are attempts to explain China’s current policies with historical motives; however, there is no specific research directly comparing Tributary System and BRI. This research aimed to close such an important gap.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this research have particular answers to some of the controversial topics about China today. They shed light on the discussions like: what were the ideological sources of Chinese perception of “others” and “self” and how has it been evaluated until today? After the long turbulence in modern era and regaining the former powerful status, what kind of hegemon is China today, and what is it likely to be in the future? Is China returning back to the old values and strategies, as it has repeatedly happened in the history? How much is the current ideology and regime divert or use its historical perception of hegemony? Is China really a “threat” to international community or is it just “a peaceful stakeholder”? The answers can help students, professionals, academics and related parties to have a better understanding of mentioned issues with their historical background. This basic understanding can help them develop their own arguments.

The content of persistence and divergence between the two systems are the main findings of the research. Chinese imperial hegemony in Tributary System’s Sinic Zone was in “leadership”, rather than in “domination” characteristic. It depended on solid Chinese economic and military powers, in the background as stability provider, with the outcome of legitimacy and prestige for all parts, having the consent of the Sinic countries mostly due to the Chinese imperial Soft Power. Thus, it shared Confucian values as ideology with lack of international institutions, formally hierarchic and these relations were mostly in characteristics of “non-interference” and socialization of Confucian countries, occasionally having wars and conflicts but were relatively peaceful. Chinese hegemony in this Zone was close to the definition of Neo-Gramscian Hegemony, with the distinction of formal hierarchic structure, prestige and legitimacy playing central role and non-interfering “wuwei” status of the hegemon. Hegemonic Stability Theory is well matching with Tributary Sinic Zone as well and over all, the

system was regional, not a global one, as China was nearly neglecting the other areas beyond the neighboring countries.

In the other zones of Tributary System, The Inner Asia Zone and Outer Zone, China was occasionally an empire, an imperial power, a colonial power and mostly pursuing power politics. Rarely there was peace and stability in these zones. Sometimes balance of power strategies were used, when the powers were comparable.

Belt and Road Initiative, from the first five years' perspective, and the official announcements and events, is creating a modern hegemonic system, predominantly complying with the definition of Neo-Gramscian Hegemony as well. What mainly proves its hegemonic characteristic is the objective of creating "Community of Common Destiny" is so important that it even found a place in Chinese constitution. BRI confesses that it is not a simple economic cooperation plan, but a comprehensive plan of creating a hegemonic system; by the significance it gives to the creation of Community of Common Destiny and People to People bonds, passing much beyond the scope of economic cooperation. BRI has solid reliance on Chinese economic power and less on political power. Depending on consent, which is generated from the benefits of "public good", created by economic means, provided by China. There is not a unique ideology created for the system, but relying on liberal international values of free trade, non-interference, and respect to the sovereignties. The institutions which have been created until now are mostly financial institutions to regulate and sustain the economic relations in the system. Nevertheless, massive economic, social and political activities formed in networks are on their way to be turned into more comprehensive institutions, covering economic, political, social and even military relations. This transformation is inevitable and even loudly defended by Chinese academics nowadays.

The system is not yet visible in global scale, mostly regionally in Chinese periphery, but creating distant periphery zones as well, like Africa. Structurally it resembles with Tributary System in this sense. It differs with Neo-Gramscian Theory mainly due to its current heavy reliance on economic power, the important motives of legitimacy and prestige as source for the inner politics of Chinese regime aiming to be the architect of "China Dream", the objective of boosting poor Chinese Soft Power rather than using

the existing one to boost the system. BRI finely suits in the framework of the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the “public good” providing version. It is also well explainable with the World System Theory, as it has clear core-periphery structure and the Complex Interdependence Theory, as it aims to develop not only economic but all-inclusive relationships. BRI is also understandable in the context of globalization, but not imperialism, colonialism or empire.

China is not a “Tianxia Empire” anymore. The centrality of “Middle Kingdom” is now a nostalgic expression of historical Sinocentric pride. China is not a Marxist-Maoist revolution exporter country as well, just as much as it is not a “Confucian State”, dividing the human being in three categories of “Chinese, barbarians and beasts”. It is not a mighty hegemon of imperial Tributary System also. China is a modern state governed with Socialism, West originated ideology, having semi-capitalist economy, a dynamic society and pursuing modern international relations with the world.

Nevertheless, China’s power and rank in terms of influence increased dramatically. As the first five years of the BRI also showing, China cannot and will not be content with remaining as a moderate regional power. Chinese society and state have a big dream. Being a dominant power once again, firstly in the region and then in the world, is the pillar of the Chinese dream. That is why the structure and most of the characteristics of the Tributary System shows up in BRI, some in the same manner as before and some modernized.

This research claims that with such dramatic changes in cultural, social and political spheres since the imperial time, China has still strong connections with its long history, well-established political culture and philosophy, and it is gradually embracing the past by getting more affiliated with the historical values, just the same as it has happened every time it lost its way in chaotic historical experiences. After the turbulences of Century of Humiliation and Maoism, China one more time turned its face to its rich history to find guiding values. This does not mean ignoring the modern age they live in, but combining the modern values with the historical ones so as to create the most useful of the things in “Chinese Characteristics”. In BRI context it is seen that there are some persisting sides of imperial Tributary System and divergences due to the undeniable changes that came by the modern age.

The diverging points, derived from the comparison of Tributary System and BRI, are mainly as follows. Hierarchic relations are embedded deeply in the Chinese political culture. Equality and individualism are not appreciated values in Chinese ethics, even today. This is the fact China always reminds us of with the narrative of “harmony”. People seldom wonder what “harmony” means actually. In the Chinese understanding, “harmony” follows hierarchy in every aspects of the relations, person to person, person to officials, and so on. This mentality requires harmony “hierarchy” in country to country context also. However, in today’s realities former hierarchic relations are not possible. Thus, the country to country hierarchic relations will continue unofficially, just as it unofficially exists in the US-led liberal hegemony.

Another divergence is that China is not an introvert country and society anymore. China has learned the consequences of isolation very well in the Century of Humiliation and Maoist period. Compared to the imperial era, China has changed this attitude completely. With the BRI China now goes global. Soft Power is another diverging point. China has enjoyed a great soft power during most of its imperial history. Tributary System has significantly depended on Chinese Soft Power. However, China has very low Soft Power today and BRI is aiming to boost it.

Military presence is a diverging issue as well. China has not used military power in distant areas. The military was actively used, in case of the “core interests” were threatened. Today, however, the definition of “core interests” will cover the neighboring periphery circles first and then distant ones soon, in BRI context, with the intense investments and political rapprochements. China goes global now, and the stability of the periphery circles in vicinity or in distance, is forcing China to create a comprehensive security climate covering all “core interests” and this is something China never did before.

The persisting points, derived from the comparison of Tributary System and BRI, are basically the following. China is a country that has always been governed by authoritarian regimes, and this has not changed so far. In fact, the structure and mentality seem to have not changed much from Imperial China to PRC. The only difference was lack of historical memory in the Maoist era, though Mao himself was

highly traditional in some aspects. Chinese are recovering and restoring the historical memory nowadays. In the past this happened under authoritarian unquestionable imperial power, while today under the current government. The legitimacy and prestige in Chinese inner politics has been the major determinant of the foreign relations. Legitimacy and prestige have played much bigger roles than it should play. It has not changed much, legitimacy and prestige of inner politics, playing major role in foreign relations today. Sinocentric pride in culture has not changed much, but has transformed into a modern, as well as very strong, expression: nationalism.

The principle of “Wuwei” idleness, with its self-centric nature, has not changed much in foreign affairs. In its definition used in this research, China skillfully continues to ignore the problems of our planet as long as they do not pose a threat to China. China follows active policies in all known parts of Earth, but it is still very home-centric and the locale is much more important than distance for the country.

This research proposes that, considering a multi-polar world in the near future, China is likely to set up a comprehensive hegemonic system in its backyard and in the distant periphery circles, similarly to the inner and outer zones of Tributary System, rather than a real comprehensive global hegemony, the one US has set up. Both Tributary System and BRI do cover all the known world in their times, but both are focusing on neighboring regions. China is still very pragmatist as it was in the past. Taoist principle of adjusting and adopting “self” to the “nature”, rather than trying to change it, is well reflected in the Chinese values during all its history and it persists today. “Water” in Taoism is presented as a model for Chinese people to take lessons from. It follows the patterns of the course it flows in, takes the shape and direction it requires to do by the landscape, but always proceeds to the destination. Carrying the risk of infringing with “internationally excepted moral values”, Chinese moral values are not critical of being deceptive and pragmatic. The ancient Chinese war philosophy constantly depends on deceptive methods of reaching the target without war and confrontations and without presenting a firm stance of some values. China was like Taoist water in history. It made agreements, gave princesses and even tribute to the “barbarians” when needed to do so and adjusted the policies accordingly. In modern age, Mao’s twists between the superpowers and Deng’s deceptive “low profile” strategy are examples of the Taoist ethics.

In sum, the diverging points between Tributary System and BRI are: the nature of hierarchy in relations, China's introvert nature, the conditions of its Soft Power and the change in its military attitude; whereas the persisting points are: authoritarianism, the role of the legitimacy and prestige in foreign affairs, Sinocentric pride in culture, the principle of "Wuwei" with its self-centric nature, organizing the relations in the inner and outer zones and the role of pragmatism and deceptive policies. Finding this much similarities between the two systems, it would not be wrong to call the new hegemonic system as "Neo-Tributary System".

The world today is divided into two camps on China and its aims. The pessimist "China Threat" camp is warning the world to be aware of Chinese deceptive policies and implying that it will actually show the real intentions when it is too late to stop. The optimist "Peaceful China" camp is trying to convince the world that, just like any country, China is trying to get stronger and protect its interest in the best way possible (Ming X. , 2013). This research also suggests its own answer to this discussion.

What this research is proposing can be described through the mighty Yellow River. Keeping in mind Chinese pragmatism, China will be tender and promising when the conditions require to do so, the same as Yellow River does, tenderly flowing from the sources to the lower plateau. China will be following the conditions, with "low profile", even if it leads to odd directions, just like Yellow River makes odd moves to north, east and south. Finally, when there are no obstacles around anymore, it will be as it likes, being destructive to the threats against its interests or beneficial to the cooperators, just the same as Yellow River floods, which destroy everything when it arrives to the "central plain" without any obstacle around, but becomes rewarding by watering the fertile lands when it is content with the conditions. And during all this journey China is expected to keep the vagueness in actions and rhetoric, just the same as Yellow River flows in vague mud color until it reaches the destination.

In this vagueness the Confucian value of "benevolence" is the historical dynamic that promises peaceful international relations, first to the periphery and then to the World. However, the strong nationalism, the memories of Century of Humiliation, Taoist "water ethics" and Wuwei "idleness" are potentially posing threats to peace and

stability. Which path will be dominant and whether China is going to make a successful synthesis between these dynamics, will be seen only when China become real itself, without the limitation of any conditions in international relations, the same as Yellow River frees itself from the dictatorship of its course, after arriving to the “Central Plain”.

Finally, all the evaluations done until now are built on the assumption that the existing regime will continue to stay in power. If there is any regime change waiting for China in the future, perhaps there will be some changes in details, but it is not expected a big change in Chinese goals and strategies.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

SABAHATTİN ZAİM UNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Soyadı : DOĞAN
Adı : ASIM
Bölümü : Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler

Tezin Adı: HEGEMONY IN CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS: FROM TRIBUTARY
SYSTEM TO BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Tezin Türü: Doktora

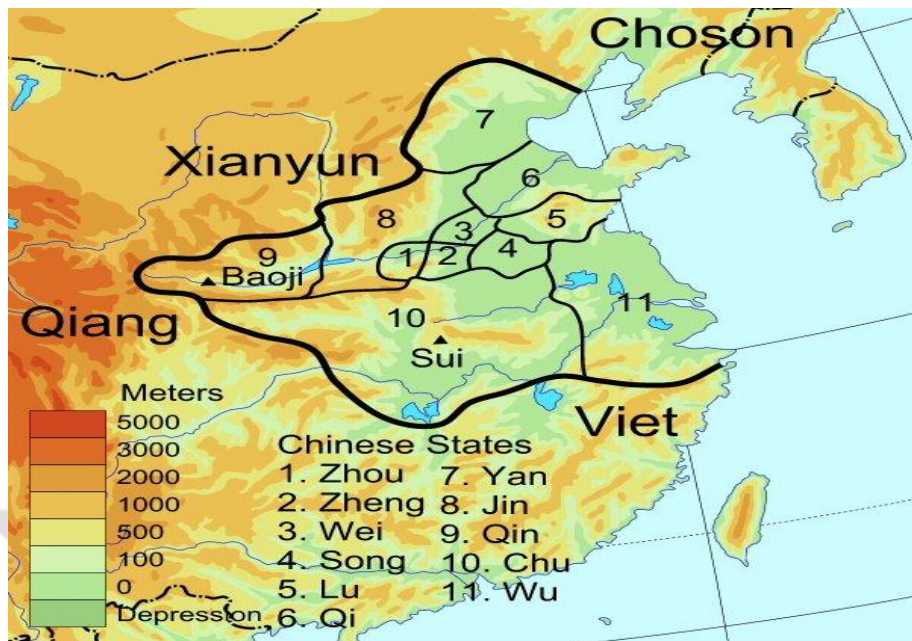
Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

ASIM DOĞAN

.....

APPENDIX B: TABLES AND PICTURES

Map I: Zhou Dynasty



(Source: Zhou Dynasty Territory, 2019, http://www.art-virtue.com/history/shang-zhou/Map_Zhou.jpg)

Map II: Ming China and Zhenghe's Route



(Source: The Ming Dynasty, July 2019, <http://ruizspieces.com/hist/1102.html>)

Figure I: Confucius



(Source: Alpha History, Mandate of Heaven and Confucianism, July 2019, <https://alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/mandate-of-heaven-confucianism/>)

Figure II: Oracle Bones



(Source: Academia Sinica, July 2019, http://museum.sinica.edu.tw/_upload/image/paragraph/large/619549783c61ca2b.jpg)

Figure III: Taoism (Yin-Yang)



(Source: Taos Experience, July 2019, <https://www.taosexperience.com>)

Figure IV: Hanfeizi



(Source: The East, July 2019, <http://www.theeast.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/08/1484.jpg>)

Figure V: May 4th Movement-1919



(Source: Totally History, July 2019, http://totallyhistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/may_fourth_movement.jpg)

Figure VI: Tianxia Cultural Center in Nanjing



(Source: Author's own photo collection)

Figure VII: Tiantan- The Temple of Shangdi (Tian)



(Source: Author's own photo collection)

Figure VIII: The Graveyard of Confucius-Qufu/Shandong



(Source: Author's own photo collection)

Figure IX: Lin Zexu (Yuanfu) (1785-1850). The commander burned UK Opium.



(Source: Author's own photo collection)

Figure X: Opium war in Humen



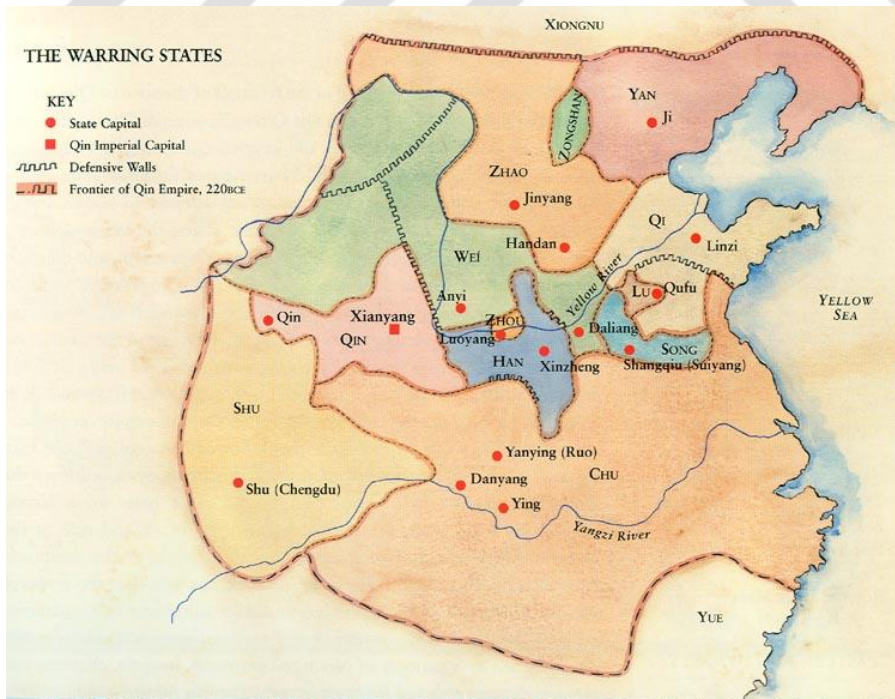
(Source: Author's own photo collection)

Figure XI: A Nomadic Attack



(Source: Ancient Origin, July 2019, <https://www.ancient-origins.net/sites/default/files/field/image/Mongol-attack.jpg>)

Map III: The Warring States



(Source: College of Liberal Arts, July 2019, <http://www.la.utexas.edu/dsena/courses/common/geography/historical/map-ws-color.jpg>)

Map IV: Ancient Silk Road



(Source: Huffington Post, July 2019, <http://i.huffpost.com/gen/3104500/images/o-SILK-ROAD-MAP-facebook.jpg>)

Map V: Yuan Dynasty



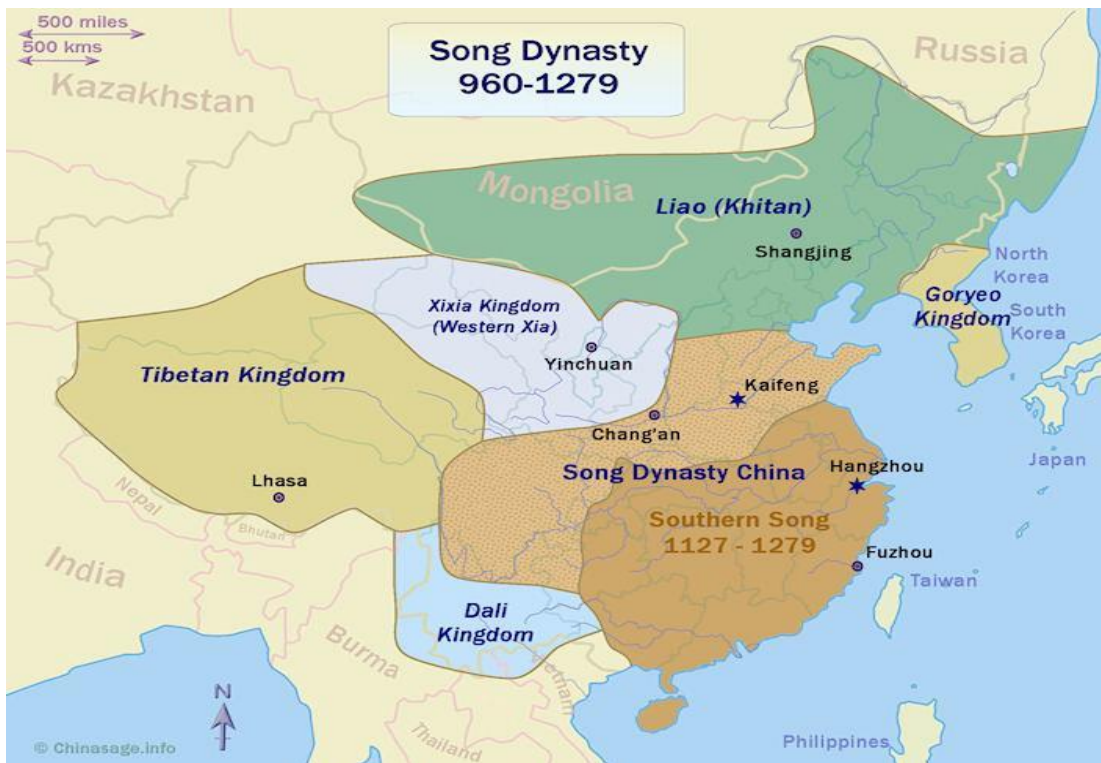
(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/maps/YuanDynasty.jpg>)

Figure XII: Imperial Examination in Song Dynasty



(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/song-dynasty.htm>)

Map VI: Song Dynasty



(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/song-dynasty.htm>)

Map IX: Xiongnu (Turkic Hun)



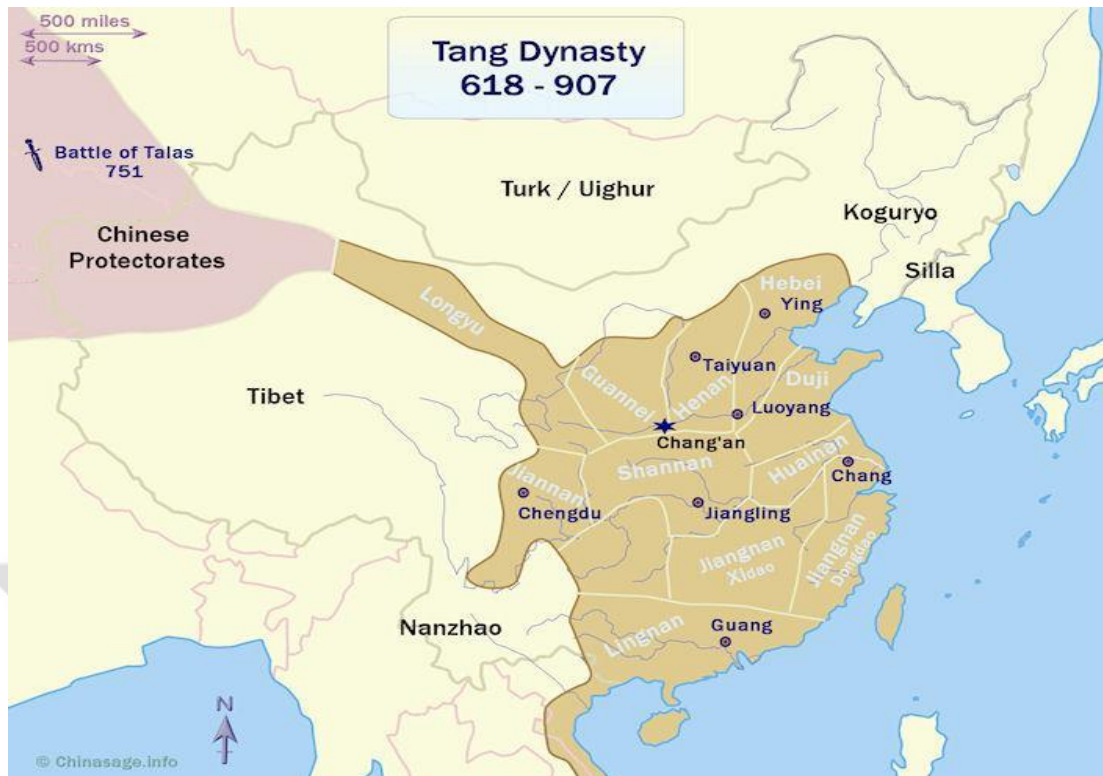
(Source: Hamag Mongol, July 2019, http://hamagmongol.narod.ru/pictures/maps/premongol/Asia_200_xiongnu.jpg)

Figure XIII: Laozi, The Founder of Taoism-Fujian



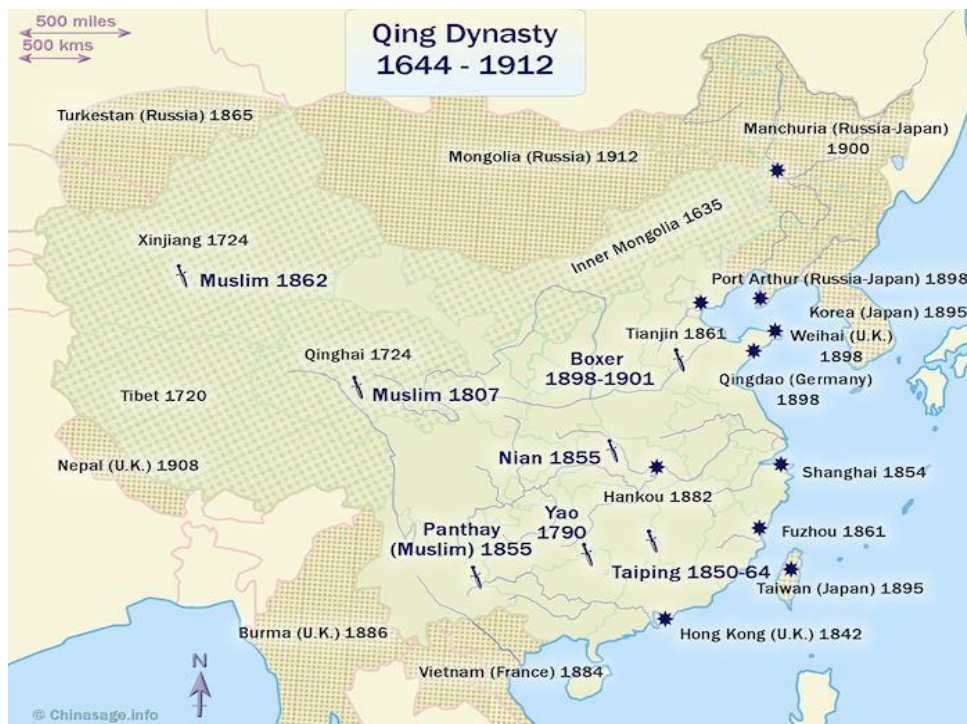
(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/daoism.htm#XL67>)

Map X: Tang Dynasty



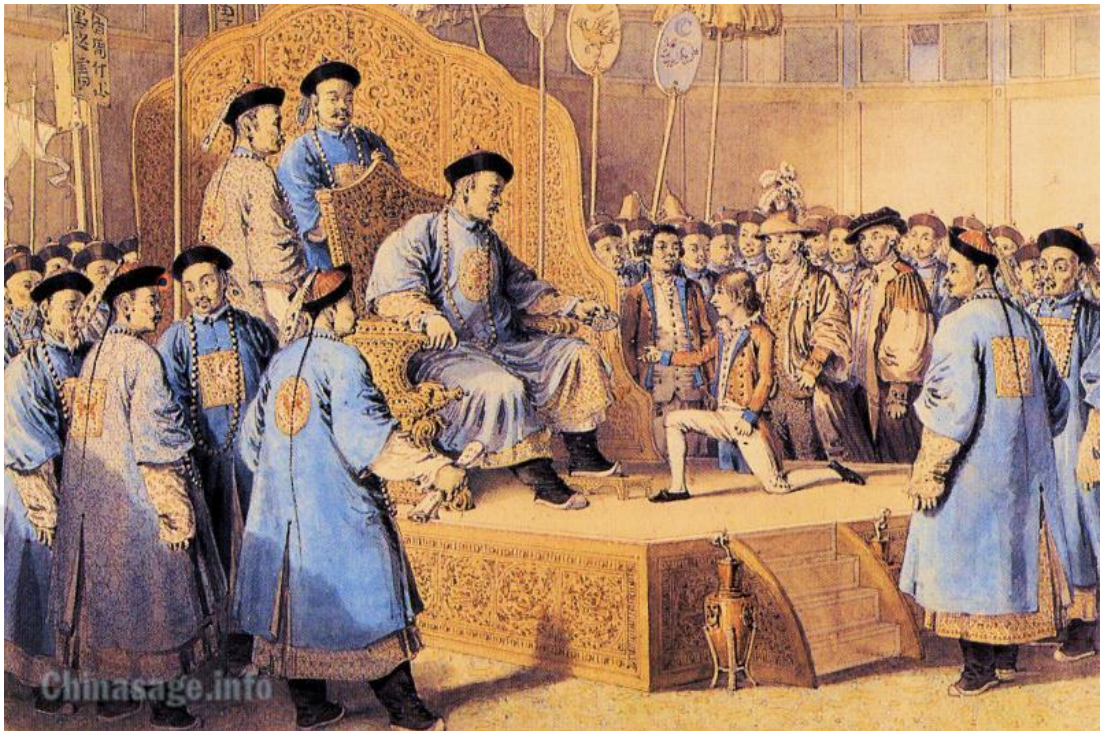
(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/tang-dynasty.htm>)

Map XI: Qing Dynasty



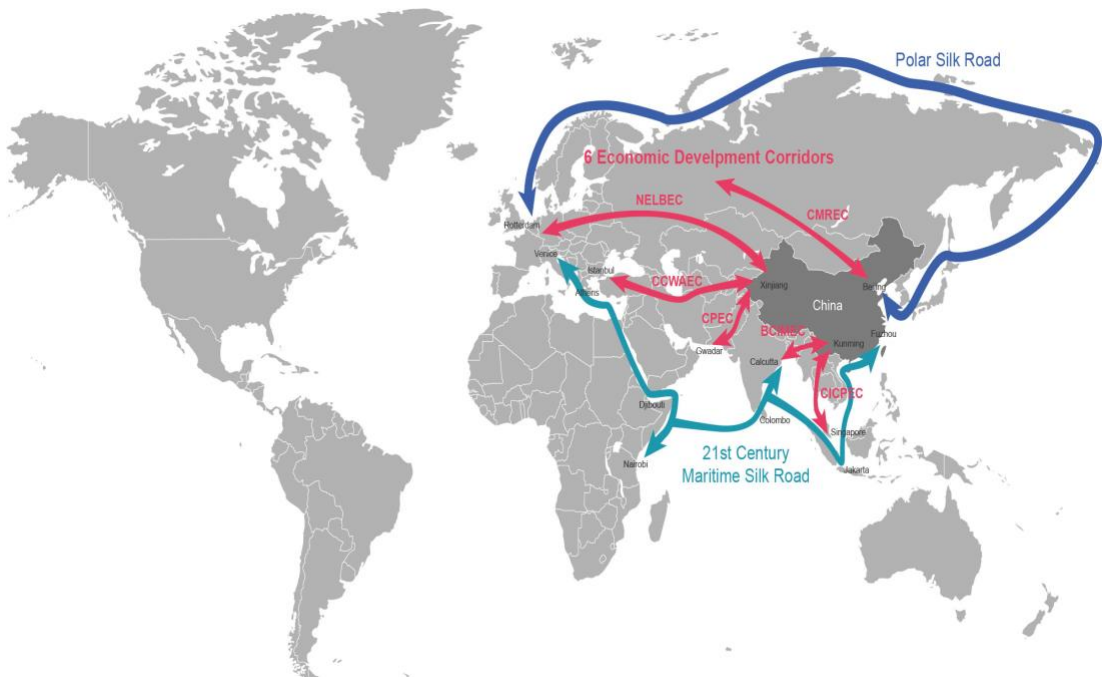
(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/qing-dynasty.htm>)

Figure XIV: Kowtowing Ceremony of Macartney



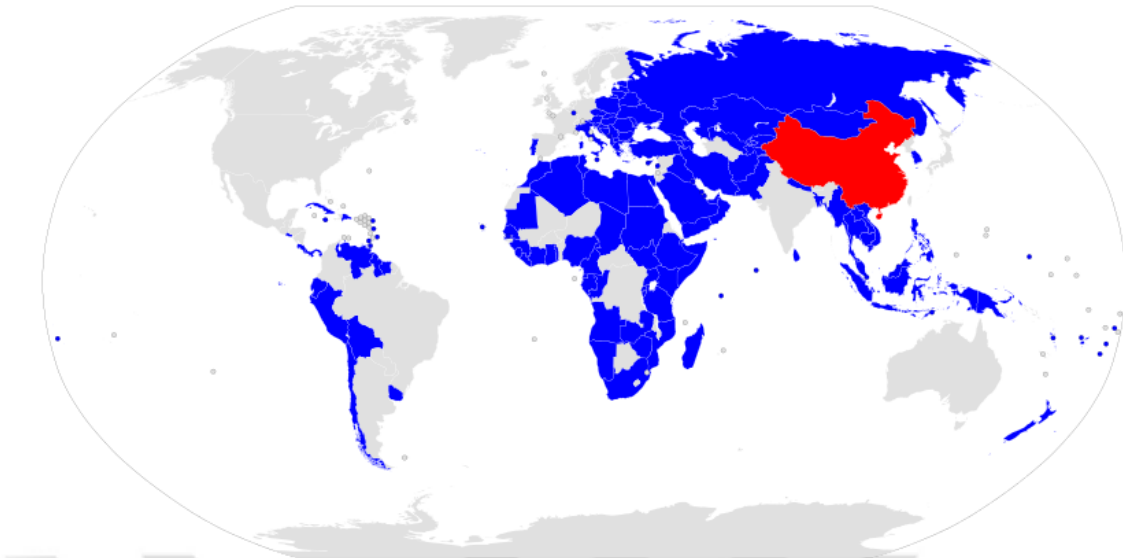
(Source: China Sage, July 2019, <http://www.chinasage.info/kowtow.htm>)

Map XII: Belt and Road Routes



(Source: Belt and Road Initiative, July 2019, https://www.beltroad-initiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/World-Map-Basis_sRGB.jpg)

Map XIII: Belt and Road Countries



(Source: Wikimedia, July 2019, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e5/Belt_and_Road_Initiative_participant_map.svg/800px-Belt_and_Road_Initiative_participant_map.svg.png)

Map XIV: Belt and Road in Pakistan



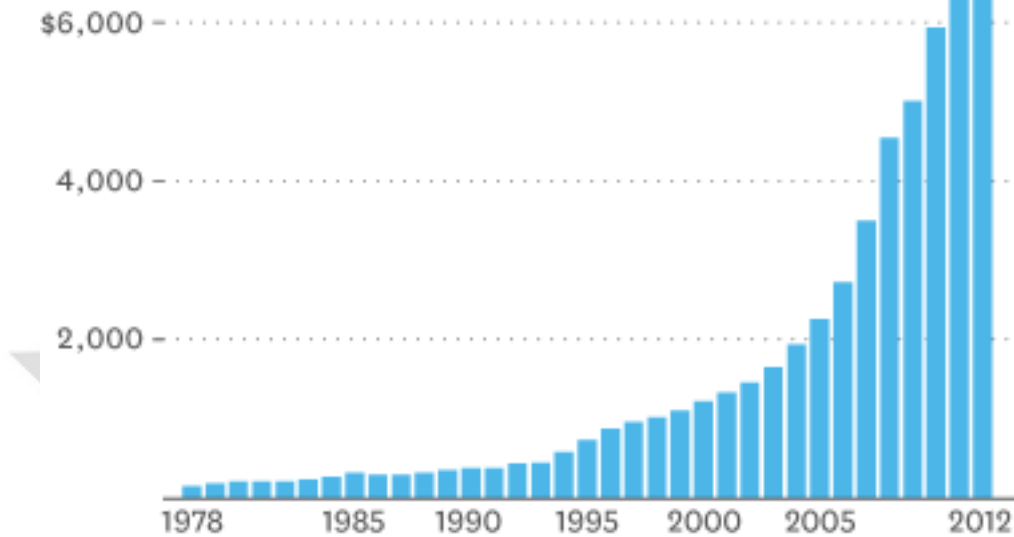
(Source: Innohabitat, July 2019, <http://innohabitat.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Belt-and-Road-Pakistan.png>)

Table I: China's GDP Rise

CHINA'S GDP

China's GDP has risen from less than \$150 billion in 1978 to \$8,227 billion in 2012.

BILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS
\$6,000 -

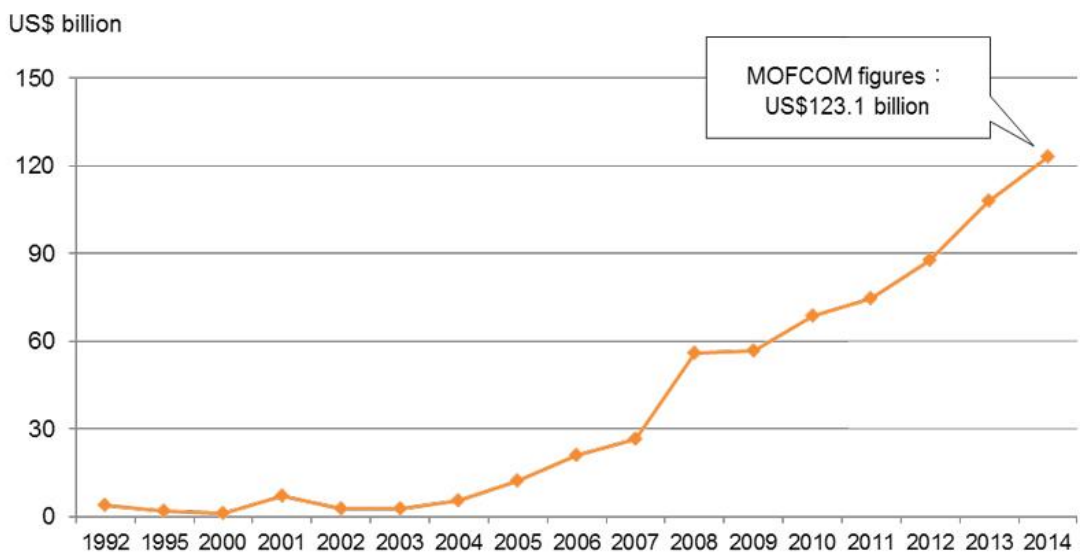


SOURCE WORLDBANK

HBR.ORG

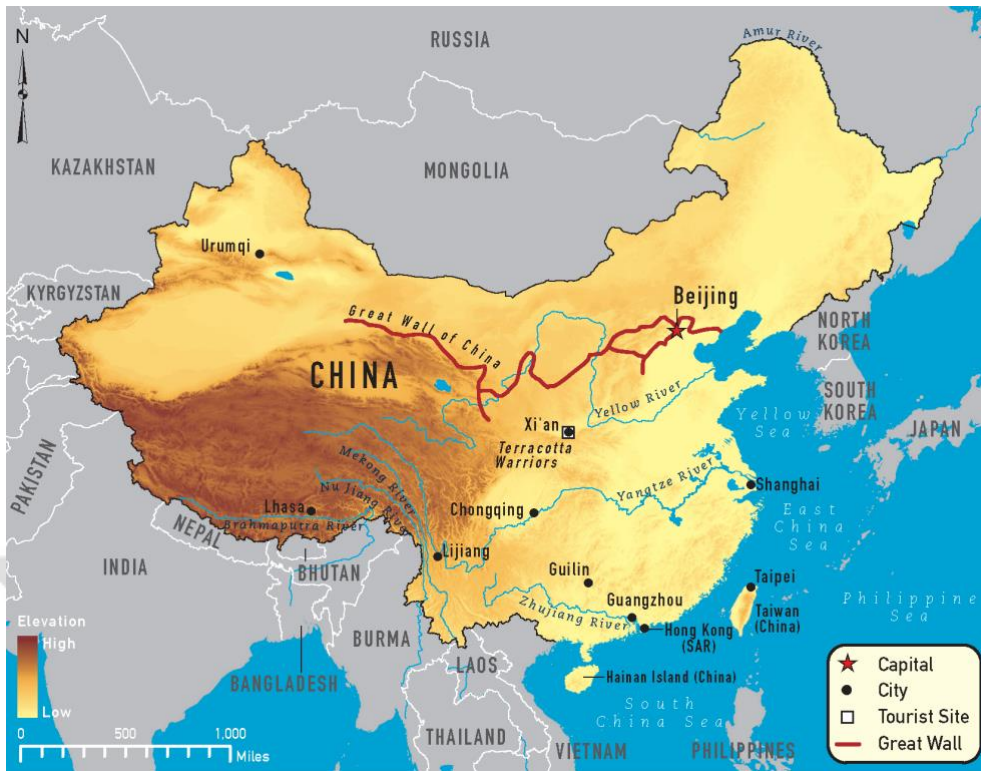
(Source: World Bank, July 2019, https://hbr.org/resources/images/article_assets/2013/11/nominalgdp.gif)

Table II: China's Outwards Foreign Direct BRI Investment



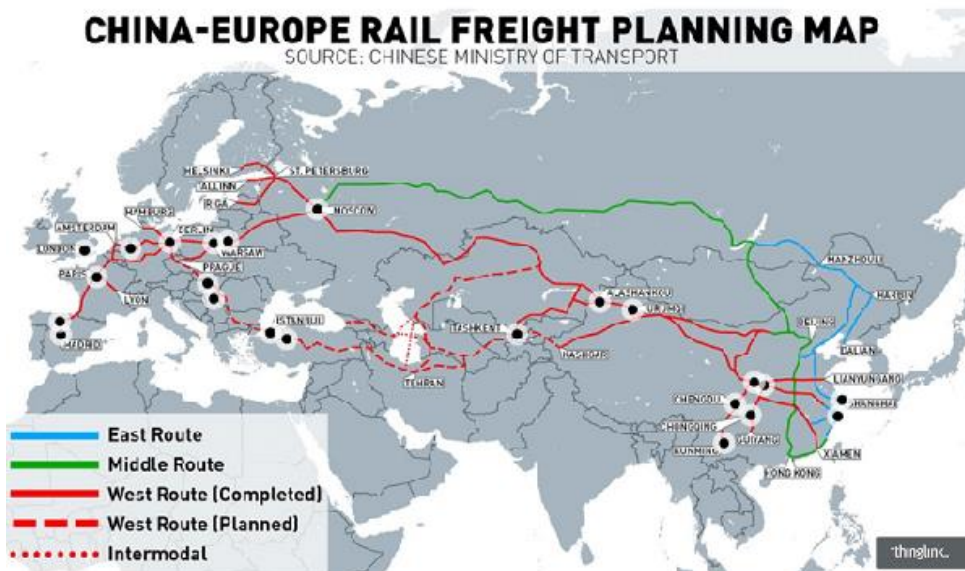
(Source: Ministry of Commerce, July 2019, http://economists-pick-research.hktdc.com/resources/MIL_Portal/Article/rp/2015/11/472055/1447139242495_eBRInvestment-c1_472055.jpg)

Map XV : Geographical Map of China and the Great Wall



(Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, July, 2019, https://www.cdc.gov/travel-static/yellowbook/2014/map_4-10.png)

Map XVI : China EU Rail Projects (Exp. 2020)



(Source: Silk Road Briefing, July 2019, <https://i1.wp.com/www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/China-EU-Map.png>)

APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM VITAE

Asım DOĞAN

A. EDUCATION

PhD : IZU, Political Science and International Relations, 2019, Istanbul.

MA : The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Government and Public Administration, 2005, Hongkong.

Bachelor: Middle East Technical University (METU), History, 2002, Ankara.

B. ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Research and Papers:

1. European Security & Defense Identity and Turkey, (2002, Middle East Technical University)
2. European Integration, (2002, Middle East Technical University)
3. Book Review: “Türkiye’de Sekülerizm ve Modernlik” Andrew Davidson (2002, Middle East Technical University)
4. The Impact of Land Reform on Political development of Taiwan (2003, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
5. China-EU Security Relations in Post-Cold War Era. How necessary is a Strategic Partnership for both sides? (2004, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
6. European Security after the Cold War Era: International Terrorism (2004, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
7. China’s Response to her Emerging Civil Society: The Case of Social Organizations (2005, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
8. Selected Topics on Hong Kong Studies: “Many people argue that the local elections are over-regulated. The Electoral Affairs Commission has intervened

too much. Do you agree or not? What should be the proper roles and functions of this body? (2005, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

9. Hong Kong Administrative Law Case Assignment: The Case of Lo Siu Lan vs. Housing Authority (2005, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
10. Case Study in Hong Kong Judiciary: Discuss on Pros and Cons of the Private/Public Law Dichotomy and Draw your own Conclusion as to the Legal Soundness of the Doctrine. Discuss the Hong Kong Judicial Standard of “Irrationality” (Unreasonableness) and how it has been applied in Judicial Review cases. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this standard of review? Do you believe that the standard should be maintained, modified or discarded? Why? Discuss the Procedural Safeguards which you believe are important. Discuss the circumstances under which such safeguards should be triggered. Why? (2005, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
11. Islam, Human Rights and Multiculturalism, (2016, Istanbul Sebahattin Zaim University)
12. Multiculturalism in Europe and Islam, (2016, Istanbul Sebahattin Zaim University).
13. New Age Movement, 2016, Istanbul Sebahattin Zaim University.
14. Kemalizm, (2016, Istanbul Sebahattin Zaim University)
15. Comparison of China-Taiwan Political Cultures, (2017, Istanbul Sebahattin Zaim University).

C. INTERESTS

Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese Political Culture, Chinese Foreign Policy, Chinese Late Imperial and Modern History, Soft Power in International Relations, Hegemony, Security, Power, International Organizations, Hongkong Administration, Taiwan Issues, Ottoman History, European History, European Union, Turkish Modernization, Turkish Foreign Policy...