ISTANBUL SABAHATTIN ZAIM UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

THESIS PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDELINE

Prepared by

Prof. Dr. Ömer ÇAHA

Principal of Institute of Social Sciences

Presentation

This guideline has been prepared to set principles and guide students for writing their graduate thesis proposals and doctoral dissertation proposals at a department under the Institute of Social Sciences of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. Students who have completed their courses submit a thesis proposal and a thesis form to the Institute. After thesis proposals are accepted by the Institute, students gain the right to start their thesis.

There are certain sections that need to be presented in a thesis proposal. These are the subject of the thesis, the significance and originality of the thesis, scope and contents of the thesis, the method of investigating the thesis subject and literature analysis. Each of these sections is written to illuminate questions such as what the thesis subject is, why it is selected, what questions it will seek to answer and what function in the literature it will play. The thesis proposal indicates that a student has a grasp of his or her thesis subject, content, pattern, problem, method, related literature and the need in the literature.

Doctoral dissertation proposal has the same sections with the proposal of graduate thesis and both are prepared with the same logic. However, the master thesis proposal is shorter and narrower than the doctoral thesis proposal. It is expected that the graduate thesis proposal should be around 7-10 pages (about 2-3 thousand words) and the doctorate dissertation proposal should be around 15-25 pages (about 5-7 thousand words).

In addition to the ones written here, it is also beneficial for students to look at the attached templates of graduate thesis proposals and doctoral dissertation proposals.

SECTIONS OF THE THESIS PROPOSAL

1. Thesis Subject

In this section, the student should demonstrate the subject of the thesis in plain, clear and understandable academic language. This is not a section to be described with only a single sentence. In order to understand what the thesis is about the themes and issues of the thesis should be explained clearly. The student may begin the section with an anecdote, a striking expression or an issue to make his/her thesis subject more interesting. Then he/she should outline what the subject is and what it contains.

2. The Purpose of the Thesis Subject

Every study has one or more purposes. Every study wants to reach an aim or serves some purpose. The selected thesis subject is also considered to serve a specific purpose. A thesis may have more than one purpose. The student should describe what he/she intends by choosing that particular thesis subject, which question will be answered, or which practical problem will be illuminated through this study.

3. The Scope and Content of the Thesis

This is the section in which the thesis is described in detail. The student here should clearly illustrate the thesis design, the scope and the content of the thesis subject clearly. Questions should be answered here such as which problem the thesis deals with, which questions it will seek to answer, under which limitations it will be made, and the assumptions upon which it is based. However, there are also concepts which are related to the subject and what the student means with regard to these concepts.

In this section, the student also writes which questions he/she will seek to answer. A thesis should have one or more essential questions and sub-questions related to it. It is important that these questions are written as points. If an empirical study will be made based on numerical data to be obtained from the field, a hypothesis related to each question will be developed and it will be included in this section.

4. Importance and Originality of the Thesis

The student should express the significance of the thesis in plain academic language. This section includes questions such as why there is a need for this particular subject, what gap it will fill in the literature, what contribution it will make to the literature, how it will contribute to the theoretical discussions, and which social problems it will shed light upon. Apart from the writing, what strengthens a thesis is its originality and subject. A subject that is not addressed by someone else while it is needed is regarded as an original thesis subject.

5. The Research Method of the Thesis

One of the important sections that should be included in the thesis proposal is the research method that will be used in the research process. The student may adopt an appropriate research method or technique. One or more of the techniques such as literature review, discourse analysis, content analysis, in-depth interview, observation or questionnaire can be used in the research. It is important to give a convincing explanation of which method is the most appropriate method for investigating the thesis topic and why this method is chosen. However, the methodological limitations of the research such as what the expected risks are, and how the thesis will overcome these risks must also be included in this section.

6. Literature Analysis Related to the Thesis Subject

One of the sections that should absolutely be found in the thesis proposal is the part where the literature analysis takes place. In the literature analysis, the student tries to justify his thesis by showing the gap in the literature. From the literature analysis, three outlines are expected: Basic concepts about the subject, major approaches and the gap in the related literature. The literature analysis in the thesis proposal contains a summary of the main literature on the topic, not necessarily the entire literature. A two to three pages summary of the literature is considered sufficient for the master thesis. However, in doctoral dissertations, it is expected that the literature analysis should be more extensive and may be composed of 5-10 pages. The student may also use the analysis of the literature in the theoretical framework of the thesis. In this respect, the literature analysis of the thesis proposal phase is the preparation for writing the thesis.

7. Design of the Thesis

In the design section of the thesis proposal, chapters of the thesis are briefly introduced. The outline of each section, except the introduction and conclusion chapters, is explained. If the student has shaped the draft of the thesis, this draft can also be shared under the heading of the "thesis design" in the thesis proposal. In this case, each chapter in the draft is given with subheadings as well as main headings. If the main headings and sub-headings of the thesis are formed, it is appropriate to write the chapter of "Table of Contents". The student may make changes in the Table of Contents if he/she considers it necessary in the thesis writing process.

8. Schedule of the Thesis Study

The schedule of the thesis study is given to show which work packages will be allocated for the thesis. The period for the graduate thesis is 12 months, and the period for the doctorate dissertation is 24 months. However, depending on the student's performance, the student may shorten or extend this period within the possibilities recognized by the "Graduate Regulation". Ph.D. students must submit three six (6) month interval progress reports to the monitoring jury. The progress reports must be approved by the monitoring jury so that they (Ph.D. candidates) can continue the rest of their study.

9. Brief Bibliography Related to the Thesis Subject

The bibliography in the thesis proposal consists of the basic sources used in the proposal text. In order to give an idea beyond the resources used directly, some sources of the related field of the thesis subject may be included in the source. However, there is no need to share all of the resources that will be used later.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR GRADUATE THESIS PROPOSAL

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University
Institute of Social Sciences
Department of Political Science and International Relations

ELECTORAL STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND IMPACTS ON BEHAVIOR OF VOTERS: THE CASE OF 2019 LOCAL ELECTIONS IN USKUDAR

MA Thesis Proposal

By

Ahmet Kayacan

1. Thesis Subject

The subject of this thesis is to study electoral mobilization strategies of political parties in the 2019 local elections and their impact on electorate behavior. During the three months before election, campaigns of two great parties in Turkey, one from the center right spectrum and one from the center left spectrum, in the city of Usküdar in Istanbul, and the impact of these campaigns on the electorate behavior will be studied. The Justice and Development Party (AK Party) representing the center-right and the Republican People's Party (CHP) representing the center-left will be considered as the subject of the research and the strategies for providing electorate support of these two parties will be investigated locally. In order to test the impact of the campaigns on the electorate's behavior, a survey will be conducted on a sample group of 1,000 voters in Üsküdar one week after the election.

2. The Purpose of the Thesis

In democratic systems, political parties constitute the highest institutions of social representation. Elections are the means of parties to interact with the community and to obtain authority through presenting their goals and programs. Elections are mechanisms that transfer electorate's expectations, values, and political convictions through the political parties to the system. Political parties share their programs, plans and projects with the voters through elections. There is a great scientific value to determine whether or not there is a difference between the campaigns at the national level and the campaigns at the regional level and also the differences between their formal campaigns and the informal campaigns and if there are where these differences originate. The main objective of the research is to identify these issues with over the example of the 2019 local elections.

3. The Scope and Content of the Thesis

The history of the separation of two main axes in the form of center right and center left of Turkish politics can be traced until the last period of Ottoman Empire. By the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period, the two main political factions are formed around the Union and Progress with Freedom and Entente. These two factions have continued to exist as the two main axes of the politics in the Republic of Turkey. It is an accepted approach that during the Republican era, while parties of the center-left (CHP, Populist Party, SHP, DSP) have followed the line of Union and Progress, parties which had erupted in the center-right (Progressive

Republican Party, SCF, DP, AP, ANAP, DYP and Ak Party) have followed the politics of Freedom and Entente. The fault line between these two political factions has showed changes. It has sometimes deepened depending on the developments in the world and conjecture in Turkey and sometimes it has become closer to each other.

Local elections are naturally the elections which are awaited for the disappearance of the deep fault line between left politics and right politics. Because, in local elections, municipal services directly determine the competition between the parties rather than political and ideological separations. However, there are serious doubts about whether the case is like that in Turkey's local elections. In Turkey, parties have parallel discourses in the local and general elections. And this is seen that it is largely formed around the ideological debates and engagements.

3.1 Basic Questions of the Thesis

In regard to the thesis focuses on a local election, researching what sort of discourses, tactics, and strategies are parties follow and how the constituents are responded in these sorts of election is the main subject the study concentrated on. Two questions are significant to underline that regard:

1. What kind of mechanisms and means are used by the political parties in Turkey to collect votes in local elections; what sort of tactics and strategies are they conducting?
2. How much influence the campaigns carried out by the parties have on electorate; how much of the electorate is affected by these campaigns?

To find out answer for the first question, the election campaigns of the AK Party and the CHP's Üsküdar will be followed three months before the election. All activities of the parties (public meetings, public speeches, rallies, coffee visits, home visits, gift and gift distribution work, promotional activities at the election coordination center, publicity in local media etc.) will be studied in detail.

In order to seek answer for the second question of the study, a survey over a sample group of 1000 voters will be conducted at the end of the week following the election to determine the level of impacts of the campaigns run by the parties on the electorate.

3.2. Thesis Hypothesis / Hypotheses

There are two basic hypotheses that our thesis develops depending on the questions it is investigating:

1. Political parties are trying to collect votes through their ideological discourses rather than local issues.
2. Campaigns carried out during the election have no impact on electorate; the election campaign cannot change electorate's choice because the electorate has already been gathered around certain parties.

There are two main reasons why we will conduct the research in Uskudar. The first one is that Uskudar is the oldest settlement of Istanbul and it is currently home to a population of about 500 thousand. Secondly, it appears that the political preference in Üsküdar was gathered around and supported the parties in the center (either right or left) in general. The two parties in the study have close vote ratios to each other in this district.

4. The Importance and Original Contribution of the Thesis Subject

The most important issue that adds an originality value to the study is that this research will study together with the influence on the behavior of the electorate from the beginning to the end of the campaign of the two parties in a district where we assume that Istanbul represents the best.

Either only a campaign of a party has been done out in the studies carried out until now (Kardam and Tüzün, 1998; Akgün, 2002; Çaha, 2004; Kaya, 2004; Turan, 2004; Kalaycıoğlu, 2005; Tosun and Tosun, 2008) or be contented with the general discourse analysis of parties before elections.

This research, which aims to examine an election that will be taken place in Istanbul with taking into account all the stages before the election. It also has a "first" and "original" feature because at the same time it is examining the impact of campaign on the electorate.

5. The Research Method of the Thesis

In our thesis study, a mixed method will be followed to serve the purpose of the research. In this context, the research will be built on four pillars of research, namely "literature review", "campaign follow-up", "survey" and "qualitative research". In the study, ideological and

political analysis of the two parties will be done first. In the analysis of the political parties, the factors that distinguish the parties from each other are generally accepted as such as the programs of the parties, the statutes, the speeches of the party leaders, and the election declarations. From there, a comprehensive program and statute analysis of the two parties will take place.

Secondly, in order to examine the election tactics of the two parties, in addition to the election greetings, the rhetoric and themes used during the campaign, the promises to electorate, the issues they are criticizing, the problems they express and the ways in which they voice their problems will be analyzed. The slogans, values, accents and themes that the two parties put forward in the billboard, banners and posters in the city will be analyzed in this context.

Thirdly in the study, a survey will be conducted on the voters in Üsküdar in the first week after the election. This research will be conducted through a face-to-face interview based on a sample of 1000 people selected using scientific sampling techniques.

After the field part of the research is completed, all the information gathered (voice and video recordings, interviews, photographs, all documents and surveys distributed by the parties) will be evaluated and interpreted by establishing a link to the theoretical framework to be converted into a systematic report

6. Literature Review Related to the Thesis Subject

We may say that studies of political parties in Turkey is generally based on three common trends.

The first of these is the studies that make theoretical analyzes based on the programs and regulations of the parties (Hale, 2002; Akgün, 2002; Turgut, 2003; Turan 2004).

Secondly, studies which are making statistical and numerical analaysis (Kaya, 2004; Tuncer, 2003, Çaha, et al., 1999).

Third, studies which are making empirical classifications based on the party preference of electorate (Eg Erder, 1996; Kalaycıoğlu, 1999; Tosun 2003).

Undoubtedly each of these approaches present evidences about general political structure of Turkey, particularly, they represent important clues about the structure and the party system in Turkey.

However, there is not an integrated study which is comprehensively considering election campaigns with their local level endeavors and interrelating the overlap of electorate preference with the election results in Turkey. One of the studies on election campaigns was made by A. J. Secor (2001). Secor followed the 1995 general election campaigns and made important determinations about party politics and voter behaviors. Among these, the determination of non-existing linear relationship between political stance and economic policies of parties comes. Therefore, a right-left separation in Turkey cannot be derived from this point.

Secor's study has a method that resembles the research we have planned. This study, however, was limited to the campaigns in the press and to the general discourse used in the 1995 general elections. It must be mentioned in this context, the limited number of studies on the election campaigns in Turkey, approaches to the issue within the framework of the general advertising effectiveness (for example, Ozkan, 2002).

Recently, electorate behavior has begun to stand out as an important criterion in the study of the political parties and social base of political parties in Turkey. The study of Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (1999) is a remarkable work in this sense.

Kalaycıoğlu makes analyzes, especially based on the shifts of the electorate behavior after 1990. He identifies out that electorate behavior and party politics has shifted toward the axis of traditional, religious and ethnic values in the post-1990 period.

Çarkoğlu (2008), Çarkoğlu and Hinich (2006) have reached a similar result in February and March 2001 based on a survey of urban electorate. According to these studies, there are two axes that pull the wires of the ideological structure of the Turkish party system. One of these is secularism, which has a dominant character against Islamism. This distinction largely overlaps with the central-periphery distinction in Turkish political structure.

There are two important studies examining the relationship between the socio-economic situations on the one hand and electorate behavior on the other in a city. By analyzing the general election results of 1999 and 2002, Zeyneloglu (2006) has mapped the distribution of votes of the parties on the neighborhood details of Istanbul province. He also explored the relationship between the distribution of electorate behavior on the space and the distribution of socio-economic characteristics of the population. A similar study was conducted by Tosun and Tosun (2008) on the province of İzmir by evaluating the results of 2002 and 2007 general elections

Studies about what are the factors in the electorate's party preference are significant. One such

study draws attention to the effect of language on the regional basis (White and Jongerden, 2002). The researchers have determined, based one of their study in Ümraniye, that politics through the instrument of local language (vernacular politics) has an important influence on the electorate's party preference in Turkish political life.

In short, from the analyzes tried to be given above, it is noteworthy that the studies about the Turkish political parties are concentrated in a few points. Firstly, these studies are carried out through a limited number of sample campaigns and these studies are mostly based on election notices and media advertisements (Özkan 2002). Secondly, some of the studies carried out, only the declarations of the persons authorized by the political parties' and programs and regulations are considered as the main issue.

From this point of view, it seems that there is an important gap in the examination of an election campaign from the beginning to the end to include all its phases. In addition to this, there is a serious need for a study driven by the political parties' informal strategies with formal strategies and national discourse with regional discourse. This thesis will fill this gap in essence.

7. Design and Structure of the Thesis

Our thesis study will consist of four chapters. The first chapter will include general discussions and approaches about political parties and their election campaigns to establish a theoretical framework. In this context, it will focus on the divisions between the parties, election campaigns and patterns of using communication tools in campaigns and factors that affect electorate behavior.

In the second chapter of the study, we will examine the election campaigns of the AK Party and the CHP's at 2019 local elections in Üsküdar County. Meetings, rallies, visits to tradesman, media advertisements, poster and flag studies, gift and promotional distribution activities performed by the parties during the election process will be analyzed in this context.

In the third chapter of the study, analyzes of the survey conducted to study the reaction of the electorate to election campaigns will be given. From the findings obtained, answers to the research questions will be searched and the research hypotheses will be tested.

At the last chapter of the study, by collating data and findings obtained in the research process with the approaches set out in the theoretical framework, evaluations and discussions will be given about strategies of local election campaigns of parties and its impacts on electorate in

Turkey.

8. Schedule of the Thesis Study

I plan to accomplish my thesis study in 12 months. The six months will be spent to the literature review and campaigns of political parties and the other six months will be left to the analysis of data obtained through investigation and thesis writing. The detailed schedule that I plan is seen as in the following table.

Table 1: Schedule of Study

Work Packages	**Duration**
Literature review and writing of theoretical framework	3 Months
Following and noting campaign activities	3 Months
Encoding of data, decryption, system entry and analysis	3 Months
Reporting and writing	3 Months
Total	**12 Months**

As the thesis study is divided into certain periods of time through the work packages, the research will be done altogether, and all work packages will be carried out at the same time. However, the main work of study will be as seen on the schedule tables.

REFERENCES

Akgün, Birol (2002), *Türkiye'de Seçmen Davranışı, Partiler Sistemi Ve Siyasal Güven*. Ankara: Nobel.

Çaha, Ömer (1999), "18 Nisan Seçimleri: Kazananlar ve Kaybedenler". *Liberal Düşünce Dergisi*, Fall, pg. 44-73.

Çaha, Ömer (2003), "Turkish Election of the 2002 and the Rise of Moderate Islam". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 2, 1.

Çaha, Ömer, Metin Toprak ve İbrahim Dalmış (2004), "Seçmenin Parti Tercihinde Rol Oynayan Faktörler: Kırıkkale Örneği". Çaha, Ömer (der), *Seçmen Davranışı ve Siyasal Partiler*, Istanbul: Fatih University, 2004-

Çarkoğlu, Ali (2008) "Ideology and Economic Pragmatism?: Profiling Turkish Voters in 2007".

Turkish Studies 9, 2.

Çarkoğlu, Ali and Ergen İLGAZ (1999) "The Rise of Right-of-Center Parties and The Nationalization of Electoral Forces in Turkey". *New Perspectives on Turkey* 20.

Erder, Necat (1996), *Türkiye'de Siyasi Parti Seçmenlerinin Nitelikleri, Kimlikleri ve Eğimleri*, Ankara: TÜSES, 1996.

Erder, Necat ve Sezgin TÜZÜN (ed.) (2004), *Türkiye'de Seçmen Eğilimlerinde Yeni Açılımlar (1994-2004)*, TÜSES, İstanbul.

Esmer, Yılmaz (1995), "Parties and the Electorate: a Comparative Analysis of Voter Profiles of Turkish Political Parties". In BALIM, Cığdem, *Turkey--Political, Social, and Economic Challenges in The 1990s,* Leiden, New York : E.J. Brill, 1995.

Hale, William (2002), "Democracy and Party System in Turkey". In Beeley, Brian (ed.), *The Turkish Transformation: New Century-New Challanges,* Walkington: The Eothen Press 2002.

Hazama, Yasushi (2003), "Social Cleaveges and Electoral Support in Turkey: Toward Convergence?". *The Developing Economies,* 41, 3.

Kalaycioğlu, Ersin (1999), "The Shaping of Party Preferences in Turkey: Coping With the Post-Cold War Era". *New Perspectives on Turkey* 20.

Kalaycioğlu, Ersin (2005), *Turkish Dynamics, Bridge Accross Troubled Lands*, New York: Palgrave.

Kalaycioğlu, Ersin (2008), "Attitudinal Orientation to Party Organizations in Turkey in the 2000s". *Turkish Studies* 9,2.

Kardam, Ahmet ve Sezgin TÜZÜN (1998), *Türkiye'de Siyasi Kutuplaşmalar ve Seçmen Davranışları*, Ankara: Veri Araştırma.

Kaya, Kamil (2004), *Yerel Seçimler, Seçmen Davranışı Etkileyen Faktörler (Isparta Örneği)*, Fakülte, Isparta.

Lijphart, Arend (1994), *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: a Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990,* Oxford: OUP.

Özbudun, Ergun (2004), *2002 Seçimleri Işığında Türk Siyasetinde Eğilimler*, Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi.

Özcan, Y. Ziya (2000), "Determinants of Political Behavior in Istanbul, Turkey". *Party Politics*

6 (4).

Özkan, Necati (2002), *Seçim Kazandıran Kampanyalar*, İstanbul: MediaCat.

Secor, A.J. (2001), "Ideologies in Crisis: Political Cleavages and Electoral Politics in Turkey in the 1990s". *Political Geography* 20.

Tosun, Gülgün E. and Tanju Tosun (2008) "Voter Preference in İzmir from the November 2, 2002 to the July 22, 2007 Elections: Has the Election Map Altered?". *Turkish Studies* 9 (2).

Tosun, Tanju (2003), *Siyasette Yeniden Mevziler*, İstanbul: Büke.

Tuncer, Erol, Coşkun KASAPBAŞ, Bülent TUNCER (2003), *Seçim 2002: 3 Kasım 2002 Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri: Sayısal ve Siyasal Değerlendirme*, Ankara : TESAV.

Turan, Ali Eşref (2004), *Türkiye'de Seçmen Davranışı, Önceki Kırılmalar ve 2002 Seçimi*, İstanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University.

Turgut, Mehmet (2003), *18 Nisan 1999 ve 3 Kasım 2002 Genel Seçimleri Değerlendirmesi*, Boğaziçi, Istanbul.

White, Paul J and Joost JONGERDEN (ed.) (2003), *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview*, Leiden: EJ Brill.

Zeyneloğlu, Sinan (2006), "İstanbul'un seçim coğrafyası: 1999-2002". *Toplum ve Bilim* 107.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR PhD DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University
Institute of Social Sciences
Department of Political Science and International Relations

HEGEMONY IN CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS:

FROM TRIBUTARY SYSTEM TO BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

PhD Thesis Proposal

By

Asım Doğan

1. Research Topic

China has been an important country during its whole history. It has undeniable contribution to the development of civilization in the world. The relative recession in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may put this fact in shadow, however, the recent amazing development performance put China back to its rightful place of attention. “Rising China” rhetoric brings a lot of doubts about the awakening giant’s future intensions. Since the world has not much clear and don’t have much right knowledge of “nearly everything” about China, it causes confusion and distress about its growth. Therefore, “Rising China” arguments often is speculated into “China Threat”.

How the Asian Giant will treat the neighbors and others when it got enough power to dominate? What kind of values or incentives will manage its intensions? Can we expect Chinese future engagements to be more predictable? These questions have already occupied a large space in agendas of politicians, scholars, business professionals and academics for a long time.

As one of those attempts to make Chinese motives more predictable, this research will investigate and analyses the hegemony perception of China through the Imperial Tributary System and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

I have chosen the Tributary System as it is a unique international relations practice, which matches with Chinese traditional identity and culture well. Tributary system will help us to figure out how China was handling its relations with neighbors and others in the imperial time. Belt and Road Initiative as the most recent game changing move made by China, has the potential of being Chinese grand strategy (Flynt & Wu, 2016) for the coming long years. In order to anticipate the coming moves of China it will be wisest way to focus on Belt and Road Initiative and keep in mind the imperial practice of Tributary relations.

For the people who distinguish China with its Maoist or socialist identity, Tributary System may not be a good reference point to analyze or to predict Chinese actions in today’s context. However, for the ones following recent developments in China and have ability and chance of intensive comprehension of Chinese recent evolution in state mentality will definitely detect that China has left “exporting” Maoism and for a long time till now not a dedicated ideological socialist country anymore. Chinese are pragmatic in every approaches. That is the reason why most of the topics related to China are defined as “in Chinese characteristics”. The gap left by Maoist ideology is nowadays filled by Confucianism and imperial codes of conducting the state affairs.

China is quietly turning to its glorious past and shaking hand with most of the values shaped its past. Just as it happened many times during its long history, China again showing strong signs of returning to past to get out of the current turmoil. This is just the main point for me to choose Tributary system to analyze.

Belt and Road Initiative is a massive infrastructure project, which the world first heard from Xi Jinping in 2013. Since then a large literature has been created by many scholars and academics on this subject. The project is mainly resembled to Marshall Plan of USA in 1947 by a number of observers (Habova, 2015: 65). It is an economical project which will be carried out in around 60 countries. However, it has many other aspects as well. Political partnerships, social interactions, cultural interactions are among the most important outcomes expected from the Belt and Road initiative. China has various expectations from this project. The enhancement of Chinese Soft Power is one of the greatest expectations.

Belt and Road Initiative is Described as "globalization with Chinese wisdom" in Xinhua (Tian, 2017). It is also obvious that the Initiative is a strong evidence of China's advocacy for globalization. While the US is having "clumsy policies" under Trump (Habib & Faulknor, 2017) and the EU is in dizziness, China finds great opportunity to implement its own plans. Those plans are going to be more international norms oriented. Belt and Road initiative is proving this fact. Therefore, China is, actually, getting more integrated to the international norms and values.

Whether China is going to be a global hegemon, regional hegemon, economical hegemon or partial hegemon is not much of my concern. My concern is about how it will conduct the hegemonic relations. Therefore, putting one head of my gauge on the Imperial Tributary System and the other head on the Belt and Road Initiative will give me clear vision of divergence and persistence in Chinese understanding of hegemony. This will be the most consistent route passing over the turmoil of "Age of Humiliation" and "Age of Red Emperor" today and will give a most reliable path to future.

2. Aim and Value of the Research Subject

Hegemony is a term defined by western scholars and mostly carrying the tendencies and world view of western scholars and politicians, which also got their causes from western history and experience. Applying the western terms to the non-western countries with different historical experience, different cultural settings, different political traditions, different belief systems and

different social structures may not methodologically bring the right conclusions. Especially to the countries like China, which the differences are usually in extreme corners with western counterparts. For this reason, I will discuss the definition of “hegemony” in all international relations main theories then will try to adopt the most widely accepted one to the case of China. By doing this, I will try to define in which aspect the western concepts of hegemony fail to explain the dynamics of China. The conditions and incentives of domestic and international conjecture, affecting to form a hegemonic structure cannot be skipped in this aspect. Therefore, besides the main factors of coercive power factors and soft power factors that creating a hegemonic rule, I will explain how the international and domestic factors also must be counted.

Among all, main purpose of this research is to accurately define the Chinese understanding and practice of “hegemony”, in the contemporary time, through the imperial Tributary system. This purpose will be achieved by the way of detecting and clarifying the divergence and persistence between the Tributary system and Belt and Road Initiative.

Defining the hegemony perception of China will serve to understand how it will dominate the neighbors and others and also what kind of hegemon it will be in the future when it becomes a fully flagged global power.

Beside this main purpose, I will try to shade light on the dynamics that pushing China to get away from its hegemonic conception of imperial and Maoist past and the dynamics that in some other ways pushing it to stick to some of the hegemonic conceptions from the both eras.

Another important purpose is to detect the Chinese regime’s priorities to stay in power through relations with hegemonic behaviors. In other words, to define what kind of hegemonic actions will be inspired and driven by the regime’s interests, rather than the country’s rational interest, or how the regime can manipulate the international issues for its own persistence and what is the condition of Belt and Road project in this framework?

Among many other minor purposes, I have to mention one more of them, which is to figure out the motives and methods of China for boosting its soft power in the Belt and Road Initiative framework.

In the big frame the research will indicate what is “hegemony” in Chinese characteristics and what makes if different from western perception of hegemony.

3. The Scope and Content of the Research

Theories are supposed to create some common and rational templates that will be utilized to explain the phenomenon around us. The main aim is to detect the rules that repeating itself in every similar conditions. Those rules are supposed to be helping us to predict the similar conditions and phenomenon and obtain correct information, which will be used to get the ultimate accurate knowledge in that subject.

If it is a social phenomenon, however, the theoretical bases may not be strong and the rules it suggests may not bring the total picture of the truth. That is mostly because the social phenomena are conducted by human being, which is a rational creature but not capable of deciding and conducting all the activities based on rationality. Human behave and decide rationally but with emotions also and the norms guiding human to act in certain ways may not be rational as well. Therefore, applying the methodology and accuracy of the natural sciences (like physics and mathematics) to social sciences by pure logic, usually will not work to explain the whole picture of the social phenomenon. In most of the cases theory which was known as successful will fail to explain some new occurrences, which it was supposed to be its job to help us to understand. The reason is because the social events are conducted by human and human may not always behave in rational way. Therefore, social phenomena are hard to be examined in natural science accuracy through pure logic.

Beside this, the theories are failing to explain the new occurrences just because the theorists usually develop them upon some experiences. Therefore, the rules the theorist derived from the certain experience may not be universally cover the new occurrences, which may never be seen before. In international relations the failure of the theories to explain new events occurred a lot. Moreover, the International Relations theories are usually hard to be applied to the countries like China, which has strong cultural differences, political traditions, giant population etc. And perhaps the most importantly, it did not have the same historical, financial, cultural, religious and intellectual experience with western world (Yin, 1999). Every attempt trying to explain any political or international relations behavior of China must keep the uniqueness of the country in mind. This study, in that respect, will seek to shed light on four main questions:

1. Are the hegemony theories -especially the Neo-Gramscian theory- applicable to China; how far the culture plays role in Chinese perception of hegemony?
2. What are the main factors that make Chinese state different from the others; as one of the important difference how much the Civilization-State oriented proud was affecting its perception of hegemony in the past and how much it is today?

3. As an important component of the Chinese understanding of hegemony what kind of effects Chinese Universalism has on its politics towards other countries today and how was it in the past?
4. What is the role of "Soft Power" in Chinese hegemonic relations; how was it playing role in Tributary System and why is it going to be important in Belt and Road Initiative?

As the hypothesis of my study in respect to the first question, I think the main factors for setting up and maintaining a hegemonic rule, (coercive domination, consent and international institutions), suggested by Neo-Gramscian theory (Gramsci, 1992) are the most comprehensive hegemony definition. However, motivations for setting up a hegemonic rule and the style the hegemon conducts the hegemonic rule will be different from a hegemon to another. Hegemony theories, focusing on the requirements of setting up and maintaining hegemonic rule are not paying enough attention to this point. When we think about Chinese hegemony in the Tributary era the main incentives of China to set up a hegemonic rule in the Pacific region are military, economic and political in characteristics (Fairbank, 1942). However, the basis of the relations depends on its perception of cultural supremacy. Culture is a decisive factor in Chinese foreign relations in that time and even partially today. However, the contemporary theories missing out this point.

Culture was affecting the style of conducting hegemonic rule as well. Chinese hegemonic rule was far from exploitation of economic sources or land annexation. This was due to notion of cultural supremacy and its acceptance by the tributes was more important for Chinese Imperial rule. This is the reason I have chosen the definitions of "hegemony in Chinese characteristics". In this research I assume to find the clear definitions of the hegemony in Chinese characteristics and locate how the Chinese cultural incentives pushed it to be a hegemon in different characteristics.

China is developing in an amazing speed. Just in 40 years it changed from an poor agrarian country to a second biggest economy in the world and it is anticipated that it will pass the USA in a foreseen future in many aspects. Rightfully this amazing development raising curiosity and in many cases unease and fear about the future intensions of China. Whether China is a rule defining or rule following power, whether a system founding or a system utilizing state, can be discussed, however it is going to be a global power.

As a global power even getting stronger in the future, how China will conduct its relations with others? Is it going to set up a western style hegemonic system? If the answer is "yes", then what will be the characteristics of its hegemonic rule? Is China's history going to be its future? The most important hypothesis of this research is going to be about these questions.

After the “Age of Humiliation” and the Mao time “Ideological Age”, China have been transformed in many ways. China left its priority of “Exporting Maoist Ideology” adopted flexible and pragmatic policies to continue the economic growth, followed a more peaceful and cooperation-based policies with neighbors and beyond. Transformation in economy brought a rapid transformation in society as well, though the political transformation is not in that much. Today’s China is quite different from China 40 years ago. Although the government’s priority is still to keep the party control and authoritarian regime to continue and legitimize its use of power, it has a lot of advancement in leaving the wrong ideological policies in the past as well. While spending a lot of sources abroad like setting up “Confucius Institutes” to develop Chinese influence, domestically it is promoting the revival of its historical pride. There is a huge curiosity among Chinese people about the Chinese history, old texts, Confucianism, Taoism etc. Seems like China once again returning to its historical values after the devastating turmoil. This is what the “rejuvenation of China” rhetoric is about. This process repeated itself a lot of time during the whole Chinese history. Even the emergence of Confucius himself was aiming the restoration of the “glorious past of the ancestors” which was the restoration of values of Early Zhou dynasty for that time.

China once again returning to its past values and ironically it is done by the hand of the regime, which was in a deadly war with those all values during the “Cultural Revolution”.

In this research I assume to find the persistence of the old values derived from Confucianism, like the values defining the concept of Tianxia and its applied form, the Tributary system (Fairbank, 1953.)

China will repeat itself again in political and cultural values of Tributary system during the Belt and Road Initiative. However, which values will be revived and how much they will affect the policies is needed to be examined extensively. It should not be expected from the modern China to be transformed into and behave identically in the same form and behaviors of Qing or Ming China. Surely there will be changes of the values in application, as the domestic and international conditions are not the same as that times. This will constitute the divergence side of my research.

In hunger and thirst of returning to its “rightful place” in the world order and in fulfilment of its great “rejuvenation” strategy, China once again will put the cultural recognition and “pride” observing policies forward. This will be the most significant resemblance with the Tributary system.

I assume that, after the research on Belt and Road Initiative, I will face a new hegemonic system that carrying elements from the Chinese old political values, especially the Chinese Tributary

system, with the persistence and divergence sides. Therefore, it should not be wrong if we name this new understanding of hegemony as “Neo-Tributary System”.

The main aim of this research will be to analyze and clarify the definition of “Neo-Tributary System” and defining its borders, detecting the persistence and divergence of the old values in it.

Applying the western-defined concepts to the whole world is a nearly unquestioned procedure. While we are talking about any state in Europe we are talking about a nation-state. With this inclination while we approach any other country on the earth we are expecting a nation state character and behavior from that state. This expectation is mostly unconsciously tending to assume that all countries have passed the same stages of cultural, historical, economic and political experiences. However, the reality is different. Most of the non-western countries had unique experiences during their histories. The difference in the historical experience will appear today in social structures, in perceptions, visions, choices and priorities of individuals and states.

When we look at China from this point of view, we must remember that China is not a Nation-State but a Civilization-State (Jacques, 2012). This is an important difference. Chinese are assuming that they are acting on behalf of the “Yellow Race” and “Yellow Civilization” rather than a nation-state. When we define the Chinese nationalism, if we say that, the term “nationalism” refers to “racism” it would not be wrong. For Chinese bureaucrats, politicians, scholars and public in the grassroots, “Zhongguo” (China) carrying much more meaning than a nation-state. Chinese people do not just have language, territorial, cultural and historical ties with their countries. China is in the center of philosophy of life and the source of whole aspects of cultural, social and religious existence for Chinese people. For Chinese, China is the “Middle” of the whole territories on the Earth. On the Earth, it is the sole projection of the “Tian”, the God’s kingdom located in the sky. Therefore, the other whole tribes and nations are either outsiders and “Barbarians” or the tributes that should be in the influence sphere of Chinese culture (Fairbank, 1960)

Unnecessary to say, today in the modern China, these ideas and values are not adhered the same as in the history. However, this historical “proud” have strong influence on Chinese minds and affecting the whole relations with the “outsiders”.

My hypothesis regarding the second question is that historical Chinese pride is one of the decisive factors in Chinese conduct of foreign relations. If China going to be an aggressive and offensive hegemon, the main reason would be its pride, derived from mentality of Civilization-State.

Acting on behalf of the Yellow Race in an extraordinary pride will definitely make relations with “outsiders” in distinctive characteristics. In this research I am aiming to dig out how this pride is rotating the Chinese foreign relations and affecting the Chinese perception of hegemony. Tributary system will show us how it was in the past. Belt and Road Initiative will show how it is today and how it is expected to be in the future.

The concept of “Tianxia” which means “everything under the sky/heaven/God” has deep impacts on Chinese culture and it can be entitled as the main ideology of imperial Chinese political philosophy. It basically describes that the heaven or God, which is the same meaning with sky in Chinese language, has appointed the Chinese emperor to rule the Tianxia “everything under the sky”. Tianxia is described as “China” usually. However, Chinese are calling their country as “Zhongguo”, the Middle Kingdom which infers the others as “Barbarians” or “Tibutes” (Fairbank, 1992)

Therefore, the centrality of China actually implies there is nothing more on earth worth to be ruled. In this regard, as the ruler of the Middle Kingdom, Chinese emperors were actually believing that they were sole representative of the Heaven/God and they were actually ruling the Earth. The main duty of the emperor was to rule the people in peace and harmony with the “Mandate of Heaven”.

This unique definition of “Universalism” differs a lot from the western universalism. In western universalism generally “white man” is obliged and destined to guide the whole world as he (not she) is created with this talent and moral capabilities. Similarly, Abrahamic universalisms require the convert of the whole humanity for salvation. So western universalisms require conquests and conversions.

Chinese universalism however, implying China as the most essential part of earth worth to be ruled does not require a policy of conquests and doesn’t carry concept of salvation. Chinese surrounded by ocean from the east, high mountains from the west, deserts from the north and jungles from the south with much backward cultures living behind all those natural borders, had convincing reasons to believe that their country was the only land worth to be ruled. Therefore, they did not have much interest in conquests although they had territorial annexations in some occasions. This philosophy originated a “steady mind set” (Roskin, 2009) and China lived with this philosophy for thousands of years. Kissinger emphasizes that during its long history China did not spread its ideas but allowed others to come and obtain them (Kissinger, 2012: 31). This characteristic of Chinese Universalism lets Martin Jacques (2012: 41) to describe it as “stay at home Universalism”.

My hypothesis related to the third question of this study is that Chinese Universalism has unique characteristics and unique effects on the Chinese conduct of the foreign relations and its perception of hegemony. If China is going to be a peaceful hegemon the main reason should be searched in the special characteristics of Chinese Universalism.

Chinese Universalism with the characteristics of "stay at home" is very important to be analyzed, in the context of Chinese perception of hegemony. Hegemony and universalism have close ties and Chinese of universalism has deep effects in Chinese perception of hegemony.

Modern Chinese political theory has passed in significant changes since the imperial time, however as today's China has a strong tendency of adhering the old values in contemporary interpretations, it is crucial to extensively analyses Chinese Universalism in relation with hegemony.

In this research I assume to find clear evidences for this relation. The Tributary System in the past had this relation very clearly. Belt and Road Initiative will also show us enough evidences.

The last hypothesis of this study about the last question asked above is that the Tributary System can be described as a historical outcome of Chinese Imperial Soft Power by some researchers. Imperial China was conducting the Tributary System on the basis of Confucian values and its attractiveness of political philosophy. The political and economic benefits were outcome of the system for the whole members.

Since the term "Soft Power" is invented by Joseph Nye on 1990's, it concerned great attention and it has made a significant contribution to International Relations literature, as well as to the foreign policies of countries. In his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in the World Politics,* published in 2004, Nye shortly describes Soft Power as the way to get the desired outcome by attraction, rather than coercion or payments. He further evaluates that the Soft Power for each country originates from its own attractions of culture, political ideals and policies (Nye, 2004: X). Though the definition is relatively new in international relations, "Soft-Power" as an experience existed in all human history. When we look at the Chinese history through this frame we will notice a great background of Soft Power source and usage. Chinese "Tributary System" alone itself can be analyzed as a special and unique result of Chinese Soft Power in Chinese history. However, in the modern term, China's interest in Soft Power doesn't have a long past. China discovered the Soft Power at the beginning of 1990's started to stress on it from President Hu Jintao's Congress Speech of 2007. Later the attention is intensified under the President Xi Jinping's rule (Shambaugh, 2015).

There are around 500 Confucius Institutes in 125 countries, promoting Chinese culture and language all around the world. Also, the amazing development story of Chinese economy,

together creating main sources of Soft Power on behalf of China, not counting the other sources (Economy, 2016).

Today's China have rediscovered the Confucian values and trying to market it in the world by Confucian Institutes. Furthermore, it discovered the importance of Soft Power, thus paying a special attention to strengthen Chinese Soft Power. The Belt and Road Initiative is one of those platforms for strengthening it.

Chinese Soft Power perception and strategy is criticized mostly by main scholars to be too much government policies oriented. Recently, this criticism is carried on a theoretical base as well. Chinese Soft Power strategy is renamed as "Sharp Power" (Walker & Ludwig, 2017).

Chinese "Sharp Power" characteristics will be softened to be closer to the normal definition of Soft Power. In other way, China will give up keeping all Soft Power actors under the strict government control and will let the non-governmental actors (movie stars, famous authors, big brands, movie industry etc.) to play more crucial role throughout Belt and Road Initiative. This is an inevitable consequence because strict official control is not creating good harvest from Soft Power improvement strategies as it has been seen till now (Nye J., 2015). One of the expectations from this research will be to dig out the clear evidences of this policy change and to locate the place of Soft Power in Chinese perception of hegemony.

4. The Importance of the Topic and its Peculiar Value

Every research about China is important and getting attention. The giant dragon's awakening took the whole attention of the world, which was neglecting it for a long time.

There is not much extensive research on Chinese hegemony perception trough Belt and Road Initiative. Especially comparing the historical experience of Chinese hegemony, which is the Tributary System, to the most recent hegemonic step of China is a maiden area of research. This topic and methodology will make my research unique to fill an important literature gap.

Comparison of China's past hegemonic system and present "Initiative" to build a new one will give us the most correct analysis of Hegemony in Chinese Characteristics. As an emerging hegemon, China's international actions and intensions will be more predictable and understandable with researches comparing the past and present of it.

This research will provide much needed analysis of hegemony, Chinese perception of hegemony by analyzing Tributary System and Belt and Road Initiative. The findings will be useful for researchers, policy makers, academics, practitioners or anybody interested in China

and the topic.

5. The Research Method

This research will be conducted on the combination of methods of extensive examination of archival and theoretical resources, literature review, content analysis and discourse analysis. These methods are fitting the best to the research topic. Collecting required and enough material about China related topics, like official announcements and addresses, agreements, academic sources, archival sources, library sources, would be challenging for a foreigner researcher. However, it will not be difficult for me as I am currently living China. Following the daily Belt and Road Initiative and Chinese foreign policy related news, attending the conferences in reach and if needed, having interviews with related scholars or government officers if I can arrange, will be the other secondary methods to contribute my research.

There is a risk in collecting accurate data and information about China always. Especially about government policies it is a challenge for researchers to get accurate information and to predict the actions in advance. The opaque structure of the government policies and decision-making process in China, makes it hard to find correct information about its intensions. Also, the western "China Threat" approach and Chinese scholars nationalist and loyalist approaches, sometimes make it hard to figure out the naked reality. For these challenges I will use my weapon of collecting the data from various ranges of approaches and comparing them to find a final and most accurate conclusion.

6. Literature Review

The concept of "hegemony" is an important discussion subject in International Relations discipline. There are various approaches from different International Relations theories to explain it.

Although the concept of Hegemony has been used in history since the ancient Greeks, Thucydides, Aristotle, Isocrates etc. (Lebow & Kelly, 2001) the modern definition of it, is done by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937).

Gramsci, using a Marxist approach, was aiming to explain how the exploited classes are so willing to cooperate with the system that actually exploiting them. He suggests that the ruling classes with their economic advantages dominating the other classes by getting their consents.

That consent is obtained by manipulating the values, opinions, beliefs, perceptions etc. The ruling class convince the lower classes by this manipulation so that the lower classes get the perception of the system that basically serving to the interests of the ruling class is actually beneficial for them as well. So, the continuation of the "exploitation" system and the legitimization of the interests of the ruling classes achieved in this way. In Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the legitimization is done by the ideology of the ruling classes and the legitimization process is carried out by the bourgeois intellectuals (Gramsci, 1992).

Gramsci's conception of hegemony is applied to International Relations firstly by Robert Cox in 1981 and 1983. Cox defined the hegemony in a critical method and never aimed to solve a problem, but rather explained the system, the way it is functioning. In Cox's perspective hegemony arises from a consistent combination of coercive material power, a mutually corresponded ideological and normative base for the world order and international institutions managing the established system with exact procedure of universality (Cox, 1981 and 1983).

In Cox's concept of hegemony, the most important factor in formation of hegemony is, the consent of the dominant actors. Coercive military and economic power is not enough for the formation of hegemonic system. The consent is required as well. The hegemon creates the consent by matching its interests with the dominated actors' interests. This is done by the international institutions.

The international institutions have important functions in the formation of hegemonic ideology. They create the rules of the hegemonic world, they are themselves the products of the hegemonic system, they legitimize the hegemonic rules by ideologies, they attract the elites from the periphery countries and they absorb the counter hegemonic ideas (Cox, 1987).

The concept of hegemony emerged in the chaotic environment of 1970's when American supremacy was shaken, and the realist theories failed to explain the new conditions, mostly caused by the economic factors. The main incentive was to theories the new situation of the USA in the structure and to restore the old system as well. The concept of hegemony was developed to fill the gap that Great Power Theory fail to fill (Eralp, 2014).

Great Power Theory was depending the state behaviors to military and political intensions and getting strength from coercive power. Kenneth Waltz was describing the great powers in five main criteria; population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, political stability and competence and military strength (Waltz, 1993).

Robert Gilpin was the first realist theorist to re-formulate the concept of hegemony in realist

school. He analyzed the functions of the international and multinational American corporations and underlined the growing importance of them in international economic relations. Gilpin counted the economic factors as one of important factors the same as the military and political factors, that effecting the formation of consent in the formation of hegemonic relations (Gilpin, 1975). This wasn't done till that time in realist school of thought before. In realist approach, the states are the only actors in international relations and they solely behave with political and military incentives.

Cox's, Waltz and Gilpin all are explaining the formation and maintenance of the hegemonic system by coercive power in the center. The consent of dominated actors, international institutions and leading in formation of ideologies to legitimize the system, are the details they differ.

The Hegemonic Stability Theory argues that, the international stability can be reached only by a single hegemon, as the international arena anarchic in nature and doesn't have a superior power to rule (Keohane, 1986).

In his "Mutual Interdependence" theory, Keohane argues that, even after the US hegemony finished, the system set up by them, can continue the order (Keohane, 1984).

Liberal institutionalists, Keohane and Nye state that as the international relations getting more complicated and more multilateral, the physical and coercive power politics cannot function as it was functioning in the early cold war era. The relations needed to be carried out in "International Cooperation" atmosphere with consent and mutual benefits (Nye & Keohane, 1977). Once again, we encounter "consent" as pre-requisite of hegemony formation.

Nye later will further evaluate this and formulate the concept of "Soft Power" as the ability of co-opting rather than coercing the others to get own benefits (Nye, 2004).

With the definition of "Soft Power" by Nye, the "Consent" in requirement of formation of hegemony, got a more comprehending name. Soft Power got the place of the previous "Consent" of the hegemony theories, with better and more detailed explanation.

Wallerstein's "World System Theory" is another important hegemony theory, which is economic power based rather than political or military power. He argues that, the most decisive part of the world system is the world economy. The world economy is consisting of three kinds of actors; central countries, periphery countries and semi-periphery countries. The power relations between the central countries have two patterns. Rivalry and Hegemony. Hegemony is temporary situation, but rivalry is permanent situation. Hegemonic power can be obtained

and held only if the hegemon can hold production, market and finance powers all together at the same time in hand (Wallerstein, 1974 and 1979).

All these three powers could be together held by some powers, but it was rare and in short time during the history. Those countries were Holland, United Kingdom and USA till now (Wallerstein, 1984).

Wallerstein in his theory undertakes that the economic power will automatically turn into political power and it will automatically turn into the hegemonic power. He disregards the consent of the dominated actors and other factors in formation of hegemonic system (Eralp, 2014).

Besides these main hegemony theories, Long Cycle Theory is explaining the rise of hegemons as a result of cycles in the history, which is occurring in a period of time and bringing another power to hegemonic position after another. In this theory, the anarchy, which is taken as granted in all theories, does not exist (Modelski, 1987).

Power transition theory briefly suggests that the hegemon will enjoy the hegemonic position in a certain period of time until another one succeeds and becomes the new hegemon. The hierarchy between states is the natural reason of this transition, as the weaker powers will be more hungry and aggressive to get the power (Organski, 1958).

Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism advocates that the continuation of hegemonic rule depends on offensive strategies of the hegemon to prevent and suppress any new regional or global potential hegemon to emerge. Therefore, great powers are tending to be expansionist (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Examining all these theories, we can clearly see that they are not explaining Chinese way of hegemony, which was practiced in Imperial Tributary System. In the theories I have mentioned above, the hegemonic system is set up principally by the coercive power. That is the military and economic power that converted into political power. The consent in most of the theories needed, however the consent is created by the hegemon, mostly by manipulation of ideologies and the rules of international institutions, which were also created by the hegemons. Ultimately, the military and economic power determines the hegemon and the hegemon does everything to continue the rules of the system it setup earlier. The system is on theoretical base for the benefit of everybody, but the hegemon gets lion share.

The main motive to gain hegemonic position, is the economic and political gains which will be obtained through the position. The incentive to be hegemonic power is rivalry, hostility and

competition. The anarchy in the system, security fear and lack of trust, fuels the desires of each nation to get more power and hopefully in ultimate level to be the new hegemon. And in the cycle the new hegemon will set up its own rules and institutions or just convert the existing system.

In Chinese Tributary hegemonic system, there are economic, political and military benefits as well, but the hegemon is not getting the lion share. The hegemon's biggest gain is to secure the borders with low cost, to secure the legitimacy of the emperor in domestic public opinion and the relatively small advantage of the trading (Fairbank, 1968).

In Chinese Tributary system, the hegemonic position is not gained by competition or rivalry. China was the natural hegemon and others were tributes. None of the tributes were aiming to get the position of hegemon (Fairbank & Teng, 1941). Japan in later centuries is an exception, but even Japan was still accepting China as in equal status with themselves, not a tribute.

Most importantly Chinese Tributary system was created on the basis of cultural supremacy, rather than military or economic power of coercion. If we consider the "culture" functioning as "ideology", like the modern hegemon does to get consent, Chinese culture was not defined as "consent collector" for some economic benefits. Chinese were not aiming invasion, exploitation or destruction of the tributes. The aim was (sometimes by force) the approval of supremacy of Chinese emperor and culture by the tributes.

It is clear that the western defined hegemony theories are not well applicable to Chinese hegemonic system in the past. Chinese perception of hegemony, largely depending on its perception of cultural and political supremacy, rather than coercive military or economic power.

That means a hegemon can emerge and sustain its system, not primarily for economic gains but for political legitimization, not by coercive threat but by attractiveness of the opportunities it offers, not for exploitation but for setting up a hierarchical security environment, not on the base of mutual benefits but on cultural and political supremacy and leadership, not sustained by tailor made ideologies and institutions but by shared cultural values.

This is the crack in the literature of hegemony theories that the theories are not well applicable to non-western societies which did not have the same historical experiences and do not share the same cultural, social and political values.

There is a large literature on Tributary system. I want to mention the most prominent and significant ones here. The most important historian specialized on Chinese history and especially on Tributary System is John K. Fairbank. Fairbank has a lot of books on China and

Tributary System.

In the book he edited in 1968, named *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, Fairbank divides the countries around China in three zones. The first zone is "Sinic Zone" includes the countries which has strongest shared values and history with China; Korea, Vietnam, Ryukyu Island and a short time Japan. The second zone is "Inner Asia Zone" and includes the nomadic tribes and states that not only non-Chinese in traditions, language and ethnically, but also at the outer borders of the Chinese world and influence. The third and last zone is "Outer Zone", the "Outer Barbarians". Which includes the South Asian countries, later Japan and all Europe, shortly the rest of the World (Fairbank, 1968).

In these three circles China was conducting its foreign relations in hierarchical way. Though the closest circle was considered more accustomed all of the zones were tributary countries. The tributes had to kowtow in front of the emperor with some symbolic gifts and recognize superiority of the emperor and Chinese culture. After this proper ceremony the "foreigners" could do trading with China (Ibid).

The foreign representatives who refused to do this ceremony would be labelled as "rebel", just because the Chinese inner and outer order were so connected to each other that any disorder in any of the sphere would affect the other one as well. That is, the legitimacy of the emperor was severely depending on the continuation of the proper orders of the foreign and domestic affairs (Ibid).

Fairbank has deep analysis of the Tributary system, on its chronological details of conduct, on its philosophical and historical sources etc. It is hard to mention all here. In summary Fairbank is describing the Tributary System as a special way of Chinese-Foreign relations management, depending on Confucian values system. He states that, thought we use western term to describe Chinese imperial practices like "Tributary System", the actual meaning and contents of them may not very suiting to the terms we use (Fairbank & Teng, 1941). Despite drawing a very positive impression of Tributary System, he has not much clear comments on, how much of the Tributary System mentality is still being carried in Chinese foreign policies.

Fairbank passed away in 1992, most probably was aware of the Chinese candidacy of the great power in the future and he was anticipating that China will one day return back to its old historical values when the storm of the communist ideology passed.

As one of the important China activist Mosher in his book *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World* names China as "Hegemon". According to Mosher, China was

authoritarian, expansionist, offensive with little respect to the citizens and neighboring countries during the whole history, including Communist era.

Starting from Qin Shihuan the first emperor united China, to last emperor, the whole dynasties had expansionist policies over the neighbors. Besides, they were Legalists inside and Confucian outside. While Mao was Legalist inside and Communist outside, not much things changed with personal cult during the whole long Chinese history, including PRC.

China has a millennia long totalitarian tradition and personal cult, with low respect of human rights and sovereignty of the neighbors. According to Mosher, China (Hegemon) will not give up this tradition in the future and will repeat the same authoritarian expansionism in three stages. The first stage will be "basic hegemony" and it will annex Taiwan and islands in South China Sea, in the second stage "regional hegemony" China will extend its borders to Qing borders. And in the last stage "global hegemony", China will stand up to overthrow Pax Americana, instead will establish Pax Sinica (Mosher, 2000).

Mosher claims that Chinese (Hegemon) almost always sought to rule his known world from Siberia to South East Asia, from Iran Borders to Pacific Ocean. The expansionist policies during all dynasties is counted briefly and then PRC's intervention and arm used conflicts counted in his book one by one. Vietnam war, Korean War, Indian War, conflicts with Russia, Japan and others (Mosher, 2000).

Mosher is drawing a quite pessimist picture of China. Although his comments sound logical, the chronological events are kind of events that every country would react in the same way. Most of the events he is mentioning are not proving enough that China is an offensive, expansionist and disrespectful to neighbors' sovereignties. Mostly would be done by any state for the national interests. However, as one of the "China Threat" works, it is worth to mention his comments to diversify the comments about China.

Ford, as an experienced diplomat in Trump administration, in his book *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations* highlighting that China during its long history has left two important philosophical heritages to contemporary Chinese administrators. One is the hierarchical foreign relations around the center (China), which defines equal relations illegitimate and transitory and the other one is Confucian tendency to see morality as the core of correct and successful governing (Ford, 2010).

According to Ford, China's seemingly obey to the "Westphalian" system of international order is short-term and opportunistic. When it got enough power, China will turn back to its heritage

of superiority and dominance-oriented policies (Ford, 2010)

Lee Ji-Young, in her famous book *China's Hegemony: Four Hundred Years of East Asian Domination*" suggests that the tributary system was not the products of Chinese power only, but the inner legitimization need of the tribute regimes also helped the system to form and continue. Lee also shows that the concepts of hegemony in international relations theories are not applicable to Asian cases, to explain the nature of the system (Lee, 2017).

Huang and Patnam commented in their book *China and the International System: Becoming a World Power* that China doesn't have intention to change the current international order, because it is participating in the system in every aspects from UN to WTO. Chinese regime cannot attempt to change the system and it will undermine its economic development, which is crucial for military advancement and will bring discontent in the society. China, therefore, should participate the current international order and contribute to its stability rather than changing or abolishing it (Huang & Patnam, 2013)

David Kang states in his book, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* that East Asian countries will slowly get used to an emerging China and choose to cooperate especially in economic issues, rather than seeing it as a threat. This will be mainly because of China's successful reassurance and engagement policies, implemented together (Kang, 2007).

Callahan in his article "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?" criticizes Fairbank to be too optimistic and legitimizing the Tributary System. He is not that optimistic about China's intensions. Callahan suggests that the term Tianxia is not just expressing an old understanding, but it is actually expressing China's desire to establish that system again in 21st century (Callahan, 2008)

The literature about Tributary system is much larger. However, it is not possible to mention all here. Though if we review them all in a few sentences, they are all analyzing the values behind the system, the functioning style, the aim of it and the benefits the system brought to each actors including China. Mostly, the system examined in structure and analyzed to understand if it is a unique system, oppressive or peaceful system, applicable to today or not. And mostly concludes that the system is not applicable to today, because the conditions changed. Most of the works miss the point that China is returning to its past values, that is why they examined the Tributary system as historical phenomenon. I don't mean China is returning back to Tributary system, but I mean China will most probably update the system and apply it compatible with the mentality of 21st century.

7. The Design and Organization of the Thesis

My thesis will consist of four interrelated chapters apart from Introduction. In the first chapter I will analyze the concept of hegemony and its use in international relations. In this chapter the difference between Chinese way of hegemony and Western perception of hegemony will be specifically emphasized.

In the second chapter I will analyze the Tributary System and its relations with the concept of hegemony. Connection between the two concepts will be analyzed from past to the present. The chapter will particularly seek answer to the question whether Tributary System is a kind of hegemony.

In the third chapter of my theses I will shed light on the Belt and Road Initiative Project initiated by China in different parts of the world. The main elements of that project will be analyzed with the vintage point of its political, cultural and economic impacts over other countries.

In the last chapter of my thesis I will go to have a general evaluation and discussion of the findings of the investigation. Research findings will be debated within the framework of theoretical discussions put forward at the beginning of my thesis.

The tentative Table of Content of my thesis will as followings:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II
HEGEMONY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
The Definition of Hegemony

2.1. Hegemony Concept in History

2.2. Modern Definition of Hegemony

2.3. Neo-Gramscian Definition of Hegemony

2.4. Hegemonic Powers in History

2.5. Hegemony in Chinese Language

CHAPTER III
TRIBUTARY SYSTEM AND HEGEMONY

3.1 Overview of Imperial Chinese History in International Relations Context

3.2 International Order in Chinese Culture and Religions

3.3 Confucian Values of World Order

3.4 The Concept of "Tianxia"

3.5 Tributary System Definition and Background

3.6 Tributary System in Practice

3.7 Chinese Hard and Soft Power During the Tributary Era

3.8 Regional and International Conditions of Tributary Era

3.9 Chinese Domestic Conditions of Tributary Era

3.10 Evaluation of Tributary System Through the Concept of Hegemony

CHAPTER IV
BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) AND HEGEMONY

4.1 Overview of Modern Chinese History in International Relations Context

4.2 Belt and Road Initiative Definition and Roots

4.3 The Importance of Belt and Road Initiative

4.4 Hegemony and Belt and Road Initiative

4.5 Chinese Contemporary Hard and Soft Power Conditions

4.6 Regional and International Conditions of Belt and Road Era

4.7 Chinese Domestic Conditions

CHAPTER V
EVALUATION AND COMPARISON

5.1 Is China Returning to Traditional Values?

5.2 What is the Place of Maoism and Socialism in Chinese Foreign Policy?

5.3 Why Tributary System is Compared with BRI?

5.4 Comparison of Tributary and BRI Eras in All Dimensions

CONCLUSION

REFERENCES

8. Research Schedule/Time Table

After the research proposal is accepted by jury, I will have 2 academic years to complete and submit my thesis.

The collection of raw data has already been mostly done and the rest will be carried out during the first semester of 2019. The research topic requires extensive analysis and classification of data. This process will be done in the second semester of 2019.

The last two semesters in 2020 will be allocated for the writing of the findings. The time allocation for each mission may be extended or shortened if needed.

Table 1: Schedule of Study

Work Packages	**Duration**
Literature review and writing of theoretical framework	6 Months
Readings and data collection	6 Months
Classification and analysis of data	6 Months
Reporting and writing	6 Months
Total	**24 Months**

REFERENCES

Callahan, W. A. (2008, December). "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?" *International Studies Review, 10*(4), 749-761.

Flynt, L., & Wu, B. (2016). "The New Silk Road and China's Evolving Grand Strategy". *The China Journal* (77).

Ferdinand, P. (2016). "Westward ho—the China Dream and 'One Belt, One Road': Chinese Foreign Policy Under Xi Jinping". *International Affairs, 92*(4), 941–957.

Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.* New York: Persus Books.

Shambaugh, D. (2015, July-August 01). *China's Soft-Power Push.* Retrieved from Foreign Affairs: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push (16 June, 2015).

Economy, L. (2016, February 27). *Is China's soft power strategy working?* Retrieved from China Power: https://chinapower.csis.org/is-chinas-soft-power-strategy-working

(10 May, 2016).

Vohra, R. (1999). *China's Path to Modernization: A Historical Review from 1800 to the Present* (3rd ed.). NJ: Prentice Hall.

Jacques, M. (2012). *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (Second ed.). London: Penguine Books.

Habova, A. (2015). "Silk Road Economic Belt: China's Marshall Plan, Pivot to Eurasia or China's Way of Foreign Policy". *KSI Transactions on Knowledge Society, VIII*(1), pp. 64-70.

Kissinger, H. (2012). *On China.* New York: Penguin Books.

Walker, C., & Ludwig, J. (2017). *The Meaning of Sharp Power: How Authoritarian States Project Influence.* Retrieved from Foreign Affairs: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2017-11-16/meaning-sharp-power (11 July, 2017).

Tian, S. (2017). *Xinhua News*. Retrieved 11 20, 2017, from "China Focus: What to Expect from Belt and Road Forum" http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/01/c_136248648.htm (1 May, 2015).

Hart, J. (2013). *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of US Foreign Policy.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Habib, B., & Faulknor, V. (2017). *The Belt and Road initiative: China's Vision for Globalisation, Beijing Style.* Retrieved from China Policy Institute: http:// theconversation. com/the-belt-and- road-initiative- chinas-vision- for-globalisation-beijing-style (17 May, 2017)

Nye, J. (2015). *The Limits of Chinese Soft Power.* Retrieved from Project Sydicate:

https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-civil-society-nationalism-soft-power-by-joseph-s--nye-2015-07?barrier=accessreg (July 10, 2017).

Lebow, R. N., & Kelly, R. (2001). "Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States". *Review of International Studies*, 4/(27).

Gramsci, A. (1992). *Prison Notebooks.* (J. A. Buttigieg, Ed.) New York: Columbia University Press.

Cox, R. W. (1983). Gramsci, "Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method". *Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 12*(2), 162-175.

Cox, R. W. (1981). "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory". *Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 10*(2), 126-155.

Cox, R. (1987). *Production, Power and World Order.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Eralp, A. (2014). "Hegemonya". In A. Eralp, *Devlet ve Ötesi, Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Kavramlar*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Gilpin, R. (1975). *US Power and Multinational Corperation* . New York: Basi Books.

Waltz, K. N. (1993). "The Emerging Structure of International Politics". *International Security, 18*(2), 50.

Keohane, R. O. (1986). *Neorealism and Its Critics.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Keohane, R. O. (1984). *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Nye, J. S., & Keohane, R. O. (1977). *Power and interdependence: World Politics in Transition.* New York: Little Brown and Company.

Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the World Economy in the Sixteenth Century.* New York: Academic Press.

Wallerstein, I. (1979). *The Capitalist World Economy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, I. (1984). *The Politics of World Economy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Modelski, G. (1987). *Long Cycles in World Politics.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Organski, A. (1958). *World Politics.* New York.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* . New York: W.W. Norton.

Fairbank, J. K. (1968). *The Chinese World Order; Traditional China's Foreign Relations.* (J. K. Fairbank, Ed.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fairbank, J. K. (1953.). *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Vol. 2). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fairbank, J. K. (1960). *Ch'ing Administration: Three Studies* (Vol. 19). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Fairbank, J. K. (1992). *China: A New History.* Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Fairbank, J. K., & Teng, S. Y. (1941, June). “On The Ch'ing Tributary System”. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 6*(2), 135-246 .

Fairbank, J. K. (1942, February). “Tributary Trade and China's Relations with the West”. *The Far Eastern Quarterly, 1* (2), 129-149.

Ming, K.-H. (2013). *Çin Halkının Zihniyeti.* (H. Güven, Trans.) Ankara: Doğubatı Yayınları.

Roskin, M. G. (2009). *Çağdaş Devlet Sistemleri: Siyaset, Coğrafya, Kültür* (9th ed.). (B. Seçilmişoglu, Trans.) Ankara: Adres Yayınları.

Kuhn, R. L. (2011). *How China's Leaders Think.* Singapore: John Wiley and Sons Pte. Ltd.

Mosher, S. W. (2000). *Hegemon; China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World.* San Francisco: Encounter Books.

Ford, C. A. (2010). *The Mind of Empire; China's History and Modern Foreign Relations.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Lee, J.-Y. (2017). *China's Hegemony; Four Hundred Years of East Asian Domination.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Yin, Q. (1999). *Dynamics vs Tradition in Chinese Foreign Policy Motivation: Beijing's Firth Column Policy.* New York: Nova Science Publisher Inc.

Huang, X., & Patnam, R. G. (2013). *China and the International System: Becoming a World Power.* (X. Huang, Ed.) New York and London: Routledge.

Kang, D. C. (2007). *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Wang, Y. (2015). *The Belt and Road Initiative; What Will China Offer to the World in its Rise.* Shanghai: New World Press.

Wang, Y. (2016). “Offensive for Defensive: The Belt and Road Initiative and China’s New Grand Strategy”. *The Pacific Review, 29*(3), 455-463.