

The Chinese Soft Regional Hegemony“Mechanisms and Challenges”

الهيمنة الإقليمية الناعمة الصينية

"الآليات والتحديات"

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Abstract

Due to the importance of Soft power on the agenda of any political actor , this study focuses on the different soft tools of the Chinese foreign policy with special focus on four main tools to achieve regional hegemony and the different challenges that hinder China from achieving such complete hegemony.

Through testing two important hypotheses as; the first checks that China asserts itself as the regional hegemonic of Asia without any resistance from the neighboring countries While the second checks that China is faced by regional resistance especially Russia and Japan which put pressure on its regional expansion.

The study depends mainly upon Foreign Policy theory with special focus on the domain of national interests, values and norms on the Chinese agenda as ideological and cultural perspectives.

المستلخص:

نظرًا لأهمية القوة الناعمة في جدول أعمال أي فاعل سياسي ، ترکز هذه الدراسة على الأدوات الناعمة المختلفة للسياسة الخارجية الصينية مع الإهتمام بشكل خاص بأربع أدوات رئيسية لتحقيق الهيمنة الإقليمية والتحديات المختلفة التي تعيق الصين عن تحقيق تلك الهيمنة بشكل كامل.

من خلال إختبار فرضيتين مهمتين ؛ تتناول الفرضية الأولى أن الصين تؤكد نفسها على أنها القوة الإقليمية المهيمنة في آسيا دون أي مقاومة من الدول المجاورة، بينما تحاول الفرضية الثانية التحقق من أن الصين تواجه مقاومة إقليمية خاصة روسيا واليابان مما يسبب ضغط على توسعها الإقليمي.

من ثم تعتمد الدراسة بشكل أساسي على نظرية السياسة الخارجية مع التركيز بشكل خاص على مجال المصالح والقيم والمعايير الوطنية على جدول الأعمال الصيني مع الأخذ في الاعتبار التوجهات الأيديولوجية والثقافية.

Introduction:

China is considered a unique model in the international world due to its' influence and effect in different fields in international relations. It is one of the active superpowers that are having strategic importance with different comprehensive power elements that affect most of the countries in different ways.

Also, balancing between Chinese socialism and western capitalism gave sort of uniqueness to the Chinese experiment as it has independent but not isolative policy which gave it power on the international world order. Even having its' own kind of culture and norms trying to replace the western culture by Chinese one.

This study focuses on the Chinese different foreign policy tools in its relations with the regional context. Due to the importance of foreign policy analysis (FPA) as being sub-discipline in IR, that takes into consideration the determinants of specific state toward specific region or country. It focusing on the internal and external factors in

shaping the Chinese FP also, merging between soft, hard and sharp powers to have a strategic role in the region.

It focuses also on the challenges in front of china that hinders its policy term achieving complete regional hegemony, thus the main hypothesis the study tries to test are:

H1: China asserts itself as the regional hegemon of Asia without any resistance from the neighbouring countries.

H2: China is faced by regional resistance especially Russia and Japan that put pressure on its regional expansion.

– For testing such two hypotheses, there are some questions the study tries to answer as:

- What are the Chinese FP tools regionally?
- What are the determinants of Chinese FP?
- What are the main challenges in front of China curbing its regional hegemony?

▪ **Methodology:**

Answering the previous questions; the study depends on theory of FP that focuses on FPA as being multi-level and multi-factorial in its approach than IR. As it is very important to analyse the behaviour of the country either positive or negative as both are considered attitude in FP that shall be analysed.

According to (wlinkon,B.) FP is considered translation of the country's goals into actions to achieve these interests and goals, furthermore; its first function is to achieve such desired goal while the second is maximizing its national interests.⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, the national interest is considered the main determinant for FP; if such interests are well written and defined then it is much easier expecting the behaviour

of the state and its attitude towards others. However, our argument in this study is focusing on the assumption that external pressures and the prevailing patterns of power can affect FP to the extent that it can change in its attitude.

It is important also in analysing the behaviour of China as being regional hegemon to divide the goals of Chinese state into three main categories which direct their FP as follows:

1– Short run goals or the essential values and interests; which is divided into self-protection, ethnic unity, protection of beliefs and values; in this category the study finds that Chinese FP is merging both soft and hard power and even resort to sharp power to achieve them.

2– Intermediate goals; specified in economics, commerce, foreign assistance. In this kind of goals soft power is much used in the Chinese agenda than any other kind of power and it has many tools for that such as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as the study will clarify.

3– Long term comprehensive goals; specified in the vision and future ideological and political goals and interests related to the international system. Hence, these goals are much connected to the vision of (Xi Jinping) and the Chinese plan to 2050. Thus, these objectives and goals are considered the ending results of the last two categories and depending on whether China succeeded in achieving them or not, therefore; this study focuses on the tools of Chinese FP to achieve the different goals and the challenges which hinder its policy in the regional environment.

- **Literature review:**

There are a lot of literature about China FP in general and the tools of China toward regional and international environment. Thus; the literature can be divided into two

main parts: the first analyses the methodological part of the study about theory of FP while the other analyses the Chinese FP in general.

❖ **First: Theory of FP:**

The first study; Historical study of the different theories of foreign policy by (Smith,S.1986), though it isn't recent study, it gives detailed analysis to the different theories of foreign policy and its assumptions and the comparative approach of (FPA) and that is considered a discredited pseudo-science.

Another study of Chinese FP in transition: trends and implications by (zhang, B.2010) in which the author focuses on the changes in Chinese Fp. with identifying five main features as the pursuit of full partnership with the united states, soft-balancing in great power diplomacy, reshaping regional orders, having geopolitically oriented economic security strategy and the last feature is the centrality of soft power with having its own definition.

Also, the study of foreign policy in international relations by (Bojang,2018) ; In this study the author analyses FP and gives conceptual framework that differentiate between internal and external determinants of FP, that the author classified the external factors into five main points which are the power structure, international law, international organizations, alliances and military strategy / arm race. while the domestic determinants of FP are divided into ten points which are culture, history, geography, population, economic development, military capabilities, political system, personality of the leader, press, public opinion and finally science and technology.

Last study, analyses foreign policy; by (Shibany,I.2019) ,in this study the author gives anatomy for FP phenomena, determinants of FP for international actors. Also; the

rational approaches in studying FP either liberal, realistic, new functional one. Finally ending up with the modules of decision making in FP.

❖ **Second: Chinese FP:**

The first study is thesis submitted by (Ping, F.2015); about Chinese foreign policy towards central Eastern European states after 1949, in which the author used the constructivist approach and timely compared the change in FP since 1949 till 2015. In its five chapters the study tries to give a review of Chinese FP and connecting between states' identity and its FP; as according to the uni-level approach, it argues that domestic factor like norms influence states FP and it ended up by a result that China in its FP focused on political aspects.

Also; Thesis discussing the role of values and interests in Chinese FP, by (Ott,S.2017), in which the author used realistic approach in analysing the FP especially in detailing the Chinese interests while he used more social constructivist approach when speaking about Chinese values. Through applying on two major case studies that are Taiwan and Japan; the author concluded this study that Chinese interests are defined by their ultimate goal to make it a regional hegemon and accordingly the most dominant interests of China are to increase its capabilities gap to other regional major powers. Therefore, interests play more important role in security issues than values while values play major role in economic situations as it is based on mutual benefits.

Furthermore; Thesis of China foreign policy in the conditions of globalization, by (Ayubova, M.2018), identifying the main specifics of China FP in modern conditions,

determining the status for Russian–Chinese relations . For the author China has strategy of inclusion into globalization process which led to a high dynamics of socio-economic development of the country and optimality of its FP. Also, the change in the concept of FP of China as it should be considered as consistent implementation with the necessary modifications in particular period.

❖ The new discussion in this study is going to be new in giving special focus to the different tools of Chinese FP in the regional context and the different challenges in front of it, to achieve such regional hegemony but with special focus on the soft tools of China.

▪ **Discussion:**

Despite most of China's FP objectives have been due to political motives, some are transparent than others. The Chinese policy toward the world is considered traditional one as it focuses on the rigid meaning of sovereignty principle for the national state and this accompanied by no intervention in any other state, even under the name of humanitarian intervention like some states do.

China also assures the refusal of using any kind of power outside the regional territory. These principles can be summarized in the five principles of peaceful coexistence which China is committed since 1954 in Peking Conference which are:

- 1– Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- 2– Mutual non-aggression.
- 3– Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- 4– Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit.
- 5– Peaceful co-existence.

This Chinese vision is very important because it is aiming at directing the international peace track in all the fields, as politically it is claiming that regardless the position of the state, they are all equal in front of international world, the role of UN is very important to support international law.⁽²⁾

ROC has many tools in its FP toward region or international world, thus the new trends in Chinese FP have contributed to china's rapid rise as a global power. One of the main tools china uses is soft power as it is the main tool adapted by ROC in its policy toward others and the next part clarifies the importance of soft power on Chinese agenda.

▪ **Tools of Chinese soft power:**

The increasing emphasis on soft power is very important trend on Chinese agenda as to influence by indirect and non-military means.

ROC has a vision to increase its influence regionally then globally through two main tools which are:

- a- Cultural and ideological appeals.
- b- Economic and financial incentives.

Before classifying the Chinese soft power, we need to define this concept from Chinese perspective as it can be viewed as one of two ways: one view sees soft power as the attractiveness of one country's ideology, political system and culture, Jie includes a country's ability to shape international norms and rules.⁽³⁾

Another view among Chinese scholars is that soft power is a broader concept that includes economic and diplomatic influences⁽⁴⁾ and ROC trying to have both dimensions into action.

Regarding the first dimension, China has expanded its cultural soft power resources as the culture is considered the core of Chinese soft power, According to some scholar's Chinese soft power seeks economic and political advantage in IR.⁽⁵⁾ Accordingly, the "strategic culture" prospective is very important and can be seen as driving factor to the Chinese FP as it helps in defining the potential acceptable options and understanding the china's long-term FP patterns. It also determines the different alternatives of FP towards the whole world, thus understanding the policies of ROC toward different issues as this Chinese strategic culture characterized by four main features which gives broad vision of how china react toward different issues; which are as follows:⁽⁶⁾

- a- The belief that china enjoys cultural and political differentiation as being the middle kingdom or the civilization of everything below the sky (tianxia) hence, ROC does not accept being on equal foot with any other country from cultural perspective. They also have their own vision in state craft, however; the stability with other countries is derived from the hierarchic belief of China that it is on the top of the pyramid while others are dependent and China is considered the core, others are periphery.⁽⁷⁾
- b- Assuring unity, integral sovereignty and non-external intervention which are derived from the mandate of heaven. People shall accept who is in power and on the other side the ruler shall govern by just and secure way for the whole society and he continues running as long as he works for the people. The Chinese culture coincide the internal domestic weakness with the external intervention.
- c- The necessity for avoiding wars especially direct fight, as one of the Chinese principles that taking risks is not desirable as it has negative connotation in Chinese

culture for ROC you can achieve the results with least possible cost and to use the lowest level of resources.

d- “China never seeks for hegemony”, is one of the Chinese cultural principles and it goes to war, only as sort of self-defence or to unify the state.⁽⁸⁾

Based on the above characteristics, china does not seek for regional expansion but rather to build region based upon common values and cultural pillars as in their perspective the only way for permanent stability is through culture relations and connections.⁽⁹⁾

Therefore; ROC can be considered as strategic plan for how to promote its soft power, china prefers to talk about its “great power responsibility” to the world community in a way to reshape the international order by its own vision.⁽¹⁰⁾

The tools for china FP to spread its soft power with its two dimensions mentioned previously can be summarized in the following points:

- 1– The Confucius Institutes.
- 2– Belt and Road Initiative.
- 3– China Central Television CCTV.
- 4– “Made in China 2025” plan.

Regarding the first tool of **The Confucius Institutes** as it began a pilot project in Uzbekistan, and it was fully established in 2009 “South Korea”.⁽¹¹⁾ It represents high level coordination as its impact is on value added knowledge creation, promoting language, culture and emphasizing cultural activities.⁽¹²⁾

Thus, these institutes seek to establish soft power through building intercultural communication and relationships. This creates a path to engage with individuals who

are non-Chinese or non-state actors.⁽¹³⁾ As cultural relations are important to build relationships based on mutual understanding rather than mere agenda –based campaigns which can impact long term communication better than short-term aiming to affect other nations .

The second tool is (BRI); originally known as (one belt one road), was launched by China in 2013; having two forks, often referred to “The silk road economic belt and the 21st century; maritime Silk Road as it connects more than 65 countries by building six economic corridors.⁽¹⁴⁾

In this tool; China merges the two dimensions of soft power as the first ideological, cultural one through building efficient cooperation platform, to create a closer partnership network balancing international governance system. Also, it has economic dimension through having economic and trade cooperation agreements with 31 countries to work towards a south–south cooperation, poverty, alleviation, exchange program and health care.⁽¹⁵⁾ Through BRI, China can achieve political and military objectives, such as establishing diplomatic ties with countries to gain support for their political agenda and expanding military basis to the participating counties.⁽¹⁶⁾

For promoting the BRI, china has made use of several soft power tools as it has made a three steps campaign strategy for BRI depending mainly on soft tools as follows:

Step 1: using media to promote BRI as the china global television network has broadcasted many episodes of their series entitled “one belt one road documentary common fate” (road of connectivity, energy ties, road to prosperity, finance and connectivity and building dreams)⁽¹⁷⁾, also having various programs supporting and criticizing the initiative.

Step (2): Through expanding scholarship programs for international students to study in China and announcing the (BRI) scholarships, where each year 10.000 scholarships will be available for any recipient from any other countries participating in BRI.⁽¹⁸⁾ Also, introducing a lot of exchange programmes aiming at promoting the BRI agenda.

Step (3): Hosting international events related to (BRI) like “Belt and Road summit 2017” in Beijing which was aiming to reach consensus in a win-win development approach. In which china introduced itself as open-minded collaborator for mutual benefit development opportunities.

The (BRI) improves dialogue and strategic communication with others by promoting comprehensive set of agendas to persuade stakeholders.

The third tool is China Central television or the role of media in broad-casting Chinese vision outside china by 6 main languages as English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese, which gives very important evidence of its influence on different regions which serve as a mean of soft power.

President (Xi Jinping) said that: “Tell China stories well, spread China’s voice well, let the world know three dimensional, colourful china, and showcase china’s role as a builder of world peace”.⁽¹⁹⁾

The use of technology is persuading the foreign public is one of the soft power tools which allowed china to spread itself as a responsible power, express it’s polices and also responding to issues within a short time frame, like many incidents such as in 2016 when UN tribunal ruled over the south china sea and the CCTV played a pivotal role in reinforcing China’s position and reaction.⁽²⁰⁾

Also in 2018; the trade war between China and U.S when the CCTV has provided a space for China to reinforce its national goals and to mediate with others, it conveys information that helps foreign audiences to find logic discourse from China's perspective, furthermore CCTV shown itself as a platform for immediate response to mediate escalating situations.⁽²¹⁾

Therefore, this tool is considered both reactive and proactive platform for communication as dealing with different issues and spreading public awareness of the national agenda.

The last tool in Chinese soft power agenda is (**Made In China 2025 Plan**), through R&D programmes. This tool is mainly focuses on the second economic and financial dimensions of soft power as it is aiming at improving innovation capacity and economic efficiency. It tries to strengthen its domestic economy and decreases its dependency on the U.S commercial industry.⁽²²⁾

The ending goal is to transform China into the top manufacturing country in the world. This transformation can happen through a plan of 10 strategies, including information technologies, aviation, rail, new energy vehicles and agricultural machinery.⁽²³⁾ From the above, it is very obvious the increasing emphasis on soft power in the Chinese agenda and to focus on the idea of becoming a role model for countries that are not fully convinced by the western, liberal economic and political systems. However, this Chinese rising soft power should not be exaggerated as the surveys of public opinion on the region surrounding China shows that (China is not that much influential and not seen as a positive force in the global and regional affairs).

For example, according to a 2012 public opinion survey of more than 6,000 people in China, Vietnam, Indonesia (47%), Japan (74%) strong majorities in South Korea (74%), are worried that China could become a military threat in the future.⁽²⁴⁾ This indicates the number of challenges China face in its strategy towards neighbourhood which affects it's track as being global power as one of the scholars says that China should prioritize its relations with its neighbours, because a great power needs the support of its neighbouring countries in order to rise in a strategic periphery belt.⁽²⁵⁾

- **Challenges facing Chinese Regional Strategy:-**

There are a lot of challenges in front of Chinese FP that hinders its progress and affects negatively achieving its interests which can be divided into four main challenges:

- **First: The political challenges:**

In the light of the developments in the global situation, ROC is faced by the American presence around the Chinese regional neighbourhood in Afghanistan in the west, South Korea, Japan in the East and the Pacific Ocean in the south. Also; the problems of Tibet and Taiwan that negatively affect the Chinese national security .

However, there are some internal challenges that affect ROC (FP) such as; the possibility that the communist party will lose legitimacy, power and the people of China will counter revolution against it, as to establish democratic system that takes pluralism and exchange of power.⁽²⁶⁾

Another internal political challenge is relying on the policies directed by the Chinese elite, which is in its nature unilateral policy extending the ROC steps during certain

stages. Additionally; the high level of bureaucracy and political centralization which acts as an impact factor on decision making and do not express democracy .⁽²⁷⁾

Externally, as China is pursuing a strategy of reshaping the orders of multiple selected regions that are of strategic importance to its national interests as in Southeast Asia and central Asia, it has proposed a variety of new cooperative frameworks to achieve a-defacto leadership role in the region.

Another challenge to Chinese regional leadership is the Russian pressure, as; although both China and Russia challenging the western-dominated international system, conflict can emerge between both powers. Since Russia strives to enhance their power in the world order, they might interpret any effort by China to increase its own status as direct threat to their interests.⁽²⁸⁾ Russia also is willing to endure long, costly periods of conflict in a way to protect its own interests in the world.⁽²⁹⁾

Japan also is considered another challenge in front of China as it can be considered as a major power in the same region with China that both countries have security related issues with conflict potential such as the (Senkaku islands); as China wants to limit the Japanese influence in the region, it also worries about mutual benefits.

Significantly;

China wants to overcome Japanese capabilities which can be achieved through relative mutual gains, but it must deal with Japan on positive mutual acceptable cooperative relations. It is true that to become regional hegemon by surpassing the capabilities of other regional major powers, but in this case Sino-Japanese relations need to be solved by mutual gains and benefits.⁽³⁰⁾

- **Second: The economic challenges:-**

There are a lot of challenges in the economic field that can be divided into three main items internally as follows:⁽³¹⁾

1- Industry challenges:

The lack of stable standards for the Chinese industry in the so-called (unified Chinese product code) which affect the credibility of Chinese products. Also, the lack of necessary raw materials affects the Chinese industry to complete the final products and substituting it by non-original materials that affect the value of the products.

Another challenge is the unavailability of the industrial safety factor necessary to secure works in order to increase production. Furthermore; the increase in the percentage of industrial pollution resulting from increased production at the expense of the ROC bearing environmental burdens for its people and most Chinese cities are classified among the worst for life.

The intensity of industrialization and the power of consumption compel the ROC to import part of its need of raw materials, especially petroleum. Adding to that; the natural difficulties which are concentrated in the difficulty of moving as the presence of high terrain, desert climate and the spread of drought in the ROC western parts and the southern, eastern regions are met by floods and typhoons.

2- Agriculture challenges:⁻⁽³²⁾

One of the challenges is categorized in drought, floods, hailstorms and tropical storms that lead to destroy crops. Also; Climate changes affect pollution as a result of carbon dioxide emissions, which lead to crop destruction.

Another challenge is the migration of manpower from agriculture to industrial sector due to the lack of material return in agriculture in contrast with other sectors. Also; the gap between supply and demands from food grains due to increase in population. The bridge gap of food in the field of livestock and the use of red meat resulting from the difference in lifestyles in ROC is severe challenge faced by China. Another point is the challenge in front of government to persuade the Chinese farmer to use modern irrigation methods to cope with the shortage of water resources in some areas.

3- Energy challenges:

One of the challenges is suffering from energy savings due to being the largest consumer of energy in the world which turned from a challenge into a threat in many situations. Also; the competition for oil like all the western countries.

Another type of Challenges is the unjust use of raw materials, illegal mining and smuggling with state pressure to reduce export quotas of mineral.

Similarly, there are also some external challenges that affect Chinese leadership and hinder it from economic expansion; through the multi–programs of BRI, made in China 2025 and FDI investments in Africa. It asserts itself in the global markets. However, this was met by the (five.no) principles for not politically interfere in African issues.⁽³³⁾ The above principles attract countries to have good positive relations with China but not to the extent to be the leading global manufacturing power. Accordingly; China FP can be characterized by its strong geopolitical interpretation of its own economic security.

Nevertheless, China's various external economic vulnerabilities are considered challenge to the Chinese national security. As this new Chinese strategies influenced various aspects of FP including regional one.

- **Third: The social challenges:**

These challenges are very important because it is related to the norms, values of Chinese thought as there are many internal challenges related to education field and human rights one.⁽³⁴⁾ The number of university degrees is very large that puts a challenge in creating jobs for graduates and increases the level of unemployment. Also, imposing agriculture education in nine years; free of charge, which led to literacy and difficulty in education.

Another field of challenge is human rights; the Chinese authorities have used in extensive way administrative forms of detention which allow police to detain individuals without trial. Also, defenders of HR have been placed under house arrest, arbitrary transfer and other ranks of ill-treatment.

The demographic imbalance is one of the Chinese challenges in front of China that is resulting from rural migration to urban areas and the pursuit of livelihood. Also, the lack of job opportunities, which represents an imbalance in all social aspects that results in defects from increasing crimes and frustration .

The death penalty is carried out in several forms by using lethal injection or by shooting to death. Finally, the judicial system is subject to the communist party and not subject to any transitional status.

- **Fourth: Military and security challenges:-⁽³⁵⁾**

There are a lot of challenges in this field, as the first important challenge is the spread of terrorism surrounding China especially in Afghanistan since the end of cold war 1991 which affects political, economic stability and negatively affects the home front cohesion and many divisions within ROC.

Furthermore; The Chinese tendency to maintain the status quo with neighbouring countries as since 1949, ROC resolved 23 border disputes representing 50% of the disputed territories. Another important challenge is the south China sea as a strategic trade corridor between Europe, the ME and East Asia, crossing from the Indian ocean to the South China sea, South Korea and Japan does not want the Chinese control in this field, as China seeks to extend its control over the South China sea as a first step towards the spread of its maritime power to the high seas especially the Indian ocean that threatens its transformation into new area for major powers to compete. Simultaneously, Japan and South Korea seek the same approach with the presence of the USA and Russian naval fleets. This goes parallel with the announcement of ROC that it will not hesitate to use its armed forces to defend its interests and rights in the South China Sea which is subject to its sovereignty and has historical and legal documents that prove the rights of China taking into account the Sino-Japanese relations mentioned previously.⁽³⁶⁾

Another security challenge is related to the increase in diplomatic relations and activities in East Asia; such as Vietnam, Indonesia which offered mediation between Japan and China, also between ASEAN countries and China to solve border disputes that put a burden on Chinese dream of being the top of the pyramid in Asia.

Indian ambitions in East Asia are considered another threat that possess to China due to the ongoing border disputes. As China would attempt to assert force in these disputed territories, India would be forced to respond militarily. Although China possesses a stronger military, India could potentially overpower them and take control of the disputed (arunachal Pradesh territory).⁽³⁷⁾

The Chinese allies would be Pakistan which has bad historical relations with India which can make the last resort to USA in developing a closer alignment to create regional balancing against China.⁽³⁸⁾

All of the above military and security challenges are accompanied with increasing western ambitions and interests in central and South Asia with introducing security arrangements with direct neighbors' countries either by establishing military alliances and agreements or establishing military bases and imposing security and military arrangements on the Syrian regions imposing a low level of military technology and prohibiting the spread of ballistic missiles on the countries of the Asian region.

- **Concluding Remarks:-**

This research tries to study the relation between the Chinese soft foreign policy tools and its ability to become regional hegemon and the challenges that face China in its track for such regional hegemony.

However, there are some concluding remarks that needed to be taken into consideration:

Though China has its own definition of the concept of soft power as mentioned previously, there is difficulty in defining the concept of soft power till now despite its multi–uses in IR. Also, norms and values are not considered the main source that

lead FP; which make another question of does Chinese force is driven by unique Chinese values or by its egoistic interests that makes it deserves the label of (The China threat).

The Chinese interests according to its final goal are to make it regional hegemon and to increase the gap of capabilities to other regional powers to expel the American existence and expand its control over the region.

Also; the Chinese perspective now is (The great power responsibility) to the world community with enjoying a positive role during the modern global financial and economic crises clarifies its willingness to contribute to the global public good.

The Reconciliation between Chinese historical constants that call for not intervening internationally in any country and the current requirements for being great power is very difficult and considered debate inside China on more than one axis between decision makers and academics about what the goals should be internationally and what are the acceptable policies and the different valid alternatives.

There are also different Chinese soft power tools to influence the region which indicate the importance of soft model in Chinese experience but there are a lot of challenges that reach to the level of threat that hinder China from being able to control the region. Thus; the contiguity and sharing borders with china is very important pressure on Chinese hegemony as it has (14) contiguity. As the country attempts to exert itself as regional hegemon, it's met with resistance from Russia and India who can be considered as major powers.

With lacking defensive alliances with other neighbouring countries, China is forced to judge whether to continue or not in its track and polices for regional hegemony as it's faced by many challenges to the extent of threats by those two powers.

Finally, China is unique case that has the potential capabilities for being regional hegemon as it has its own moral mode through which it can build leadership, but the contemporary variable and the different challenges in the (Political – Economic – Social – Security and military fields) curbs china from achieving programs in its hegemony.

Hence, checking the first hypothesis, it is true that china asserts itself as regional hegemon as it uses many tools to achieve this, but at the same time this Chinese polices are faced by many regional resistance, not only related to border disputes, but also to the internal and external challenges as well.

The idea of being hegemon in itself contradicts with the Chinese non-interventionist model and many norms, values which put challenge on the Chinese hegemony but IR can always have surprise which can change Chinese position at any time.

- **Attachments:**

***(Belt and Road Initiative Map)**



▪ **Table of abbreviations:**

FP	Foreign Policy
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
IR	International Relations
UN	United Nations
ME	Middle East
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
ROC	Republic Of China
R&D	Research and Development
HR	Human Rights
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

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