



**IR THEORY, DIFFERENCE AND SUBJECTIVITY: ON
CONDITIONS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF POST-
WESTERN IR THEORY**

Muhammed A. AĞCAN¹

ABSTRACT

The question of difference and multiplicity in IR has been conventionally defined by the particularistic ontology of the sovereign-state based on a certain understanding of the relationship between humanity and socio-political community. In the last three decades by bringing gender, race, class, post-sovereign socio-political communities, cultural-civilizational identities etc. into IR, critical international relations theories have sought to rethink the international as being conscious of its historico-cultural settings and recognizing multiple ethico-political worlds and international imaginations in contemporary human societies. The recent debate on post-Western IR theory emerging within this conceptual-historical context seeks to problematize Eurocentrism in IR and to find ways to include non/post-western historico-cultural worlds, socio-political formations and international imaginations. Postcolonial account of this scholarly debate focuses on the colonial relations of international politics originated in the world historicity of European modernity/capitalism defending the co-constitution of self and other and accordingly develops the postcolonial subjectivity. This article critically engages with this debate on post-Western IR theory and specifically postcolonial standpoint by asking whether, how or to what

¹ Yrd. Doç. Dr. Muhammed A. Ağcan, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İktisat Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, Beyazıt-Fatih, İstanbul, m.a.agcan@gmail.com.

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extent we could conceptualize differences of non/post-Western subjectivities. More precisely the article will examine the idea of postcolonial subjectivity in terms of its possibility to do justice to the differences of non-Western subjectivities and will argue for the significance of their self-understanding/conceptualizations on the basis of philosophical-scientific and historico-cultural justifications in dealing with the question of difference/multiplicity.

Keywords: Post-Western IR, Eurocentrism, Postcolonialism, Non-Western Subjectivity.

ÖZ

Uluslararası İlişkilerde farklılık ve çeşitlilik sorunu çoğu zaman insanlık ve sosyo-politik topluluk arasında belirli bir ilişkiyi varsayan egemen devletin partiküler/tikelci ontolojisi aracılığıyla tanımlanmıştır. Son birkaç onyıdır toplumsal cinsiyet, ırk, sınıf, egemenlik-sonrası sosyo-politik topluluklar, kültürel-medeniyetsel kimlikler vb. konu başlıklarını Uİ'e taşıyan eleştirel uluslararası ilişkiler teorileri uluslararası yeniden düşünmenin gerekliliğini savunmuş; tarihsel-kültürel bağlamının bilincinde ve çağdaş toplumlardaki farklı/çoğul yaşam dünyalarını ve uluslararası tahayyülleri tanıyan bir tavra çağrıda bulunmuştur. Bu kavramsal-tarihsel bağlam içinde gelişen Post-Batı Uİ teorisi tartışması, Uİ'deki Avrupamerkezciliği sorunsallaştırmakta ve Batı ötesi ve/ya Batılı olmayan tarihi-kültürel dünyaları, sosyo-politik formasyonları ve uluslararası tahayyülleri dâhil etmenin yollarını aramaktadır. Bu tartışmanın önemli taraflarından biri olan post-kolonyal yaklaşım, Avrupa modernitesi ve kapitalizminin dünya tarihselliğinde temellenen uluslararası siyasetin kolonyal ilişkilerine odaklanmakta; bu tarihsel-kültürel tecrübeden hareketle ben ve ötekinin karşılıklı kurulumunu savunan bir postkolonyal öznellik fikrini geliştirmektedir. Bu çalışma, Batılı olmayan ve/ya Batı-ötesi özneliğin imkanın olup olmadığını, eğer mümkünse nasıl ve ne ölçüde olabileceğini Post-Batı Uİ teorisi tartışması ve spesifik olarak postkolonyal bakış açısını üzerinden ele alacaktır. Daha net bir şekilde belirtmek gerekirse bu çalışma postkolonyal yaklaşımın geliştirdiği öznellik fikrinin Batılı olmayan öznellikleri ne kadar temsil

edebileceğini inceleyecek ve bu anlamda Batılı olmayan öznelliklerin felsefi-bilimsel ve tarihi-kültürel gerekçelendirmeye dayalı ben-kavramsallaştırmalarının önemine dikkat çekecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupamerkezcilik, Postkolonyal Eleştiri, Evrensellik/Farklılık, Öznellik.

INTRODUCTION: UNIVERSALITY AND DIFFERENCE IN IR

The question of difference and multiplicity in the mainstream IR has been conventionally defined (and ultimately occluded) by the particularistic ontology of the sovereign-state. The sovereign state is based on the idea that constructs the relationship between humanity, universality, moral obligation and community, particularity, citizenship through a philosophical and normative particularism (Linklater, 1982). It assumes a particular form of socio-political community that is regarded to be the historico-social condition of the possibility of being human. It fixes distinct individual and collective subjectivities and historical-cultural world/formations into a specific form of socio-political community. In other words the coexistence of multiple socio-political communities is framed within and mediated through the territorial sovereign-state. The determination of political community into a territorialized/particularized space and time (Walker, 1994) is regarded as having universal validity, which provides multiple individual and collective subjectivities with legitimacy and agency in world politics. In this sense the discourse of IR mediated/represented by the sovereign state and accordingly its associated concepts such as power politics, security, national interest, anarchy etc. function as the universal category by which agents, structures and interactions in world politics are identified, justified, measured and judged. Therefore the discourse of IR works, acts and functions through and simultaneously enact and perpetuate the dialectic of particularism and universalism (Ashley, 1998). It both articulates its objects, concepts, explanations, subjectivities and structures within particular-distinct forms and modes, and considers them as universal, identical and same for whole human communities (Behr, 2011: 2-3). However the idealized category of the territorialized sovereign state in IR filters and discern its object and subject and thereby its Other. In every instantiation of the reproduction of its particularity as universality and identity it veils differences, particularities and multiplicity. Consequently it has been often claimed that the discipline of IR, specifically its mainstream discourse, has no tools and potency to be able to deal with the problematique of difference in world politics (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004).

For the last three decades critics of mainstream IR such as constructivism, critical theory, poststructuralism, feminism drawing on differing social-political philosophies and social-scientific traditions, have investigated a variety of the

fundamental issues, such as social construction of identity, power/knowledge nexus of self/other, normative-emancipatory potential of social-cultural interactions, historico-cultural formation of the sovereign state and international, gendered nature of (global) political practice and theory, perspectival and discursive character of knowledge claims (Wendt, 1999; Rosenberg 1994; Cox, 1996; Smith et. al. , 1996). What these post-positivist critiques essentially defend is that meaning, truth and understanding are constructed within so called paradigms, discourse and research programs and that social-scientific research requires epistemological and methodological pluralism (Lapid, 1989). Along with this pluralistic social-scientific orientation critical international political theories have brought gender, race, class, post-sovereign socio-political communities, cultural-civilizational identities etc. into the conceptual framework of IR. They in their own ways have sought to rethink the international as being conscious of its historico-cultural settings, ethico-political assumptions and epistemological premises and recognizing multiple life-worlds, differing collectivities and international imaginations in contemporary human societies. As the result of the post-positivist research agenda and its philosophical-scientific insights, it is argued, the discipline has become much more reflexive about its temporality, particularity and limits (Smith, 2002; Tickner, 2003).

It could be argued that what has become significant with this literature is that the multiplicity of socio-political communities, the distinctiveness of subjectivity and the plurality of historico-cultural life worlds need to be the subject-matter and the defining-problematique for theoretical-philosophical endeavour in IR. For this interpretation, the discipline has to take seriously self/other, space/time, universality/particularity and identity/difference with their philosophical, normative and historico-social dimensions. Within this conceptual and historical context there has been a growing literature to problematize the parochialism of IR and seek to do justice to difference, diversity and multiplicity in world politics by reflecting on non-Western² individual/collective subjectivities and international/global imaginations originated in diverse ontologico-philosophical ethos and historico-social formations (Acharya and Buzan, 2010). This scholarly intervention initially starts with the idea that both the subject-matter of the discipline is essentially reflections of Euro-American historico-social experience and politico-economic

² In this work I use the “non-West” as a generic term to refer to distinct individual/collective subjectivities represented through different forms of socio-political communities and embedded within particular ontologies, civilizational-social imaginations and historico-cultural life worlds that the concept of the West however it is used does not include or represent, indeed, often exclude or marginalize. Here I am not interested in plural/multiple components of the term and I will use it in a singular form for only analytical reason in order to imagine its possible meanings/existences. I need to emphasize that I do not suggest there is dichotomy between the “West” and “non-West”. Neither do I consider them monolithic in themselves and take these categories in essentialized forms.

priorities, and the ontological premises and knowledge claims of IR are largely shaped by modern European philosophical-scientific traditions isolated from world-historical context and non-European philosophical-scientific traditions. In order to go beyond the parochialism of IR and have a genuinely international/global discipline, it is argued, the discipline not only needs to broaden its geographical-political boundaries by addressing different historico-cultural and socio-economic settings in which international relations of power, wealth and identity take place but also pluralize the ontologico-epistemological assumptions and methodological structures of IR by recognizing diverse ways of being, knowing and living in global politics (Tickner and Waever, 2009).

The recent debate on post-Western IR theory (Vasilaki, 2012) emerging within this “cultural-reflexive turn” seeks to problematize Eurocentrism in IR and to find ways to include non/post-Western historico-cultural worlds, subjectivities, socio-political formations and international imaginations. This article critically engages with this debate on post-Western IR theory and specifically postcolonial standpoint of this debate by asking whether, how or to what extent we could conceptualize differences of non/post-Western subjectivities. More precisely the article will examine the idea of postcolonial subjectivity in terms of its possibility to do justice to the differences of non-Western subjectivities. The article will suggest that even if postcolonial account of non-Western differences provides some crucial insights, it turns out to be insufficient because of its problematic concept of subjectivity. I will argue for taking into account the self-understandings of non-Western subjectivities on the basis of their philosophical-scientific and historico-cultural justifications in dealing with the question of difference/multiplicity. In the following I will first investigate the recent debate on post-Western IR theory by tracing its emergence, identifying main critiques and arguments, and pointing out differing standpoints in the related literature. Second the article critically engages with the postcolonial account of non/post-Western subjectivity by both recognizing its corrective intervention to the problem of dealing with difference, multiplicity and subjectivity in IR and at the same time showing its ultimate failure to do justice to the differences of non-Western subjectivities. Lastly in order to go beyond this failure the article will look at how to substantiate the difference of non/post-Western subjectivities and points out the possible sites in which non-Western subjectivities could be conceptualized.

1. PUTTING THE DEBATE ON POST-WESTERN IR THEORY IN ITS PLACE

As have just been said post-Western IR theory is essentially about problematizing Eurocentrism in IR and recognizing multiple historico-cultural life-worlds, distinct socio-political communities and plural subjectivities in world

politics (Acharya, 2012; Shillam, 2011; Dunn and Shaw, 2001; Tickner, 2003). For this, post-Western IR starts first with the idea of the decentralization of the West as the philosophico-scientific and historico-cultural referent. It must first recognize the existence, legitimacy and agency of distinct subjectivities, alternative socio-political communities, diverse historico-cultural life-worlds and multiple civilizational identities. Furthermore it is predicated upon the assumption that the international is intersubjectively constituted by these multiple/diverse subjectivities along with a plural understanding of the universal embedded within their differing philosophical ontologies and civilizational ethos. Therefore, I suggest, the debate has to address the questions of how and in what ways non-Western societies, civilizations, geocultural epistemologies and socio-political worlds whatever it is called differ from the West. Where does the difference of non-Western individual and collective subjectivities and historico-social life worlds come from? Secondly it has to do with whether or how we could conceptualize difference in relation to distinct subjectivities and structures using the concepts and methodologies of social sciences and specifically the discipline of IR. However all in all it is about the subjectivity of the other and its articulation/representation within social-scientific language.

Two general standpoints can be distinguished within the literature on post-Western IR theory (compare Vasilaki 2012). A line of thought criticizes specifically the parochialism/particularism of IR consisting in Euro-American cultural-intellectual experience and politico-economic priorities and seeks to broaden its subject-matters and methodological-conceptual horizon by looking at distinct local-regional cultural and socio-political phenomena. This line of thought concurs and starts with the argument that the main concepts of IR such as sovereignty, security, nation-state and so on are mostly irrelevant to non-Western societies and cannot explain the social and political conditions in Africa, Asia or other local and regional socio-political formations (Dunn and Shaw, 2001; Tickner, 2003). As Acharya and Buzan maintain in their now well-known edited book (Acharya and Buzan, 2010; 1-25) IR theory misrepresents “the global distribution of its subjects” and because of its geo-cultural and epistemological Westernness, it fails to understand the global socio-political reality in which diverse non-Western subjectivities and cultural-politics exist and contribute. What is needed, for these authors, to bring non-Western scholarly contribution and cultural-political experiences into IR theory. To do so, it is necessary to look for knowledge and social-political experiences produced within non-Western local/national characteristics and cultural settings and thereby reconceptualize these materials within the first-order structure of IR theory (Acharya, 2012). In other words, for this standpoint, it is required to revise the discipline’s concepts and create new ones sensitive to local, national and regional (cultural-political) structures.

The objective of this standpoint seems to consist in putting the particularities of subjectivities, local/regional socio-political structures and historico-cultural traditions into the “universality” of the discourse of IR and its social-scientific premises. Since this attitude to debate on post-Western IR theory constrains itself to pluralize the subject(s) and object (s) of IR without any systematic problematization of the Euro-American meta-theoretical structure of the discipline, neither ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the discipline nor the subjectivity of the other have been properly scrutinized and problematized. However this is exactly what has to be explored in order to go beyond the Eurocentric construction of the international. As Shillam (2011) rightly argues it is not the solution to add the non-Western thought and experience into the Western social-scientific knowledge, which claims to have universal validity. This might lead to the re-production of the intellectual hegemony of the West and may become the philosophical-theoretical justification of its imperial policies. What is necessary, on the other hand, “is to undermine the security of an epistemological cartography that quarantines legitimate knowledge production of modernity to one (idealized) geo-cultural site” (Shillam, 2011; 24).

Representing the second standpoint in this debate, postcolonial writers aim to destabilize/deconstruct the authority of Western social-scientific knowledge and concepts by re-narrate their world historical emergences along with the aim of retrieving the colonial other (Seth, 2013; Chowdry and Nair, 2004; Paolini, 1999). They crucially take issue with the use of pure categories of “Westernness and non-Westernness” of IR in relation to the problem of difference, multiplicity, subjectivity, self/other and dialogue. They problematize global modernity and capitalism through which Westernness and non-Westernness (of subjectivities, structures, interactions, concepts and international imaginations) essentially co-constitute. In this line of thought the theory and practice of the international have been produced and reproduced organically but unequally and hierarchically in connection with European colonialism and imperialism (Jones, 2006). Furthermore the modern concepts of subject, property-territoriality, sovereign state, political-social order, Westphalian international system etc. find their meanings within the colonial encounters of Europeans with non-Europeans (Jahn, 2002; Boucher, 2009). This encounter with the other is especially crucial because it determines not only the historico-cultural underpinnings of Westphalian international order but also defines the epistemological and methodological conditions of International Relations (Seth, 2013; 15-31). For these authors only through exposing these epistemological and historical-cultural conditions of IR is it possible to deal with difference and to reflect on postcolonial social-formations and subjectivities (Agathangelou and Ling, 2009). Therefore the objective is to examine the constitutive place/role of

race, class, gender, power (Chowdry and Nair, 2004) in the interaction between European and non-Europeans that has constituted and still constitutes the international (Paolini, 1999). As soon as the globality of the international originated in unequal self-other co-constitution is recognized, especially its implications for the form of knowing, being and acting in the postcolonial order we will be at better place to think about difference in global politics (Shillam, 2011; 21). In other words whenever difference is contextualized and substantiated in the global colonial modernity/capitalism as such, only then the subjectivity of the other can be conceptualized. Accordingly IR theory is provincialized and diversified.

The postcolonial account of the debate problematizes what it is often taken as given, self-enclosed, essentialized concepts and practices. It points out the colonial relations of international politics originated in the world historicity of European modernity/capitalism and emphasizes the co-constitution of self and other in this structure. In this sense the postcolonial critique seeks to put the colonial other in the discourse of IR and more generally the social sciences and thereby to develop the idea of postcolonial subjectivity which, it is argued, has been always there and still here in the constitution and making of the theory and practice of IR (Krishna, 2009). To the extent that by underlying the constitutive role of the non-West in the discourses of modernity, social sciences and IR, the postcolonial orientation has significantly contributed to the conceptualization of the subjectivity of the non-West. Specifically this perspective critically investigates the concepts of political modernity such as civil society, democracy, citizenship, the state, human rights in their differentiation within the (colonized) cultural-social life worlds and simultaneously reflects on distinct ways of sociality, subjectivity, politics and so on (Chakrabarty, 2000; 4 and 180-213). By doing this it begins laying out the foundations of possible mediums through which the subjectivity of the non-West is to be examined.

If difference in terms of race, class, power, gender, socio-political formation and cultur/civilization is conceptualized through the unequal relationship of European self and colonial other within modernity and capitalism, the content and form of the postcolonial subjectivity turns out not to be very different at all. It is ultimately determined by the trajectory of global modernity which is in fact essentially shaped by the Western discourse and experience. This tension is evident when Dipesh Chakrabarty seeks to dig and articulate the difference/agency of the colonial other in their concrete life worlds and culturally-religiously specific conditions of its existence and simultaneously enacting the universal categories of European modernity for and their penetration to the form and substance of the colonial difference/subjectivity (Chakrabarty, 2000; 47-71). Therefore to the extent that the subjectivity of difference/other is ultimately conditioned by the universality of European

modernity and capitalism, we are unable to conceptualize/capture non-Western subjectivities in their distinct ontologies and ethos. In this vein the failure of postcolonial subjectivity in dealing with the conceptualization of non-Western agency seems to lie in the fact that it does not take seriously philosophico-scientific and historico-cultural contexts/resources in which non-Western subjectivities take shape and that cannot be subsumed and conceptualized under the “universal” categories of European modernity.

For this reason I suggest that even if postcolonial standpoint gives us some crucial insights in relation to the issue at stake as emphasized above, these are not sufficient to dealing with the very problematique of subjectivity of the non-West the inclusion of which in the first place is necessary to imagine post-Western IR theory. In other words, it could be argued that, the postcolonial account of the agency/difference of the non-West falls short in retrieving the subjectivity of the non-West which seems to lie beyond the reach of European discourse and experience. Therefore the debate on post-Western IR turns out to be the question of how the subjectivity of non-West is conceptualized. In the following I will briefly discuss why the postcolonial subjectivity cannot fulfill this task by critically exploring the different ways in which it is articulated. More substantially I will examine in detail the state, content and form of the postcolonial subjectivity developed in postcolonial literature. And then as conclusion I will outline a framework that seeks to identify conditions of the possibility of post-Western IR theory which is assumed to be able to substantiate non-Western subjectivity.

2. FORMS OF DIFFERENCE AND SUBJECTIVITY IN POSTCOLONIAL IR STUDIES

The postcolonial subject as developed in postcolonial IR literature cannot capture/grasp what non-Western subjectivity is and/or could be. It provides us with crucial but limited insights about its form and contents. The reason might be its problematic notion of subjectivity which refuses any sense of essence, substance, foundation (Paolini, 1999; 63-90 and 91-128). It looks for subjectivity in deferring moments of difference and structure. On the one side of the spectrum the postcolonial standpoint seems to constitute the agency of non-West as difference which is established ultimately in practices/actions primarily in the form of resistance and reaction without having a particular logic, substance, systematic narrative, principle or ethos. The forms in which this difference is articulated are the ones the self constitutes itself and the other. Here we have something different but we cannot know/identify or substantiate what it is, where its difference exactly comes from or what makes its resistance possible. For example only possible sites in which the non-West exists, its resistance is developed and/or its difference can be sustained are those of subjectivities,

principles, concepts, structures and institutions shaped primarily within the discourses and practices of European modernity.

On the other side of the spectrum, self and other are regarded as the production of structure/discourse which cannot be reduced or subsumed to and defined by any categories of subject, essence, reason, truth, principle, logic and so on. Difference is manifested in multiple selves and subjectivities which emerge in plural philosophical ontologies, social imaginaries and historico-cultural life worlds. Neither self nor community is stable, take a distinguishing form, have over-arching identity and/or can be embodied/represented; but they are always in a never-ending process of shaping/formation in plural selves and discourses/structures. For this account, for instance, the subjectivity of the non-West cannot be instantiated within a certain form of socio-political formation or civilizational identity. Nor its difference is justified by a specific idea of being, reason, truth, morality and so on. Consequently to the extent that the postcolonial conceptualization of subjectivity is reluctant to the specification of the quality of subjectivity of the non-West, alternative and distinct notions of ontology, humanity, morality, social imagination that the non-West potentially contains cannot be recognized, substantiated and conceptualized. More crucially the postcolonial account will remain and determined within the Western discourse and since in its articulation this account has to utilize this hegemonic discourse (in terms of philosophical-normative and institutional-cultural forms and materials), it ultimately perhaps without consciously re-produces it.

It would be pertinent to substantiate this argument by focusing on some exemplary postcolonial texts. For instance Pinar Bilgin (2008) critically examines the parochialism of IR and discusses how to inquire into non-Western thinking and politics. She problematizes a general tendency that seeks to explain difference by using essentializing/totalizing categories of the West and the non-West which are considered as the geographical and cultural self-enclosed entities. Bilgin emphasizes the possible existence of the non-Western thinking and practice in the structure of Western discourse and the constitutive place of Western concepts in the articulation/determinations of difference of non-Western subjectivities. However, the argument goes, difference is mostly explicable by investigating the historical-conceptual structure of the relationship between the West and non-West which provides the non-West with a certain manner of being, thinking and acting. For the author this manifestation of difference of the non-Western way of thinking about and doing politics is best captured in Bhabha's well known phrase 'almost the same but not quite'. She substantiates the argument in the cases of India's nuclear policy, Turkey's secularization/Westernization and Asia's integration into the global liberal order all of which are the possible sites of the non-Western (thinking and) politics (Bilgin, 2008).

Bilgin aims to show that how 'mimicry' may become a politics of resistance and difference by furnishing the conditions of the agency of the non-West in the form of similarity and thereby disrupting the authority of the Western discourse. For example India's search for nuclear status is predicated upon the idea that if India becomes a national-security state essentially by having nuclear power, this will prevent Western intervention in, threat to or domination of India (Bilgin, 2008; 15-16). Turkey's secularization is also the case of "mimicry" by which both Turkish identity and its difference are simultaneously sustained. Secularization is considered by Turkish rulers as the condition of the possibility of survival, the embodiment of which is the ideal socio-political form of modernity, namely the sovereign-state. It is through adopting Western discourses, institutions and practices that Turkey constitutes itself a modern sovereign-state that made it possible for Turkey to look like "similar" in the eyes of the West and to be regarded "same" and harmless (Bilgin, 2008; 16-17). Lastly Asia's integration into the liberal world order should not be seen neither a part of teleological Westernization nor a counter-strategy of Asian hegemony. It is best understood an aspiration to be recognized by Western countries as equal partners in global politics (Bilgin, 2008; 17-19).

All these three cases of the possible sites of non-Western thinking and politics emerging within the interaction/relationship with the West, Bilgin seems to think, may have potential to turn survival instinct of power, material interest and security into rational and identity politics. As Bilgin (2008; 19) states "...such seeming 'similarity' may be rooted in policies of survival shaped in an international political context characterized by an equal division of labor and distribution of power". It leads to the socialization of the non-West into the structure, practice and institution of the international on which difference and agency of the non-West are established. In other words, for this standpoint, "similarity" of the West and non-West in terms of thinking about and doing world politics mediated through the universal category of "survival" is the site in which the agency of the non-West is manifested. Most importantly it constitutes and sustains its difference. However the ways/forms in which survival takes shape and gets embodiment are the ones that emerged within certain space and time defined by European philosophical-scientific orientation and historic-cultural life world. More specifically the non-Western actors use Western concepts and theories in order to establish their identities as difference encountering similar socio-political and cultural experience within their particular geo-cultural contexts (Bilgin, 2010; 824).

Discursive account of colonial domination points out the categories of mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity which are used to demonstrate the impotency of the colonial discourse and the multiple/nonessentialized articulation of self and subject positions that are represented in most explicit

forms by migrants, diasporas, exiles, refugees and so on. They negate all forms of individual and communal essences/constructs which instead assume multiple/split selves, subjectivities, communities (Paolini, 1999; 74-78). The colonial other through the double determinations of mimicry threatens the authority of the colonial disciplinary power and legitimate knowledge by not to be articulated, appropriated and essentialized. It establishes its difference by being almost same but not quite. The notion also requires non-organic communities, traditions, culture, history, discourse and so on which clearly are most relevant to the postmodern condition of contemporary human societies. However since mimicry predicated upon power, discourse and rules set from above, the resistance, agency and subjectivity of the colonized have to be conditioned by the colonial discourse. As Paolini (1999; 77) claims, “the subject is merely swept up in the ambivalence of colonial discourse, a bit player that responds passively to the dynamics of mimicry.” Consequently all the idea of mimicry can do is to underlie the fact that the authority of the colonial power is limited and its discourse is impotent. However it cannot tell us how the subjectivity of the other is established, which resources to use in its constitution and what qualities/components it tends to present.

The constitution of agency of the non-West through “mimicry” indicates the relationality of ontology qualified with the constitution of multiple and diverse social-existential life worlds. Agathangelou and Ling (2009; 5-6) calls this worldism which is predicated upon the idea that “the self reverberates with others to construct their mutual subjectivities communally”. The entwining of social ontologies through intersubjectively shared knowledges, institutions and languages provides a specific condition of being in which selves and others manifest themselves in trans and multi subjectivities reflecting and producing themselves reciprocally. It recognizes the agency of diverse selves and others in the making of social ontologies which is open to adjustment, change, reformulation and transformation. For the authors the ontology of the global is the multiplicity of intersubjectively constituted social formations and cultural traditions entangling/encountering with each other which ultimately leads to hybrid and creole practices, formations, subjectivities (Agathangelou and Ling, 2009; 86-91).

There is clearly continuity from looking for non-Western thinking within the forms of national-security state, secularization and the liberal-capitalist order to the idea of conceptualization of the non-West on the basis of a relational ontology that implies selves and subjectivities constituted through multiple discourses/structures. In the first instance the subjectivity of the non-West is looked for in the rather similar forms of modern categories of metaphysics, the political, the sovereign-state, individual-collective imagination and so on. In the second the non-Western subject is de-essentialized through decentralized

discourses/structures which have already been established by certain metaphysics and requires to take certain forms of subjectivity, politics and collectivity. What is common in both accounts is the lack of insights by which to reflect on what non-Western subjectivity can be, which distinguishing qualities it may have, how it is articulated in distinct plural forms, what resources it has to utilize in its constitution/s. In short what we have in the end is underdeveloped concept of the subjectivity in relation with the non-West. This is most crucial in the debate on post-Western IR theory which in essence requires to go beyond the Western confinement of the international and necessitates the multiplicity of collective subjectivities, civilizational/social imaginaries and social ontologies in the constitution of the global. Therefore without theorizing/substantiating the subjectivity of the non-West in its universality/difference nexus, it is unlikely to multiply/pluralize the international, which in itself requires thoroughgoing investigations of distinct ways of being, knowing and acting in the world.

The problem seems to be related with to what extent non-Western thought and experience are taken into consideration and made the object of analysis. In this vein Shillam (2011) rightly maintains that non-West should not be only represented as the colonized/passive/victimized other in the colonial domination but also qualified with the authority and agency which are deployed in critically engaging/adjusting and reformulating discourse, institutions and structures of modernity through its embodied traditions and lived experiences. In grounding the “creative agency” of the non-West, Shillam emphasizes the fact of translation and generating novel meanings of modern categories by the non-West. What Shillam intends to argue that “non-Western thought is constitutive of global thought on modernity” (Shillam, 2011; 12-26 and 20-21). Nevertheless the author takes into consideration the agency of the non-West to the extent that the non-West contributes to the global modernity. In other words the subjectivity of the non-West is defended in order to pluralize discourses on modernity and thereby traces/constructs multiple narratives of the global modernity discourses, structures, principles and subjectivities of which are considered as uncontested and universally valid. Ultimately this implies that the non-West is not exist and has no truth and value in itself. It becomes something insofar as it contains/develops something for the European modernity, and its philosophical discourse, normative ideals and social epistemologies. Therefore from this perspective there is no need to explore it in itself and its particular existence. It is clearly not sufficient to reflect on the non-West by only retrieving its constitutive place in the making of modern philosophy, culture, politics, institutions, structures, practices and so on. And I think this is the underlying deficiency of the postcolonial account observed in the above examples that the subjectivity of the non-West is not examined within its proper civilizational identity, social

imagination, moral horizon, historico-cultural life worlds and philosophical-scientific framework/discursive structure.

3. CONCLUSION: ON CONDITIONS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF POST-WESTERN IR THEORY

The problem with the postcolonial standpoint seems to lie in the fact that since it constrains itself to conceptualize the difference, agency and subjectivity of the non-West through the historical-conceptual relationship with the West, it ends up to articulate the non-West only by using those concepts of self, subjectivity, morality, civil society, rule of law, socio-political community, sovereignty and so on deeply embedded within Western metaphysics, ethics, civilizational identity and social imagination. In other words the non-West is conceptualized only insofar it can be captured/allowed by Western philosophical scientific knowledge. This ultimately means that the West as historico-cultural referent and philosophical-scientific validity criterion is considered as the condition of the possibility of postcolonial subjectivity. Accordingly from this perspective the non-West is qualified only with a limited/derivative subjectivity/agency. If this interpretation is correct, then it could be argued that, the postcolonial standpoint represents a default Eurocentrism.³

The promise of post-Western IR theory has to be both recognizing the agency of diverse socio-political communities, the plurality of collective subjectivities, the possibility of alternative social/international imaginaries and inquiring into the characteristics of distinct historico-cultural worlds, the validity of their knowledge claims and the existence of multiple ontologies in the constitution of the global. This recognition entails to identify and focus on the subjectivity of multiple/diverse socio-political communities, civilizational identities and social imaginaries that the universal needs to concretize its condition of possibility within the global socio-political structure. The non-West needs to be substantiated both by justifying its philosophical/analytical validity and reclaiming its historical/empirical existence. In order to do this it is crucial that subjectivity is to be established on the self-conceptualization of their philosophical-scientific and historico-cultural consciousness. Therefore first of all this focus on the subjectivity of the non-West must include a systematic investigation of philosophical-scientific and normative characteristics of non-Western subjectivities. Secondly it must examine thoroughly the historico-cultural determinations of the non-West in a global historical perspective. In the following few paragraphs I will give just some remarks of how to do this. There

³ My usage of derivative subjectivity/agency and default Eurocentrism is inspired by Hobson's conceptualization of default and derivative sovereignty in relation to the representation of the non-West in Western international theory. For details John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conceptualization of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010*, Cambridge, CUP, 2012.

is no need to say that this should be considered just as an outline that is designed to identify basic prerequisites and central problematiques that needs to be explored by further research.

In order to substantiate the subjectivity of the non-West, it is required to examine in depth the philosophical-ontological underpinnings on/through that the characteristics of the non-Western subjectivities are likely to be established. More concretely it is needed to work on philosophical and scientific traditions which underlie non-Western cultural life worlds and socio-political formations. In this sense scholars should critically explore classical philosophical-scientific texts of the non-Western worlds within their ontological and epistemological premises and identify concepts, theories, methods most relevant to their civilizational identities, historico-cultural life worlds and socio-political formations. For example it is necessary to have grasp and knowledge of Islamic philosophical-scientific traditions and their contemporary interpretations when to conceptualize the difference/subjectivity of any Islamic individual and collective subjectivities. In other words crucial point here is that how collective subjectivities in Islamic world construct themselves on the basis of the philosophical-scientific traditions that they have accumulated for centuries and are re-interpreting continuously in contemporary times. In short the subjectivity of the non-Western socio-political formations, here specifically originated in Islam, is justified through their particular terms and discursive frameworks shaped within in certain philosophical-scientific traditions.

In this sense the distinguishing aspect of Islamic individual and collective self-perception/consciousness is based on the simultaneous recognition of the unity and distinction of the transcendence and the immanence, the noumenal and the phenomenological, the infinite and the finite, the divine and the mundane, the sacred and the secular, the metaphysical and the physical etc. which defines the basic conditions/terms of being, thinking and acting in the historico-social world. This also provides the basis of the limit and possibility for subject, self, self-consciousness, reason, rationality, imagination, morality, community, the social, the political. However this transcendental underpinning of subjectivity in Islam or any other non-Western life worlds in their own distinctive ways has been and still is being considered as unintelligible, illegitimate and/or invalid in the social sciences and IR. For example Vasilaki (2012; 15-18) enthusiastically defends that the social sciences should remain committed to Western secular heritage by carefully distinguishing social-scientific knowledge from unjustified thoughts originated in religious beliefs, spiritual contemplation and so on which is assumed to be ultimately relevant with non-Western collectivities. Secularity here turns out to be a metaphysics itself by defining and imposing certain absolute conditions and principles of being, thinking and acting to those whose forms of being, truth claims and life

worlds are considered in some way or another unintelligible, alien, illegitimate and/or non-existent. Indeed it is primarily because of the paradigm of Western secularity and the nihilistic premises of modern European world which leads to prevent us from having dialogue and dealing with the other (Pasha, 2011). Therefore if a call for the pluralization of philosophical ontology and methodology in IR limits itself to ambiguous and contested notions such as worldly insights, scientific knowledge claims and justified thoughts (Jackson, 2011), we are not able to conceptualize the difference/subjectivity of the Other which is distinctively shaped within other worldly insights, some forms of spiritual experiences and/or a certain idea of the transcendental Being (Acharya, 2011; 633-639).

In addition to the philosophical-scientific justification the subjectivity of the non-West consists in historical consciousnesses and contemporary socio-cultural determinations. The non-West has been the agents of interconnected world history and are currently in diverse ways constitutive of the contemporary global socio-political structure. The non-Western civilizations have not only developed distinct cultural-social existence and socio-political formations but also exchanged ideas, institutions, practices with the West in connected histories and thereby contributed extensively to the global modernity (Hobson, 2004; Bowden, 2007; Bhambra, 2007). For example world historian Marshall Hodgson (1974) shows in details that Islam in its classical form and period underpinned a universal pluralist civilization with its morality, law, culture, politics and social-institutional structure that brought together different cultural life worlds, socio-political formations, local-ethnic traditions from Central Asia to North Africa and East Europe to South Asia. More specifically the Ottoman state with its geo-cultural and socio-political characteristics have had world-historical significance and its impact on and place in modern European history has been well explored (Karpas, 1974). More importantly this historical-cultural legacy of Islamic-Ottoman civilization have deeply penetrated to the countries in contemporary Middle East, Balkans and North Africa and particularly Turkey in terms of their institutional structures, socio-cultural features, political formations and demographic-ethnic maps (Karpas, 2000).

This legacy have great influence, even if in different ways and contexts, on contemporary (international) politics of these countries. In addition to this dimension of historical consciousness, therefore, what is crucial is to take into consideration their contemporary interpretations embedded within lived experiences and concrete universalities (Elshtain, 1999) of non-Western individual and collective subjectivities. In this sense it is important to examine their experiences of modern norms, practices and institutions such as secularity, public space, civil society, sovereign-state, capitalism, democracy, dialogue, human rights, development within geo-cultural, socio-historical and economic-

political contexts (Tickner and Waever, 2009) in connection with metaphysical presuppositions, philosophical-scientific discourses and geo-cultural epistemologies that they embrace whether in a systematic form or not. More concretely the focus should be diverse and plural mediums and ways through which they experience, live, deal and encounter with these norms, practices, institutions, discourses on the basis of distinctive understanding of the self, the social, the political, morality etc (compare Chakrabarty, 2000). This intersection of their plural/diverse presences in the contemporary world and philosophical orientations is specific mediums which IR theory should delve into in order to go beyond its particularistic-eurocentric cage. Put this another way without provincializing Europe and substantiating historical and socio-cultural underpinnings of the non-Western subjectivities within the context of interconnected and world historical perspective simultaneously, it is unlikely to grasp the difference of non-Western politics in international relations and to conceptualize non-Western subjectivities in contemporary world.

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