

## Conceptualizing Resistance in Theories of International Relations

document type: Conceptual paper

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Received: 2024/05/16

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Accepted: 2024/07/10

### Abstract

Can we conceptualize resistance in theories of International Relations? Are there theories which directly or indirectly refer to resistance against the dominant international system and guide the oppressed how to resist and revolt against the oppressors? Regarding this question, it seems that there are some reflectivist theories that have the capacity to conceptualize resistance implicitly or explicitly, namely Gramscianism, Poststructuralism and Postcolonialism. Gramscianism teaches us that the only way to challenge the hegemonic position of the ruling class is a counter-hegemonic struggle in civil society. Poststructuralism emphasizes using 'genealogy' and 'deconstruction' methods to discredit such dichotomies as the developed and the underdeveloped, the modern and the pre-modern, the civilized and the barbaric, which the dominant discourse makes us take as given and natural; and Postcolonialism utilizes 'hybridity' as a sign of the agency of the colonized and their ability to resist domination. This article aims to investigate how these theoretical approaches help us defy the domination and subordination hierarchy in global system and open up alternative ways to understand world politics.

### Keywords:

Resistance, Political Islam, Counter-hegemony, Deconstruction, Genealogy, Hybridity.

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## Introduction

**The Problem:** In contemporary era especially since World War II we have been witnessing some orientations toward cultural, political and even military resistance against the domination of the West over the global system. This trend can be seen mainly as a reaction of Third World nations and the inhabitants of former colonies to the politico-cultural hegemony of the West, which is mirrored in the globalization of western values such as individualism, secularism and materialism, and their struggle for a non-western, or perhaps anti-western culture and identity.

During recent decades particularly after the end of Cold War, the rise of some issue areas like identity, culture and religion has played a significant role in the emergence of 'identity politics' which can be referred to as a form of resistance and revolt against the cultural aspect of globalization and the imposed homogenization from above. Identity politics tries to change the politico-cultural hegemony of the West and replace it with alternative non-western models. This can be expressed in the advent of postcolonialism, the attempts to develop Asian values and the resurgence of religious fundamentalism or political Islam.

Islamic Revolution in 1979 can be conceived as a turning point in expanding the resistance idea in global politics. Islamic Republic of Iran emerged in international arena as an ideological and theocratic state which challenged and jeopardized the interests of Western powers in the Middle East so they embarked on efforts to overthrow or at least contain and normalize it by divergent methods from military threats and economic sanctions to subversion. But revolutionary Iran adopted a resistance policy and stood its ground in the face of domination system and has refrained from altering its revisionist and anti-imperialist course of action over the last four decades.

Needless to say, it wasn't Iran that took the initiative in offering the idea of resistance and revisionism. It had been previously well-known to international relations through the works of the liberation movements in decolonization period in different parts of the world especially Asia, Africa and Latin America. Nevertheless, the fact is that Iran has played a pivotal role in developing resistance based on its accumulated experiences as one of the most formidable anti-imperialist actors in contemporary world.

Since the rise of the Islamic Republic many militant Jihadists across the Middle East have drawn inspiration from Iran and its political and spiritual leaders to revolt against the oppressors so Iran managed to organize and mobilize them in what is called 'Axis of Resistance', a proxy network of Anti-Western groups led by Tehran. Remarkable victories in different parts

of the region, namely Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and Syria have proved the great ability of Iran-led coalition in pursuing its goals as opposed to the Western powers' so it can be argued that the 'Axis of Resistance' is a decisive factor in determining the outcome of the power equations and political dynamics in the Middle East.

**Necessity and Importance of discussion:** It seems that the idea of resistance should be taken into account if we are supposed to analyze changes in contemporary world politics based on a transition from state-centric system to a multi-centric one, within which a wide range of state and non-state actors compete with each other and the West is losing its dominance and supremacy. The US undeniable failures in some military operations over the last decades indicates the emergence of new identities that resist the power of the main actors and are defiant of their commands. Consequently such new forms of asymmetrical confrontations can determine the political landscape of the world in a near coming future.

**Goals, Questions, & Assumptions:** Without a doubt, resistance movements require theoretical grounds and frameworks to endorse their actions and guide them how to resist and revolt against the oppressors and their dominant discourse. Now can we find such theories in International Relations as an academic discipline? Which IR theories have the capacity to conceptualize and theorize resistance in world politics? At first glance, it seems that among IR theories, Gramscianism based on the concept of 'hegemony', Poststructuralism with an emphasis on 'genealogy' and 'deconstruction', and Postcolonialism regarding 'hybridity' can refer to resistance implicitly or explicitly. The main aim of this article is to investigate the mentioned theories' potentials to provide a theoretical pretext and to help us defy the politico-cultural hegemony of the West in global politics.

**The Method:** This article uses a descriptive-analytical method and compare three theories of International Relations regarding the concept of resistance.

### **1. Making sense of resistance in world politics**

'In political science or sociology, resistance is notoriously difficult to define due to its multidisciplinary nature.' depending on which academic discipline defines it, It can arguably range from armed guerrilla warfare to symbolic gestures (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004, p. 538). Although according to Chandra (2015, p. 565) defining resistance 'too broadly stretches the concept to the extent that it includes ambiguous or ambivalent acts in

everyday life' but needless to say it is possible for us to distinguish a main definition as an ancestor to all sorts of resistance movements.

For a better understanding of the definition of resistance, we need to address the theoretical roots of the concept of resistance in IR theories and explore the historical development of this concept in the history of international relations. It seems that the concept of resistance is a historical one, with its earliest symptoms dating back to the first disputes in human history. In other words, we can say that resistance has been considered a common phenomenon in human social life since its start in thousands of years ago. As stated by Mani Shutzberg 'It seems "everday resistance" – significantly widens the inclusion criteria of what counts as resistance' (Shutzberg, 2021, p. 51). However, the theoretical roots of the concept of resistance in the field of international relations appear to trace back to the years of colonial formation in the world.

With the advent of the modern colonial era in the 15th and 16th centuries, European influence expanded in the non-European world. The discovery of new lands, particularly the Americas, prompted major European powers -Spain, Portugal, France, England, the Netherlands- to seize the newly found territories and other continents, thus beginning colonization in the lands of Africa, Asia, and America (Stuchtey, 2011, p. 3). With the arrival of European colonizers in other regions, the first indigenous resistances against the invasions and aggressions of the colonizers began. The term Colonial Resistance refers to the collective actions taken by indigenous people and groups against invading or dominating colonial powers. These initial resistance movements against colonizers had several aspects and numerous occasions, such as negotiations, peaceful protests, or persuasive dialogues, in addition to violent rebellions. Their resistances expanded over many years and developed complex mechanisms, such that prominent figures of the colonized countries took the lead of these movements and through extensive organizations, hierarchical structures and various areas of work, they sought to achieve the established goals.

It is obvious that their main goal was reaching autonomy, cultural identity, and national sovereignty. We can say as time went by, resistance to colonialism across Asia, Africa and Latin America became fiercer and more politically engaged (Heywood, 2011, p. 36). In long-term, these movements not only paved the way for the fall of colonial empires and establishment of independent national states, but also had great impressions on forging new political ideologies and institutions. For example, the long-lasting anti-colonial struggles in Africa resulted in the independence of several nations, reshuffling the political map of the continent.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the echoes of colonial resistance continue to influence contemporary international relations, human rights debates, and national policies worldwide (Bernhard et al, 2004, p. 231). The developments of the resistance have led to its concept entering various fields such as human rights, international law, etc. and creating various legal rules. Due to the effects of resistance development history, we witness today that some scholars of IR are talking about "right to resistance". Some even claim that Realism, as a theory that considers power as its central focus and believes in anarchy, contains an implicit ethos of resistance (Franceschet, 2024, p. 1).

In the vast timeline of resistance movements, there were some events that stood out, serving as turning points in the narrative of resistance. Here are some noteworthy ones:

- **American Revolutionary War** (1775-1783): Signifies the successful secession of 13 British colonies in America, which ultimately formed the United States of America.
- **The Indian Rebellion** (1857): Often referred to as the 'First War of Independence,' this event marked a widespread revolt against the British Raj in India.
- **The Berlin Conference** (1884-1885): Decided the partition of Africa among European powers, an act that intensified numerous resistances across the continent (Uzoigwe, 1984, p. 14).
- **Second Italo-Senussi War** (1923-1932): represented the peak of Libyan resistance against Italian colonial rule. Despite intense guerrilla warfare led by the Senussi Order and the symbolic leadership of Omar al-Mukhtar, the conflict tragically ended with Omar al-Mukhtar's capture and execution. However, this event laid the groundwork for Libya's eventual independence from Italy.
- **The Indonesian National Revolution** (1945-1949): decolonization movement of Indonesian people, led by Ahmad Socarno, which unfolded between 1945 and 1949 and marked by a series of armed conflicts and diplomatic efforts that ultimately led to Indonesia's independence from Dutch colonial rule.
- **Mau Mau Uprising** (1952-1960): Unfurled in Kenya, presenting a unified armed resistance against the British government (Wa-Githumo, 1991, p. 5).

Mahatma Gandhi, Omar al-Mukhtar, Patrice Lumumba, Dedan Kimathi and so many on, were great leaders who dedicated their life in the way of their countries liberation. Their unwavering dedication and contributions significantly shaped the concept of resistance and taught new

and effective methods to countless resistance movements. For example Gandhi's ethic of non-violent resistance, Satyagraha, reinforced by his ascetic lifestyle, gave the movement for Indian independence enormous moral authority. Derived from Hinduism, Gandhi's political philosophy was based on the assumption that the universe is regulated by the primacy of truth, or satya, and that humankind is 'ultimately one' (Heywood, 2011, p. 261).

### **Political Islam**

One of the very important factors and events that had a significant impact on the evolution of the concept of resistance was the emergence of political Islam. Resistance to opposing forces and infidels has been a long-standing aspect of Islam from its earliest form into the colonial era up until today (Bartal, 2021, p. 4). Since many of the colonial territories seized by Europeans belonged to Islamic lands, and more specifically to the Ottoman Empire, the multiple defeats and ultimately the collapse of the Ottomans in 1920, raised a fundamental question among Muslim thinkers: what is the cause of the defeat and dissolution of the Islamic caliphate and the colonization of Islamic territories? (Karpat, 1997, p. 471). In fact, the decline of Islamic empires and their various defeats in different fields such as military, political, cultural, scientific, and even technological aspects had been a concern among Muslim thinkers for many years.

A persistent political, social, and legal debate regarding the role of Islam in public life arose in the mid-nineteenth century (Auf, 2016, p. 1). However, the defeat and collapse of the 600-year-old Ottoman Empire, as the symbol of the Islamic Caliphate, was the most significant blow that made the necessity of reflection and consideration on the matter inevitable. Politics and systems of government in Islamic theory were actively debated in this years. A diverse range of reasoning to this important question made by Islamic thinkers. The central theme in the theorizing of Islamic scholars was the incomplete implementation of Islamic commandments and the deviation from true Islam. They declared that the deployment of Islam is decisive in the formation of political Islam (Sayyid, 2017, p. 69).

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) emerged in Egypt in 1928 amid this growing debates. The founding of the MB helped to fill a vacuum that followed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Auf, 2016, p. 3). The Muslim Brotherhood was actually the first serious movement after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Islamic world that sought to address the gaps that had arisen, and this important aspect led to its spread and promotion in Egypt and the Islamic countries. When Hassan al-Banna, the Egyptian Muslim

thinker, founded the Muslim Brotherhood, the focus of the movement was on cultural, propagandist, and educational activities. In fact, the initial members of the movement, who saw the cause of the repeated defeats of Muslims in the lack of adherence to the 'Salaf al-Salih' (the pious predecessors) and the incomplete observance of Islamic commandments, prioritized education and the propagation of Islamic thoughts and did not deal with government and politics for many years (Butterworth, 1992, p. 35). However, the occurrence of several important events led the Muslim Brotherhood towards politics and governance.

These events can be divided into internal and external causes. The internal cause was that despite the flourishing of the Muslim Brotherhood and its wide acceptance among many groups of people, it was banned by the rulers of Egypt at various times and faced crackdowns. During these years, the government declared membership in the MB a crime, thereby arresting many of the movement's leaders and key figures and subjecting them to severe punishments such as execution. In addition, about two decades after the establishment of the movement, the initial leaders such as Hassan al-Banna stepped aside, and new leaders were chosen at the height of the movement's repression and oppression by government. The most significant figure who greatly influenced Islamic resistance groups during these years was Sayyid Qutb (Butterworth, 1992, p. 36). Sayyid Qutb linked the concept of jihad to the concept of Islamic resistance. Before Sayyid Qutb, jihad in the sense of armed struggle against enemies and infidels, was not part of the manifest of Islamic resistance groups. However, inspired by domestic and international events, Sayyid Qutb theorized the necessity of jihad by resistance groups. The killing of Muslims in Islamic countries and the assassination and torture of resistance group leaders gradually led various factions of resistance groups to resort to violence and engage in armed activities.

The external factor that had a significant impact on the transition of Islamic movements from a propagandist phase to a political one was the beginning of Palestinian-Jewish conflicts and ultimately the establishment of Israel in 1948. The establishment of Israel was one of those events that led to the unification of Arabs in Islamic countries and for the first time, resistance movements formed on a multinational level. The simultaneous occurrence of these events with the rise of Pan-Arabism in Islamic countries led to the spread of a common Islamic-Arabic spirit among Arab countries.

The good days of the resistance movements soon came to an end, and the repeated and disgraceful defeats of the Arabs against Israel, along with the competition among Arabs to take on the leadership of the Arabs, quickly led

to the decline of this Arabic-Islamic spirit. The defeat of Gamal Abdel Nasser and his subsequent death as a charismatic Arab-Islamic figure, along with the betrayals of Arab countries concerning the Palestinian issue and even the initiation of normalization processes with Israel in the following years, were among the most significant events that led to the decline of Islamic resistance. At this time, the rise to power of Anwar Sadat in Egypt, the banning of resistance movements and the criminalization against them, as well as the normalization of Egypt's relations with Israel as the first Muslim country to do so, which had been a center of Islamic resistance theorizing and activities for half a century, dealt a significant shock to the Islamic resistance groups (Huber, 2018, p. 3).

The profile and influence of political Islam was substantially strengthened by the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which brought the Shia cleric Ayatollah Khomeini to power (Heywood, 2011, p. 48). An important point to note is that the Camp David Accords and the Iranian Revolution both occurred approximately in the same year. In another words, the suppression of Sunni resistance movements by Anwar Sadat in Egypt and the defeat of the Arabs by Israel caused Sunni resistance movements to become disillusioned and marginalized for many years. Additionally, the occurrence of the Shia Iranian Revolution and its widespread propagation among the Shia countries in the region led to the sudden formation and growth of Shia resistance movements in Islamic countries.

The Iranian Revolution also had a significant impacts on Sunni groups involved in the Palestinian issue. The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s was a period where Islamic movements all over the Palestine and Greater Israel area blossomed (Bartal, 2021, p. 387). In this period, Islamic groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah ('Party of God') tended to displace secular-based groups, like the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in leading the struggle against Israel and what was seen as western imperialism (Heywood, 2011, p. 48). Ismail Haniyeh, former chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, has described it as the "Jihad movement of the Brotherhood with a Palestinian face" (Coughlin 2015, p. 163). Hamas was deeply influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's jihad ideology of Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and other less familiar philosophers (Bartal, 2021, p. 380). The two main pillars of Hamas ideology are: Palestinian nationalism and Arab Islamism (Bartal, 2021, p. 381).

One of the other important events that contributed to the resurgence and flourishing of Sunni resistance groups was the Soviet war in Afghanistan. However it should be noted, the process that took place in Afghanistan ultimately led to the formation of contemporary terrorist groups

through increased violence and extremism. The Soviet war in Afghanistan, 1979–89, led to the growth of the Mujahideen, a loose collection of religiously inspired resistance groups that received financial or military support from the USA, Iran and Pakistan. The Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan, 1996–2001, developed out of these Mujahideen groups. A range of new jihadi groups have also emerged since the 1990s – the most important of which is al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden – which have given expression to a particularly militant form of Islamism. (Heywood, 2011, p. 198). The beginning of the 21st century and the occurrence of the September 11th attacks, which ultimately led to the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by the United States, also resulted in these groups leaning more towards violence and extremism, which ultimately manifested in the form of terrorist groups such as ISIS.

Today Manifestations of “political Islam” range from political parties, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria, Hamas in Palestine, the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan to Islamic republics, such as Pakistan (1956), Mauritania (1958), Iran (1979), and Afghanistan (1992). It can include countries such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, and insurgent groups such as ISIL, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab. (Sayyid, 2017, p. 69).

The occurrence of all these developments over the past two hundred years has led to the emergence of the concept of resistance as one of the most prominent concepts in international relations theories today, turning it into a broad and theoretical concept. Nowadays, the resistance doesn't merely involve military confrontations but veered into cultural, economic, and political realms as well. It seems resistance can challenge and transform relations of power, or even fail to do so, ‘as we know all too well, (resistance sometimes) fail to alter existing social arrangements in particular instances’ (Chandra, 2015, p. 565). Resistance may also create, strengthen or reinforce power (Lilga, 2022, p. 210). In another words, resistance in its meaning, depends on power and its influence on changing power hierarchies. The Department of Defense defines a resistance movement as “an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability.” (Lee, 2017, p. 44) or as Hollandder and Einonhner (2004) state resistance means “[collective and] active efforts to oppose, fight, and refuse to cooperate with or submit to... abusive behavior and... control.” Multiple and diverse definitions have also been mentioned by scholars, but the prominent point is that the evolution of the concept of

resistance and the breadth of intellectual engagement by various scholars on it have led to resistance becoming a deep, historical, and theoretically rooted concept today.

## **2. Gramscianism and the establishment of a counter-hegemonic bloc**

Gramscianism can be classified as a strand or sub branch of Marxism, based on the work of the famous Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, whose ideas have left a deep impression on IR Critical theorists. The main question that occupied Gramsci's mind was how could modern states in capitalist camp survive and resist mass uprising by controlling the working class so that Marx's prediction about proletariat revolutions in such developed countries turned out to be wrong (Hobden and Wyn Jones, 2014, p. 147).

To answer the mentioned question Gramsci offered this hypothesis that the survival and domination of the ruling class in modern states depends not only on its coercive power, which is exerted by the units of political society like the police and the army, but also on its intellectual and moral leadership which Gramsci calls it 'hegemony'. He believes that the function of hegemony is to secure consent from the oppressed or subalterns and to convince them that the ideas and interests of the ruling class are in their benefits. In other words, hegemony creates and recreates consent for the ruling class and prompts its political and cultural values to become widely dispersed throughout society and to be considered as 'common sense'. It is noteworthy that according to Gramsci hegemony is implemented by the institutions and agents of civil society such as churches, education system, media and organic intellectuals. So it can be argued that based on hegemony concept, the secret to the perpetuation of the dominance of the ruling class is a mixture of coercion and consent and the interplay between political, military and ideological forces (Heywood, 2011, p. 69; Hobden and Wyn Jones, 2014, p. 147).

Now what is Gramsci's solution to resist against the dominant class hegemony? He fervently believed that since hegemony or intellectual and cultural leadership is the key factor in the domination of the ruling class, then society can only be changed if that hegemonic position is successfully resisted and challenged at the cultural level through a counter-hegemonic struggle in civil society. In other words, the only chance to undermine the hegemony of the ruling class is by ideological and cultural activities in civil society, which Gramsci called a 'war of position' and to construct a counter-hegemonic historic bloc in the interest of the proletariat and based on socialist principles and values (Hobden and Wyn Jones, 2014, p. 148; Rupert, 2013, p. 161).

Some IR scholars have drawn inspiration from Gramsci and have tried to utilize his ideas for explaining global dynamics and developments in a systemic level of analysis, among them is Robert Cox, the Canadian scholar. Cox argues that in order to resist liberal hegemony, counter-hegemonic forces of global civil society should engage in a war of position and create and mobilize a variety of social movements and build coalitions to counter 'globalization from above' with 'globalization from below'. Although Cox acknowledges that creating a counter-hegemonic bloc won't be easy and it will be difficult for example to unite Western social forces with Islamic ones and to form a global counter-force, but he emphasizes that it is the only way to resist liberal globalization (Griffiths et al., 2009, p. 169-170).

### **3. Poststructuralism and the methodology of resistance**

Poststructuralism discredits metanarratives and dominant discourses, which claim to have access to objective and absolute truth. Poststructuralist scholars believe that those discourses which are in hegemonic positions and impose their worldviews and narratives about what is and what is not good, desirable, legitimate and acceptable in world affairs have acquired their superior and hegemonic status due to power/knowledge relations. So Poststructuralists tend to reveal these relations in order to undermine dominant discourses and give voice to excluded and marginalized alternative narratives and discourses (Chernoff, 2007, p. 156).

Poststructuralists encourage us to take a critical stance toward dominant narratives of the world and denaturalize those concepts that the oppressors want us to take as given. This can open up new ways of thinking about global politics (Griffiths et al., 2009, p. 254). Although Poststructuralists do not refer to 'resistance' explicitly, they offer two methodological strategies (genealogy and deconstruction) that can be useful in helping us resist the hegemony of the ruling class at intellectual level.

Genealogy has been offered by the French thinker, Michael Foucault as a way to unveil power/knowledge relations and to prove that there is no 'truth' existing outside of power. Genealogy can be defined as a 'history of the present' that asks two important questions while facing a contemporary issue or subject. The first question is that which political practices have constructed the subject as it is and make us take it as given. The second question is that which alternative understandings and discourses have been marginalized and forgotten in the process of social construction (Hansen, 2014, p. 173, 175). So it seems that genealogy enables us to discredit particular 'truth claims or 'regimes of truth' presented by hegemonic

discourse and hence can be regarded as a method of resistance against the hegemony of the ruling class at intellectual and academic level.

Deconstruction is another method presented by another French thinker Jacques Derrida as a method to destabilize constructed dichotomies. Derrida believes that language is made up of artificial dichotomies for example between the developed and the underdeveloped, the modern and the pre-modern, the civilized and the barbaric. He contends that such fake dichotomies are constructed by dominant discourses to justify the superiority of the dominant groups who consider themselves superior to the others. Thus Derrida offers 'deconstruction' and 'double reading' as methodological tools to destabilize the hierarchy between inferior and superior terms by revealing the internal tensions within a text and showing how there is always more than one reading of any text (Hansen, 2014, p. 173; Smith, 2001, p. 182; Devetak, 2005, p. 168). So we can consider Derrida's method as a resistance strategy against dominant narratives and hegemonic discourses.

#### **4. Postcolonialism, hybridity and the resistance of the subaltern**

Postcolonialism is a theory which has been developed mainly by non-western scholars in recent decades. Postcolonialists take the cultural aspects of colonial rule into consideration and strongly believe that decolonization has not changed the situation of the former colonies remarkably and even after formal independence the global hierarchy of domination and subordination has been made and remade by Western powers through the social construction of racial, gendered and class differences. From a postcolonial viewpoint, although the period of former colonial control and domination by military force is largely over, global structures and hierarchies are still unequal at the expense of the oppressed. So regarding inequality and injustice there is no difference between the colonial past and the postcolonial present. Thus, the main goal of postcolonial scholars is to pay attention to the marginalized, the subaltern, and the oppressed whose voices are not audible in world politics (Smith et al., 2014, p. 6-8).

Some of the early anti-colonial intellectuals advocated the use of violence to overthrow colonialism and resist against domination-subordination relations. For instance Frantz Fanon in his book *the Wretched of the Earth* emphasized that using violence is the only tool for resisting against the colonizer and achieving self-defined identity and national consciousness, though he was not that much optimistic about it due to the destructive role of the local elites and intellectuals. Therefore, a real freedom even after political independence remains far-fetched and elusive (Sylvester, 2014, p. 186-187).

Another Strand of Postcolonialism is subaltern school of Indian historiography with prominent figures such as Gayatri C. Spivak. The subaltern school contends that the history of colonialism has been narrated and told by Western colonizers and is the story of the powerful, which has marginalized and ignored the subaltern's narrative. Therefore, Postcolonialists are motivated to retell history from the counter-hegemonic perspective of the colonized or the subaltern. This alternative narrative can be regarded as a way of resistance because it focuses on the historical experiences of the oppressed to show that they are not passive victims of imperial power. In other words, retelling contemporary history from the viewpoint of the subaltern is a process of recovery of marginalized or silenced voices to resist and revolt against the hegemony of dominant discourses (Abrahamsen, 2007, p. 113, 119-120).

Hybridity is a significant postcolonial notion, which is firmly related to resistance. This notion is presented and theorized by the famous postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha. Bhabha contends that western colonizers have tried to impose their values and culture on non-westerners and to construct their identities in accordance with dominant discourse. However, he argues that the colonizer have not been fully successful in implementing their goal because although non-westerners especially those who inhabit western countries aspire to some of western values and norms, but they still keep some parts of their indigenous values and thus, develop hybrid identities as a sign of resistance. In other words, non-western immigrants not only resist against cultural homogenization but also begin Provincializing Europe through maintaining their own lifestyles. From Bhabha's point of view hybridity indicates that the identities and destinies of the colonizer and the colonized are intertwined and the former have failed to fully dominate the latter due to their creativity, resilience and adaptability. Hybrid identities show that the oppressed are not passive victims of the oppressors and their identities cannot be imposed and constructed in a one-way process by colonial hegemony because they have the capacity to influence the colonizer in return (Abrahamsen, 2007, p. 117-119; Sylvester, 2014, p. 192).

### **Conclusion**

We came to this conclusion that it is possible to conceptualize resistance in the frameworks of three theoretical approaches in IR discipline. From a Gramscian perspective, resistance can be conceived of as a counter-hegemonic struggle or war of position in civil Society to challenge ideological and intellectual hegemony of the ruling class through undermining its values and principles and offering alternative ones. In a

poststructuralist context, resistance can be referred to as a textual strategy to destabilize and deconstruct hegemonic discourses and metanarratives, which justify domination-subordination hierarchy, by revealing power relations behind them. This way we can give voice to marginalized and forgotten narratives and open up new ways to understand world politics. Finally, from a postcolonial viewpoint, resistance is a creative reaction of the colonized and the subaltern to the colonizer in a postcolonial and neocolonial condition based on their hybrid identities. Hybridity helps them not only defy the homogenization policies from above, but also influence Western societies by maintaining their indigenous values and cultures as a sign of ‘the revenge of the East’ or ‘the revolt against the West’.



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