Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of International Relations

NON-WESTERN CHALLENGES TO EUROCENTRISM: THE CASE OF CHINESE IR

Ömer YILMAZ

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2023

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Ömer Yılmaz has on the date of 08.06.2023 successfully passed the defense examination and approves his Master's Thesis titled "Non-Western Challenges to Eurocentrsim: The Case of Chinese IR".

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i

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ABSTRACT

YILMAZ, Ömer. *Non-Western Challenges to Eurocentrism: the case of Chinese IR*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2023.

The Eurocentric nature of the IR discipline has been discussed recently. Scholars criticize Eurocentrism for being unable to understand and analyze the problems of the non-Western world. Therefore, many studies attribute considerable significance to the efforts for developing a non-Western IR. Through these discussions, seven main premises appear to be constructing the Eurocentrism of IR: Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, the Eurocentric framing of world history, Western civilizational superiority, Orientalism and the theory of progress. Not satisfied with this situation, many scholars argue for the necessity to overcome Eurocentrism and strive to reach a non-Western IR, which is neither establishing a new -centrism nor specifically designed for only certain regions/states. The Chinese School of IR is one of such attempts and is the focus of this study. Scholars of the Chinese School optimistically observe their success in overcoming Eurocentrism and believe that the Chinese School has the potential to establish a non-Western IR approach. Thus, this study aims to understand to what extent the Chinese School is successful in overcoming Eurocentrism. The seven premises of Eurocentrism are considered as the tool of comparison to be applied to the Chinese School of IR. As a result of this analysis, it is observed that the Chinese School replaces Eurocentrism with Sino-centrism, which stands as a challenge to the glorified West and Western ideas. However, it also reproduces Eurocentric logic of parochialism. Creating a new -centrism does not match the aim of non-Western IR, which strives to emancipate the discipline from centrist approaches. Through such an analysis, this study reveals the hidden traps in the search for a non-Western IR that would lead unintentional reproduction of Eurocentrism.

Keywords

Eurocentrism, The Chinese School, Non-Western IR, global IR

ÖZET

Yılmaz, Ömer. *Avrupa Merkezciliğe Batı-dışı Karşı Çıkışlar: Çin Uİ örneği*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2023.

Uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininin Avrupa merkezci doğası son zamanlarda tartışılmaktadır. Akademisyenler, Avrupa merkezciliğin, dünyanın geri kalanının sorunlarını anlayamadığı ve analiz edemediği için eleştirmektedir. Bu nedenle, birçok çalışma, Batı-dışı bir Uİ disiplini geliştirme çabalarına büyük önem vermektedir. Bu tartışmalar yoluyla, Uluslararası İlişkilerin Avrupa merkezciliğini inşa eden yedi ana öncül ortaya çıkmaktadır: Batı istisnacılığı, ırkçılık, evrenselcilik, dünya tarihinin Avrupa merkezci çerçevesi, Batı medeniyet üstünlüğü, Oryantalizm ve ilerleme teorisi. Bu durumdan hoşnut olmayan pek çok akademisyen, Avrupa merkezciliğin üstesinden gelmenin gerekliliğini savunmakta ve ne yeni bir merkezciliğe iten ne de sadece belirli bölgeler/devletler için özel olarak tasarlanmış olan Batı-dışı bir uluslararası ilişkiler teorisine ulaşmaya çalışmaktadır. Çin Uluslararası İlişkiler Okulu bu tür girişimlerden biridir ve bu çalışmanın odak noktasıdır. Çin Okulu akademisyenleri, Avrupa merkezciliğin üstesinden gelme noktasındaki başarılarını iyimser bir şekilde yorumlamakta ve Çin Okulu'nun Batı-dışı bir Uluslararası İlişkiler yaklaşımı oluşturma potansiyeline sahip olduğuna inanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, Çin Okulunun Avrupa merkezciliği aşmada ne derece başarılı olduğunu anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Avrupa merkezciliğin yedi önermesi, Çin Uluslararası İlişkiler Okulu'na uygulanacak karşılaştırma aracı olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu analiz sonucunda Çin Okulu'nun Avrupa merkezciliğin yerine Çin-merkezciliğini koyarak bir meydan okumada bulunduğu görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Batı dar görüşlülüğünü Çin dar görüşlülüğüyle değiştirerek, disiplini bir bölgeye tahsis etme noktasında Avrupa merkezciliği yeniden üretmektedir. Yeni bir merkezcilik yaratmak, disiplini merkezci yaklaşımlardan kurtarmaya çalışan Batı-dışı Uluslararası İlişkiler çalışmalarının amacı ile uyuşmamaktadır. Böyle bir analiz aracılığıyla bu çalışma, Avrupa merkezciliğin istemsiz olarak yeniden üretilmesine yol açacak Batı-dışı bir Uluslararası İlişkiler arayışındaki gizli tuzakları ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Avrupa Merkezcilik, Çin Okulu, Batı-dışı Uİ, global Uİ

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCE	Before Common Era
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CFPPR	Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research
IO	International Organization
IR	International Relations
IRT	International Relations Theory
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWII	World War II

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INTRODUCTION

> Eurocentric vision … The European West is not only the world of material wealth and power, including military might; it is also the site of the triumph of the scientific spirit, rationality, and practical efficiency, just as it is the world of tolerance, diversity of opinions, respect for human rights and democracy, concern for equality … and social justice. It is the best of the worlds that have been known up until this time (Amin, 1989/2010: 180).

"If social science is to make any progress in the 21st century, it must overcome the Eurocentric heritage which has distorted its analyses and its capacity to deal with the problems of the contemporary world" (Wallerstein, 1997: 22). Eurocentrism in the IR discipline has been criticized extensively by the scholars from the Western and non-Western world. Its insufficient capacity to understand the world problems -especially the recent ones – (Acharya & Buzan, 2007; Akgül, 2022; Qin, 2010; Wallerstein, 1997), its parochialist approach to IR and glorification of the West together with its vilifying of the non-Western world (Amin, 1989/2010; Anieveas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2012) have made scholars uncomfortable. They criticize both Eurocentrism and its reproduction by the IR discipline (Akgül, 2022; Alruwaih, 2015; Demirer, 2021). Various debates have been taking place regarding the nature of Eurocentrism, its implications, the necessity to overcome it and alternative approaches to reach a non-Western or global IR that is not enclaved with ethnocentrism or simply some "ism". Some scholars focus on revealing the hidden parts of Eurocentrism (Amin, 1989/2010; Hobson, 2007-2012) while others strive to discover the indigenous resources and alternative ways of the non-Western world to find a path for overcoming Eurocentrism (Behera, 2010; Chun, 2010; Inoguchi, 2010; Qin, 2010; Yan, 2016). Although the critique against Eurocentrism is very comprehensive and coming different directions, "Eurocentrism … is a hydra-headed monster and has many avatars. It will not be easy to slaughter the dragon swiftly" (Wallerstein, 1997: 22). Since Eurocentrism has been forged at least from the period of Enlightenment onwards (Hobson, 2012), the solution to overthrow it requires a long and exhausting effort for all.

Eurocentrism is composed of various components and various scholars point a different part of it. It is not easy to detect, but it is also existing (Wallerstein, 1997). Considering

the most prominent ones, this study highlights seven main concepts regarding Eurocentric construction of IR. These are mainly Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric framing of world history, Western civilizational superiority, Orientalism and theory of progress. Each component has a critical role in Eurocentric IR (Acharya & Buzan, 2007; Amin, 1989/2010; Anieveas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2012; Wallerstein, 1997). Without understanding these concepts and their implications, efforts to overcome Eurocentrism would fall short. Non-Western scholars should understand the underlying factors that cause Eurocentrism in order to avoid reproducing Eurocentrism with a different color, i.e., another nationality or continent based Eurocentric approaches.

The totality of abovementioned Eurocentric concepts (Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric world history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress) establishes the Eurocentrism of the IR discipline. Each concept is intertwined with each other; therefore, it is not easy to distinguish them from one another and to detect them individually in the studies of mainstream IR. Each of them plays a significant role in constructing the Eurocentric nature of IR (Acharya & Buzan, 2007; Amin, 1989/2010; Anieveas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2012; Wallerstein, 1997). In this fashion, eliminating one would not be sufficient to overcome Eurocentrism. Following the analogy of Wallerstein (1997), each of these concepts is like a head of the hydra-headed monster. Thus, non-Western scholars should carefully investigate and accumulate a deep knowledge of these concepts while challenging Eurocentrism.

Although it is significant to comprehend the fundamental premises of Eurocentrism, it is also fundamental to understand why the IR discipline is Eurocentric. Without understanding the underlying reasons for Eurocentrism, it would not be a straight-forward task to defeat the Eurocentrism of the discipline. Considering these reasons, non-Western scholars would develop strategies to overcome them. Otherwise, efforts to challenge the seven Eurocentric premises would not produce a fruitful result. Because of this reason, this study will briefly mention such possible reasons.

It seems that two critical explanations rise to prominence, which are about Gramscian hegemony and the role of local discriminatory conditions (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Behera, 2010; Cox, 1996; Lanti & Sebastian, 2010). Firstly, Gramscian hegemony works through the apparatus of consent-coercion (Gramsci, 1971/1992). It requires the periphery

– the non-Western world in this case – to show consent to the hegemon and internalize the values and knowledge that is produced by the hegemon (Cox, 1996). This internalization will result in the intentional or unintentional reproduction of the hegemon's ideas by the periphery (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Cox, 1996; Sune, 2016). If consent is not demonstrated by the periphery, the end result would be coercion, which is to force the periphery to acknowledge the hegemon and its values. The same seems to be working in the IR discipline as well. The West, as the founder of the discipline, has established a hegemonic status and draws the boundaries of the discipline. The rest should accept this and act accordingly. If there is rejection, mainstream IR would also reject the one who is rejecting the Eurocentric premises (Amin, 1989/2010; Cox, 1996). As a result, Gramscian hegemony seems a possible and valid reason for the IR discipline to become Eurocentric.

The second one is about the discriminatory local conditions that prevent/hinder the process of producing a non-Western approach. The number/quality of universities offering IR departments, higher education, the bureaucratic workload of scholars, funds for IR studies (especially non-Western International Relations Theory (IRT) studies), states' perspective on the necessity of IR are few examples of such local conditions (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Behera, 2010; Lanti & Sebastian, 2010; Tadjbakhsh, 2010). An increase in the number of such negative conditions decreases the probability of a fruitful non-Western IRT production by scholars living in those countries (Behera, 2010). Without the support of his/her own country, society and universities, it seems considerably difficult for a scholar to focus on his/her studies and freely think about theory-building (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Various states of the non-Western world, such as India and Indonesia, seem to be suffering from such conditions, which indirectly reinforce Eurocentrism in IR because of inadequate challenges by non-Western scholars (Behera, 2010; Lanti & Sebastian, 2010). Therefore, Eurocentric hegemony in the Gramscian sense and obstructive local conditions seem to be the most relevant explanations for the reason for Eurocentrism in IR.

Understanding the nature of IR – as Eurocentric – together with its possible reasons for such a case, scholars begin the discussion on whether it is possible to overcome Eurocentrism and reach a non-Western or a global IR. For certain scholars, it is possible – and necessary - to have a non-Western IR approach (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Buzan &

Little, 2010; Qin, 2016; Ren, 2020). They argue that if the West was able to acquire a hegemonic position and establish a Eurocentric IR, it should also be possible for the non-Western world to challenge this Eurocentric construction and reach a global IR (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Ren, 2020). On the other hand, a group of scholars, especially those who are following positivist methodology in their research, argue that it is not possible to have such an approach (Keohane, 2008 as cited in Hobson, 2012: 17; Mearsheimer, 2022 as cited in CFPPR, 2022, 36:24). The efforts to reach a non-Western IR would not be sufficient to overcome Eurocentrism. It is also an unnecessary struggle because the current IRTs are sufficient to analyze and explain the events of the world, including non-Western regions (Mearsheimer, 2022 as cited in CFPPR, 2022). It is an expected result since the positivist methodology requires one to accept universal laws, which should not change from culture to culture (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Alruwaih, 2015).

Even if there are critical voices against the efforts for producing a non-Western IRT, scholars still try to achieve this task and utilize three main methods. These are showing the Eastern origins of the West, studying indigenous resources to extract knowledge for today's world and establishing an Eastern framing history or world history approach. The first method argues that many achievements of the West were the result of Eastern contributions while their original examples would be observed in the history of Eastern societies (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Behera, 2010). Thus, the West was like an heir to Eastern achievements rather than reaching its success by itself (Wallerstein, 1997). This method is a risky method because it has seeds of Eurocentrism in it and generally leads to the reproduction of Eurocentrism in IR (Sune, 2016; Wallerstein, 1997). It implicitly argues that the West is successful and the East was not able to reach this success but to act as a springboard for the West.

Many scholars also focus on their original, traditional resources in order to understand how their ancestors were engaging in international politics in the past and find ways to re-adapt it to the current world order (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). It is critical to keep in mind that scholars would fall into the trap of ahistoricism while applying this methodology because it is possible for one to forget that history would bring changes to world order and consider that the past is similar to today (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Callahan, 2008). As the last methodology, scholars try to reformulate history from an Eastern or world history perspective (Buzan & Little, 2010). The main argument is that

without avoiding Eurocentric history, it would not be possible to formulate a non-Western IRT (Buzan & Little, 2010). World history approach would highlight the significant cornerstones of the non-Western hemisphere rather than the West (Wallerstein, 1997). Noticing these historical achievements, the non-Western world and scholars would take the courage to strive for the production of non-Western IR as well as understanding the interpretation of their ancestors regarding the nature of world politics.

In order to investigate the efforts to overcome Eurocentrism in IR, this study chooses the Chinese School of IR as a case study because of claims of the School's scholars in regard to their success in the development of a non-Western and Chinese IRT (Noesselt, 2012; Qin, 2016; Ren, 2022; Zhang & Chang, 2016). The discussion for the production of a Chinese IRT dates back to the 1980s and has been taking place since that time (Wang & Buzan, 2014). Various scholars have been contributing to the discussion and throughout the 2000s four main approaches of Chinese scholars appeared as a branch of "the Chinese School of IR" or for some "IR with Chinese characteristics" (Wang & Buzan, 2014: 11). The main aim of the Chinese School is to produce a Chinese IRT in order to understand IR and the non-Western world in a Chinese way (Ren, 2020). In other words, they strive to develop a *Chinese* perspective on world politics rather than advancing a comprehensive approach to reach a global IR. This should be kept in mind throughout the discussions on the Chinese School of IR and its capacity to overcome Eurocentrism. As mentioned, the School is generally accepted as being composed of four main approaches (Ren, 2020). These approaches are, namely, *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), *guanxi* (relational theory), *gongsheng* (symbiosis) and *Tsinghua* (moral realism). Except *Tsinghua* (moral realism), all have claims to become a non-Western Chinese IR theory (Qin, 2016; Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020) while *Tsinghua* argues that it considers itself a branch of realism, but still considers itself as having the potential to establish a non-Western IR approach by adding morality aspect to mainstream realism (Yan, 2016). They generally focus on Confucian teachings, the international politics of ancient China and the tributary system (the international tax system) of those times (Qin, 2016; Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016). Accumulating knowledge from ancient China and traditional resources, scholars reformulate them to understand/analyze the current era (Xu & Sun, 2016). They are eager and optimistic to produce a theory that has roots in ancient China and has the ability to understand/shape/re-shape today's world (Qin, 2016; Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016).

As this study aims to understand whether non-Western scholars have been successful so far to challenge Eurocentric IR for the establishment of a global IR and choses the Chinese School of IR as the case study, the School's success and failures are analyzed in regard to the seven premises of Eurocentrism (Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric world history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress). The Chinese School would be a valid candidate for checking the optimistic arguments of non-Western scholars regarding the challenge against Eurocentrism because many scholars striving for the establishment of a Chinese IRT approach claim that they were so far successful and will be able to produce a non-Western IRT (Xu & Sun, 2016; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016). Analyzing the School according to the concerned seven premises, the result seems that the Chinese School of IR is partially challenging/overcoming Eurocentrism while partially reproducing the Eurocentric logic of parochialism.

It is a significant strategy (if intentional) for the Chinese School of IR to avoid using the method of non-Western scholars that is to show the Eastern origins of the West. As mentioned, such a method generally leads to the reproduction of Eurocentrism in IR by ultimately glorifying Western achievements (Wallerstein, 1997). Rather than using this strategy, scholars of the Chinese School generally follow the method of studying indigenous resources and re-framing the history from an Eastern/world perspective. Through analyzing the Chinese School of IR, this study supports the view that these methods are common in non-Western scholars' effort to develop a non-Western IRT.

Although the Chinese School challenges the Eurocentrism of IR to a certain extent, it also engages in the reproduction of Eurocentric parochialism by establishing Sino-centrism. Scholars of the School take a rigid stance against the West and Western conceptualization of world politics (Zhao, 2021; Qin, 2016; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016). They highlight the significance of China, the Chinese emperor and the Chinese tradition while vilifying the West (Zhao, 2021; Qin, 2016; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016). They do not pay much attention to the influence of the West over Chinese teachings throughout the history and consider the West as the reason for world-wide chaos that has to be eliminated by Chinese tradition (Zhao, 2021; Qin, 2016; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016). Following this method, they replace many premises of Eurocentrism with Sino-centrism, glorify China and the Chinese tradition. For instance, the School challenges the Orientalist view of the mainstream IR with an Occidentalist approach while claiming that China will be the one to bring order,

peace and progress to the world (Yan, 2016). Through these challenges, the Chinese School of IR partially overcome the Eurocentrism of the IR discipline (Tolay, 2021). However, a critical component, its underlying approach, remains in the School as well. The School follows the Eurocentric method of parochialism (Callahan, 2008). It replaces one centrism with another one. It fails to avoid cultural exceptionalism and prioritizing itself over others. Without emancipating from such a centrist approach, (although there are different aims for different scholars of the Chinese School) the Chinese School would not be successful in the aim of overthrowing Eurocentrism and establishing a non-Western/global IR.

This study aims to understand the Eurocentric nature of the IR discipline and challenges by the non-Western scholars to overcome Eurocentrism. It questions whether the attempts for a non-Western IRT have been successful by considering the example of the Chinese School of IR. It is critical to answer this question since the world-wide search for non-Western IRT has been taking place almost more than thirty years. The success and failures of these efforts should be put on a trial in order to demonstrate the mistakes and provide insight in order to further develop the discipline through the contributions of non-Western scholars.

In this regard, this study is organized under three main chapters. As discussed in detail below, it begins with the examination of Eurocentrism in IR and the critical approach of non-Western scholars toward the discipline. It is followed by the case study, which is the Chinese School of IR. The last chapter is concerned with the analysis of the Chinese School of IR regarding its ability to overcome Eurocentrism.

The first chapter is concerned with Eurocentrism in the IR discipline and the challenges to it. Acknowledging that the IR discipline is Eurocentric, the chapter detects abovementioned seven main premises that establish Eurocentrism, which are Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric world history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress. Each of them is explained in detail while the critical voice of non-Western scholars is also presented together with the explanation of these premises. Following, the chapter briefly elaborates on the issue of why the IR discipline is Eurocentric. In the last section of the chapter, the possibility of a non-Western IR is discussed.

Comprehending that the IR discipline is Eurocentric, many scholars are not satisfied with this situation and strived to develop a non-Western IRT; the second chapter focuses on the Chinese School of IR as an example of non-Western IRT. Since the scholars of the concerned school are highly confident about the success of a concrete establishment of a Chinese School challenging the Eurocentrism of IR, the Chinese case seems an appropriate example in order to investigate a non-Western IR attempt. Making research on the Chinese School, the second chapter detects that four approaches are generally accepted as the ones that make the Chinese School of IR. These approaches are called *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), *guanxi* (relational theory), *gongsheng* (symbiosis) and *Tsinghua* (moral realism). Each of them is elaborated in detail beginning with their founders, ontological basis to reaching their implication to the IR discipline and world politics.

The third chapter analyzes the Chinese School of IR in terms of its achievements and failures on the path of overcoming Eurocentrism. First of all, the methods of the Chinese School to develop a non-Western or Chinese IR are investigated in order to understand which of the three main methods of non-Western scholars for the production of non-Western IR is used by the Chinese School. As mentioned, these methods are showing the Eastern origins of the West, studying indigenous resources and re-framing world history in order to avoid the Eurocentric framing of world history. Following, seven main premises of Eurocentrism is tested on the Chinese School of IR in order to observe whether the School is successful to avoid each of these traps. It is argued that although there is a certain challenge by the Chinese School against Eurocentrism by ignoring the West and signifying China, the School still falls into the trap of parochialism of Eurocentrism that is to specify the discipline to a certain nation/region/state, which is China in this case.

In brief, this study first demonstrates that the discipline of IR is Eurocentric and seven main premises hold a critical ground. However, many scholars, especially the non-Western ones, are not satisfied with this situation by arguing that the existing mainstream IRTs do not meet the demands and needs of the non-Western world. These theories are still for the West and Western interests rather than the rest. Being part of this critical voice, the Chinese School of IR appears with its four approaches to challenge Eurocentrism. Even if the School is successful to replace the West with China in many

cases and establish a Sino-centric perspective, the School still fails to overcome parochialism of the Eurocentrism. A new centrism does not assist much to solve the problem of non-Western scholars, who strive to free IR discipline from parochialism.

CHAPTER 1: IR, THE WEST AND THE NON-WEST

"International Relations is an increasingly *globalized* subject… [but, being globalized] does not mean it is being *universalized*" (Acharya & Buzan, 2007: 432). "Conventional IRTs lack universality" (Akgül, 2022: 233) because "these allegedly universal theories are not in fact universal, but rather a presentation of the Western historical pattern as though it were universal" (Wallerstein, 1997: 25). In other words, IR has become a discipline that is studied almost all over the world, but it has not been able to become a universal discipline that provides necessary tools for all to understand/analyze their own conditions, except the West. It promotes Western values/norms/ideas as universal values/norms/ideas that everyone should follow rather than welcoming the input of non-Western societies and scholars (Hobson, 2012). The West had this opportunity to present its unique pattern as if universal by its power to conquer the world since "the strong define what they can and the weak consent to what they must" (Demirer, 2021: 112). Thus, the strong (West) defined the IR and the weak (non-West) had to consent to the defined IR. Since the IR has been dominated by American social sciences, their theories, patterns of thinking and methodology are deeply rooted in the IR (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). "Western scholars are [started to be] seen as theory producers while non-Western scholars are for theory testing" (Tickner, 2013; Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al., 2016 as cited in Akgül, 2022: 218).

Eurocentrism of the discipline has mainly been established based on Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric framing of world history, Western civilization's superiority, Orientalism and the theory of progress. These concepts are intertwined with each other to an extent that they cannot be considered/analyzed in an isolated way. The combination of them results in a Eurocentric IR both in the mainstream and critical theories. For this reason, each of them will be elaborated in the forthcoming subtitle analyzing Eurocentrism in IR. Although the IR has been constructed in a Eurocentric pattern, scholars of the discipline have started to critically engage in this construction to argue that the current IR "has distorted…its capacity to deal with the problems of the contemporary world" (Wallerstein, 1997: 22). Supporting this view, scholars have been attacking the aforementioned Eurocentric premises in order to reveal the insufficiency of Eurocentric IR to meet needs of the non-Western world (Acharya &

Buzan, 2010). They argue that Eurocentrism does not grant agency to the non-Western world and presents them just as a passive obtainer of the things that are developed by the West, despite the fact that the development of the West heavily relied on Eastern contributions (Amin, 1989/2010; Anieveas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2012).

While it is significant to understand the Eurocentric construction of IR and its main premises, it is also significant to comprehend how this Eurocentrism is established. Once the reasons for Eurocentric construction are revealed, it would be easier to find strategies for defeating the "hydra-headed monster" of Eurocentrism (Wallerstein, 1997: 22). Five main possibilities are presented in order to understand why IR is Eurocentric (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). These are, shortly, (1) the West has discovered the right path, (2) Gramscian hegemony leads the reproduction of the Western patterns, (3) there are hidden non-Western theories that need to be unearthed, (4) local conditions of non-Western societies do not allow the production of IRTs, (5) the West was first to initiate theory-building that led it to construct its IR (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Although all of these reasons are present in the construction of Eurocentrism in IR, arguments of Gramscian hegemony and the discriminative local conditions seem to be the prominent ones.

Following, as mentioned above, once the reasons for the Eurocentric construct are understood, it is possible to initiate a counter-movement. This leads one to consider the possibility of a non-Western IR. Scholars argue for the possibility of such an approach (Acharya & Buzan, 2007-2010; Hobson, 2007-2012; Wallerstein, 1997). They claim that if the West was able to do it and reach a hegemonic status, then, the non-West should also be able to do so (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Considering this possibility, scholars generally follow three methods; demonstrating the Eastern origins of the Western, focusing on non-Western traditional resources and searching for world history against Eurocentric history. In short, they argue for the locality against the universalist claims of the current IR. For them, IR does not provide sufficient room for local actors (agency) and local needs that do not fit with the established IR. As a result of this reasoning, non-Western scholars should focus on locality in the path of developing a non-Western IR.

This chapter is organized under three main subtitles in order to elaborate on the discussions mentioned above; Eurocentrism in IR and its critiques, why is IR Eurocentric? and the possibility of a non-Western IR. The first part regarding

Eurocentrism and its criticisms will focus on the main Eurocentric premises and discuss the relevancy of each in the construction of Eurocentric IR. Following this, criticisms against these premises will be considered in order to understand how they are leading Eurocentrism in IR. Understanding the Eurocentric premises and its critiques, the chapter will continue with the reasons for the concerned Eurocentrism in order to comprehend the possible ways of overcoming Eurocentrism. When these reasons are revealed, the current attempts of non-Western scholars to develop a non-Western IR would be checked systematically whether they were able to defeat Eurocentrism or they are still hooked by the same reasons that lead Eurocentric construction of IR. For this purpose, the last part of this chapter will discuss the possibility of a non-Western IR considering the discussion regarding Eurocentrism, its critiques and the reasons that led to its construction. As a result of these discussions, it will be argued that since Gramscian hegemonic position of Western IR has led to such kind of Eurocentric construction, locality arguments have to be supported by material power (coercion) in order to be able to establish an alternative counter-hegemony that could lead the defeat of the former. Otherwise, all the attempts will cause the reproduction of the current Eurocentric IR.

1.1 EUROCENTRISM IN IR AND ITS CRITIQUES

"International theory [is not] … objective, positivist and universalist … but seeks, rather, to parochially celebrate and defend or promote the West as the proactive subject of, and as the highest or ideal normative referent in, world politics" (Hobson, 2012, 1). Whatever is done in the West should be good and the rest should follow it since it is the highest normative reference for all. The rest does not worth considering since they cannot really reach the level of the West (Alruwaih, 2015; Hobson, 2007; Wallerstein, 1997). This is the case since the West is exceptional, their race is superior, their norms are universal, the history of the world is the history of the West, there is no match to Western civilization, backwardness is the fate of the Orient and the line of progress is the line of the West (Amin, 1989/2010; Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Hobson, 2012; Wallerstein, 1997). All these concepts and understandings underpin Eurocentrism in IR which requires the attention of this study. While some scholars, especially those who are following positivist methodology, are convenient with the situation (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2022 as cited

in CFPPR, 2022); others are uncomfortable living with this Eurocentrism (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Akgül, 2022; Amin, 1989/2010; Demirer, 2021; Hobson, 2012; Küçük, 2022; Wallerstein, 1997). Each one of these concepts will be discussed in detail while the criticism of them will be provided as well. Although they are separated in their definitions, it is almost impossible to separate them while considering Eurocentrism because they play the role of building blocks for the construction of Eurocentrism in IR. Thus, each one is related to the other that makes them seem similar to each other at the first glance, but also each one of them should be attacked in order to defeat the monster of Eurocentrism.

1.1.1 Western Exceptionalism

The concept of Western exceptionalism would be an initial step in understanding the Eurocentric nature of IR. Although it does not make IR Eurocentric only by itself, it plays an important role in the Eurocentric construction of IR (Hobson, 2012). It refers to the idea that whatever good happened in Europe/West has stemmed from the Western past without being affected by the rest of the world (Wallerstein, 1997). Hobson terms this as "*logic of immanence* through which Europe's rise is self-generated" (2007, 94). In other words, Europe rose to the world power but only through its own achievements and processes without the help of the rest of the world. Acharya and Buzan (2010) also acknowledge Western exceptionalism as one of the two main pillars of Eurocentrism in IR by claiming that mainstream IR heavily focuses on the "Western philosophy, political theory and/or history" while ignoring the rest of the world to a certain extent. Amin (1989/2010) includes Western exceptionalism among the Eurocentric premises of IR. He states that the West traces its roots back to Ancient Greece and "Greek thought are taken over by European thought beginning in the Renaissance and come of age in the modern philosophies" (Amin, 1989/2010: 167). In this story, contributions of non-Western thinkers to Western civilization are omitted. "Arab-Islamic philosophy is treated in this account as if it had no other function than to transmit the Greek heritage to the Renaissance world" (Amin, 1989/2010: 167) since it was and can only be the West to develop ideas and progress, who does not need the help of others -that already cannot help- in its development. As a result, scholars studying the issue of Eurocentric IR seem

to be commonly referring to the Western exceptionalist line of mainstream IR that does not provide agency to the non-Western world and solely focus on Western self-generated development.

On the other hand, critics argue for the opposite by claiming that the West has benefited from the rest of the world to a great extent that it is not possible anymore to argue for Western exceptionalism. In order to briefly explain his stance against Western exceptionalism, Hobson openly states that "without the Rest there would be no West" (2007: 110). To elaborate, Sugihara stands at a similar point with Hobson in his work *The East Asian path of economic development: A long-term perspective* (2003). He claims that it was East Asia to open the path of economic development to the West and Western industrialization by introducing his concept of great divergence. Presenting the East as the catalyzer of the West in the latter's quest for development, Sugihara stays on the exact opposite side of paternalist Eurocentric institutionalists, who believe that without the help -in terms of forceful impose- of the West, the East cannot develop by itself (Hobson, 2012). Amin (1989/2010), Anievas and Nişancıoğlu (2015) and Wallerstein (1997) also criticize Western exceptionalism by claiming that the influence of the East on the West cannot be ignored because of the deep-rooted contributions of the Eastern civilizations on the development of the West and its rise of the world power. Thus, it could be observed that scholars argue for the necessity of overcoming the issue of Western exceptionalism in the path of developing a non-Western or non-Eurocentric IR.

1.1.2 Racism

Racism is another Eurocentric premise of IR that concerns scholars of the discipline. Hobson argues in his book *Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* (2012) that scientific racism is one of the main foundations of the Eurocentric construct of IR. For him, scientific racism separates the West from the East on genetic/biological factors. Then, he divides it into imperialist and anti-imperialist, which results in the categorization of defensive/offensive scientific racism. Defensive scientific racism "is the belief that the white race must avoid coming into contact with the non-white races for fear of racial contamination (especially through miscegenation or blood-mixing)" (Hobson, 2012: 8) because if this contamination takes place, it means that "rebarbarization" (2012: 8) of the

West has started because of racial impurification. He summarizes this with "the conception of the 'besieged Western citadel battening down the hatches'" (2012: 8), which has to protect itself from the Eastern mobilization or "coming 'yellow peril'" (2012:9). To achieve this aim, it is necessary to engage in an "imperial containment" of these "regressive/predatory" yellow peril (2012: 9).

As it can be understood from the name, offensive racism is in call of exiling/killing the barbarians among the white race and spreading civilization through imperialism to the barbaric East that can never progress by itself (Hobson, 2012). Since the difference emanates from the race, which cannot be changed because of its intrinsic nature, and true civilization cannot be achieved by those inferior races; the best way to get rid of this threat is the destruction of them, that is exemplified by German Nazis according to Hobson. The difference is briefly explained as that the former argues "barbarians are coming!", while the latter declares "barbarians are already here in our midst!" (Hobson, 2012: 9). Amin (1989/2010) also argues for a similar point of view by stating that linguistics -who placed race at the center of analysis regarding the origins of languages- played an important role in the construction of Eurocentrism during the period of Renaissance. By the time of the Enlightenment, the theory of progress -which will be discussed in forthcoming sections- "establish[ed] one of the key intellectual foundations for the emergence of 'scientific' conceptions of racism" (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015: 128). Although "gradually a progression was made from genetic racism…to a geographic racism…[to] cultural racism" (Amin, 1989/2010: 171), the West has remained racist. The only change was in the color of it. Therefore, being originated from Western thoughts and ideas, mainstream IR also carries a certain amount of racism in its studies that underpin the Eurocentrism of IR (Hobson, 2007). Hobson (2007, 2012) argues that IR discipline is constructed in a hierarchical and racist way that prioritizes the West. Most of the mainstream and even critical IR has been criticized for racism that grants agency and superiority to the Western race while depriving the rest of such traits. For instance, Mohanty (1981 as cited in Hobson, 2007: 101) criticize feminism that stands for universal women's rights for being racist and White supremacist that does not provide an agency to non-Western women. As it is mentioned before by Amin (1989/2010) that scientific racism has replaced cultural racism following WWII. Cultural racism locates the "difference in terms of culture and institutions, [and] elevates the West to the exceptional status" contrary to genetic

difference presented by scientific racism (Hobson, 2007: 104). Following this transformation, "race has been rendered invisible today" while "racism and 'racist hierarchy' continues as a major constitutive force in contemporary global politics/economics" and IR discipline (Hobson, 2007: 105).

As racism provides a binary view of the world that is composed of the superior, civilized white race and inferior, barbarian remaining races; scholars of the non-Western world -or so-called inferior, barbarian scholars- refuse such kind of an understanding that does not provide any agency and good traits to the non-Western world. Considering scientific racism, scholars argue that the rise of the West would date back to the 17th and 18th centuries and owes its rise to the Eastern societies/races because of the former's transfer of the latter's technology, values, norms and ideas to the West (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2007). The argument continues, if the current Western hegemony of the superior white race is established by the contributions of the non-Western, backward, ignorant races; then, how it is possible to argue for the latter's inferiority? If the non-Western world is inferior, then, its technology/norms/values/ideas should not have been transferred to the West, which was not at the center of the world politics of that era. If the non-Western world is not inferior -and actually it was not generally accepted so until the rise of the West (Amin, 1989/2010; Hobson, 2007)-, then, there is no point to argue for the superiority of the white race. Turning to cultural racism, scholars point out that European culture has roots in Eastern cultures, such as Ancient Egypt, Ancient Sumer and Christianity as a religion whose origins were established in the Middle East (Amin, 1989/2010; Hobson, 2004; Wallerstein, 1997). Since it is almost impossible to separate Western culture and civilization from Eastern cultural contributions, it is contradictory to argue for the superiority of white culture and the necessity of cultural racism (Hobson, 2007). Therefore, in order to have a non-Western IR, racist hierarchical constructions of world politics have to be eliminated, so that the rest would acquire their agency status rather than being just a passive receiver of the West.

1.1.3 Universalism

The concept and understanding of universalism mainly stem from the dominance of positivism in sciences that took place, especially following the Enlightenment period

(Amin, 1989/2010; Hobson, 2012; Wallerstein, 1997). According to positivist methodology, there are universal Newtonian-Cartesian scientific truths that can be applied to all societies, time and space. It argues for the determinist laws that govern the world in the form of a linear process and the possibility of value-free science, including the social sciences (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Kang, 2003; Wallerstein, 1997). With the virtue of the same understanding of Enlightenment, scientific racism has also emerged in social sciences. Because all societies had to have some permanent characteristics that are transferred from one generation to the other, which can be analyzed and observed in a value-free scientific way; they had to be classified according to their characteristics by again providing superior traits to the Europeans (Hobson, 2012). Mainstream IR is suffering from such a positivist dominance in the discipline (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Lapid, 1996) and neorealism and neoliberalism present convenient examples of this kind of universalist/positivist approach in IR (Kang, 2003; Küçük, 2022). Universalism concept is also fundamental for the theory of progress (Wallerstein, 1997), which will be discussed in the concerned subtitle.

The premise of universalism is also the target of criticism. Accepting positivism as the main cause of such universalistic claims of the West, scholars first focus on positivist methodology in order to check its reliability and validity. Positivism in IR results in the conclusion that objectivity and neutrality provide IR with the necessary tools to come up with universal generalizations that can be applied to each and every part of the world (Wight, 2002). More importantly, once the boundaries of *valid* knowledge are drawn in such a way, the so-called research and knowledge production outside of this methodology are accused of being unscientific or pseudo-science (Jackson, 2016). Then, if IR is universal and appliable to all cases, arguments on the East/West divide or non-Western IR are meaningless because the result of such a positivist, universal and value-free IR would have to have the same results regardless of the research and the space it is conducted/applied (Alruwaih, 2015; Jackson, 2016). Alruwaih states this situation as "ontological and epistemological barriers that 'police' knowledge production in the discipline" (2015: 40) because it draws "the disciplinary boundaries of IR theory ontologically and epistemologically" (Behera, 2010: 97) that does not allow others to enter inside, in which any attempt to do so is blamed of being unscientific (Jackson, 2016). Following WWII, this kind of positivist epistemology in the IR discipline has

obtained hegemony through the studies of American social sciences, which has started to be criticized by the critical theories especially beginning with the 1990s and "the return of culture" into the IR (Küçük, 2022; Lapid, 1996: 13).

When the critical theories acquired popularity among IR scholars, non-Western scholars also started to question this universalist-positivist understanding of IR by claiming that "devising different set of tools and exploring a new repertoire of resources that have, thus far, been de-legitimized or rendered irrelevant for knowledge production in IR" (Behera, 2010: 92). There seems a general tendency of being not satisfied with the dominance of positivism in the literature of non-Western IR. It is argued that this hegemony of positivism results in the direct rejection of other possible resources in the non-Western World with the accusation of not producing scientific knowledge, therefore, not valuable in IR (Alruwaih, 2015). Speaking from Japan, Inoguchi also carries the same concern that "if theories of IR are not narrowly defined in terms of positivist methodology as often seen in the United States, it is possible to identify [various theories in Japan]" (2010: 62). Chun (2010) also argues for the dominance of Confucius normative understanding in Korea before the forceful introduction of Westphalian state system together with positivist and universalist values. Approaching the issue from the issue of identity, Williams (1996) and Ong (2004) claim that the Anglo-American positivist methods are not sufficient to adequately comprehend the issue of identity in IR (as cited in Inoguchi, 2010: 59). With the same framework, considering the effect of positivism among Muslim scholars, Alruwaih states that "[positivism] tell us what to ignore: human agency, belief systems, normative structure" and "the sense of moral responsibility before God cannot pass the fact/value distinction [of positivism]" (2015: 46-47). Mittelman expresses this strictness of IR in the positivist methodology as "the positivist faith in empiricism" that hinders the development and broadening of the discipline (2005: 20). As a result of all such concerns, scholars studying non-Western IR tend to adopt critical theories and post-positivist approaches in their search for alternative theories by the claim that the universalist/positivist understanding of IR cannot adequately grasp their identity, culture, belief and norms.

1.1.4 Eurocentric World History

The argument regarding the Eurocentric world history is very similar to the argument of Western exceptionalism on the common point that all the achievements of the West were achieved because of the West itself. While exceptionalism also takes place in the Eurocentric framing of world history, the latter stands for a wider understanding of history that world history is almost equalized to European history merged with the understanding of universalism (Wallerstein, 1997; Buzan & Little, 2010). This is because the significant cornerstones of world history are decided by the so-called value-free and objective Western historians (Wallerstein, 1997) since positivism allows scientists to decide what to investigate and what to ignore even under the banner of objectivity (Alruwaih, 2015; Behara, 2010). In other words, things that are important for the West in history are written in the world history, while the things that are important for the non-West [and not important for the West] are ignored by historians since it was the West to decide what is important or not. This is called "privileging of European experience" (Buzan & Little, 2010: 197). While privileging the European experience, inevitably, "European historians had 'minimised' the role of non-Europeans in the 'drama of mankind'" (Wells, 1925: 2 as cited in Buzan & Little, 2010: 200). Hobson argues that this is the result of "ahistorical Eurocentrism [that is] written backwards" (2007: 98). Abu-Lughod elaborates this term by stating that "the usual [Eurocentric] approach is to examine ex post facto the outcome – that is, the economic and political hegemony of the West in modern times – and then reason backward, to rationalize why this supremacy had to be" (1989, 12 as cited in Hobson, 2007: 99). As a result of such a backward reading, it became an inevitable result to have a Eurocentric world history since the history is written to demonstrate the achievements of Europe, not the others. In this framing, it is almost impossible to end up in an alternative story, but Eurocentrism.

Acharya & Buzan argues that "Eurocentric framing of world history… weaves through and around much of this [mainstream IR] theory" (2010: 6). In order to prove this, they briefly examine classical realism, neorealism, strategic studies, liberalism, neoliberalism, Marxism, the English school, historical sociology, critical theory, constructivism and postmodernism in which they demonstrate the existence of both arguments in all these mainstream theories, leading to the conclusion that the mainstream IR is Eurocentric.

McNeill's book also provides a fruitful example to understand the Eurocentric framing of history. He, himself, "acknowledged that he had been unconsciously influenced by the 'imperial mood' that prevailed in the US after World War II. Hence the title of his *world history* [emphasis added]: The Rise of the West" (1991: xvi as cited in Buzan & Little, 2010: 200). Although he was writing world history, the name of the book implies that it is Western history because of the Eurocentric framing of world history. Wallerstein describes this as "fundamental to other explanations [of Eurocentrism in IR]" (1997: 23). Regardless of the existence of other societies of the world, Europe was destined to reach its current stage of development since whatever is achieved in Europe is the result of *isolated* European history.

Explaining the current dominance of Eurocentrism in world history, scholars of non-Western IR criticize that the discipline focuses on Western/European history in an overwhelming way that does not provide agency to the East in the formation of history, but just a passive obtainer of it. Said's book on Orientalism is dedicated to this subject to demonstrate that the binary view of the West did not allow them to award such kind of an agency to the Orient since the Orient is the source of all the backwardness, ignorance and cruelty that cannot contribute to the virtuous and honorable Western civilization (1978). As mentioned before, Sugihara (2003) highlighted the importance of East Asia in the formation of Western industrialization and hegemony, which should be noticed in world history. Moreover, Abu-Lughod claims that "between 1450 and c.1800 China stood at or near the centre of the global economy" (1989 as cited in Hobson, 2007: 109), which should not be ignored in the writing of world history since it was a period of almost 400 years long and "which simultaneously gives the lie to Eurocentrism's assumption that all great powers in the last millennium have been Western" (Hobson, 2007: 109). From this point on, if -as in the case of mainstream IR, especially the realist variants- only the great powers matter (Waltz, 1979), then, world history should minimize the influence of Europe at those times since the great powers of that era was mainly located in the Asia and the Middle East (Buzan & Little, 2010). "As Lack (1965: xiii) observes, 'From 1500 to 1800 relations between East and West were ordinarily conducted within a framework and on terms established by the Asian nations'" (as cited in Buzan & Little: 2010: 205). If the great powers are the game-makers, it would be understood from this quotation that the great powers from 1500 to 1800 were Asian nations since they were deciding the rules

that were to be applied in the relations between East and West. Sachsenmaier summarizes this contradiction by arguing that "Western world historians can afford to ignore non-Western research without hampering their professional reputation, while scholars outside the West cannot do the equivalent" (2007: 472 as cited in Buzan & Little, 2010: 200) since the discipline is dominated by Eurocentrism (Hobson, 2007). Therefore, non-Western scholars argue for the necessity of a truly world history that equally highlights the importance of both the West and the East (Buzan & Little, 2010; Hobson, 2007) in order to overcome Western-centric stance of IR and other social sciences.

1.1.5 Western Civilization

Civilization argument stands for the superiority of the West that perceives itself as the only civilized society of the world -which will be again mentioned in the Orientalism part regarding the binary view of the civilization- and the one to spread *its* civilization to the uncivilized regions of the world that waits upon their honorable civilizing mission, which was accompanied generally by the imperialism, especially during the period of world-wide colonization. Exemplifying the civilizing mission of 19th century French colonizers, Wallerstein elaborates this concept by stating that "they meant that… France (or more generally Europe) would impose upon non-European peoples the values and norms that were encompassed by these definitions of civilization" (1997: 26) since they hold the position of being civilized.

The same line of argument could be found in the paternalist/anti-paternalist Eurocentric institutionalism of Hobson (2012). For him, there are four different versions of Eurocentrism, which he identifies as "the four variants of generic Eurocentrism in international theory" (2012: 5). First, he divides it into two subcategories as Eurocentric institutionalism and scientific racism, while former is based on the division of West/East on institutional/cultural factors, latter is based on the genetic/biological ones that have been mentioned above. Then for each, he divides them as imperialist and anti-imperialist. As a result, there are paternalist/anti-paternalist Eurocentric institutionalism and offensive/defensive scientific racism.

Paternalist Eurocentric institutionalism adorns the West with the role of *pioneering agency* that has the capacity to reach modernity by itself while the East has the role of

conditional agency, whose development can only take place just by the civilizing mission of the West. Compared with Acharya and Buzan (2010), this claim might be accepted closer to their argument regarding Western exceptionalism since the rest should be civilized by the honorable and virtuous civilizing mission of the superior West. The same line of argument regarding the civilizing mission would also be found in the study of Anievas and Nişancıoğlu (2015) regarding the Western rise and rule. They claim that there was a "hierarchical demarcation of the European Self as 'advanced' and 'superior'" during the times of European colonization of the Atlantic (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015: 126), which has accompanied by "the moral obligation for the 'the civilized to take control of the uncivilized'" (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015: 126). Hobson (2012) takes classical liberalism and Marxism into this category of Eurocentric institutionalism by analyzing the studies of well-known scholars of these theories, such as William Robertson, John Muirhead, David G. Ritchie, Karl Marx, George Hegel and Max Weber. For him, all these thinkers supported hierarchical sovereignty and attributed the West a pioneering agency that is destined to engage in civilizing mission to emancipate the rest from backwardness.

On the other hand, anti-paternalist Eurocentrism grants the right of self-development to the East as having the role of *derivative agency*, which can only mature by following the universal and natural methods of the exceptional West. The latter concept seems to be similar to the argument of Acharya and Buzan (2010) about taking the West as the origin of analysis. To exemplify this, Adam Smith and Immanuel Kant are presented by Hobson expressing that these thinkers had tolerance to non-European societies and were against imperialism and state intervention, however, they were also requiring non-Western societies to "relinquish their cultural self-determination and become European" (2012: 62) in order to become a developed nation.

Scholars studying the possibility of a non-Western IR approach also criticize the Eurocentric premise of Western civilization and civilizing mission. First of all, this superior civilization traces its roots back to Ancient Greek, Rome and the Christianity, which Amin (1989/2010) argues that Ancient Greek and Christianity are forcefully attired in a Eurocentric disguise by an artificial Eurocentric construct since the Ancient Greek perceived itself as a part of the Orient and Christianity has its roots in the Middle East. Even Christians until the Renaissance "make the case that Christianity, far from

representing continuity, marked a decisive break with Greece, Rome, and Israel" (Wallerstein, 1997: 28), demonstrating the forceful integration of Christianity to the Eurocentric construct. Leading to the conclusion that "whether modern Europe can plausibly claim either Greece and Rome on the one hand or ancient Israel on the other as its civilizational foreground is not at all self-evident" (Wallerstein, 1997: 28). Focusing on the same issue, Bernal criticizes Marx by tracing origins back to Ancient Greece, but not to the Egypt that was influential in the formation of the former's culture (as cited in Hobson, 2012: 57). Hobson (2012) adds on this by claiming that the Eurocentric construct also omits the Ancient Sumer that contributed many ideas of Ancient Greece. These non-Western contribution stages are generally ignored by the Western construct of the linear process of history because it is not logical (in this Eurocentric construct) for "chosen people" (Hobson, 2012: 57) to be benefitting from barbaric others.

Pointing to the aforementioned problems of the Western civilization claim, scholars in the literature of non-Western IR criticize the discipline by forcing and imposing such kind of a view of holistic Western civilization that does not allow the East to contribute. Scholars search for ways to overcome "normative inferiority [of the students and scholars in the non-Western world] induced by a Western civilization that views itself as intellectually culturally and morally superior'" (Ong 2004 as cited in Inoguchi, 2010: 59). In order to overcome this obstacle, scholars seem to be generally having a tendency of demonstrating their own civilizations' appreciated sides -in certain cases, its superiority. For instance, Lanti and Sebastian (2010) argue that Indonesian Javanese society, which has been the ruling elite of Indonesia for centuries, has a long history of civilization that provides an abundant resource for the production of non-Western Indonesian IR that does not glorify the West alone. Shani (2008) makes a case study to show Islamic and Indian civilizations are convenient grounds for providing alternative IRTs that do not necessarily adopt the West as the superior civilization, while Inoguchi (2010) strives to prove the necessity of giving up the West as the referential point/criteria for anything that is produced in the discipline since they are not the only ones to think and produce ideas. Interestingly, even "[some] Enlightenment thinkers viewed Egypt and especially China as more civilized than Europe at least down to the 1770s" (Hobson, 2012: 60). Therefore, scholars studying non-Western IR defend the position that there are other civilizations as

superior as, or in certain cases more superior than, the Western civilization that should be considered while conducting research on IR and IRTs.

1.1.6 Orientalism

Together with the concept of civilization, Orientalism stands for the binary understanding of the world as the Occident (West) and the Orient (non-West) in which all the superiority is held up by the Occident while all the inferiority given to the Orient (Said, 1978; Wallerstein, 1997). The concept is mainly derived from the writings of Anouar Abdel-Malek (1972/1981) and Edward Said (1978) in order to reveal the binary view of the West regarding non-European societies. Hobson (2012) also argues that his arguments regarding the different variants of Eurocentrism are to provide a deeper understanding of Said's Orientalism rather than rejecting it as he argues that dividing Orientalism into two, he finds the scientific racism and Eurocentric institutionalism. As a result, Orientalism appears as an important cornerstone while speaking about Eurocentrism in IR among the scholars of this field (Amin, 1989/2010; Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Akgül, 2022; Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2012; Küçük, 2022; Wallerstein, 1997). It is accepted as a social construct of Europeans regarding the Orient and their living style in an abstract way and "[it is] said to legitimate the dominant power position of Europe" (Wallerstein, 1997: 26). In the Orientalist view, the West was honored with progressive properties, virtue, superiority, civilization, modernity and pioneering agency while "the East was deemed, at worst, to be the repository of barbarous or savage regressivism that posed a threat to civilization and world order" (Hobson, 2012: 9). As Said summarizes;

> Orientalism [is the] corporate institution for dealing with the Orient [by] making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient ... [an] enormously productive discipline by which European culture [managed and produced] the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the Post-Enlightenment period (1978: 3).

Orientalism is one of the main -and almost the utmost- target(s) of criticisms regarding the issue of non-Western IR since it is the one that appears directly to the vision while considering Eurocentrism. As an expected result, non-Western scholars, who are depicted as backward people in an Orientalist way, stand on the opposite side of it. The first attack comes from the same argument that is offered against the argument of civilization above

regarding the Oriental origin of the Occident (Amin, 1989/2010; Hobson, 2004). They conclude by stating that if the West owes its development to the East, then, it is not sound to argue for the backward and barbaric characteristics of the Orient since if it is so, then, the West who has borrowed the ideas of the East has to have backward and barbaric traits in its civilization as well, which is portrayed in a way of pure goodness (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015; Hobson, 2012; Wallerstein, 1997) because "the Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture" (Fleming, 2000: 1223). Todorova argues that even the West had been acknowledging the superiority of the East until recently by stating that,

> It [the Orient] epitomized longing and offered option, as opposed to the prosaic and profane world of the West… imagination of the romantics, but it became also an escape for liberals and nationalists…after the Napoleonic wars, when the Orient "became a symbol of freedom and wealth."...English gentlemen found desirable models of behavior and dress that they readily emulated (2009: 13).

This was the case until the late 18th century marked the beginning of "modern orientalism" (Said, 1978 as cited in Fleming, 2000: 1225; Hobson, 2007) that separated itself from the Orient by granting most of the inferiority to the latter. Amin also argues that this view is justified by Europeans "once it became capitalist and developed the power to conquer" since they show a right in themselves "to represent others…and even to judge them." (1989/2010: 175). Thus, breaking the argument of Western exceptionalism and presenting the superiorities of their own civilization, scholars of non-Western IR refuse Orientalism and its depiction. They claim that without refusing Orientalist premises, it is not possible to argue for a non-Western IR since the former does not provide sufficient room for the latter to have the ability to produce something good.

1.1.7 Theory of Progress

Lastly, the theory of progress together with universalism argues that there are certain linear progress to be followed by all societies to develop from primitiveness to modernity or from barbarism to civilization, in which the West is situated at the last stage of it. This kind of understanding is "the rationale of almost all stage theories [i.e., liberalism and Marxism]" (Wallerstein, 1997: 30). While the path of progress is open to anyone, it is also imposed on the rest of the world by the West in order to make them 'civilized' as well (Wallerstein, 1997) as in the case of paternalist Eurocentric institutionalism of

Hobson (2012). This argument is also embedded in all four variants of Eurocentrism in Hobson (2012), considering the idea of the linear development that has to be followed by the rest, if they want to be developed as the West did. Contributing from a different perspective, Amin (1989/2010) argues that the flexible nature of Christianity allowed Europeans to pass the stage of capitalism that cannot really be met by other religions or civilizations because of their dogmatic and preventive nature. Anievas and Nişancıoğlu term the theory of progress as "*linear developmentalism*" (2015: 127) in which "non-Europeans were seen to present an image of Europe's past, and in turn Europe posited itself as the image of non-Europeans' future." (2015: 127). They argue that this concept found its "fullest expression" by the time of the Enlightenment "with an emphasis on clearly distinguishable stages of development" (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015: 128). Material backwardness of non-Western societies was to prove their normative backwardness as well, that in turn, justified the necessity of civilizing mission and "humanitarian interventions" towards non-Western societies (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015: 128). As a result, the theory of progress supported other Eurocentric premises, such as Western exceptionalism, racism, Western civilization/civilizing mission and Orientalism, on the basis that the rest is backward in all aspects since they could not pass the stages of development as the West.

However, a different picture occurs in the theory of progress considering the criticism of non-Western scholars on the Eurocentric premises because of implicit acceptance of this theory by the non-Western attempts. Although there are certain scholars arguing for alternative patterns of development, it seems that there is a general tendency among non-Western scholars to consciously or unconsciously accept the progress theory of the West in their search for a non-Western IRT. To illustrate one example of such an attempt, Sugihara (2003) argues for an alternative path of economic development regarding the industrialization of Asia, which gave a path to the development of the Western industry. He presents two concepts to prove his claim, which are "labour-intensive industrious revolution path" [East Asian] and "capital- and natural-resource-intensive industrial revolution path" [Western]. According to him, "it was the East Asian path of economic development that made it possible for the majority of the world's population to benefit from global industrialization" (Sugihara, 2003, 81). This hypothesis claims that without following the methods of the West, the East made it available for the world to reach the

fruits of industrialization, which would provide another perspective to the theory of progress.

On the other hand, including the attempt of Sugihara (2003), numerous attempts to "attack [on theory of progress] is often, however, rendered contradictory by the efforts of other non-Westerners to appropriate progress for part or all of the non-Western world, pushing Europe out of the picture, but not progress" (Wallerstein, 1997: 31). To elaborate, according to Wallerstein (1997), non-Western scholars commit a common mistake in the search of overcoming Eurocentrism in the theory of progress. The mistake is to change nothing regarding the logic or underlying structure of the theory of progress, but to change the agency from the West to the East, in which the result again appears in the same Eurocentric understanding of the *linear* development that all should follow the same path in order to reach to the level of development. Any attempts of following different methods would result in the failure in the race of development since there is only one way towards it. Thus, Wallerstein (1997) argues that without realizing and eliminating this implicit acceptance of the theory of progress, the attempts for a non-Western IR would fall into the category of Eurocentrism.

Considering all these criticisms towards the basic Eurocentric premises of IR -which have found a great audience until now among scholars of the discipline-, it would be concluded that there is a growing dissatisfaction with mainstream IR and its premises. Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric world history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress construct a Eurocentric IR that prioritizes and glorifies the West while ignoring the non-West. The agency appears as the main concern throughout the discussion since the mainstream IR tends to ignore the non-Western world and its influence over world politics by solely focusing on the Western agency and its patterns. As a result of such a perspective, the former becomes the test laboratory of the West rather than providing any contribution to the events or theories of worldly affairs (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Thus, non-Western IR scholars argue for the existence of their own agency that has to be considered in order to have an IR discipline that is all-compassing. With the aim of demonstrating this agency, scholars argue for the possibility and necessity of non-Western IR approaches. Before discussing the possibility of a non-Western IR, one should discuss the reasons for the Eurocentric construction of IR in order to find methods to overcome it.

1.2 WHY IS IR EUROCENTRIC?

Having realized the dominance of Western norms, ideas and values in the IR discipline, scholars started to question the reasons for this. Because it is necessary to understand how the (Western) hegemony is holding its ground in order to successfully overthrow it (Gramsci, 1971/1992 as cited in Ransome, 2010: 179). Once the underlying reasons for Eurocentrism in IR are detected, they could be beneficial both to understand the possibility of a non-Western IR and to question whether the already existing attempts for a non-Western IR were able to overcome this Eurocentrism or not. In other words, it could be a tool to compare the past with the present or compare the conditions that have led to the construction of Eurocentric IR and the conditions of the current era that faces attempts of non-Western IR approaches to overcome the former. If the reasons/conditions of Eurocentrism still remain in the discipline, then, it would mean that the attempts have not been successful until now to reach an IR discipline not dominated by Eurocentrism. Since Acharya and Buzan (2010: 222) provide a wide range of possible explanations, it would be appropriate to discuss this hegemony through their initiatives. They present five main arguments for this:

1. Western IRT has discovered the right path to understanding IR.
2. Western IRT has acquired hegemonic status in the Gramscian sense.
3. Non-Western IR theories do exist, but are hidden.
4. Local conditions discriminate against the production of IR theory.
5. The West has a big head start, and what we are seeing is a period of catching up.

Beginning with the first one, Acharya and Buzan clearly reject it by saying “if true…this book would then have no point other than to exhort non-Westerners to engage themselves more in the established theoretical debates” (2010: 16). As Cox famously claimed, “theory is always for someone and for some purposes” (1986, 207), then, Western theories have to be for the Westerners as well in the view of Acharya and Buzan, therefore, it would be unjust to argue that the West has found the right path of IR that the rest should follow. On the other hand, listening to the words of Waltz, the founder of neorealism, he argues that “it would be ... ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica.... A general theory of international politics is necessarily based on the great powers." (1979 as cited in Kang, 2003, 57). This would

lead to the conclusion that the West has already done it, which would easily be found in all the four variants of Eurocentrism presented by Hobson (2012). As Hobson states the view of the West that "societies will develop but only by following the 'naturalized Western path'… pioneered by the Europeans through their 'exceptional institutional genius'" (2012: 6). Being one component of the so-called Western path, IR, then, should have been discovered by the West and the rest has to follow them, which directly matches with the arguments of Waltz. As a result, the decision to verify the first claim of Acharya and Buzan regarding whether the West has found the true path or not lies in the approach/methodology of the observer. If s(he) approaches the issue by using mainstream theories and especially the positivist methodology, then, the conclusion will testify the claim that the West has already found the true way of doing IR because scientific facts are value-free and universal. Then, the Western path becomes not a Western path, but a scientific and universal path that is valid for all. However, if s(he) approaches the issue from a critical perspective, s(he) should consider the warning of E. H. Carr "the English-speaking peoples are past masters in the art of concealing their selfish national interests in the guise of the general good" (1946: 79 as cited in Acharya & Buzan, 2010: 5). It could be re-stated in accordance with the discussion of Eurocentrism that English-speaking peoples are past masters in the art of concealing their self-understanding/values/norms/ideas in the guise of the universal/scientific/value-free facts. Then, it becomes not possible to argue for the West as the founder of the true path, but as a master of defining its theories as universal theories. This stands in support of Acharya and Buzan's (2010) argument that "Western IRT has discovered the right path to understanding IR" does not seem as a strong reason for the Eurocentric construction of IR. Since this study follows a critical perspective, it could be concluded that it would not be appropriate to argue for the West as the founder of the true IR and therefore, it is Eurocentric.

In order to better comprehend the second argument of Western hegemony, one should understand what Gramscian hegemony stands for. Hegemony consists of a combination of consent and coercion, in which the "consensual aspect of power is in the forefront, [while] hegemony prevails" (Cox, 1996: 217). Unity "of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy" should always be preserved for the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971/1992: 124).

Although coercion is an important and necessary factor for hegemony, it is generally an option of the last resort (Ransome, 2010). As Gramsci states, “the apparatus of state coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively” (1971/1992: 12). Then, it could be summarized that hegemony works through the consent of the receivers rather than mere coercion. However, Gramsci was not focusing on the international level that much, but on the state. Cox (1996) converts his ideas into the IR discipline. Transferring the hegemonic class of the state into the world hegemony, Cox states that “world hegemony can be described as a social structure, an economic structure, and a political structure and it cannot be simply one of these things but must be all three” (1996: 222). It “is expressed in universal norms, institutions, and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behavior for states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries” (1996: 222). Following, it could be argued that world hegemony (or Western hegemony) includes social, economic and political structure and work through the consent of non-Western societies, together with the coercion of the West if necessary. Then, the internal (national) structures of the hegemon are transmitted to the rest of the world and internalized by them in a way that the latter consciously or unconsciously reproduces the hegemony. In the first stage, intellectuals play a key role in the internalization of the knowledge coming from the hegemon since “[they are the] permanent persuaders" according to Gramsci (1971/1992: 9). After a point, this hegemony “operates largely unconsciously in the minds of others” (Acharya & Buzan, 2010: 17) and leads to the reproduction of Western hegemony even if the one argues for the opposite in his/her stance (Robinson, 2005). As a result, hegemon “determine[s] what can be said, how it can be said, and whether or not what is said constitutes a pertinent or important contribution to knowledge.” (Tickner, 2003: 297, 300; Aydinli and Matthews 2000 as cited in Behera, 2010: 96)

Understanding the hegemony in Gramscian sense, the second argument of Acharya and Buzan would be discussed smoothly. Hobson identifies this Western hegemony as “the dark underside of the international theory” (2012: xi) and claims that the IRT is there to promote Western norms, ideas and values to the rest of the world since they are the pioneers of civilization and development. Then, once they hold the powerful position of civilization and development and impose it on the non-Westerners, the reproduction of this Western pattern could easily be observed in IRT for Hobson. Supporting the same

stance and implicitly referring to the reproducing hegemony in Gramscian sense, Wallerstein states that "If we are not careful…we may in fact criticize Eurocentrism using Eurocentric premises and thereby reinforce its hold on the community of scholars" (1997: 22). Amin (1989/2010) also acknowledges the same stance by expressing that once the West gained its power to conquer the world, it has started to represent and judge other societies of the world. Following this, "non-European peoples…either they can accept Europeanization and *internalize* its demands, or, if they decide against it, they will lead themselves to an impasse that inevitably leads to their decline" (Amin, 1989/2010: 180).

To present a few examples of such reproduction, one would consider the IRT studies in the non-Western part of the world. Qin openly claims that "there was a domination of realism in the IR discourse in China and the learning process was very much leaning toward the misperception that realism was the IR theory", that has caused Chinese scholars to reproduce Western understanding of IR (2010: 29). Interestingly, arguing for the existence of Japanese IRTs in contrast to Western IRTs, Inoguchi utilizes a realist perspective by stating that "yes [there is Japanese IRT] because…Great powers often produce theories of international relations" (2010: 51), demonstrating the hegemonic reproduction by himself in the quest of countering it. For Korea, as Chun claims "most IR theories have been imported from the West, especially the US" (2010: 69), which would make it considerably difficult to produce a theory without reproducing the Western hegemony. The same line of arguments seems to be presented by Behera (2010) for India, Lanti and Sebastian (2010) for Indonesia, Chong (2010) for Southeast Asia and Tadjbakhsh (2010) for Muslim societies that the scholars of these areas consciously or unconsciously reproduce the Western knowledge rather than establishing non-Western alternatives. Overall, the second explanation seems significantly relevant in the Eurocentrism literature that is held responsible for the dominance of the West in IR.

The third possibility is presented as that there are certain non-Western IRTs and simultaneously, they are hidden from the public and academia. Although some scholars argue for the existence of non-Western IRTs in their local culture -which are invisible for now- (Kang, 2003; Inoguchi, 2010; Say, 2012; Tadjbakhsh, 2010; Qin, 2010), this line of argument seems to be not being favored much by the scholars of the discipline (Acharya & Buzan, 2010, 2017; Alruwaih, 2015; Chen, 2011a; Demirer, 2021; Hobson, 2007; Newman & Bacon, 2002; Shahi, 2019; Shani, 2008; Wallerstein, 1997; Waltz, 1979). Ren

(2020) argues for the existence of Chinese School by presenting four theories, that are namely relational theory, moral realism, *tianxia* theory and *gongsheng*/symbiotic theory. For him, despite these theories being there, they are not known by the overall IR discipline. Additionally, as mentioned above, Inoguchi (2010) argues for the existence of distinct Japanese IR, which is not famous because of the Gramscian hegemony of the West that does not allow the Other to be represented in the disciplinary boundaries. Ralph Pettman (2010) also argues for the existence of Japanese IR, especially focusing on the morality issue, that is not acknowledged as an alternative IRTs. For Indonesia, Lanti and Sebastian claim "that a distinctive Indonesian international relations tradition exists which can become the source of inspiration for alternative ideas" (2010: 149), however, this is not realized by the IR scholars as well. Turning to Islam, Tadjbakhsh also states that "alternative Islamic IRT exists and is possible" (2010: 175), implying that despite its existence, this Islamic IRT is not recognized by the rest. With a similar argument in mind, Seyfi Say also wrote a book named *İbn Haldun'un Düşünce Sistemi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Kuramı* (2012) in order to show that *Muqaddimah* (1377/2015) of Ibn Haldun provides the necessary knowledge for an alternative IRT to the Western ones. All these claims are in favor of the argument that there are non-Western IRTs around the world, but, are not seen by the general public and academia. However, as mentioned above, scholars of the IR discipline generally reject this kind of argument by claiming that the presented examples for alternative theories are also Western-centric and some of them even does not carry the necessities of being an IRT (Acharya & Buzan, 2010, 2017; Alruwaih, 2015; Chen, 2011a; Hobson, 2007; Wallerstein, 1997). Being on the same idea, Acharya and Buzan also conclude that "[the third explanation]is only marginally relevant to our overall question. Unless they are very well hidden indeed, even from the eyes of the locally based case-study authors" (2010: 223).

The fourth argument of discriminative local conditions of the non-Western world in terms of theory-building as the cause of the Western domination of IRT seems also relevant for certain cases in the non-Western part of the world. Acharya and Buzan argue that this argument seems "powerful" for explaining the reason for the absence of non-Western IR (2010: 224). For them, China has started to become an exception for this because of its rising power and the increasing importance of the IR discipline; while Japan has the potential, it is utilized in internal affairs rather than regional or global perspectives, which

shows a part of local conditions preventing the emergence of non-Western IRTs. Looking at India, Behera (2010) also finds the explanation of discriminative local conditions is certainly valid for the Indian case. He states that the IR discipline as an undergraduate program cannot be found in India, while only four universities offer Master's programs. More importantly, students choosing the IR department "often come with a frame of mind that 'they are coming to an inferior social science'" (Bajpai 2004: 28 as cited in Behera, 2010: 93). Having this kind of a nationwide understanding, it would be almost impossible to develop a sound alternative non-Western IRT. Acharya and Buzan (2010) refer to Southeast Asia being in the same situation as India regarding the lack of local resources and interest to study for IRTs. For Indonesia, there is an interesting situation that the scholars are more interested to attend debates on public and media programs rather than focusing on IRT development, which comprises another part of the local condition's hindering capacity (Lanti & Sebastian, 2010). In the case of Islam, focusing on the article of Tadjbakhsh (2010), Acharya and Buzan conclude that the Islamic Middle East does not agree with the idea that the Western pattern of thinking is the true path of IRTs while mainstream IRTs obtaining the hegemonic status among the scholars of the region; though the studies of Say (2012), Matin (2013), Shani (2008), Aydın (2007, 2017) and Abdelkader et al. (2016) stands at the opposite pole.

There is another point needed to be discussed while mentioning the discrimination caused by the local conditions that are not mentioned by Acharya and Buzan: material power/factors, which is interrelated with the Gramscian hegemony argument. Connecting these two premises (hegemony and local conditions) with each other, one should consider the necessity of material power (coercion) in search of the non-Western IRT; because as mentioned above, if the Western hegemonic knowledge production followed the rising power of the West that led it to conquer the world, then, it would be almost impossible to produce a non-Western IRT without adding the coercive aspect of the non-Western world to the table. As Cox argues, "coercive strength underwrote this [Western] order" (1996: 221). This can also be related to the argument of hidden theories since again without a coercive power to underwrite a non-Western order; even if one achieves to find a non-Western IRT, acceptance of it as a theory would have a significantly low percentage. In order to elaborate on this issue, the focus should be returned to the detection of Eurocentrism. As Amin argued that once the West obtained sufficient "power to

conquer", they awarded them with the right to "represent[ing] others… and even to judge them" (1989/2010: 175). In other words, the West did not conquer the world and impose its ideas on the rest of the world because they have developed a Western perspective that is different from the superpower of that day, however, they imposed their ideas because they conquer the world. This kind of interpretation matches the Gramscian perspective of the consent-coercion relation.

Exemplifying the Chinese case, Qin states that "the Chinese saw a great discontinuity of their intellectual culture when the West met the East [throughout 19th and 20th centuries]" in which the West had gained the upper hand in world affairs, and "[the Chinese faced with the] forced teaching by the Westphalian Westerners" (2010: 38). The result, "as the Chinese culture with Confucianism as its core was confronted and defeated at the turn of the twentieth century, the belief system contained in it disintegrated accordingly" (2010: 38). This kind of transformation of ideas, norms and values following the defeat against the West could be found in the other parts of the world throughout the process of Western rise (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015).

Additionally, as was the case before the West became triumphant, Ancient Greece was considering itself as a part of the Orient, "recognize what they learned from the Egyptians and the Phoenicians…also did not see themselves as the 'anti-Orient' which Eurocentrism portrays them as being" (Bernal as cited in Amin, 1989/2010: 168). However, when Europe obtained the power to define others, it also constructed "the myth of Greek ancestry" that has worldwide acceptance today (Amin, 1989/2010: 166). With the same stance, Hobson presents "six Eurocentric myths of IR" that are designed to protect and promote the West and its superiority over others following its acquirement of power to conquer (2012: 14). Returning to the original idea of linking local conditions and Gramscian hegemony argument, as a result of this discussion, it could be said that the most prominent local condition discriminating against the production of non-Western IR is the support of material power alongside with the discursive establishment of the concerned theory since without having the *power to define* as the West did, "no matter what you theorize about, its soul is Western" (Qin, 2010: 38). As the rising power of China and its potential to become a superpower have been started to be discussed recently, Chinese initiatives for a non-Western IR requires more concentrated attention in order to understand the upcoming future of IR discipline.

The last argument regarding the dominance of the West in IR is about Western headstart advantage that left the Rest in the position of catching up. Acharya and Buzan (2010) find this point also powerful for the explanation of the concerned hegemony. Wallerstein proposes two general and common claims of those arguing against Eurocentrism which have similar explanations to this last hypothesis of Acharya and Buzan. Wallerstein states that the first claim is about "Whatever it is that Europe did, other civilizations were also in the process of doing it, up to the moment that Europe used its geopolitical power to interrupt the process in other parts of the world" (1997: 31); while the second one is "Whatever Europe did is nothing more than a continuation of what others had already been doing for a long time, with the Europeans temporarily coming to the foreground" (1997: 31-32). These two arguments seem to be offering the same proposition that somehow the West had found a way to finish the race earlier. Accordingly, the West had a big head start in the process of developing materially and ideationally (IRTs in this case) that other societies were also trying to reach. The difference between the two arguments lies only in the method of winning the race rather than the winner. Although Wallerstein does not accept the two by accusing them of being "anti-Eurocentric Eurocentrism" (1997: 32), these claims support Acharya and Buzan's fifth hypothesis of the Western head start.

On the other hand, there is another point to be discussed concerning this hypothesis. Similar to the stance of Wallerstein regarding the anti-Eurocentric Eurocentrism, acknowledgment of this fifth hypothesis of the West having a big head start entails a Gramscian hegemonic acceptance that it was the West and only the West to develop IRTs in the first place without the contribution of the rest, which is summarized by Hobson as "only once, and only in the West" (2012: 9-10). This can be traced back to the "foundationalist myth of IR", which argues that IR discipline is founded following the battles of Europe and WWI in order to prevent wars and reach world peace (Hobson, 2012: 15). As a result, it would be said that accepting the absence of non-Western IR because of the Western head start in terms of the establishment of discipline and IRTs means also accepting the Eurocentric foundationalist myth of IR.

In addition, this head start hypothesis could be accepted without being Eurocentric, if the big head start is accounted not as philosophical thinking of IR, but as material power. One could say, yes, the West did have a big head start in terms of power rather than the

discourse or theory, especially following the industrial revolution (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015); because there were theories in the East before, regarding international relations and state politics which has not classified and structured in a systemic way of modern IR presented by the West (Hobson, 2004, 2012; Say, 2012; Qin, 2010). Hobson tries to show the Eastern contribution to the rise of the West in terms of both material power and ideas/theories in his book *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (2004). He explicitly states that "the West… owes its breakthrough to modernity in large, though by no means exclusive, part to the East from which it borrowed all manner of technologies, *institutions and ideas* [emphasis added] throughout its long developmental period between 800 and 1800" (2012: 10).

Adding on this, Say (2012) strives to demonstrate that certain ideas of certain key Western scholars would already be found in the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldun. Sune summarizes this as;

> Say argues that it is possible to find the distinction that Ibn Khaldun makes between bedavet (rural) and hadaret (civilized) in Durkheim's works…. was well aware of the impossibility of explaining the social reality with one variable even before Darwin and Marx… studied climate before Bodin and Montesquieu and rural life before Weber… [he] is the real pioneer of Keynesianism and the real father of Economic Liberalism… Perhaps the most extreme example… he finds the roots of the concept of "balance of power" in Ibn Khaldun… Moreover, Say views Ibn Khaldun as the founder and pioneer of Realism and Social Constructivism, and claims that it is possible to find elements of Liberalism, Marxism and Postmodernism (2016: 85)

As in the case of Say, there are many scholars from different parts of the world to have claims on the same line that the local philosophers/thinkers -studied by them- have already mentioned the key concepts of numerous mainstream IRTs before the philosophers/thinkers of the West leading to the establishment of those IRTs as well as ideas that are not even recognized in IR discipline, which has to be included in IRTs (Abdelkader et al., 2016; Behera, 2010; Inoguchi, 2010; Lanti & Sebastian, 2010; Ren, 2020; Shani, 2008; Qin, 2010, 2016; Yan, 2014).

Therefore, it could be argued that the West had a big head start in terms of gaining the power to conquer (Berberoglu, 2003; Wallerstein, 1997) that allowed the West to produce hegemonic knowledge and make others accept this knowledge to an extent that the latter

started to reproduce it (Amin, 1989/2010). Then, worldwide acceptance of the West as the founder of IR lies in the Western power of defining that establishes consent among tothers to accept its *modern* system (Berberoglu, 2003; Hobson, 2012). As a result, "as an institutional structure, social science originated largely in Europe" (Wallerstein, 1997: 21), but not as an ideational structure of thinking. This is supported by Qin's (2010) claim that once the West gained power over China, the Chinese understanding of state and international order lost legitimacy and it has to accept the *modern* system by abandoning its old tradition. Based on this, in order for one to avoid Eurocentrism without avoiding the acknowledgment of certain Western achievements, the head start issue should be discussed sensitively and without accepting the given premises of the Western mainstream IR.

Overall, all five hypotheses seem to be a part of the Western hegemony in IR. While some acquire a more prominent role, none of them would easily be excluded from the reasons for Eurocentrism. Along with the discussion above, the second (Western IRT has acquired hegemonic status in the Gramscian sense) and fourth hypothesis (Local conditions discriminate against the production of IR theory) of Acharya and Buzan (from the aforementioned perspective for the fourth one) seems to be more influential for the Eurocentrism of the discipline. As it is argued by many scholars (Amin, 1989/2010; Anievas & Nişancıoğlı, 2015; Buzan & Little, 2010; Hobson, 2004, 2007, 2012; Wallerstein, 1997), the West and Western philosophers have not been that much a critical referential point before the expansion of the West and Western world system to the rest of the world.

1.3 POSSIBILITY OF NON-WESTERN IR

There are two sides to the discussion regarding the possibility of non-Western IR. One argues for its possibility and even its existence, while the other stands on the opposite side by stating that it is not possible to have a non-Western approach in IR. Beginning with the supporters of the former idea, Acharya and Buzan (2010) appear to be one of the most optimistic and cited scholars arguing for the necessity of non-Western IR to have a true discipline of all-including IR rather than the West. As they propose, if the West achieved to reach the hegemonic position of knowledge production and the mainstream

IR became Western via this path, then, it is also probable for non-Westerners to establish a counter-hegemonic stance that can challenge the established norms of mainstream IR and adjust it according to needs of the non-Westerners. “No one denies that Europe did have a significant and distinctive impact on world history” (Buzan & Little, 2010: 202), however, it is argued that the gates of acquiring hegemonic status have not been closed to non-Westerners, which brings the opportunity to the Rest for digging their place in IR. “At the very least this West-centrism suggests it is possible for non-Western societies to build understandings of IR based on their own histories and social theories, and even to project these in the form of universalist claims” (Acharya & Buzan, 2010: 10). In order to achieve this, IR scholarship generally focuses on three main methods, which are showing the Eastern origins of the West and Western ideas/theories as the first, intensifying the study of non-Western traditional resources and concepts regarding the world politics and lastly, arguing for the necessity of an Eastern history or world history compared to the history based on the Western exceptionalism.

For the argument of Eastern origins, scholars generally seem to be implying that the West has achieved what it achieved through the contributions of the Eastern civilizations that are omitted and ignored by the mainstream discourse. As explained above, it was Ancient Egypt and Ancient Sumer civilizations to provide the basis for the Ancient Greek civilization. Upon this, Islamic scholars transmitted the knowledge of Ancient Greece to Europe by developing a considerable amount of knowledge between the two. However, the cases of the Middle East, Ancient Egypt and Ancient Sumer are generally ignored and the history is traced back to Ancient Greece alone while the contribution of Islam is reduced to the Ancient Greek and European civilization as being just a transmitter or post-officer in the mainstream IR. Focusing on Indian contribution, Behera (2010) argues that Kautilya was the father of realpolitik, who is not mentioned in any IR courses. He was “the forerunner of the modern fathers of the realist traditions in IR as Arthashastra [Indian science of politics dating from the fourth century BC] predates Hobbes’ ‘state of nature,’ Machiavelli’s ‘Prince’ as well as Kenneth Waltz’s anarchic international system and the ‘security dilemma’ of modern states” (Behera, 2010: 102). When it comes to technological development, Chinese civilization is generally brought forward by scholars as another omitted civilization that provided the basis of technological developments in the West (Hobson, 2004; Hobson, 2007). It was the Chinese compass to allow the

beginning of the discovery of the Americas as well as the Cape of Good Hope while it was the Chinese powder to allow for the rise of Western power. Lastly, it was the Chinese paper to allow West to record and develop the knowledge that has transmitted from Ancient Egypt and Sumer to Ancient Greece, Islam and to the West (Bacon, 1960; 118 as cited in Rosenberg, 2016: 19). Thus, the infusion of all these non-Western civilizations and ideas to the Western civilization suggests that the East also has a rich civilization and agency that can shape the world. If this is the case, then, non-Western scholars should be able to produce non-Western approaches to IR by sufficiently digging up their own civilizations that helped the West to rise.

Once it is accepted that the non-Western civilizations were there to contribute to the Western conquer of the world, it is also proposed that these resources of the non-Western ancestors should be studied thoughtfully. If they were the ones to help the West to come to the world governance, then, they could also be ones to help non-Westerners to overcome this hegemony. Having this logic in mind, scholars around the world have been studying such resources. Scholars from China (Chen, 2011a; Chen, 2011b; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2011, Zhao, 2009; Zhao, 2006; Wang, 2009) mainly concentrate on Confucianism and Chinese leaders and intellectuals, such as Mao of communist China, in order to find clues to develop a systemic IR theory. They extract concepts like *tianxia* (world harmony) and *gongsheng* (symbiotic) arguing that these might be the basis of new alternative Chinese IRTs (Zhao, 2006, Ren, 2020). Turning to India, Behera (2010: 99) and Zaman (2006) also follow the same method as the Chinese researchers and focus on Indian civilization, Buddhism and nationalist and intellectual leaders, such as Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, V. D. Savarkar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. As an example, Kautilya presented the theory of mandala "(sphere or circle of influence, interest and ambitions) [which] stipulates that every king or vijigeesoo (aspirant to conquest) is to regard his realm as located at the centre of a concentric circle of kingdoms [or sphere of influence] or mandalas (rings)" that represent the "natural enemies and possible allies" (as cited in Behera, 2010: 102). Being one of the concepts like *matsya-nyaya*, *Khalsa Panth* and *danda*, *mandala* also offers a convenient starting point for Indian IR theorization that might overcome the Eurocentrism of IR (Behera, 2010; Shani, 2008). Furthermore, Japanese scholars (Chen, 2011a; Ikeda, 2011; Inoguchi; 2010; Ong, 2004; Sugihara, 2003) argue for the existence of fertile resources in Japan that could lead to a

Japanese IRT. As Pettman proposes "*yosai tokon* ('Western knowledge/Eastern spirit') – represent a 'fresh source' for understanding conflict resolution that may even *prevail* over Western approaches" (2010: 4, 13 as cited in Chen, 2011a: 50). This understanding proposes the protection of Japanese cultural roots while combining it with the Western theories in a hybrid way (Pettman, 2010). Scholars studying Islam (Abdelkader et al., 2016; Alruwaih, 2015; Matin, 2013; Shani, 2008; Say, 2012; Tadjbakhsh, 2010) generally focus on the concepts like *umma* (Muslims around the world), *Dar al Islam/Dar al Kufr* (lands of Islam/ land of infidels) and *asabiyyah* (group solidarity) -from Ibn Khaldun- in order to present them as potential resources to begin the search for IRT of Islam. Considering these examples, one would get an insight into what non-Western scholars have in mind while arguing for the utilization of non-Western resources and concepts as a blueprint for building up non-Western IRTs.

As another pillar of non-Western scholars, world history appears the be a significant step in the search for alternative IRTs. It is important because history -as mentioned above- is "fundamental to other explanations" (Wallerstein, 1997: 23). Without changing the Western understanding of history that depicts the events from the eyes of Westerners, it seems not possible to establish an alternative theory. "Once we shift the focus of attention away from Europe, then long-established truisms in Western IRT are quickly called into question" (Buzan & Little, 2010: 197). It is the case because historians -despite claiming to be neutral and value free- decide the significance of events from their own perspectives and "European historians had 'minimised' the role of non-Europeans in the 'drama of mankind'" (Wells, 1925: 2 as cited in Buzan & Little, 2010: 200). This could only be achieved by self-declared right of the hegemonic West to decide what to exclude from the field of science and history (Behera, 2010). Realizing this, scholars insist that a non-Western IRT should necessarily begin with a non-Eurocentric world history that does not only focus on the important cornerstones in the way of Western rise, but the whole world (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Stucktey and Fuchs (2003: 21–2 as cited in Buzan & Little, 2010: 201) observe this trend and claim that non-Western societies of the world have started to struggle for investigating and interpreting history from a non-Western perspective that provides more agency to their states and also more importance in the flow of history. Bull (1984) also points out that -sarcastically- it is absurd to think non-Western states, in which civilizations traced back thousands of years back, got the legitimacy of

being states only after being forcefully integrated into the modern world system of the West. This perspective of the English School provides inspiration for non-Western scholars, especially in Asia, that they take the English School as a model for the search for world or non-Western history (Chen, 2011a; Qin, 2010;) and Chen even titled his study *Is Japanese IR the Next English School?* (2001a, 43), demonstrating the importance given to the methods of the English School in Japan. As Ren (2020) argues that with the same token, Chinese scholars realized that it is well possible to engage in theory-making and history without being besieged by the methods and perspectives of American social sciences.

Thus, scholars seem to be complaining about the lack of locality in the mainstream IR that stems from the subjectivity given to the non-Western world, or to call it a lack of agency that cannot affect the ongoing processes. It is argued that the Eurocentric IR cannot meet the demands of non-Europeans because of this lacking of the locality. As mentioned above, the West has shaped the IR according to its needs and presented it as universal facts to the rest of the audience, which cannot fully comply with the local conditions of the non-Western areas. Behera states this as "Europe, where 'Western local patterns being turned into [general] IRT concepts is common practice'…this option is not available to the Third World including India" (2010: 97). She argues that the West had the option to transform its locality (local conditions and practices) into universal values, while the non-West -since it does not have agency to influence the world politics- did not have such a chance to utilize its local values in IR. The argument continues, if the so-called universal values of IR are actually Western local values, then they cannot perfectly fit into the local values of the others. As a result, the Others' local values should also be presented in IR to have a true IR that includes the all rather than the West itself (Acharya & Buzan, 2010).

On the other side of the discussion, there are scholars arguing for the impossibility as well as the unnecessity of such an attempt to produce a non-Western IR approach. This attack is initiated mainly by scholars who embrace positivist methodology in their studies, though there are critical theorists as well. As discussed before, positivism does not accept the subjective interpretation of facts or the locality of knowledge, but the universality and neutrality. As a result of such an acknowledgment regarding knowledge production, it is not 'logical' to strive for a non-Western approach since a Western approach also does not

exist. Whatever is presented in the IRTs is derived from the objective observation of reality staying out there, which is the same for a Western and a non-Western society. Thus, it is “unscientific” or “pseudo-science” to argue for Eurocentrism or non-Western IR (Alruwaih, 2015: 46). If it will be unscientific knowledge to produce anything called non-Western IR, then, it does not require the attention of IR discipline. Even if it is produced, it will not be scientific, so it will not have a place in IR.

Hobson presents the example of Keohane, a leading liberal institutionalist. Accordingly, Hobson tells that he listened to one of the presentations of Keohane that took place in 2008 in which Keohane “celebrated the virtues of positivism and dismissed critical theory outright” (2012: 17) while arguing for the “virtuous act” of the West to intervene into a non-Western part of the world “in order to retrack the non-Western world onto a more progressive Western path of liberal capitalism and democracy” (2012: 17-18). Considering this example, it can be said that for Keohane, it is not logical to wait for a non-Western IR since they got out of the progress track, which could only be reversed back by the glorious hands of the West. Adding more, Hobson also claims that Adam Smith and Immanuel Kant, who were presented as cultural pluralists defending the right of all, were providing these rights “given that they must relinquish their cultural self-determination and become European” (Hobson, 2012: 62). This kind of understanding would also end up in stating that locality of non-Western people cannot have a place in IR and IRTs since they can only be welcomed by the modern world after they give up their local culture. As a last example from Mearsheimer, one of the leading figures of offensive realism, he advocates almost the impossibility of a non-Western IR in one of the senior scholar seminars of AllAzimuth/CFPPR (Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research) by stating that “what I am telling you, folks, is that the future for IR theory across the planet in the western world and in the non-western world is bleak because one there's not a lot new to say” (CFPPR, 2022, 36:24). Therefore, it might be argued that the positivist and universalist assumptions do not provide much room to develop non-Western IR since there is not a need for that.

Overall, considering both sides of the discussion, it seems that scholars of non-Western IR are trying to increase the importance of the non-Western lands as an agency of IR by highlighting its influence over world politics throughout the history and necessity of including local values to the IR to make an all-comprehensive IR. On the other hand,

mainly from positivist scholars, it does not seem possible to establish a non-Western IR and even if it is produced, it would be a meaningless effort since locality means unscientific pseudo-science that no one is eager to see in IR. Thus, it would be concluded that the literature on the possibility of non-Western approaches to IR revolves around the locality versus universality debate. Before reaching a decision, the current phase of globalization and its effects on the non-Western world should be analyzed in order to observe whether the locality is something that is much sought after or not.

1.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude the chapter, it could be stated that the IR discipline is Eurocentric and Gramscian hegemony (consent-coercion) has a significant role in the construction and spread of such an IR discipline. Because of this reason, attempts of non-Western scholars for a non-Western IR based on locality and local agency seem to be unintentionally reproducing the same Eurocentric patterns. The first part of the chapter was dedicated to the revealing of Eurocentric premises in IR. These are the Western exceptionalism of isolating itself from others' contributions, the superiority of the white race, promoting Western values/norms/ideas in the guise of universalism, framing world history through Eurocentric lenses that prioritize the West, glory of Western civilization, barbaric and backward nature of the Orient and linear stages of development in which the West carries the position of being first. These concepts are presented to understand on what basis, scholars argue for Eurocentrism in IR. Together with these concepts, criticism of non-Western scholars also provided that demonstrates the existence of an unsatisfied group of scholars with the current Eurocentric IR that does not meet the needs of the non-Western world.

After deciding IR as Eurocentric, reasons or paths to such a construct are discussed in order to understand methods of overcoming Eurocentrism in IR and also to analyze non-Western attempts whether they were able to avoid these reasons leading to Eurocentrism. This part revealed that the most prominent reason for such a construct relies upon Gramscian hegemony that the West has taken the consent of the rest of the world for using Western patterns of thinking after they acquired power (coercion) to conquer the world. This led the non-Western world either to consent or be punished until they consent. Thus,

it resulted in an unintentional reproduction of Western hegemony and Eurocentric premises.

Comprehending the reasons for Eurocentrism in IR, the discussion on the possibility of a non-Western IR has been observed in order to compare the general method of developing a non-Western IR and the method of the West in constructing a Eurocentric IR (especially Gramscian hegemony). It is found that the IR scholarship generally follows three paths for a non-Western IR; presenting the Eastern origins of the West, focusing on local resources and demanding and trying to provide world history rather than Eurocentric history. Considering these three methods, it is understood that the attempts of non-Western scholars are generally revolving around local and traditional values, norms and ideas without engaging in the aspect of material power. As it was the result of the prior discussion regarding why IR is Eurocentric, Gramscian hegemony and its material power (coercion) have been a significant factor in the construction of a Eurocentric IR. Comparing this conclusion with the methods of non-Western scholars, it could be said that the latter seems to be omitting material power in their search for a non-Western IR. Therefore, since coercion cannot be separated from consent in the process of establishing hegemony and maintaining it; it would be almost impossible for non-Western scholars to produce an alternative non-Western IR based on locality without the support of material power.

CHAPTER 2: CHINESE SCHOOL OF IR

The first chapter focused on Eurocentrism in IR and challenges by non-Western scholars in an attempt to overcome the Eurocentrism of IR by developing non-Western IR theories. This chapter introduces Chinese attempts in the search for non-Western IR in order to comprehend and analyze a specific case while considering non-Western approaches. The chapter aims to provide an in-detail understanding of the concerned school.

"The question 'why there is no IR theory in China' [is] obsolete" (Ren, 2020: 386) because "this process is [still] continuing" (Ren, 2020: 408) and the "emergence of a 'Chinese School' is inevitable" (Ren, 2016: 35). Having such kind of an aspiration, Pang asks the question "why can't we construct our own IR theory by relying on so rich [Chinese] historical accumulations?" (2003 as cited in Ren, 2020: 392) in order to inspire others to search for such a theory. Chinese scholars, being taught Western IR theories for long decades, have started to question the mainstream IR discipline and argued for the necessity of establishing their own set of ideas and theories, which would help Chinese people, China and all the world in overcoming the theoretical obstacles of Eurocentric IR in explaining/analyzing the non-Western world and its dynamics (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Wang & Buzan, 2014; Hu, 2016; Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014; Ling, 2016; Noesselt, 2012; Qin, 2010; Shih, 2018; Ren, 2016; Ren, 2020; Wang & Han, 2016; Zhang & Chang, 2016).

In order to better comprehend the developments of Chinese IR, the short history of IR discipline in China and the beginning of the search for an independent Chinese IR should be considered. Although systemic thinking of international relations has existed since ancient times, "international studies as an academic subject appeared in the teaching curricula and syllabi in Chinese universities in the Republican period (1912–1949)" (Zhang & Chang, 2016: 7). When Mao regime had taken the control of the government, IR discipline almost totally ceased of being taught in the universities (Ren, 2016). This situation continued until 1979, the era of "opening China to the world" (Qin, 2010: 44). This reform has changed the face of IR discipline in China by allowing Western theories to flow into the Chinese IR courses (Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014). English books on IR and IRT have started to be translated into Chinese (Qin, 2010). An associate professor describes this situation as follows:

> If a Chinese scholar, a professor or associate professor or doctor, if he would like to become famous firstly he chooses a person who is famous in Western academia. And research and introduce him to the Chinese audience and translate his books…. invites this professor to China…. Then he becomes famous…. If he introduces a theory or a paradigm into Chinese academia he will become the representative of this school (as cited in Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014: 101).

This line of quotation might be helpful to understand the extent and intensity of translating and introducing Western IRTs into Chinese academia at those times. At first, realism was holding supremacy among Chinese scholars. Although other theories were also present in China, realism was even accepted as IRT itself (Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014; Qin, 2010).

Later realism left its place to the English School (Wang & Buzan, 2014). Ren explains the reason for this "as Chinese IR scholars became aware of the enormous influence of American IR, they began to tap into… English School of international relations" (2020: 390). It has provided an alternative for Chinese Scholars and again major books of English School were translated into Chinese (Ren, 2020). It made Chinese scholars learn significant lessons:

> (1) taking one's own path and not following the new fashion (2) networking with academic researchers with similar interest and developing scholarly theories step by step (3) stressing academic inheritance (4) publishing their writings in the form of research article, which is often more useful than that in the book form of meager quality (5) long-term persistence (Ren 2003; see also Wang and Buzan, 2016 as cited in Ren, 2016: 38).

Comprehending these teachings from the English School, Chinese scholars started to ask "if there could be an English school, why not a Chinese school?" (Ren, 2020: 391). They understand that it is possible to build a theory out of the U.S. as English School did in Europe (Ren, 2020).

Following, the first call appeared in 1986 by Wang Jianwei and others published the paper "Make Efforts to build Chinese IR theory" (as cited in Wang & Buzan, 2014: 6). One year later, a big seminar was arranged to construct "Chinese IR theory with Chinese characteristics" (Akgül, 2022, Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014: 107), which was the first and a general name and framework for the establishment of Chinese IR. This seminar is counted as the formal beginning of the search for IR with Chinese characteristics. In 1991, the name "Chinese School of IR" was introduced by Zhang Minqian with the same aim of producing China's IRT (Wang & Buzan, 2014: 7) and in an attempt to "seek autonomy from political influence and constraints and to dilute ideological content in their

endeavour" (Zhang & Chang, 2016: 9-10). It was argued as such because IRT with Chinese characteristics reminds the "well-known political slogan 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'" (Ren, 2020: 388). Following these initial steps, scholars have started to search for a distinct Chinese IR together with the existing mainstream IRTs in China. From 1978 to 2007, 5% of IR studies were concerned about the Chinese IR approach (Qin, 2008 as cited in Wang & Buzan, 2014: 8); while from 2008 to 2011, 14% of theoretical studies were about theoretical innovations (Yuan, 2012: 91 as cited in Wang & Buzan, 2014: 19).

This search for a Chinese approach to IR has led Chinese scholars to find alternative names for the school by themselves without waiting for others (non-members of the school) to name them (Ren, 2016; Wang & Han, 2016). Various names are proposed by scholars, such as "'IR theory with Chinese characteristics', 'Chinese localization (or Nativization) of IR theory', 'China's exploration of international political theory', 'Chinese view of international relations or international politics', and 'The Chinese School'" (Wang & Buzan, 2014: 11). Among these possible names, IRT with Chinese characteristics and the Chinese School seem to be the most prominent ones. Analyzing Chinese academic journals from 2000 to 2011, Noesselt (2012) concludes that these two names are the most used among Chinese scholars and one of them has not overwhelmed the other yet.

Regardless of the name, the aim is almost the same: "to construct Chinese IR theory" (Wang & Buzan, 2014: 11). Even if many scholars argue that the attempts for producing a Chinese School of IR are not related with any political agenda, they also justify their claims regarding the necessity of a Chinese School by pointing the rising power of China and its effects over the international politics (Liu & Wang, 2011 as cited in Wang & Han, 2016: 61). For instance, Zhao claims that "because China is increasingly an integral part of the world, we must discuss the implications of Chinese culture and thought for the whole world … the contributions China can possibly make to and the responsibilities China should bear for the world" (2005: 2-3 as cited in Ren, 2020: 404). For Qin, the aim of the Chinese school should be to explain "whether China will peacefully become integrated, what conditions will prompt China to become integrated in a peaceful way, and what being a responsible member of the international community implies for China" (2005: 166 as cited in Ren: 396). Noesselt argues that the term Chinese School "reflects

China's national interests and considers its options, as a rising power, for cooperation with the international community of states, as well as the danger of confrontation with these same states" (2012: 16). Therefore, it could be said that "'rise of China' might also entail a rise of 'Chinese IR theory'" (Wang, 2009: 103 as cited in Noesselt, 2012: 5) with the aim of analyzing the conditions and opportunities of China in the international politics, guiding its actions and justifying the peaceful rise of China (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Qin, 2005 as cited in Noesselt, 2012: 11; Zhang & Chang, 2016) together with the unsatisfaction of deficient mainstream IR analysis/explanations regarding the non-Western hemisphere, especially China (Qin, 2010; Ren, 2020).

Since "a 'Chinese school' is a cluster of IR theories with Chinese characteristics, rather than referring to a single school" (Pang, 2003 as cited in Ren, 2020: 391), four main attempts are considered as the fundamental parts of this school. The four theories are named *tianxia* (all-under-heaven), *guanxi*/relational theory, *gongsheng*/symbiotic theory and *Tsinghua* approach/moral realism (Ren, 2020). This chapter explains each of them in detail. For each theory (or approach); founder(s) of it, its meaning, origins and the historical context of it will be discussed. These will be followed by core assumptions of the theory, (if provided by the scholars) its probable application to the international politics of today and the claimed difference with the Western mainstream IR.

2.1 *TIANXIA* (ALL-UNDER-HEAVEN)

It would be appropriate to start with the concept of *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven). In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the approach this section starts from basic philosophical foundations of *tianxia*, its historical evolution, main assumptions stemming from the philosophical core, implications of these assumptions on IR discipline, which will be followed by the difference of *tianxia* with the mainstream/Western IR. This systematic will be followed in each four approaches.

Focusing on Chinese history, especially pre-Qin period (before 221 BCE), Zhao Tingyang (2005) - not an IR scholar - has reinterpreted Chinese concept of *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) in order to develop a non-Western IRT (as cited in Ren, 2020: 402). It is a concept of Confucian thinking related with the universe and has a long tradition of utilization in Chinese history (Qin, 2010; Zhao, 2021). It is firstly "originated in the Zhou

period [1050–221 BCE] and matured in the Qin [221–206 BCE] and Han [206 BCE – 220 AD] periods …[it has] lasted for over two thousand years" (Ren, 2020, 403). Sun Yatsen also expressed the same concept in his republican revolution of 1911 "'*tianxia wei gong*' ('Justice for All-under-Heaven')" (Ling, 2016: 25) and later on Chinese President Xi Jinping integrated this concept in his discussions with the phrase "*tianxia an* (peace under heaven)" (Ling, 2016: 25), demonstrating the continuity of the term *tianxia* in Chinese intellectual history (Ren, 2020). Having such a long history in Chinese tradition, *tianxia* has become an indispensable part of Chinese worldview and requires attention in formulating a Chinese School of IR (Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020).

In its original sense, *tianxia* combines nature, supernature (god) and morality without ignoring one another in a constant relation (Zhao, 2021; Qin, 2010; Qin, 2007 as cited in Akgül, 2022: 232). This relation is a vertical relation and it is between heaven, man and earth in which "the Emperor[1] ('Son of Heaven') mediating across all three" (Ling, 2016: 25). It requires harmony among all the three and the unity of them. "It aims at eventually heading for '*tianxia yijia*' ('one family under the sun') which is an all-inclusive (*wuwai*) order" (Ren, 2020: 403), which then corresponds the term 'all-under-heaven". Since all are connected and related with each other, "no one is excluded and there is no such category as 'foreign' [in the *tianxi*an order]" (Noesselt, 2012: 20). This connection ranges "from the individual to the family to the state to *tianxia*, and back again" (Ling, 2016: 26). This continuing process leads to the ultimate ideal of "*Datong* (great harmony)" (Zhao, 2021; Qin, 2010: 42). More strikingly, as Qin states "In a dualistic philosophy [of the West], great harmony is impossible…. In a holist worldview [perspective of *tianxia*], however, it is not only possible, but also inevitable, for the seemingly opposite elements always complement each other" (2010: 42). Thus, *tianxia* awaits the establishment of a harmonious world that include the all [not just states, but individuals] and the all-encompassing harmony.

This vertical relation is accompanied with a horizontal relation "from a moral–ethical center to the peripheries" (Ling, 2016: 25) or from inner to outer (Ren, 2020). This process starts from the one's inner-self and extends until to the world harmony. Once "the same principles" (Ren, 2020: 403) of inner circle are extended to the utmost outer circle,

[1] Which refers to the Chinese emperor since China establishes the center of this system (Qin, 2010).

the process will be completed and there will be no turning back (Ling, 2016; Ren, 2020; Qin, 2010). In other words, horizontal expansion takes a one-way route (Ling: 2016) in contrast to the vertical relation, which has a circular continuum. As Confucius thinking explains:

> The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue [*ming ming de*] throughout the [universe], first ordered well their own states [*zhi guo*]. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families [*qi jia*]. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons [*xiu shen*]. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts [*zheng xin*]. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts [*cheng yi*]. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge [*zhi zhi*]. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things [*ge wu*]. [And the process repeats in reverse from the individual's investigation of things] to tranquility and happiness in the [universe] (*tianxia ping*) (Daxue as cited in Ling, 2016: 26).

The journey begins with learning knowledge and being sincere in the thoughts which then extends to the families, states and to the universe. More interestingly – and kind of problematically-, this extension has to start with one's inner self leading all the way to the everyone. The problem appears as that since every human being will start spreading his/her own principles from his/her own inner-self to the others, whose principles will be taken as prior or how to solve the conflicting inner principles during the process of expansion. The solution presented by *tianxi*an thinking seems to be the *hierarchy*, which will decide who to expand its principles.

Tianxia establishes a hierarchical and patriarchal system. Its "patriarchy combines both hierarchy and self-centeredness" (Ling, 2016: 29). From the classical Confucius sense, *tianxia* is established based on five main relationships that are "father-son, emperor-minister, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife and friend-friend" (Qin, 2010: 42). Each of the relationship has a hierarchy that grants priority to the former on the latter. This "Confucian family, [is composed of] unequal but benign [relations]" and "order is the most important principle in society" (Qin, 2010: 42). Since it starts from the family, father-son relationship has a significant place because it is also the basis for the state that prioritize the parental love towards its people, which in return awaits the obedience of children towards their parents (Zhao, 2021). While hierarchy takes place inside the state and society, it also takes place in the international arena.

Another important aspect of extending principles from inner to outer is that this expansion takes place voluntarily (Zhao, 2021). It aims "harmony through a universal agreement in the 'hearts' of all people'" (2005, cited in Eun, 2020: 3 as cited in Akgül, 2022: 232). It

is a core component of *tianxia* to have the "general will of the people" without forcing anyone to accept the principles of the core that extends its inner principles to the peripheries and allowing for diversity in a tolerant way (Zhao, 2006: 30 as cited in Ling, 2016: 25). Forceful integration to the system cannot be accepted according to Confucius thought and everyone should be let free to decide whether to join or not (Ling, 2016; Zhao, 2021). Although the system is based on unequal and hierarchical relations; since it provides a stable order, others will voluntarily be part of it because "*tianxia* is a theory of converting enemy to friend … attract others rather than to conquer them" (Zhao, 2005: 33 as cited in Ren, 2020: 404). In other words, it "may not guarantee that everyone is happy, but can hopefully guarantee peace and security" (Ren, 2020: 404). The logic follows that one will prone to choose peace and security – or *tianxia* - over happiness even if s(he) is not happy (Zhao, 2021). Having such kind of an approach, "the tianxia system can guarantee maximum possible power and interest for all states, so that every state would like to join and stay" where it "can form a network of mutual benefit, in which the interests of the imperial centre and all other states enhance and supplement each other, promoting world prosperity and peace" (Zhao 2005, 2009d, 2010 as cited in Wang & Han, 2016: 62). However, one issue seems to be left in vague. *Tianxia* system argues for the necessity of diversity, tolerance and voluntary acceptance together with the importance on extending one's inner principle to the outer in a hierarchical way and until these principles are not accepted by others, others cannot be part of the system. The question regarding how it will be possible to provide room for diversity in the system while the system does not allow others to join it without accepting the principles of the system is left unanswered.

Returning back to the *tianxia* system; beginning from inner self to family and state, *tianxia* also requires an international spread in order to reach great harmony. Since this extension of principles follows a hierarchical path, the same should be valid for the international arena as well. Because Chinese dynasties perceived themselves as the center of Confucian worldview, they self-proclaimed Chinese empire as *Zhongguo* (Middle Kingdom) (Ling, 2016; Zhao, 2021) and placed it to the top in the hierarchical arrangement of international politics. "The framework of '*tianxia*' was the 'tributary system'" (Wang & Han, 2016: 61) and it is accepted by certain scholars as "the most complete system in the development of international relations from the Han [~206 BCE]

to the late Qing Dynasty [1911] of China" (Wang & Buzan, 2014: 36). This system was established based on three operating systems:

> (i) China served as the centre, neighbouring states should acknowledge and respect China's legitimacy and authority, at least in a symbolic way; (ii) to demonstrate subservience, neighbouring states should pay tribute regularly to the Chinese emperor, and in return, neighbouring states would receive gifts exceeding their tributes; (iii) the emissaries of neighbouring states should perform ritual obeisance when the Chinese emperor delegates an imperial letter of patent, or a seal of rank, as the signs of local power (Zhang 2015 as cited in Wang & Han, 2016: 61).

Tributary relations with the neighbors were based on specific conditions of the concerned neighbor and this resulted in a flexible system of relations. It "followed no single formula" and avoided having "a rigid model was the only formula that was applicable in all cases" (Shih, 2018: 194). This variety stemmed from the hierarchical international order because each neighbor had a place "depending on their geographical proximity to the Chinese empire and the degree to which they had assimilated and internalized 'Chinese' norms and values" (Fairbank 1968 as cited in Noesselt, 2012: 18). It is also important to keep in mind that this assimilation and internalization should not take place through force, but voluntary acceptance as *tianxi*an system does not allow to use force in order to convert enemy to friend.

As Qin argues, although the tributary system "is a system of inequality … There are some other important ideas and practices in this system as well as in the philosophy that may be highly positive" (2010: 41-42). For instance, in the event of an invasion to the neighbors, the middle kingdom is to help them to the utmost extent possible (Wang & Han, 2016) because "this power center is not democratically elected but is legitimated through its compliance with moral and ethical values" (Noesselt, 2012: 20). The four core social bounds have to be observed constantly. These are "propriety, righteousness, honesty and a sense of shame" as described by Confucius (Qin, 2010: 42). If the emperor – or Son of Heaven – does not follow moral order, he will lose his legitimacy of being the emperor while "the rulers of neighbouring states governed indirectly as they channel rights from the heaven through tian zi [the Son of Heaven – the Emperor]" (Chang 2011 as cited in Wang & Han, 2016: 61). Accordingly, "military capability matters…but it does not and cannot replace proper governance, defined as parental love and discipline" because it should follow the Confucius thought that "love your people as a child", not as an interest-seeker (Ling, 2016: 26). Therefore, there should be morality, responsibility

and parental love from the center over the periphery and the system should be established based on voluntary acceptance.

Following the main philosophy and its role in international relations, Chinese scholars also highlight the difference of *tianxia* with the mainstream Western IR theories. First of all, because *tianxia* does not see anything as foreign (Wang & Han, 2016; Zhao, 2021), there is "never something that …[is] opposite, intolerant and needed conquering" (Qin, 2010: 42) as in the case of dualistic Western IR. The dualistic view necessitates the conflict while harmonious view makes it necessary to coexist together (Qin, 2010; Ren, 2020). In *tianxia*, "it [harmony] is not only possible, but also inevitable, for the seemingly opposite elements always complement each other" (Qin, 2010: 43). Because of the dualistic philosophy, Westphalian nation-state is considered to be the cause of international conflicts (Zhao, 2021). Scholars attribute negative characteristics to the Westphalian order: "the international system is anarchic; nation-states compete against each other in zero-sum games; and wars and conflicts result from the absence of an ethical code of conduct" (Qin 2005; Zhao 2005 as cited in Noesselt, 2012: 19). "Western thinkers often ask, 'who are you', causing a division between 'us' and 'other', Chinese thinkers ask, 'who are we', seeing the whole world as one family" (Wang, 2009 as cited in Akgül, 2022: 232). Thus, *tianxia* does not grant importance to the state, but the world and "worldbuilding is more important than nation-building" (Zhao, 2009 as cited in Akgül, 2022: 232). This leads to an optimistic, hierarchic and stable world that provides peace and security for all (Ren, 2020; Zhao, 2021).

Second, *tianxia* argues for world society and world institutions that surpass states because "the central unit of Chinese IR is the 'world'. [and] The 'world' needs a commonly agreed-upon 'world institution' as its control center" (Noesselt, 2012: 20; Zhao, 2021: 36). It "shows parallels to world system theory and theories of world society, yet it officially draws on original 'Chinese' philosophy to develop an autochthonous concept" (Noesselt, 2012: 20). Zhao (2021) argues that UN cannot be considered as an equivalent of this *tianxi*an world institution because of its nation-state-based structure that goes against the ultimate destination of great harmony established by the agreement of all people. As explained before, *tianxia* is open to everyone rather than individual states. From the same point of view, Chinese scholars also consider *tianxia* as a different understanding than English School's world society since states are still matter for the

latter (Wang & Buzan, 2016). Zhao argues that the existence of borders in the notion of international society leads to a paradox that "all regions outside of one's own borders are tacitly recognized as a potential commons to be plundered" (2021: 236), while *tianxia* stands for a world where all is considered as part of one family that cooperates with each other to ensure mutual benefit and security.

In contrast to Western exclusiveness, Chinese inclusiveness perceive *tianxia* (the whole world in this case) "as an indivisible public domain" that "considers the world's problems in context of the whole world", and thus, it makes it possible to go beyond of selfish national interests and focus on the values and responsibilities of the world (Zhao, 2005 as cited in Wang & Han, 2016: 62). This system will be based not on modern democracy that has led ethnic conflicts throughout the world, but on hierarchy with moral and ethical values (Zhao, 2021). This hierarchy will not take place only among states but among people of the world. "Its institutional arrangements no longer allow hostile behavior" (Ren, 2020: 404). There is one problem to be considered in the discussion of world society against nation states. It seems that Chinese scholars refers realism as the whole IR discipline because when they compare their theories with the mainstream IR or Western IR, they tend to show the difference of Chinese theories with realism rather than focusing on all the theories of mainstream IR. In this case, when Chinese scholars argue for the world society as a different concept than IR theories, they highlight that IR theories place nation-states at the center, which is the case for realism while the centrality of states changes in other IR theories. Nevertheless, *tianxia* concept is presented as a different approach to IR compared to Western theories because of its world-based understanding in contrast to nation state based understanding of IR.

In sum, *tianxia* argues for the world society, world institutions, all-inclusiveness, voluntary acceptance of the system, spreading from inner-self to the outer circles, tolerance, harmony and seeing the all world as one family that guarantees the world peace and safety under the conditions of hierarchical establishments in kind of father-son relations. In contrast to mainstream IR that depicts a world of Westphalian nation-states competing with each other, encircled by boundaries of nation-states which perceive each other as potential enemies, dualistic, intolerant and harsh anarchical atmosphere. *Tianxi*an hierarchy is exemplified by the tributary system that places China at the top of international politics and all others to follow China and show respect to it in return for

Chinese morally-bounded emperors and parental love/protection towards its subjects (both inside and outside). It is argued that the same essence of this tributary system might also be established in the future under the flag of *tianxia* that is tolerant to diversities and different ideas/norms/values/civilizations. Because of these characteristics, *tianxia* is presented as one of the fundamental parts of the Chinese School of IR and requires attention in the discussion of non-Western IR, especially considering the rise of China in international politics.

2.2 *GUANXI* (RELATIONAL THEORY)

The second approach in the Chinese School of IR would be counted as *guanxi* or relational theory. This theory was introduced by Qin Yaqing into the IR literature (Ren, 2020) with the aim of providing alternative readings to the discipline and to the Chinese worldview (Qin, 2016). *Guanxi* "is one of the words that make up the term 'International Relations' in Chinese – *guoji guanxi*" (Kavalski, 2018: 105) and it is described as "the lifeblood of all things Chinese – business, politics and society" (Kavalski, 2018: 107). Jia also argues that *guanxi* has a very central place in the Chinese thinking that "reflects the Chinese way to know about reality (ontology), the Chinese way to interpret reality (phenomenology) and the Chinese values about humanity (axiology)" (Kavalski, 2018: 107). These statements demonstrate the significance of the word and its implications to the Chinese approach to IR. It is translated as relationality to English language, however, it is also argued that this translation cannot cover the exact meaning of *guanxi* (Kavalski, 2018).

The term *guanxi* is composed of two parts: *guan* (barriers), "designated a 'wooden crossbar for doors,' 'strategic pass,' 'toll gate' or the activity of 'closing' or 'connecting'" and *xi* (connections) "used to refer to 'tie' or to 'care for'" (Eike, 2007: 5 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 106). Thus, the literal meaning of *guanxi* becomes "connection across barriers' or 'pass the gate and get connected'" (Kavalski, 2018: 106). It argues that within the doors (or borders), you become one of "us", but if you are out your existence is almost totally ignored (Kavalski, 2018). Even if the meaning leads such a conclusion, a key concept for *guanxi* is inclusiveness and openness, that does not aim to exclude anyone (Qin, 2016). The origin of this understanding is traced back to the Confucius as in the

case of *tianxia* (Qin, 2016), which is in accord with the method of basing research on traditional indigenous resources.

Considering the main philosophy of *guanxi*, it argues for the prominence of relations and relationality rather than rationality in daily life and in international politics. Relationality "means that a social actor bases her action on relations" (Qin, 2016: 37). It aims for the establishment of continuous relations because one can only exist if s(he) was to be in relation with someone (Kavalski, 2018). If there is no two, then one cannot exist because s(he) will have no one to engage in relation that will shape/construct his/her own identity and will shape/construct the other's identity as well (Qin, 2016). Thus, *guanxi* does not allow to live in an isolated situation. It requires one to have different roles/identities based on his/her relations because his/her existence will appear and established by the construction and re-construction through these relations. The person is to act according to the role given by the specific relation (Kavalski, 2017 - 2018; Qin, 2016). "Participants in a guanxi perceive each other to be 'role occupants rather than individuals'" (Hwang, 1987 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 108). Since the relation itself grants the roles, the person would behave completely different in various relations. As Nisbett summarizes "I am the totality of roles I live in relation to specific others" (2003: 5 as cited in Qin, 2016: 36). This leads to the conclusion that a person cannot have a self-identity before the relation takes place. As a result, the relation itself became an important and key actor that cannot be omitted. "[It] is very much like an intangible hand that orients an actor toward a certain action" (Qin, 2016: 38).

Based on this logic, it is also understood that a person's actions cannot be predicted because s(he) does not have a personality before engaging in relation and will adopt the personality that is required by the relation itself. This part of relationality reaches to the point that actors use the relational circles for their own benefit (Kavalski, 2017; Pan, 2016). As Pye interprets "the Chinese tend to see the manipulation of human relationships as the natural and normal approach for accomplishing most things in life" (Pye, 1968: 173–74 cited in Gold et al. 2002: 11 as cited in Qin, 2016: 38). As the founder of *guanxi* theory, Qin (2016) also acknowledges this argument and argues for the necessity of one to utilize relational circles for his/her own purposes. "Actors act to achieve self-interest, utilizing relational circles to facilitate the achievements of instrumental objectives" (Qin, 2016: 38). This side of *guanxi* might be the reason why it is associated with corruption,

bribery and graft (Kavalski, 2016) since a person will try to utilize his/her relations to achieve his/her self-interests. As a result, relations both shapes/constructs/enclaves the actors while actors also make use of the relations in *guanxi*.

However, two sides of the relationality seem to contradict with each other. On the one hand, *guanxi* argues that one's identity cannot exist out of relations and s(he) is the totality of his/her relations and on the other hand, it also argues that one should make use of his/her relations to achieve his/her aims. Then, the problem occurs: if a person has intrinsic aims, then, this person should already have an identity before the relations. If s(he) has an identity before relations, then, it cannot be argued that the existence of one depends on the relations with others because his/her identity or aims were already constructed before the relations. Otherwise, s(he) cannot have an aim to utilize the relations for his/her own interests because the interests of him/her will appear throughout the relation and will specifically take place inside the same concerned relation. If the relation itself provides the roles for the two, then, there cannot be any hidden interest to achieve through this relation because the roles are already granted by the specific relation itself. This contradiction in the argument of *guanxi*/relationality needs a clarification by the supporters of it.

Third significant assumption of *guanxi* is the process. It is a dynamic system that never ends (Qin, 2016). Since the existence of one depends on the relations of his/her with others, one has to always engage in relations with others (Kavalski, 2018). Following, since one shapes and is shaped by the relations, his/her identity is always re-constructed (Qin, 2016). Then, because the relations cannot end and the identity formation always takes place, *guanxi* cannot reach an end and requires the continuity of the process and dynamism of the identities/relations/system (Qin, 2016). As Wei-Ming states "the self so conceived is not a static structure but a dynamic process. It is a centre of relationship…It needs to reach out, to be in touch with other selves, and to communicate through an ever-expanding network of human relatedness" (1985: 133 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 108). This dynamism stems from the importance of social relations and responsibilities since relations are not just instruments but also end in themselves (Qin, 2016). Thus, *guanxi* is based upon three basic principles: (1) relations are key in the system and one cannot exist without engaging in relation, (2) one should also manipulate relations for his/her own interests and (3) relations should have a dynamic process.

These basic principles are accompanied with a critical component that is the uncertainty. Although the participants of a relation are aware of the fact that their roles are granted by the relation itself, they cannot be wholly aware of the future and information about the other side (Qin, 2016). Even if they cannot comprehend the role/identity/interests of the other in a complete way, the other will continue to exist in the future – and the relation as well. Therefore, it is important to maintain the relation in a good manner and provide a comfortable platform to reach harmony. Womack elaborates on the issue:

> [*guanxi*] assumes that while the future is unknown, the partners in the future are the same as in the past and present. Therefore, the significance of any specific interaction lies in how it shapes a particular relationship … The bottom line in a relationship logic is that both sides feel that they are better off if the relationship continues—this is the minimum meaning of 'mutual benefit'. A normal relationship does not require symmetry of partners or equality of exchanges, but it does require reciprocity [i.e. respect for the other] (2008: 295-297 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 111).

Uncertainty of the future requires partners to have a relation that will make both of them better off in the future. This stems from the Chinese philosophy of "seek[ing] predictability and the comforts of dependency [which] makes them [Chinese] very anxious to seek any acceptable basis for orderly human relations" (Pye, 1968: 174 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 109). This would only be achieved by the *guanxi*an purpose of harmony.

In order to make the future better off for the both, each of them should act according to responsibility and respect, which stems from the emphasis of *guanxi* on harmony. Harmony requires showing respect to others and have a benevolent relationship rather than conflict and coercion (Qin, 2016). The main aim in this harmony (or the respect for others) is to cultivate reputation, which is the currency of any relation. "It is in this setting that *xinyong* (trustworthiness) – the reputation for meeting one obligations to others – gains its significance as 'the most valuable asset' in the transactional web of *guanxi*" (Donald, 1995: 205-206 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 110). This applies that reputation overpasses the power (in realistic perspective) in relations and the main interest of each increases the reputation rather than the power. Thus, the relation has to be conducted in a voluntary atmosphere that does not allow one to use coercion for establishing relation – and manipulating this relation because if one to appeal coercion, then s(he) already lost 'the most valuable asset' of reputation. Based on this, harmony becomes "the ultimate and ideal order of society" (Qin, 2016: 39).

Qin (2016) argues that relational theory follows two main concepts in its understanding of epistemology. These are the meta-narrative and *zhongyong* dialectics. Qin explains that "the former is the simplest form representing all relationships and the latter is the way to understand and interpret the nature of this meta-relationship" (2016: 39). *Yin* (moon representing darkness) and *yang* (sun representing light) is the most significant relationship and it constitutes the meta-relationship. "It is the prototype … [and] any other relationship can be seen as being derived from this meta-relationship" (Qin, 2016: 39). It provides an understanding of polarity and pairs, such as male-female, East-West and strength-weakness, and the progress could only take place by the continuous interaction of the two poles. Therefore, they are called co-thesis, in contrast to the structure of thesis-antithesis. This implies that it requires harmonious polarity/difference rather than the conflictual polarity/difference. There is an interesting difference between the *tianxia* and *guanxi* that although the both of the theories are derived from the Confucius teachings, former is based on the combination of nature, supernature (god) and morality against the binary view of world while the latter argues for the polarity of the world based on cooperating binaries. As mentioned, *guanxi* requires the co-existence of *yin* and *yang* in a state that it is impossible to completely separate one from the other.

The concept of *yin-yang* as meta-narrative requires the interpretation of *zhongyong* dialects in order to understand this relation and its influences over the whole world. Qin (2016) states that inclusivity, complementarity and harmony is the main principles of the *zhongyong* dialects. Inclusivity refers that there is *yang* in the *yin* and there is *yin* in the *yang* in which they cannot completely separate from each other. "*Yin* is always 'becoming *yang'* and *yang* is always 'becoming *yin*,' as the natural world day is always becoming night" (Hall & Ames 1987: 17 as cited in Qin, 2016: 40). In other words, polarity always include each other, i.e. the West includes the East and vice-versa. This results in the conclusion that there are no fixed identities that continues eternally but each polar is in the process of becoming the other. Following, complementation stands for the cooperation between the two rather than elimination (Qin, 2016). The constant transformation from *yin* to *yang* and *yang* to *yin* requires complementation of each other rather than conflict and isolation. It results in a new form of life containing attributes from each pole (Qin, 2016). Sometimes the process may also encounter with conflicts, but the totality of the process takes place in the form of harmony. Harmony is similar to

producing music that "appropriate combination of different musical notes so that a beautiful melody is made" (Qin, 2016: 41). As like this, difference is the basis of a good and beautiful society. "Harmony is then the state of nature and the universal principle of order." (Qin, 2016: 41). Thus, meta-narrative of *yin-yang* is interpreted via *zhongyong* through the principles of inclusivity, complementation and harmony.

Based on the mentioned main philosophy of *guanxi*, its implications for IR should also be considered. In *guanxi*an IR, "primary unit of analysis should be relations rather than actors" (Qin, 2016: 36). This assumption is constructed on the premise that each actor will adopt the role given by the relation itself. Since there is no state/society/IOs etc. to have a stable identity out of relations, one cannot analyze the IR and actions of the actors without focusing on the specific relation itself. Thus, relations should be the primary unit of analysis. Otherwise, one cannot be able to understand the behaviors of actors, who gain rationality based on the specific relation rather than having a rationality in isolation. Because of this, "logic of relationality has priority over both the logic of instrumental rationality (consequences) and the logic of normative rationality (appropriateness)" (Qin, 2016: 38). Based on this assumption, one could have friends, enemies and rivals stemming from the degrees of intimacy in the concerned relation. These categories will also have subcategories "such as allies, close friends, and average friends" (Qin, 2016: 38). Qin exemplifies this argument by pointing the British history. "Keene's study (2007) of the British treaty making against the slave trade in the early nineteenth century also points to the fact that the British followed different norms when signing treaties with actors Britain had different relationships with" (2007 as cited in Qin, 2016: 38). It means that British was to act differently based on the intimacy of the relationship it was engaging in. This provides supporting evidence for *guanxi* that it has the potential for a universal application in international relations. Additionally, since manipulation of relations is a key principle in *guanxi*, actors in IR should also manipulate their relations to reach their self-interests either in short-term or long-term (Kavalski, 2018). This method was also applied by China, when China decided to establish close ties with the U.S. in 1970s against the ideological partner of the U.S.S.R. in order to increase its national security rather than completely following one ideology (Qin, 2016). Thus, the relation is the primary unit of analysis in IR for *guanxi* and this relation should provide a platform for actors to follow their self-interests in short or long-term.

Following, the governing takes the form of relational governance. It is "is both an alternative and a complementary governing model to rule-based governance" (Qin, 2016: 42). As in the case of conflict between the polarities, relational governance also does not reject the rules, but argues for the significance of relations while governing. It aims to manage relations of the societies in a way that the end result will be the order and harmony in which the individuals act in accordance with cooperation and mutual trust rather than conflict and enmity. "Trust is the key word … only cooperation based upon trust is sustainable" in the system of relational governance (Qin, 2016: 43). Since the focus is on relations and trust, relational governance does not try to manage the actors themselves, but the relations. For Qin (2016), relational governance has been long present in the history of Asia and still continues to exist, as in the case of ASEAN. Based on this, international system also becomes the relational international system. The main assumption is that relations themselves define the nature of the international system, such as hierarchy and anarchy (Babones, 2017). In the same manner, it argues for the significance of relations rather than actors (Babones, 2017). In the relational international system, since the process of *guanxi* is dynamic, the international systems and their characteristics will also be dynamic. Today's anarchy would become the tomorrow's hierarchy, which are just two examples of international systems among numerous ones (Qin, 2016). As a result, *guanxi* stands for the relational governance and relational international system regarding the nature of IR.

Another important aspect of *guanxi*an IR is the power, which implies that "relations are power" (Qin, 2016: 41). Relational power "is the ability to change the attitude, motivation, or behavior of others and thus make them conform to one's will during the process of social interaction" (Hwang 1987: 947 as cited in Qin, 2016: 42). As mentioned, *guanxi* requires one to manipulate relations for his/her own self-interests, therefore, the relational power in IR highlights the significance of being able to change behaviors of others in order to acquire what one wants. This power is not possessed by any specific actor but coming from the relation itself. Larger the relational circles means greater the power of the actor. "An actor is more powerful because she has larger relational circles, more intimate and important others in these circles, and more social prestige because of these circles" (Qin, 2016: 42). The power of a nation or an international actor is decided by their relational circles. If they are able to influence others (manipulate the relations),

then, it means that these actors have relational power in their hand. Qin provides the example of China helping Africa in terms of material supplies in 1960s arguing that "clearly, China expected no symmetrical material returns, but wanted to gain the reputation as a friend in need through its solidarity with third world countries" (2016: 42). This opened the path of joining UN in 1970s by the approve votes of African countries, which would be classified as a long-term profit-oriented relation manipulation (Qin, 2016). Overall, *guanxi* places relations and its variants (governance, international system and power) to the center in terms of international politics and its working standards.

Comparing with the mainstream IR, *guanxi* offers a relation-based approach to IR rather than rationality-based one. For Kavalski, "the defining feature of Western/Eurocentric IR is its lack of relationality" (2018: 106), which would be to complemented by *guanxi*an approach. Qin (2010) argues that if the rationality was the main focus of the Enlightenment period, relationality is the counterpart of it in Chinese society, which does not vanish rationality but enclaves it with relationality (as cited in Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014: 107). Stemming from the same understanding, *guanxi* does not highlights the individual or societal rationality but the relationality of all. "The Chinese worldview is 'neither *geren benwei* (individual-based) nor *shehui benwei* (society-based), but *guanxi benwei* (relation-based)'" (Shiming cited in Gold et al., 2002: 10 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 108). As a result, *guanxi*an worldview does not focus explicitly on individuals or societies, but the relations.

While the West argues for the autonomous existence of individuals, their lack of dependence for others and importance of individualism regardless of the others' existence, *guanxi* stands for the necessity of engaging in relations to exist. In other words, since the relation is at the center, no one can autonomously exist before any relation takes place (Qin, 2016). This logic leads that actors can have stable interests, norms, values and ideas before any relationship takes place in mainstream IR; while actors have to have a dynamic and constantly changing interests, norms, values and ideas in *guanxi* through the endless process of interaction and transformation (Kavalski, 2018; Qin, 2016; Xue, 2021). This difference also produces another difference that is called uncertainty of the future. The Western understanding of stable self-interests makes it more possible for actors to predict the future since the grant aim of actors stays stable (which is a result of rationality), while the future is considerably uncertain in *guanxi* because of the constant changing of

actors' self-interests and identities based on the each and every specific relation (Qin, 2016). The issue of minimal uncertainty allows Western approaches to focus on maximizing profits, while it forces actors to maintain mutually-benefitting relations rather than profit maximizing in order both to be better off in the future according to *guanxi*.

The differing behaviors as a result of uncertainty also produces the relations that are either conflictual or harmonious (Kavalski, 2018; Qin, 2016). Since it is possible for individuals to maximize (or try to maximize) profits in the mainstream IR because of the autonomous self-existence of individuals, the relation between the two takes the inevitable form of conflicting interests in most of the time (Xue, 2021). For *guanxi*, however, since the uncertainty requires actors to have a relation that is mutually-benefitting, actors cannot strive for conflict in order to increase the profit because once this happens, the relation will break and so the existence as well as the possibility of following self-interests (Xue, 2021). Therefore, even if the conflicts occur time to time, it cannot establish the basis of relations and actors have to learn live in cooperation and harmony.

This results in two-sided implication. As the first, while the Western theories allow for one to consult coercion, especially in the case of unresolvable conflicting interests; *guanxi* does not allow one to enforce relations (Qin, 2016). In other words, one cannot be forced to engage in relations. Actors themselves should voluntarily adjoin to the system, otherwise, they are not to exist. Second, since the relation cannot be forced upon individuals or coercion is not allowed, it changes the currency of the system to reputation and trust-worthiness rather than having material power to enforce wills upon others (Qin, 2016). In order one to follow his/her self-interest, s(he) should increase its reputation in relations by following his responsibilities that are given by the specific relation itself and by increasing his/her trust-worthiness in contrast to mainstream IR's focus on increasing material power.

Considering the power, *guanxi* argues for relational power rather than hard or soft power of the mainstream IR. Although both power definitions merges on the point that one's ability to make others what the one desires, their difference rests on the possessor of the power (Qin, 2016). For *guanxi*, the power is derived from the specific relation itself and one's ability to manipulate this relation while the power concept of mainstream IR is attached to the actors themselves rather than the relations (Qin, 2016). Together with this,

relational power highlights the significance of nonmaterial elements to access power, such as relational circles and intimacy in relations, instead of solely focusing on material capabilities as in the case of realism and neorealism (Qin, 2016; Xue, 2021).

Lastly, the epistemology of *guanxi* (meta-narrative concept or *yin-yang* approach and *zhongyong* dialects) differs from the binary view of the mainstream IR. While *yin-yang* and *zhongyong* allows difference to co-exist together in a constant state of transformation between the two poles, mainstream IR requires difference to conflict and eliminate the one pole in order one pole to dominate the whole. In other words, binary view of *guanxi* requires both parts of the binary to become each other while the binary view of the Western IR requires both parts to conflict and produce a new synthesis rather than cooperate and include differences (Qin, 2016).

2.3 *GONGSHENG* (SYMBIOTIC THEORY)

Before focusing on the details of *gongsheng* approach, a few obstacles should be mentioned. Although *gongsheng* approach is counted among the theories of Chinese School (Smith, 2020), availability of English resources on it is very limited. Because of this reason, it seems that English-writing scholars had to reference the same article "Grown from within: Building a Chinese School of International Relations" (Ren, 2020) in order to explain *gongsheng*. Even though this article is written in English, most of the resources for the concerned approach is written in Chinese, which makes it difficult for English-readers to have a comprehensive understanding of it. A second problem is that although Ren (2020) utilizes in-text references in a well-ordered way throughout the article, he does not properly use in-text citation while mentioning about *gongsheng* approach, which again prevents one to increase his/her knowledge on the approach by analyzing other resources. He states that "a group of Shanghai-based IR scholars have introduced '*gongsheng*/symbiosis' into IR research" (Ren, 2020: 405), however, he does not again provide a clue to find out this group of scholars or their original resources. Even if it is clear that Ren is a professor in Fudan University (Shanghai), one cannot reach to the conclusion that *gongsheng* approach is developed by Ren because of his afore-mentioned statement. Although Ren seems to be a part of this group, the group members and their original resources remain unavailable for English-speaking audience. Thus, this

approach will be explained in line with Ren's studies. These obstacles would bring the question of why to focus on this approach as part of Chinese School, if it is that much problematic to study. It should be studied and considered as part of Chinese School because even if it is not available on English-speakers, there is still considerable effort in China to produce a non-Western IR approach through the concept of *gongsheng*. As a result, omitting *gongsheng* would mean ignoring the efforts of local scholars for producing alternatives to the mainstream IR.

Comprehending these obstacles, it would be appropriate to get an insight of *gongsheng*/symbiosis theory. The roots of the concept of symbiosis trace back to the evolution theory. "In 1879, the German microbiologist Heinrich Anton de Bary first introduced the concept of symbiosis to describe a system of mutual reciprocity and coexistence among organisms" (Li, 2021: 4). It represents a set of complex and coexisting organisms that support each other (Smith, 2020). Later on, the concept of symbiosis is extended to various fields of philosophy and social sciences (Smith, 2020; Li, 2021).

In the Chinese context, symbiosis is combined with Confucian and Taoist interpretations through analyzing East Asian inter-state system (Ren, 2020). Similar to *guanxi*/relational theory, *gongsheng* also bases its understanding on *yin-yang* and its implications all over the world. Thus, *gongsheng* argues that there are and there should be all kinds of differences in the world (Smith, 2020). Homogeneity is problematic and breaks the bounds of symbiosis and *yin-yang* (Ren, 2020). Through this understanding, it denies discrimination. Differences have to co-exist together without offending one another (Smith, 2020). Since any kind of superiority cannot be found in *yin* and *yang*, the relations among all should also be free from superiority claims. In other words, differences should co-exist together and interact with each other on the basis of equality. The significance given to the equality greatly separates *gongsheng* from the *tianxia* concept of the Chinese School, since the latter mainly requires a hierarchical order to reach its ideal. For *gongsheng*, these equal relations among the different agents should be mutually benevolent and produce advancement rather than elimination and isolation (Smith, 2020). Through this equality a balance has to be established between *yin* and *yang*, or between weak and strong, big and small and etc. (Ren, 2020). As a result of such relations, striving for assimilation and unavoidability of conflict are expected to vanish from the world. Since the advancement can be achieved through the co-existence of differences and their

cooperation, all becomes dependent to each other (Ren, 2020). Isolationist individual life becomes meaningless. Even if this is the case, no one should be forced upon to join the system (Smith, 2020). Voluntary-basis is a key part of *gongsheng* and coercion means the breaking of symbiosis chain or the destruction of the system itself (Ren, 2020; Li, 2021). People will voluntarily join the symbiosis because it will allow everyone to make progress through mutual learning from differences (Smith, 2020). Considering the main assumptions of *gongsheng*, it seems very similar to the assumptions of *guanxi*/relational theory. This might be a result of basing the system on *yin-yang* understanding because it will require one to acknowledge the co-existence of differences and their interactions.

On the other hand, Professor Tsuyoshi Ishii from the University of Tokyo takes the opposite stance regarding peaceful co-existence (Li, 2021). He argues that rather than cooperation, symbiosis leads to the conflict and contradictions. He continues that "there will be a deadly tension between our ideals of symbiosis and our pursuit of symbiosis in practice" (Li, 2021:15). In other words, the practice of symbiosis and *yin-yang* will be completely different than the theory of them. During the very process of applying this theory to the life (the theory of bringing differences together), it will lead to the conflicts and combats rather than peace and harmony. Because of this, "humanity, when seeking out symbiotic forms of governance and social order, will often instead end up with a rigid structure marked by oppression and exclusion." (Li, 2021: 15-16).

Turning to IR, *gongsheng* argues that when its principles followed, the result will be a peaceful world. According to Ren, "today's liberal international order is porous and problematic, if not in crisis. Multiculturalism is failing", and because of this "Western thought has to, and also can be, complemented by the ideas that emanate from other parts of the world. *Gongsheng* is such an idea and theory" (2020: 406). First of all, *gongsheng* does not allow agents/actors to maximize their power, interest or status. If this happens, it will lead to the breaking of *gongsheng* system (Smith, 2020). Agents should be seeking the ways of mutual cooperation and mutual advancement rather than selfish interests. "Instead, gongsheng allows reasonable interests and satisfactory status" (Ren, 2020: 407). However, there remains an ambiguity about how to achieve this. It is argued that in the system of *gongsheng*, no one is allowed to maximize profit in order to maintain the system, but, if there is no method to prevent people from pursuing self-interests, then the system of *gongsheng* seems very prone to collapse because some would follow their self-

interests and profit maximization. In short, it seems a stillborn approach from this point of view and needs explanation. This part of the approach seems weaker than the previous two approaches (*tianxia* and *guanxi*) because they were at least offering some explanations to this question. The validity of these arguments should be the topic of another study.

Additionally, relying on the equality of everyone, *gongsheng* refuses the need for a supreme authority in order to achieve world peace. Ren (2020) argues that world peace could be achieved through the existing sovereign states (the Westphalian system) on the basis of equality. This should be the case because no one can claim superiority over culture/value/civilization/race and etc. (Smith, 2020). All differences of civilizations and people of the world should be acknowledged and these differences should produce development rather than conflict (Ren, 2020). "Proper purpose of symbiosis in international relations is to display respect rather than enmity, to possess goodwill rather than irreconcilable hostility" (Ren as cited in Li, 2021: 24). If a conflict occurs, "[it] can be mediated by voting, by discussion, or through the management methods of tribal societies" (Ren as cited in Li, 2021: 24) rather than coercion, which would mean the end of the system. As a result, tolerance to differences and mutual appreciation of them will bring the world peace to all.

When it comes to the issue of difference with mainstream IR, *gongsheng* highlights the significance of diversity and its coexistence rather than sameness. Since, diversity brings conflict in Western philosophy, it is not something desired to have (Ren, 2020). Diversity should be minimized to prevent conflicts to happen and reach world peace. In contrast, *gongsheng* argues that diversity should be there to reach world peace (Smith, 2020). Assimilation and homogeneity will result in the cease of progress while diversity will bring progress and harmony. Based on the way of approaching diversity, the issue of equality also differs between the two. While *gongsheng* argues that all civilizations/races/values are equal and should be treated on the base of equality, Eurocentric IR argues for the Western superiority in all these categories (Ren, 2020), which is explicit in Orientalism discussion. Following this, since the other is not to be eliminated but to be cooperated in order to have a mutually benevolent development, one does not aim to maximize its power so that the other can no longer possess a threat to former's existence according to *gongsheng*, which is the opposite in mainstream IR

(Smith, 2020; Ren, 2020). Lastly, similar to *tianxia* and *guanxi*, *gongsheng* is also against the use of force and coercion. The system should be established based on voluntary joining, which is not the case in mainstream approaches to IR because diversity cannot be accepted in those approaches (Smith, 2020).

Overall, *gongsheng*/symbiosis approach argues for the co-existence of diversities on equal basis. This understanding stems from the *yin-yang* methodology that requires polarities to include and complement each other. Cooperation of diversities provide mutual development and progress and because of this reason, one become dependent on such relations even if *gongsheng* cannot be forced upon anyone. Applying to IR, it requires one to avoid maximizing profit and keep it at the level of reasonable interest because if one to maximize profit, this means that one exploits the other rather than mutually cooperating. Additionally, it does not allow any kind of claims regarding the superiority of one's race, culture, values and civilization because all the interactions of diversities should be based on equal basis and mutual tolerance. Since there is no superiority, there cannot be a supreme authority to establish world peace. Existing Westphalian state system is well-sufficient to reach the world peace based on *gongsheng* equality. Comparing with the mainstream IR, this approach argues for the necessity of diversity to reach cooperation, progress and world peace. It stands against the Western understanding of diversity leading to conflict and necessity of minimizing it to have a peaceful life. Secondly, *gongsheng*'s insistence on mutual cooperation rather than profit maximization represents another difference with the Eurocentric IR that requires one to increase its power and resources as much as possible. Lastly, the equality concept of *gongsheng* eliminates claims of superiority which directly goes against Eurocentric IR that was established on the implicit assumption of Western superiority over others. Having those traits, *gongsheng* is also counted as one of the fundamental parts of Chinese School of IR.

2.4 *TSINGHUA* APPROACH OR MORAL REALISM

The last component of the Chinese School of IR is called *Tsinghua* approach or moral realism. The founders of it already acknowledge *Tsinghua* as "a branch of realism" (Yan, 2016: 4) and follow methods of positivism in their research. Although they do not claim

producing a non-Western IR approach because of their own acceptance of the approach as a branch of realism and utilization of the same positivist methodology, they are still hopeful to produce a new theory through *Tsinghua* approach (Xu & Sun, 2016; Yan, 2016; Zhang, 2012). Even if the main purpose of this study is to discuss non-Western IR, since *Tsinghua* is a part of the Chinese School, it should also be explained in detail in order to understand the Chinese perspectives on IRTs.

"In 2005, under the direction of Professor Yan Xuetong and a group of scholars [including Xu and Sun themselves] based at Tsinghua University began research on pre-Qin interstate relations" (Xu & Sun, 2016: 162). Although the team was very large at the beginning, recently a few scholars pursue the aim of producing a new theory while the majority of the initiators have left the group (Xu & Sun, 2016). In contrast the non-political claims of the first three approaches (*tianxia*, *guanxi* and *gongsheng*), moral realism explicitly has the intention of guiding politics. *Tsinghua* approach has three key characteristics:

> (1) enriching modern International Relations (IR) theory and drawing policy lessons for China's rise today; (2) drawing on China's political thought from the pre-Qin period, which he notes might be considered the most unique aspect of the Tsinghua Approach; and (3) Applying the scientific method to the analysis of pre-Qin thought on interstate relations (Zhang 2012: 75 as cited in Xu & Sun, 2016: 162).

From Zhang's interpretation and Yan's open statements, the political nature of moral realism could easily be understood since it directly argues for presenting policy lessons for China in its path of rising to the world stage (Yan, 2016).

Similar to the first three approaches of the Chinese School, *Tsinghua* also argues for the significance of morality as it can be understood from its name *moral* realism. Yan argues that morality has to be integrated into realism and claims that "doctrine of realism is misunderstood not only by idealists, legalists, moralists, liberalists, and constructivists, but also by certain realist theorists" (2016: 2). He takes Morgenthau as the main target of his criticisms for neglecting the morality aspect in realist assumptions. For him, although realism includes personal morality, it does not provide any space for state morality and this is the main problem of the current realism, which would be solved by the moral realist approach (2011). Having this kind of an understanding, Yan (2016) argues that the misunderstanding of morality stems from the swallow differentiation between the morality of state and person. Thus, moral realism argues for universal morality.

Accordingly, "the moral principles that moral realists advocate, such as equality, fairness, democracy, justice, freedom, and civility, are neither national nor regional but universal" (Yan, 2013 as cited in Yan, 2016: 3). Following, universal morality is divided into three types of morality; personal morality, state morality and world morality (Zhang, 2012). Personal morality refers the individual traits, such as "incorruptibility, faithful love, and honesty" (Yan, 2016: 3). State morality is about the political leadership (not the individual traits of the leader but the all process of decision-making that is represented by the leader) and refers traits like "the duty to practice international norms, strategic credibility to allies, and the responsibility to protect people's interests" (Yan, 2016: 3). For the world morality, it is about "pacifism, caritas and conservationism" (Yan, 2016: 3). Therefore, it is argued that the problems of realism would be solved by integrating personal/state/world morality aspects to realism, which is derived from pre-Qin era of China.

Moral realism "attempts to explain the reason why, under certain conditions, a rising state can win in a competition against the dominant state which is the stronger of the two and has more powerful material strength" (Yan, 2016: 16). In other words, the main purpose of moral realism is to discover the necessary conditions for a rising state to replace the hegemon. To put it politically (since it aims so), the main purpose of moral realism is to explain how China can win the competition of becoming a world power. The answer is the political leadership, which has four different categories of inactive, conservative, proactive and aggressive. In order to be able to comprehend the approach, certain concepts of moral realism should be introduced first, such as power, strength or authority.

Moral realism differentiates power from strength and authority. It is important to note that moral realism follows the definitions of realism itself on international power, national strength, and national interest. However, it has different definitions of power, strength and authority. Yan (2016) prefers to use Chinese terms *quanli* (power) and *shili* (strength) to describe the difference between the two. *Quanli* or power stands for the ability to insert political control/influence while *shili* refers to strength or capacity of one (Yan, 2016; Zhang, 2012). "For instance, the jurisdiction of the police is a kind of power, while the competitiveness of athletes is in strength's domain" (Yan, 2016: 5). As a result of this distinction national power and national strength become two different concepts in moral realism. When it comes to the difference between power and authority, Yan (2011, 2016) argues that power is based on force/coercion to control others while authority is based on

the voluntary acceptance of the leadership by the others. These distinctions are significant to understand the basic assumptions of moral realism.

"Power is the most pivotal constituent of national interest, and consequently the goal of states' foreign policy" (Yan, 2016: 5) while "the strength of a state is the foundation that defines its national interest, and hence the tool through which to achieve its national interest" (Yan, 2016: 6). Strength is composed of politics, military, economy and culture (Lei, 2022; Trigkas, 2020). The totality of the four categories of strength provides the comprehensive strength of a state and this strength leads to establishment of national interests. These interests are objective and perceptions of people are in no concern for the establishment of them. The level of strength directly provides the national interests of a state regardless of its geographical position, race or ideology (Lei, 2022).

Although the national interests are set by the national strength, it is still important for policymakers to prioritize some national interests over others. According to Xunzi, who was an important thinker of the pre-Qin period, policymakers have different societal perceptions based on the conditions of their environment and education, which lead them to adopt different strategies in the pursuit of their interests (as cited in Yan, 2016: 10). This definition sounds similar to constructivism. However, Yan refuses this by stating that "moral realism argues that national interests are objective, while constructivism believes that national interest is subjectively constructed by people's social perceptions" (Yan, 2016: 11). The difference occurs in the ranking rather than the establishment of national interests. Based on societal perceptions, policymakers rank the objective national interests. In other words, policymakers perceive certain national interests more significant than the others and choose a strategy to reach that interest accordingly as an impact of societal perception on policymakers. Overall, comprehensive strength sets the objective national interest, in which power is a significant component of it, while societal perception of leaders sets the ranking of the objective national interests and strategies to be followed.

Understanding the both sides (morality and power/strength), it is important to consider the relation between them according to moral realism. Moral realism accepts the change in the international moral principles throughout the history (Lei, 2022), i.e. the condition of slavery in 18th century and now. It also claims that there are certain enduring moral

principles that have lasted for centuries and these principles are to establish basic moral principles, which would be comfortable for states to easily follow in different eras (Lei, 2022). In order to understand the impact of these moral principles, Yan (2016) divides it to lower-level moral codes and higher-level moral codes, in which the former is more influential on states rather than the latter because it is easier and generally more profitable for states to follow the former one. For instance, it is easy for states to endure alliances for long periods while it is very difficult for states to endure providing economic aids to poorer states for a long time (Yan, 2016). Accordingly, morality requires power/strength to have two complementary elements. First, international legitimacy of a state's power increases or decreases depending on following international moral principles or not (Lei, 2022; Trigkas, 2020). Even if the strength of a state remains same, its power legitimacy would increase or decrease based on its moral conduct (Yan, 2016). The second result of morality is on the strength of a state. Rejecting moral principles will result in the decrease of national strength through the decrease of national power because without national power one cannot influence others to follow him in the international arena, which results in the decrease of relative national strength regardless of its absolute strength (Yan, 2016). Therefore, states cannot ignore the morality aspect in the international arena to keep their national power and strength.

Although moral realism accepts the realist assumption of survival as the main national interest, it requires rising state and hegemon to strive for international authority. Practicing international norms has a direct impact upon international power and international authority (Trigkas, 2020). Following a moral path, states acquire international strategic credit, which is about trustworthiness and increasing international alliances (Yan, 2016). This credit is a key factor for influencing the others in the international arena. Increase in the capacity to influence the others means increase in the international power of a state (Yan, 2011). Together with the international power, if a state is to follow moral norms, its ability to attract others (not by coercion but consent) will increase (Lei, 2022). This increase will result in the reinforcement of international authority of the concerned state. It is very crucial to have the strategic credit and authority together with the power because "a rising state is able to increase its international power by promoting material strength, but cannot establish international authority through that approach" (Yan, 2016: 8-9). Therefore, without morality, a rising state cannot change the

norms of international order because it will not have sufficient international authority (acceptance by others) to impose its rules for a long time. Thus, strategic preference of a state is decided together with strategic interests (objectively stemming from comprehensive strength) and political perceptions (stemming from the type of political leadership). Combination of the two will result in different strategies for dominant/rising states and different international norms ultimately, even if their national strength is equal.

Political leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the strategies of states and it is not considered in regard to the personality of a leader, but his/her policy making. It basically has four categories as inactive, conservative, proactive and aggressive (Lei, 2022). Considering all the categories, "moral realists argue that the proactive leaders' strategy preference has a better chance than others of achieving the goal of rise" but "correctness of one player's strategic decision will not determine the final ends of a game with multiple players" (Yan, 2016: 21).

Considering its differences with realism (rather than mainstream IR because moral realism already accepts itself as a branch of realism), the key component becomes the morality itself. The other aspects of difference stems from the understanding and the definition given to the morality. As mentioned before, realism does not provide any important role for morality to be influential in states' interests and foreign policies. As Ren explains, "[Yan] is particularly frustrated with developments in realism after Kenneth Waltz introduced the theory of structural realism, which gave no consideration to morality or justice" (2020: 168). Yan claims that Morgenthau "failed to clarify the relations between the practice of morality and comprehensive national strength, between moral actions and international leadership, and between leading powers' moral behaviour and the evolution of international norms" (2016: 4), which moral realism tries to solve. Placing morality as a part of national and international power/strength, moral realism argues against the realist claims that only concern the material power of states in the distribution of power. According to moral realism, one cannot have sustainable power/strength without the moral conduct of behaviors (Lei, 2022). This morality brings different types of national and international political leadership in front to consider rather than accepting them as same for all states.

Introducing morality as an independent variable requires moral realism to accept different types of states and their goals rather than billiard ball understanding of state for realism. Different types of states follow different strategies and different strategies of dominant powers establishes different international norms. It "has a different view on the functions of states from Waltz, who asserts that there is no functional differentiation among states" (Yan, 2016: 14). Although moral realism acknowledges that offensive strategies are more common to be used, they are not the only alternative for states to follow (Lei, 2022; Yan, 2011). For instance, moral realism does not deny the critical role of reward-punishment mechanism but highlights the significance of leading by example rather than brutal force. Therefore, one cannot consider all states of international politics as the same billiard boards, if s(he) wants to apply a moral realist approach in his/her analysis.

Lastly, regarding the core question, "unlike other schools of IR realist theory that study the shift of power from the perspective of how to maintain the hegemons' dominant position … [moral realism] concentrates on the question of why a rising state can replace the dominant power and create a new international leadership" (Yan, 2016: 25). This might be the cause of their origin of production. Since Realism, developed in the West and aim to provide policy guide for the West and especially the U.S. (Acharya & Buzan, 2010), its concern with maintaining the position of hegemon is understandable. Having the opposite condition, being produced in China and aiming to provide policy guide for it, moral realism's focus on rising powers rather than hegemon is also an expected behavior. In contrast to general expectation, moral realism argues that this happens through the political leadership of the rising state rather than the sole national strength of it (Lei, 2022; Yan, 2016). In other words, material capabilities themselves are not sufficient to become a leading world power. Without having international strategic credibility and authority through following morality and having strong/good political leadership, a state cannot become a long-enduring world power and cannot establish its own system of international order.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Comprehending all the four approaches of the Chinese School of IR, it would be argued that their main focus is on morality and ethical behaviors rather than material factors.

Tianxia (all-under-heaven) argues for the inevitability of a harmonious world through the voluntary acceptance of the system by the others because of moral behaviors (father-son relations) conducted in the path of spreading inner principles to outer circles. *Guanxi*/relational theory argues for the centrality of relations rather than actors and requires actors to mutually engage with each other in a good manner to maintain the relations and get mutual benefits in the long-run. *Gongsheng*/symbiosis focuses on the co-existence of differences through equal relations without claiming superiority to anyone. *Tsinghua* or moral realism requires states (especially the rising state) to act morally in order to gather international allies for its search of becoming the world power. In all four approaches, voluntary acceptance is a necessary condition for the establishment of their systems. Act of coercion will result in the destruction of the system for *tianxia*, *guanxi*, and *gongsheng* while hindering the process of becoming world power for *Tsinghua*. The reason of this similarity would be that all approaches focus approximately on the same era of ancient China, and especially Confucius philosophy. Studying on similar resources would result in similar arguments with certain different interpretations.

The image of ideal world system of these approaches also carries similarities and differences. *Tianxia* and *Tsinghua*/moral realism are in favor of a hierarchical world order that is established by voluntary submission of the others. In contrasts, *gongsheng*/symbiosis theory requires the equality between the actors. While *guanxi*/relational theory does not explicitly state its perspective on the issue, it might be deducted from the *yin-yang* dialects of *guanxi* that it would also accept equality as the basis of relations because both *gongsheng*/symbiosis and *guanxi*/relational theory centralize *yin-yang* relations in their approaches.

All approaches seem to promoting the idea of peaceful co-existence, which brings the question of whether it is related with Chinese “peaceful rise” policy. While some considers it as such (Hu, 2016; Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014; Shih, 2018), some other (especially Chinese scholars arguing for the first three approaches) refuses such claims by stating that the efforts to produce Chinese IRTs are a result of academic concerns rather than political concerns (Qin, 2011-2016; Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020; Li, 2021). One exception is *Tsinghua*/moral realism, which directly states its main purpose as guiding Chinese foreign policy in its rise to world power.

One critical point should not be omitted: all approaches would be regarded as their initial steps. They can be called theories by accepting the definition of Acharya and Buzan that "[an approach will be counted as a theory if] it be[is] self-identified by its creators as being IRT even if this is not widely acknowledged within the mainstream academic IR community" (2010: 6). However, even the founders of these approaches accept (Qin, 2016; Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016) that their approaches are still not fully developed to be a valid IRT. They consider their efforts as opening doors for such theories to be established by Chinese School of IR. However, one question remains: whether these approaches were able to overcome Eurocentrism of IR or not, which is to be discussed in the third chapter.

CHAPTER 3: IS THE CHINESE SCHOOL EUROCENTRIC?

The first chapter of this study discussed Eurocentrism in IR together with the relevant concepts and the challenges by non-Western scholars to overcome Eurocentrism. In the following chapter, the Chinese School of IR was presented as an illustration of such attempts. In this setting, this last chapter investigates to what extent the Chinese School of IR is successful at overcoming Eurocentrism. To achieve this task, seven main Eurocentric premises -discussed in the first chapter- will be regarded as the tool of comparison. To remind, these premises are Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric framing of world history, Western civilization's superiority, Orientalism and the theory of progress. The Chinese School of IR will be examined under the scope of these premises.

As Demir warns "non-Western -and in this case Chinese- intellectual contributions should not fall into the trap of becoming another form of parochialism, exceptionalism, or Western-centrism" (2017, 11). Thus, it is significant for Chinese scholars to be aware of the possible results of their efforts and whether they are still reproducing Eurocentric parochialism and exceptionalism or not. Considering this aspect of the Chinese School, Christensen (2019) heavily criticizes the school for not being able to and even not trying to overcome Eurocentrism. For him, the school is not "explicitly critical towards existing theories and does not purport to threaten the privileged position of Western IR theory" and it is just "another way of carving out a spot [by Chinese scholars] within the stratified structure of the academy" rather than a true search for a non-Western approach (2019, 10). While Christensen (2019) argues for the non-existence of the Chinese School of IR, certain scholars - mainly Chinese scholars themselves- are very optimistic about the school's initial steps and believe that the Chinese School will ultimately reach its target of producing reliable and valid non-Western IR theory/school (Ling, 2016; Qin, 2010; Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020; Yan, 2016; Wang & Han, 2016; Zhang & Chang, 2016).

There is a third group of scholars which occupies the middle ground and claims that although the Chinese School was successful in overcoming Eurocentrism to some extent, it still fails in reproducing Eurocentrism and Eurocentric parochialism (Demir, 2017; Hwang, 2021; Peng, 2018; Tolay, 2021). For instance, Peng (2018) criticizes the Chinese School for being not able to present an overall new alternative, but a modification of

already existing Western IRTs. This chapter argues that Chinese School still suffers from Eurocentrism despite its limited success in providing indigenous perspectives. For this purpose, this chapter begins with an analysis of the methods utilized by the four approaches of the Chinese School to overcome Eurocentrism. They will be compared with the three methods mentioned in the first chapter (demonstrating the Eastern origins of the West, examining traditional resources and the Eastern framing of history) in order to comprehend which of the three methods is in use for Chinese scholars to reach their target. Following, the Chinese School will be put in analysis based on the seven main premises of Eurocentrism to observe its success and failures.

3.1 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME EUROCENTRISM

Before analyzing the success of the Chinese School in the search for reaching an alternative non-Western IR, it would be appropriate to observe the strategies of Chinese scholars to overcome Eurocentrism. As mentioned in the first chapter, there are three main methods utilized by non-Western scholars in the process of developing non-Western IR approaches. Briefly, these methods are pointing non-Western roots of Western achievements, focusing on indigenous resources and applying world history perspective instead of Eurocentric framing of the world history. All four approaches of the Chinese School use either one or more than one of these methods.

First of all, *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) seems to be engaging into the two main methods: focusing on traditional resources and Eastern framing of history. Focusing on Confucius and his teachings, *tianxia* bases its foundations on the traditional Chinese sources rather than using Western sources as its reference point (Zhao, 2021). When it comes to the issue of Eastern framing of history, one encounters with a China-centered worldview and history. Tributary system seems to demonstrate this China-centered approach since it considers China as the center of civilizations and in a way as the world turns around it (Zhao, 2021). Being the Middle Kingdom, all the others have to be affected by China and its actions without the opposite way taking place (Ling, 2016). However, introducing *tianxia* does not seem to be a way for scholars to show the Eastern origins of the Western concepts, which is another common method of non-Western IR scholars in their approaches; because scholars almost totally ignore the existence or the influence of the

West while trying to understand *tianxia* and tributary system (Zhao, 2021; Ren, 2020). This method does not match with the method of showing the Eastern origins of some Western ideas/concepts. The reason of this will be discussed in the forthcoming sections. Therefore, *tianxia* approach would be classified into the two methods of investigating traditional resources and Eastern framing of history.

When it comes to *guanxi* (relational theory), it seems only be utilizing the method of focusing on traditional resources. Similar to *tianxia*, *guanxi* also bases its philosophy on Confucius teachings and Chinese practices without referring to the West (Qin, 2016). It does not argue that something Western had already been invented in China long ago, but only presents its core principles from Confucius. In contrasts to *tianxia*, *guanxi* does not openly argue for Eastern/Chinese framing of world history and does not demonstrate a specific order from Chinese or Asian history that is established based on *guanxi*. Qin (2016) even presents examples from the UK and the U.S. together with China rather than solely considering Asia. These examples would be considered as world history, but to have such a title *guanxi* needs to focus on history in a more comprehensive way. Therefore, *guanxi* only uses the method of intensifying studies on traditional resources.

Gongsheng (symbiotic) approach, on the other hand, considers all the three methods of developing non-Western IR approaches. Although Ren (2020) does not explicitly mention the structuring of *gongsheng* approach implicitly states that there was a symbiosis kind of an understanding in China long ago before the term's introduction by the German microbiologist Heinrich Anton de Bary. Even though Ren (2020) does not even mention the connection between symbiosis and evolution theory, one could understand this by reading other scholars such as Li (2021). From this point, it could be understood that *gongsheng* argues for being the first in the concept of symbiosis without pointing the West. Second, similar to *tianxia* and *guanxi*, *gongsheng* also presents its foundations from Confucius teachings with an addition of Taoism (Ren, 2020; Li, 2021), which was not present in the former two approaches. This is counted for the method of studying on traditional resources. Lastly, even if *gongsheng* does not directly mention specific period of history to prove its existence in Chinese history, Ren (2020) argues that *gongsheng* has been produced through the analysis of East Asian inter-state system, which is similar to the method of Eastern framing of world history. Therefore, *gongsheng*

approach would be accepted as utilizing all the three main methods of producing non-Western IR.

Getting an insight of moral realism, it uses the two methods: focusing on traditional resources and Eastern/world framing of history. It does not aim to argue that ancient China already had the assumptions of realism, but only brings morality perspective from past to integrate it into realism. To do so, Yan Xuetong's team heavily concentrated on pre-Qin era of China (Xu & Sun, 2016). They extracted IR knowledge from these resources and came up with *Tsinghua* approach (Xu & Sun, 2016). Additionally, they do not begin and end the history with Europe, but recognize and study Chinese history and its relations with the surrounding states (Yan, 2016). As a result, *Tsinghua* would be accepted as utilizing the methods of traditional resource studies and Eastern/world framing of history even if it does not aim to establish a purely non-Western IR approach.

In short, all approaches utilize the methods of studying traditional resources and Eastern/world framing of history while only *gongsheng*/symbiosis theory implicitly utilize the method of showing the Eastern origins of the West. Thus, from the case of Chinese School of IR, the validity of the argument regarding the commonality of these approaches in producing a non-Western IR approach would be approved once again. Understanding the common utilization of these methods to develop non-Western IR based on the Chinese School case, it would be appropriate to analyze whether the school is successful in overcoming Eurocentrism.

3.2 WESTERN/CHINESE EXCEPTIONALISM

The first premise of Eurocentrism is mentioned as Western exceptionalism in the first chapter and this section evaluates the Chinese School from this perspective. Western exceptionalism simply stands for the argument that every achievement of the West was the sole product of the West without the influence of others. Considering the four approaches of the Chinese School (*tianxia*, *guanxi*, *gongsheng*, *Tsinghua*), all of them engage in Chinese exceptionalism instead of Western exceptionalism. The only change is the main subject (from the West to China) rather than the perspective or the ontological and epistemological outlook. In other words, it is the same building with a different (Chinese) color regarding the understanding of exceptionalism.

Beginning with *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), it overvalues the Chinese experience, culture, history and tradition while ignoring the importance/contributions of other civilizations to China as in the case of Western exceptionalism that overvalues the Western ones. It argues that China is itself the reason of Chinese development and civilization without other's assistance (Zhao, 2021). *Tianxian* approach presents a direct link from Confucius to tributary system and modern China without considering the surrounding civilizations and the clashes with the West in 18th-19th centuries (Zhao, 2021). This echoes the Western counterpart as directly linking ancient Greece to Rome, Enlightenment and the modern Europe. Ren states that "*tianxia* [was] … originated in the Zhou period and matured in the Qin and Han periods … lasted for over two thousand years" (2020: 403). This statement demonstrates the Chinese exceptionalist perspective in *tianxia* because it originates in China, develops in China (without external influences) and still continues in China. It should be the case because "Chinese always keep with them an ideal beyond reality" (Xing, 1983 as cited in Ren, 2020: 403). Since they are *Chinese*, they should be the ones to develop their original perspectives that are not borrowed or influenced by others. This understanding accounts for exceptionalism. In this case, it should be called Chinese exceptionalism. Although *tianxia* challenges Western exceptionalism with Chinese exceptionalism, it seems not sufficient to overcome parochialist and exceptionalist approach of Eurocentrism.

Guanxi (relational theory) also follows the same path of *tianxia*. It establishes a direct and continuous link from Confucius to Mao and Beijing's recent practices of third culture (Qin, 2016). As Qing Liu states "*guanxi* reflect[s] an idiosyncratic coalescence between tradition and modernity – or what some have referred to as the 'critical inheritance and critical transformation of Chinese thought' (2014: 330 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 108). The statement provides no room for the external influences on Chinese thought. It has started with traditional China, critically transformed and continues with modern Chinese thought. By referencing the rationality, Qin clearly highlights the same exceptionalist approach: "Go back to the Enlightenment, rationality became the dominant word, if we choose one word that forms the foundation of social sciences and natural sciences. I think the counterpart in Chinese society … is relationality." (2010 as cited in Kristensen & Nielsen, 2014: 107). If *guanxi* is the counterpart of rationality -which is a major example for Western exceptionalism, then, *guanxi* becomes Chinese counterpart of Western

exceptionalism since both does not acknowledge the influence of others. As a result, similar to *tianxia*, *guanxi* also carries the label of Chinese exceptionalism.

Gongsheng (symbiosis theory) stands for Chinese exceptionalism as well beginning from traditional East Asian system to the Belt and Road Initiative. "*Gongsheng*-focused research has been carried out with respect to the traditional interstate system in East Asia" (Ren, 2020: 405). It based its approach on Confucianism, Taoism and Daoism (Li, 2021) and "*gongsheng* scholars have sought to re-theorize the East Asian tributary system as a gongsheng order" (Smith, 2018: 459). Establishing the basis of the approach, scholars have observed today's world and "scholars point out that Asian regionalism, with the BRI [Belt and Road Initiative] as its new engine, rests on different foundational norms than the European experience [which is *gongsheng*]" (Smith, 2018: 462). Considering the steps of the research on *gongsheng*, one cannot encounter with the European or any other civilizations' contributions on it, even under the condition that the name of the concept itself is borrowed from evolutionary sciences. As Atlı states "*gongsheng* (literally meaning 'symbiosis') is concept found in natural science, which was adapted by a number of Chinese scholars to the realm of IR" (2022: 134). Ignoring this convergence of the symbiosis from the West, scholars sound like there is an intentional exceptionalist approach in the process of developing the theory of *gongsheng*. Therefore, *gongsheng* approach also embraces Chinese exceptionalism.

While studying *Tsinghua* (moral realism), we should focus on its "moral" part rather than realism because the latter is already classified as Eurocentric in the first chapter. For this reason, the analysis regarding *Tsinghua* will be concerned about this part of the theory in the forthcoming sections. *Tsinghua* team bases their approach on "China's political thought from the golden age of Chinese philosophy in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period (770-222 BC)" and "devoted enormous energies and time to refining the thoughts of pre-Qin (founded in 221BC) Chinese thinkers" (Ren, 2020: 401). They "borrow from the classics in order to enrich understandings of contemporary phenomenon" (Xu & Sun, 2016: 168). Then, they directly reach modern China to observe its moral realist parts. They argue that *Tsinghua* should be used to understand post-1949 China and Xi Jinping's *Zunwang Rangyi* strategy, which is a hegemonic behavior specifically takes places during the Warring States period of China (Xu & Sun, 2016). Different than other three approaches, *Tsinghua* is directly concerned with Chinese

foreign policy and argues that "on the basis of *classical Chinese theories* [emphasis added] … China can promote new international norms based on the principles of equity, civility and justice" (Yan, 2012: 21 as cited in Xu & Sun, 2016: 169). Therefore, *Tsinghua* begins from the golden age of China, reaches to modern China to understand its international politics and draws policy lessons for the future Chinese world order based on classical Chinese theories. Then, it could be said that *Tsinghua* follows Chinese exceptionalism as the other three theories of the Chinese School of IR and also depictures the future which should be established based on Chinese exceptionalist understanding since it should embrace classical Chinese theories without getting influenced by others.

All four approaches of the Chinese School of IR engage in Chinese exceptionalism in their search for non-Western IR. Not even mentioning about the Western contributions and its influences on China and Chinese thought throughout the history, the Chinese School challenges the Western exceptionalism by Chinese exceptionalism. However, changing the subject and replacing Western exceptionalism with Chinese exceptionalism reproduces the Western logic of exceptionalising one nation/culture/race/region from others. Whether it is Chinese or any other, the result is the same: considering one nation/culture/race/region superior and exceptional over others. Thus, Chinese exceptionalism cannot overcome Eurocentric perspective of exceptionalism by only changing the nation who exceptionalize itself even if it assists to break the castle of West as the sole superior region. In order to completely overcome Eurocentrism, exceptionalist perspective itself should be replaced with a comprehensive perspective that includes the whole world.

3.3 RACISM

Reaching the second underlying premise of Eurocentrism, the Chinese School should be observed regarding racism and racist tendencies. It is significant to understand whether Chinese scholars engage in racism in the process of producing a non-Western IR approach or not since without lifting the racist perspective from IR, it cannot truly overcome the Eurocentric tendency of praising one race over others. According to the analysis, the Chinese School avoids racism and discourages racist perspectives in world politics. Although there are claims of Chinese greatness as mentioned in Chinese exceptionalism

and will be mentioned in the section regarding the superiority of Chinese civilization, these claims are not necessarily counted as racism. In order to label a perspective as racist, it should explicitly focus on the superiority or inferiority of the races rather than the civilizations or cultures.

Even if *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) has a tendency for civilizing mission and establishing a world system that is governed by China, it does not explicitly require the superiority of the Chinese race. *Tianxia* argues for the spread of Chinese values and principles to others, but it does not argue for the glorified traits of the Chinese race. It is even essential in *tianxia* to improve the inner self and inner thoughts before aiming for the demonstration of virtuous acts to others. As mentioned, Confucius thought elaborates on this issue as follows: "The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue [*ming ming de*] throughout the [universe] … they first cultivated their persons [*xiu shen*]. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts [*zheng xin*]" (Daxue as cited in Ling, 2016: 26). This stands against the racist understanding of Eurocentrism which attributes superiority to the white race itself, which is blessed with all the virtues from birth. *Tianxia* makes it compulsory for one – especially the Chinese emperor since he is the one to spread the values of his inner self – to purify himself before spreading his values to others. Although it glorifies the values and principles of China and the Chinese emperor, it does not grant superiority to the Chinese race and asks for the latter to abandon or improve its unwanted/inferior traits. Together with this, it is also an indispensable part of *tianxia* to strive for reaching the state of world harmony and establish a harmonious world society. In the path of reaching this harmony, *tianxia* avoids forcing others to accept the values of China and desires voluntary participation, which does not expect others to acknowledge the Chinese race as superior, but the Chinese values. Therefore, *tianxia* seems to be successful in overcoming racism which is a critical component of the Eurocentric construction of IR.

Focusing on relations, *guanxi* (relational theory) does not consider race – and even individuals – as critical elements of international politics (Qin, 2016). For *guanxi*, relations should be the primary unit of analysis. Actors/individuals cannot be considered as such a unit of analysis because the former could not have a separate existence without the relations taking place. As mentioned before, the inexistence of relations means the inexistence of an individual and through the relations, one's identity is constructed (Qin,

2016). With regards to this, it would be extracted that no race could be superior to others because *guanxi* does not grant traits to individuals before the relations take place. In other words, since one cannot have an identity coming from birth, one cannot be superior to others through his/her race. Reinforcing this view, there is an understanding of constant change in *guanxi*. It claims that the identities of actors constantly change through the relations because everyone should behave according to the role provided by the specific relation rather than having a pre-constructed stable identity (Kavalsk, 2018; Qin, 2016). The constant change in identity through relations does not allow a concept of racist supremacy since the members of the concerned race and their identity/attributes constantly change in such a system. As a result of all these explanations, *guanxi* also seems successful to a certain extent in overcoming racism by focusing on relations rather than actors and individuals in its analysis, which is a considerable achievement in the path of overcoming Eurocentrism.

Gongsheng (symbiosis) also stands against racist understanding in world politics by highlighting equality. It requires differences to co-exist and complement each other to develop and progress. These differences should lead to harmony rather than conflict and eliminate the claims of superiority in the system of *gongsheng*, otherwise, the system will collapse. Because of this, no one is allowed to argue for civilizational/cultural or racist superiority (Ren, 2020). Such claims of superiority break the chain of symbiosis (Li, 2021). This kind of understanding rejects the racist understanding of Eurocentric IR. *Gongsheng* does not require one to be a member of a certain race in order to develop and progress. On the contrary, it places great emphasis on diversity and cooperation of differences – different races in this case – in order to reach world peace and advancement. Regardless of race, one would engage in cooperative relations on an equal basis and the path of progress is open to any race. As a result of focusing on equality, tolerance and cooperation; *gongsheng* seems to be avoiding racism.

As the last branch of the Chinese School, *Tsinghua* (moral realism) specifically concentrates on morality and political leadership rather than race. Moral realism grants a game-changer status to morality and argues that morality and political leadership (whether it follows the path of morality or not) are the ones to decide the fate of a rising state (Yan, 2016). Regardless of its race, if a rising state is able to follow a moral path, it would be able to become a new world power and endure it for a long period. If it abstains

itself from such a path; then, even if this rising state is composed of the Chinese race, it would not be able to establish a new world order and promote progress for all. Although *Tsinghua* explicitly aims for assisting China in its foreign-policy making, assumptions of *Tsinghua* do not stand for the superiority of the Chinese race and its inevitable success. Moral realism takes its roots from the traditional Chinese resources and Chinese understanding, it glorifies Chinese civilization; however, it does not glorify the Chinese race. Therefore, *Tsinghua* also seems to be successful in overcoming racism.

Considering all four branches of the Chinese School of IR, all of them seem to avoid racism. They do not grant a racist superiority to Chinese people, but they grant superiority to Chinese culture and civilization. The latter would be counted as a component of Chinese exceptionalism and Chinese civilizational superiority; however, it is a problematic approach to call these tendencies racism because these claims of superiority are not attributed to the Chinese biological race itself. In other words, it is not argued that the superiority of Chinese culture and civilization occurs because of the superior intrinsic traits hidden in their races. Thus, the Chinese School of IR seems to be successfully overcoming the racism of Eurocentric IR while also avoiding replacing it with Chinese racism. This is a significant achievement for the School and further studies for developing the School should also avoid falling into the trap of racism.

3.4 UNIVERSALISM

The third premise of Eurocentrism is universalism, which stands for universalizing Western values as if all the societies of the world follow the same principles and naturally, degrading the values of other civilizations as a branch of realism. Since it is a critical component of Eurocentrism, the Chinese School of IR should be analyzed from this perspective as well. Considering the claims of the School, it seems that the School engage in universalism as well. As in the case of exceptionalism and racism, universalism also takes a Chinese color in the studies, which is to universalize Chinese values and especially Confucianism and pre-Qin era thinkers.

Although it is not directly stated by *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) that there are *universal* values to be followed by all, its assumptions are in favor of universalism. As mentioned, one’s inner-self (its values) should spread from inside to outside until it unites the whole

universe. Since this process and this unification is "inevitable" (Qin, 2010: 42), the ultimate end of *tianxia* depictures a world where one's own values has spread to whole world. In other words, once the *tianxia* is reached, the values of one will be the values of everyone. Thus, *tianxia* does not propose a Western style universalism, but a system of universally-accepted principles. As Wang and Han elaborates "[*tianxia* presents] hierarchy, but also a universally-accepted world system" (2016: 61). Moreover, some arguments of *tianxia* carry the voice of universalism. For instance, it argues that "there is nothing foreign or alien in the world" (Wang & Han, 2016: 62) or it claims that *tianxia* would bring universal peace and justice to the world (Ling, 2016), without considering the enormous discussion on the definition of peace and justice. Through such claims, *tianxia* acknowledges its own definitions of foreignness, peace and justice as the definitions of the whole world because it does not highlight the different voices regarding these concepts. Its arguments on the probable establishment of world peace through the system of hierarchy and world harmony represent a prominent example of universalism of *tianxia*. Therefore, *tianxia* system stands for a universal system of values and universalism.

Rather than establishing an ideal world system of politics and ruling, *guanxi* (relational theory) stands in the moral side, but still with universalist values. It universalizes the values of Chinese people and Confucianism. For instance, it argues that all the world is built upon relations and their effects, together with the admission that this understanding stems from "Chinese 'compulsive need to avoid disorder and confusion'" (Pye, 1968: 174 as cited in Kavalski, 2018: 109). From this statement one can understand that *guanxi* takes Chinese values and transforms them to universal values as if the whole world works as such. For example, it assumes that everyone engaging in a relationship manipulate this relation to achieve self-interests (Qin, 2016). These are a few examples of *guanxi* to demonstrate that it universalizes Chinese values as if everyone follows these Chinese principles in the life.

Considering the main assumptions of *gongsheng* (symbiosis), one also realizes intrinsic universalism of the approach. Although *gongsheng* stands for equality of values and tolerance to diversity, it also claims universal proper conduct of behaviors and values, such that all should act based on morality, love, responsibility and etc. (Ren, 2020). As in the case of *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), *gongsheng* also does not properly mention the

considerable differences on the definitions of such concepts of morality, love and responsibility. It tends to accept Chinese definitions of these concepts and universalize them in a way that as if all the world understands the same. This would be understood from the approach of *gongsheng* that it requires acting based on morality, love and responsibility, but it does not properly elaborate on the meaning of them. It requires everyone to act in a grand, holistic and communal way without opening room for others to decide their own behaviors while arguing for the necessity of being tolerant to diversity. This echoes the Western universalism that argues for equality, freedom, pluralism and democracy while also dictates the proper conduct of behaviors to the whole world. Thus, such methods of *gongsheng* seem to be attaching a universalist inclination on the theory.

Similar to other approaches, *Tsinghua* (moral realism) also universalize Chinese values and principles in its assumptions. For instance, Yan states that "according to moral realist theory it will be possible for China to change the international system in the 21st century if it practices the moral principles of fairness, justice, and civility both at home and abroad" (2016: 1) and defines these principles according to Confucian thought and pre-Qin era thinkers. Despite this being the case, he treats like his definition on the concerned principles of fairness, justice and civility are universally-accepted principles as if there is no discussion on the implication of these concepts. To elaborate, he quotes Xunzi – a prominent pre-Qin era thinker – "one who uses the state to establish justice will be king; one who establishes trust will be a lord-protector; and on who establishes a record of expediency and opportunism will perish" (Muzhi, 1999: 315 as cited in Yan, 2016: 8). Because *Tsinghua* tends to universalize the definition of justice, it provides a universally comprehensive three main types of states regardless of the location of states/kingdoms. In other words, universalizing the definition of justice, moral realism also universalize the types of leaders/states. Similar examples would be detected throughout the study of *Tsinghua* approach that echoes universalism.

Overall, the Chinese School engage in universalism, which would be called as Chinese universalism rather than Western universalism. It is Chinese universalism in the sense that the Chinese School universalize traditional Chinese values in a way that as if all the world acts like that. Universalizing Chinese values is a challenge against universalizing the Western values. However, as in the case of prior premises, universalist approach of the Chinese School again falls into the category of parochialism, which is the main

problem of Eurocentric IR. Without avoiding such a universalizing tendency, changing the universalizer will not be sufficient to overcome Eurocentrism completely. In order to reach that aim, the Chinese School should conform to the main assumptions of its own approaches, especially the ones that claims tolerance to diversity, openness and harmony because the latter does not allow a universalist approach but requires everyone to follow its path freely.

3.5 EUROCENTRIC/SINO-CENTRIC FRAMING OF WORLD HISTORY

The fourth underlying principle of Eurocentrism is Eurocentric framing of world history, that is to prioritize European experience while studying the world history and highlight the cornerstones of the Western history as important for the whole world. In certain cases, it even engages in distorting the historical knowledge in order to present it as favorable for the West. It is important to note that since the Chinese School of IR is still a newborn school, one should not await to encounter with a comprehensive studying of history as in the West that has cultivated enormous knowledge throughout the establishment of the discipline. Considering the approaches in the Chinese School, it seems that the School mainly engages in Eastern/Chinese framing of world history with the exclusion of *guanxi* (relational theory). This is to prioritize the East (East Asia) and Eastern experience rather than the other parts of the world. As the West, the Chinese School also engages in distorting the past in order to make it compatible with their idealistic China and Chinese people image represented by the approach.

Tianxia (All-Under-Heaven) studies Zhou, Qin and Han periods of the Chinese history and focuses its analysis on the tributary System. While developing its approach, *tianxia* follows the method of distorting the past, but does not utilize the method of Chinese framing of history. First, *tianxia* clearly ignores the influence of other nations - especially the West – over China (Zhao, 2021). It only focuses the aforementioned eras of China to understand and also test the theory. The history of *tianxia* would be equalized the history of Chinese hierarchical tributary system. Since China was at the top and the Chinese emperor was the Son-of-Heaven (Ling, 2016), the history inevitably has to written according to them and the events that is critical to them. As a result of this, history of *tianxia* presents the history of Chinese rule over its neighbors and considering China as

the center of all the civilizations (Ling, 2016; Zhao, 2021). Adding on this, as Christensen states "Zhao Tingyang's *tianxia* [theory]…[is] severely attacked…for 'distorting [the past] in order to advance an equally distorted political agenda'" (Dreyer, 2015: 1031 as cited in Christensen, 2019: 10). This is the case because "Chinese state was often engaged in violent interactions with states and semi-states along its frontiers" (Callahan, 2008: 755) rather than having an all harmonious and peaceful existence of tributary system as represented by *tianxia* (Zhao, 2021). Wang points a critical point in its analysis of *tianxia* by stating that "Zhao does not mention is instructive: 'The *Tianxia* is united' [*Tianxia yitong*] describes 'uniting the *tianxia* through conquest'" (2006: 3 as cited in Callahan, 2008: 755). This reality directly rejects the main assumption of *tianxia* that the tributary system was peaceful without wars and could also be applied in the future in order to have a peaceful world (Zhao, 2021). Thus, this should be counted as distorting the past to prove the assumptions of the theory. It seems that *tianxia* distorts the past in order to support its theoretical premises and avoids Chinese framing of history, which might be stemming from the lack of interest in studying world history comprehensively.

Guanxi (relational theory) also seems to be successful in overcoming Eurocentric or Sino-centric framing of history to a certain extent. It is partial because of the methodology of *guanxi*. Since *guanxi* does not explicitly study history as in the case of *tianxia*, one cannot argue that it is able to reach a comprehensive world history approach. However, it is still able to avoid Eurocentrism and Sino-centrism in its approach to historical events. Thus, one can observe this success in the analysis of *guanxi* while considering the historical events rather than the historical framing itself. It takes its roots from Confucian teachings and studies historical events (Qin, 2016). For instance, in order to explain the logic of relationality (how it works), Qin brings the example of the U.S. forward by stating that "the United States would be irrational if it would require its allies to destroy their nuclear weapons as it has required of its enemy" (Qin, 2016: 38). Together with the U.S., he also mentions the British example "[according to] Keene's study (2007) of the British treaty making against the slave trade in the early nineteenth century also points to the fact that the British followed different norms when signing treaties with actors Britain had different relationships with" (2016: 38). Besides these Western countries, Qin (2016) also provides examples from China and ASEAN to demonstrate that *guanxi* has been in the world throughout the history regardless of the region/country and therefore, it is worth

studying. As a result of this, it could be argued that *guanxi* seems to be partially successful in overcoming parochialist historical framing of history whether it is Eurocentric or Sinocentric. To achieve a complete success, *guanxi* should have an overall and comprehensive approach to history rather than looking for proofs of existence of *guanxi* in history.

Gongsheng (symbiosis), similar to *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), ignore the significance of other civilizations and distorts the past in order to support the theory. As in the case of *tianxia*, *gongsheng* also focuses on the tributary system and "*gongsheng*-focused research has been carried out with respect to the traditional interstate system in East Asia" (Ren, 2020: 405). The aim of this focus is to "re-theorize the East Asian tributary system as a gongsheng order" (Smith, 2018: 459). Hand in hand with this study, *gongsheng* explicitly rejects the Western history and system because it is considered that Western history, thought and system brought nothing to the world, but chaos (Ren, 2020). This accounts for Eastern, and specifically Chinese, framing of history in contrast to Western framing of history. Secondly, *gongsheng* distorts the historical knowledge – as *tianxia* does – in order to present the historical *gongsheng* order as something desirable and beneficial to whole world. As mentioned before, *gongsheng* also utilizes the same method of demonstrating tributary system as full of peace and security while Western system as bringing war and chaos to all (Ren, 2020). Encountering the same result of Chinese framing of history and distortion of the past in both approaches (*tianxia* and *gongsheng*) would be stemming from the reason that both focus on almost the same historical period and both argue that their theory is to provide peace and security to world. Thus, it leads to playing with historical information in order to support that the concerned era of China was peaceful because of *tianxia* or *gongsheng*. Although they challenge Eurocentric framing of history with Sino-centric framing of history, they are still not able to overcome the tendency of framing the history according to a specific nation/civilization. In order to have a non-Western IR, the approaches should avoid parochialism and focus on world history rather than Sino-centric history.

Tsinghua (moral realism) avoids Chinese framing of history or distortion of history in its approach. *Tsinghua* explicitly and almost solely focuses on pre-Qin era (Xu & Sun, 2016). Based on this understanding, *Tsinghua* studies modern era by ignoring the historical linkages between the two periods regardless of whether it is Chinese history or any other.

The events happened during this mid-period considered as valid examples of moral realism rather than as a resource for developing the theory (Xu & Sun, 2016; Yan, 2016). As it was the case in the pre-Qin era, China was considered as the center of all civilizations and the world (Ling, 2016; Xu & Sun, 2016). Through such an approach, *Tsinghua* does not feel necessity to re-frame or distort history, but only take the specific events that are critical for the theory building. Thus, *Tsinghua* is able to avoid Eurocentric or Sino-centric framing of history through its research concern, which solely focus on specific examples to prove the theory. This also helps the approach to avoid distortion of history since it does not study world history, but focus on critical historical events that are significant for the theory itself.

The Chinese School of IR mainly follows the method of distorting history while avoiding a centric framing of world history. The School put China and the Chinese experience at the top while studying history. They analyze Chinese history and focus on the historical cornerstones that are specifically significant for China rather than having an understanding of the world history perspective. This approach sometimes leads the School to distort history in order to demonstrate that the concerned approach is valid and would bring peace again, as in the case of -distorted- ancient China. Only *guanxi* seems to be engaging in such a world history perspective because it does not differentiate China from any other nation while demonstrating examples of *guanxi* in history. However, this success of having a world history perspective remains very shallow for *guanxi*, which stems from *guanxi*'s approach to history. It does not look at history as a resource for theory construction – which the other three approaches do -, but as a resource for theoretical examples. Thus, it limits its success and needs a comprehensive study of history to reach a complete world history approach. Turning back to the main trend of the Chinese School, it replaces the Eurocentric distortion of history with the Sino-centric distortion of history and does not have a comprehensive world history study that prevents the School from developing some centric framing of history. For the issue of distortion, although the School challenges the Eurocentric distortion of history with Sino-centric distortion, it still reproduces the logic of parochialism. This approach of the School hinders its process of becoming the voice of the non-Western world and non-Western IR because, as in the cases of the aforementioned Eurocentric premises, the School only changes the subject who follows centrism rather than providing a non-centric approach

to IR. To overcome Eurocentrism completely, the School should challenge Eurocentric as well as Sino-centric distortion of history. For the issue of world history, without having a comprehensive study of world history, it would be a mistake to judge the School regarding its Euro- or Sino-centrism. Whether it is necessary to study world history in order to develop an IRT would be the discussion of another study.

3.6 WESTERN/CHINESE CIVILIZATION

The fifth principle of Eurocentrism is considering Western civilization as the superior and ideal civilization that has to be spread to the rest of the world without getting influenced by the other inferior civilizations. As mentioned, this claim of superiority is accompanied by the civilizing mission (or white man's burden) as well as imperialism. It is significant for non-Western IR approaches to overcome such tendencies of overvaluing one nation or arguing for civilizing mission regardless of the subject who is campaigning for the civilizing mission. Therefore, the Chinese School of IR should also be tested on this fifth premise of Eurocentrism. Considering the four approaches of the School, one would observe that all of them have – explicitly or implicitly- claims on the superiority of Chinese civilization while they successfully avoid claiming the necessity of Chinese civilizing mission, except the intrinsic tendency of *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) for such a mission. The claim of civilization superiority without civilizing mission might be a natural result of the intense Occidental tone in the Chinese School, as discussed in the forthcoming section.

Tianxia (All-Under-Heaven) explicitly stands for the superiority of Chinese civilization while implicitly – and in a very rigid way – favors Chinese civilizing mission. Callahan (2008) severely criticizes *tianxia* for following the Western methods of superiority claims and civilizing mission. He argues that "rather than guide us toward a post-hegemonic world order, *Tianxia* presents a new hegemony where imperial China's hierarchical governance is updated for the twenty-first century" (2008: 749). He also compares *tianxia* with the Western civilizing mission by stating that "Zhao's Pax Sinica mission is quite similar to that of the Western imperial scholars whom he criticizes" (2008: 754). Nyiri supports this view by arguing that *tianxia* stands for "China's 'yellow man's burden' of using China's ethical mode of governance to pacify and civilize the world" (2006: 106 as

cited in Callahan, 2008: 754). This study also supports this view and a few examples will be provided to demonstrate it. For instance, *tianxia* requires other civilizations to assimilate and internalize the principles of the center, which spreads its values inner to outer circles, (Ling, 2016) as the West requires others civilizations to "relinquish their cultural self-determination and become European" (Hobson, 2012: 62). As exemplified by tributary system, which is glorified by *tianxia*, "dynastic politics always sought to 'transform' (*zhuan hua*) the Other to the Confucian center; never the other way around" (Hevia, 1995 as cited in Ling, 2016: 29) because "the Confucian center [always] knows the best", not the others (Ling, 2016: 29). Although *tianxia* highlights the significance of being tolerant and basing the system on voluntary joining, these examples show the inherent logic of civilizing mission. This echoes the *derivative agency* role in anti-paternalist Eurocentrism, which favors that others must accept the Western civilization in a voluntary basis in order to become civilized and modern (Hobson, 2012). It is tolerant but requires the acknowledgement of Western superiority. *Tianxia* is also tolerant but requires the acknowledgement of Chinese superiority. In other case, both parties will consider the non-accepter as an uncivilized and backward society that does not have a proper way of thinking. As the ultimate ideal of *tianxia* is to reach world harmony in which all the people in the world accepts the principles of the center and this ideal is "inevitable" (Callahan, 2008: 755), it is almost impossible to adjoin everyone to the system by voluntary acceptance. If it is required by *tianxia* to extend the center's principles to all until the world harmony is achieved (Zhao, 2021), then, the center cannot leave anyone outside and will require everyone to join the system. This would be the call of civilizing mission rather than tolerant acceptance of diversities. Thus, *tianxia* seems to be following the methods of anti-paternalist Eurocentrism and reaches to anti-paternalist Sino-centrism. It degrades the West and other nations while superioritize China and Chinese civilization.

Although it is clear that *guanxi* (relational theory) argues for the superiority of Chinese civilization, it is difficult to directly detect civilizing mission in the approach since it bases everything on relations and requires actors to change their behaviors according to the relation. The theory solely and specifically focuses on Chinese civilization, values and tradition to understand the world without considering other civilizations and constantly refers to these values while explaining the basic assumptions of the theory (Qin, 2016).

This means that *guanxi* acknowledges Chinese civilization as superior to others, so that it does not feel a necessity to consult other civilizations and their perspectives. Thus, *guanxi* has a "background knowledge that has been formed in practice and history in Confucian societies" (Qin, 2016: 35) and consider Chinese civilization as superior to others. Together with this, there is *yin-yang* understanding, which argues that opposite polars should always exists and complement each other in a constantly changing way. Therefore, one cannot eliminate the other by civilizing mission according the basic principles of *guanxi*. As a result, *guanxi* replaces Western civilization with Chinese civilization and argues for the superiority of the latter. For the issue of civilizing mission, it does not have explicit assumptions for civilizing mission and it rejects such attempts in certain occasions.

Gongsheng (symbiosis) - similar to *guanxi* (relational theory) - also accepts the superiority of Chinese civilization while avoiding claims of civilizing mission. Although *gongsheng* argues for equality and tolerance, its inner logic seems supporting the view that China is great and others should follow. Focusing on "the traditional interstate system in East Asia" (Ren, 2020: 405) and Confucian teachings without considering the contributions of other civilizations, *gongsheng* begins its research with the claim that Chinese civilization is greater. It is presented as a solution to today's problems and international conflicts (Ren, 2020). Stating that "the homogeneity of the liberal order clashes with elements of traditional Chinese thought that stress the universality of difference" (Smith, 2018: 461) and arguing *gongsheng* as the solution, the theory already delivers the implicit message that without integrating or accepting Chinese tradition, current problems of the world will continue to remain. As Wang Yangming reminds "universal oneness' [or *gongsheng*] is what allows for a flourishing civilization" (as cited in Li, 2021: 18). In other words, without *gongsheng*, civilization cannot flourish. Despite the tendency of *gongsheng* to acknowledge Chinese civilization as superior to others, it is successful in avoiding claims of the civilizing mission. Throughout the analysis of the theory, it seems that *gongsheng* avoids clashes and civilizing mission while expecting all to be respectful to other civilizations, which stands against the main logic of the Western civilizing mission. Therefore, it would be stated that *gongsheng* is successful in overcoming civilizing missions while reproducing the Eurocentric logic of parochialism

in its challenge to Western civilizational greatness by replacing it with Chinese civilizational greatness.

Although *Tsinghua* (moral realism) considers itself as a branch of realism, it has a clear stance regarding the superiority of Chinese civilization while avoiding civilizing mission. Yan (2016) constantly mentions that it should be China to change the current order of chaos and it was China to establish a peaceful and secure international system in pre-Qin era. This tendency itself is sufficient to understand how *Tsinghua* acknowledges China and Chinese civilization as greater than others. It is important that in "the Confucian doctrine, [there is understanding of] '*Li wen lai xue, bu wen wang jiao*' (It is known that people initiatively come to learn rites from masters but it is never heard that masters initiatively go to educate others about rites)" (Gaowei, 2000: 1 as cited in Yan, 2016: 4). Asking who would be the master in *Tsinghua*, the answer is not surprising: China. For this reason, Yan desires that "China [is] to change the international system in the 21th century if it practices the moral principles of fairness, justice, and civility both at home and abroad" (2016: 1). It is obvious that the concerned principles of fairness, justice and civility will be based on Chinese understanding of them. On the other hand, as in the case of *guanxi* (relational theory) and *gongsheng* (symbiosis), *Tsinghua* successfully avoids requiring civilizing mission. Although it focuses on the Chinese understanding of morality and its compulsory nature to bring worldwide peace in the current era, moral realism focuses on lead-by-example -which is mentioned in theory (Yan, 2016) - rather than transforming by coercion. Therefore, *Tsinghua* acknowledges Chinese civilization as superior to others and suggests that to transform the current world order, China should lead-by-example through its morally responsible behaviors rather than forcing others to convert the Chinese world order.

All four approaches of the Chinese School acknowledge Chinese civilization as superior to others and – except *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) – avoid claims of a Chinese civilizing mission. Comparing with the mainstream IR, the Chinese School mainly replaces Western civilizational superiority with Chinese civilizational superiority while avoids replacing Western civilizing mission with Chinese civilizing mission. As in the other analysis of Eurocentric premises on the Chinese School, this concept of civilization and the civilizing mission of the School challenges Eurocentrism by Sino-centrism regarding civilizational superiority; however, the underlying logic of Eurocentrism to parochialize

one nation over others remains in the Chinese School as well. This kind of approach could not be sufficient to meet the demands of the non-Western world to make themselves heard in the discipline of IR. Therefore, in order to truly produce a non-Western IR, the Chinese School should abandon its assumptions of Chinese civilizational superiority as in the case of their success in leaving the civilizing mission behind.

3.7 ORIENTALISM/OCCIDENTALISM

The sixth principle of Eurocentrism is Orientalism, which is to have a binary view of the world in a way that it glorifies all the things Western, and vilify all the things Eastern. It is important for non-Western world to get rid of this label of inferiority and acting as the test laboratory of mainstream IRTs. Thus, the Chinese School of IR should be able to overcome Orientalist view. Considering the approaches of the School, all of them seems successful in disregarding Orientalism through glorifying China and Chinese civilization. However, while overthrowing the dominance of Orientalism in their theory-building, the Chinese School produces Occidentalism, which again looks at the world with a binary view and at this time, glorifies the East (China) and vilifies the West. Such an Occidentalism is exclusively observable in the four approaches of the Chinese School because scholars of each approach constantly compare their theories (and Chinese values) with the Western ones to demonstrate that Chinese one is always superior to its Western counterpart.

As the first approach, *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) has a binary view in its approach and explicitly vilify the West while glorifying China. In his book, Zhao (2021) begins with negating the West and Western order and then, explains the assumptions of *tianxia* in almost each chapter. The first part of vilifying the West covers more than half of each chapter and the remaining limited and short parts are left for explanations on *tianxia*, which is shallow and superficial. Although Zhao (2021) argues that there is no other or enemy in the system of *tianxia*, his approach in the chapters tells the story from an opposite view. "[A]ll that is good and desirable – order, legitimacy, voluntary submission – are clustered within the Chinese traditional system, and what is bad and undesirable – anarchy, disorder, war – are inherent in the Westphalia system" (Kim, 2016: 74 as cited in Christensen, 2019: 10). The organization of chapters in such a method results in an

understanding that "world dominated by China, or at least by Chinese principles, comes to represent a superior scenario to that of a Hobbesian world of nation states" (Christensen, 2019: 10). Zhao's approach in his book ultimately attains the voice of Occidentalism against Western Orientalism.

Guanxi (relational theory) follows the same path with *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) and in order to demonstrate the merits of *guanxi*, it constantly compares its main assumptions with the West and Western values in a way that it glorifies Chinese one. Since *guanxi* is based on *yin-yang* understanding, there has to be a binary view: dark and light, good and bad, and East and West (Qin, 2016). Different than *tianxia*, *guanxi* allocates room for inclusiveness (Kavalski, 2018). As light inside the dark and vice-versa, there is East in the West and vice-versa. Although this polarity and its constant transformation to each other are presented as constantly happening in a dynamic way by *guanxi* (Kavalski, 2018), it forgets its own assumptions while comparing the West with China. For instance, while comparing relational governance with rational governance (which Qin equalizes this with the West), Qin argues that "rules are designed to exploit the rationality of the actor" (Qin, 2016: 42) in contrast, "relational governance… manage complex relationships in a community to produce order so that members behave in a reciprocal and cooperative manner with mutual trust evolved over a shared understanding of social norms and human morality (Qin, 2011: 133 as cited in Qin, 2016: 43). He also states that *guanxi*an world "is a world that differs from the hard realists' interpretation of the Hobbesian jungle, where everyone fights again everyone else for survival… [in guanxi] differences make harmony" (2016: 41). Therefore, although he claims that there is dynamic process of change between *yin* and *yang*, he treats the West and Chinese tradition as something static in his study while comparing them. *Guanxi*, thus, replaces Orientalism of the West with Occidentalism of China in a way that it even goes against its own assumptions of dynamism.

Similar to *guanxi* (relational theory), *gongsheng* (symbiosis) establishes a view of Occidentalism without arguing that there is a dynamic process of change. *Gongsheng* takes the West as something static and homogenous and then, makes comparison with China and Chinese tradition, in which the latter is superior. For instance, Ren argues that "Western international relations theory views this [diversity] as anarchy, but for Chinese thinkers who emphasize symbiosis, this is just the way the world is" and "differences

between agents as a vital force that facilitates mutual stimulation" (as cited in Li, 2021: 24). First, Ren differs Chinese civilization from Western civilization with these statements. Adding on this, Yangming reinforces this differentiation by flavoring it with Occidentalism by claiming that "intrinsic oneness—that is to say, a state of symbiosis—without the light of human morality, can only ever breed a dark and uncivilized society", which was the result of Western order (as cited in Li, 2021: 18). In order to be civilized, one has to embrace the method of symbiosis and morality. This has been the case for China throughout centuries. Once China has left the place to the West, the result was anarchy and conflict rather than diversity and harmony. As a result, *gongsheng* acquires Occidentalism in its search for a non-Western IR approach.

Similar to *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), *Tsinghua* (moral realism) adopts Occidentalism more explicitly than *guanxi* (relational theory) and *gongsheng* (symbiosis). As an obvious illustration of such a binary view and Occidentalism, Yan argues that "the core principles of this system [based on moral realism] should be 'equity, justice and civility'… is superior to the values of 'freedom, equality and democracy'" (2013: 12 as cited in Xu & Sun, 2016: 169). In this statement, Yan, first, glorifies *Chinese* definition of freedom, equality and democracy over Western understanding of freedom, equality and democracy. He directly states that Chinese one is superior to the Western one. Throughout his study (2016), he constantly compares his theory with the Western theories, and naturally with realism. He, then, constantly refers that Chinese definition and understanding of morality is necessary to overcome the deficiency of Western theories on the role and importance of morality in the international politics. As the current Western system is failing, China should promote a new international order based on Chinese understanding of morality, equity, justice and civility (Yan, 2016). This should be the case because mainstream IR and Western philosophers are deprived of a true understanding of morality, which would be brought from China to solve the problem (Yan, 2016). Therefore, since the understanding of *Tsinghua* follows the view that Western system and its concepts are inferior to Chinese ones, it should be stated that *Tsinghua* also appeals Occidentalism in its search for a non-Western IR.

Overall, the Chinese School of IR challenges Orientalism of the mainstream IR with Chinese Occidentalism and clear-cut comparisons with Western philosophical traditions. Among them, *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) and *Tsinghua* (moral realism) apply

Occidentalism in their research more explicitly than *guanxi* (relational theory) and *gongsheng* (symbiosis). Although the degree of Occidentalism varies among the approaches, the existence of Occidentalism cannot be rejected. However, replacing Orientalism with Occidentalism does not seem sufficient to overcome Eurocentric tendency to glorify one nation while vilifying the others. It does not get rid of the understanding that some nation has acquired all the good traits throughout the history, while the rest of the world has been struggling with all the badness and inferiority. Whether it is the West or China would not change the ultimate result of degrading others.

3.8 THEORY OF PROGRESS

Theory of progress has two roles in Eurocentrism. First, it argues that development takes place through linear process of stages in the history and the West occupies the first place in terms of development. The second, in order to be as developed as the West, others should follow the methods and practices of the West. Otherwise, the true development cannot take place. Studying on the Chinese School, one would observe that except *Tsinghua* (moral realism), none of the four approaches engage in the issue of developmental stages. They do not seem to be concerned with the issue of progress regarding its transformation through stages. This might be stemming from the methodology of the approaches that focus solely on a certain period of Chinese history rather than having a comprehensive perspective towards history. However, for the second role, regarding the necessity of other nations to follow Western practices in order to be developed, the Chinese School seems to be replacing the West with China.

Being the most rigid one to promote Chinese superiority, *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven) has clearly requires the world to adopt Chinese civilization in order to reach true and moral development. “The *tianxia* system can form a network of mutual benefit, in which the interests of the imperial centre and all other states enhance and supplement each other, *promoting world prosperity* [emphasis added] and peace” (Zhao 2005, 2009d, 2010 as cited in Wang & Han, 2016: 62). In other words, without the system of *tianxia*, which is special to China and Chinese tradition, the world cannot reach world prosperity/progress and peace. Zhao supports this view by stating that *tianxia* is the “best ideal-typical scenario articulated by Chinese philosophers” while “the worst actual scenarios in today’s

world" (Xu, 2007: 135-37 as cited in Chu, 2022: 79). Thus, *tianxia* readably requires other nations/societies of the world to follow Chinese methods - especially *tianxia* – in order to progress from backwardness to development and prosperity.

Although *guanxi* (relational theory) is not concerned with progress as other approaches of the Chinese School, it still provides some suggestions to progress. It argues that "the Chinese conceptualizes the universe in a polar way, believing that progress and evolution take place by interaction of the two opposite poles" (Qin, 2016: 39). From this statement, it is understood that *guanxi* offers a method for progress (and evolution) through the interaction of differences. Development remains an aim of *guanxi* in that sense. Based on this, it is also synthesized that since the relations have to take place in a constant way, then, progress itself has to exist in a constant way as well because once the relation begins, it ultimately leads to the progress. In other words, everyone starts progressing and developing once s(he) has been counted as existing by *guanxi*. Adding on this, it is understood that everyone is destined to develop throughout his/her life (including nations, societies, states and etc.) regardless of his/her desire to develop or not. This process of developing will continue "to reach the ideal state of harmony" (Qin, 2016: 41). Therefore, although the main aim of the *guanxi* is not the progress, it still cannot avoid suggesting a path of development and progress. It even makes this compulsory for all rather than providing room for reluctant people not to progress. As in the case of other three approaches of the Chinese School, *guanxi* also requires this progress to take place through the practice of *guanxi*, or through the practice of Chinese values, norms and understanding.

In contrast to *guanxi* (relational theory), it seems that the main purpose of *gongsheng* (symbiosis) is progress because of its constant emphasis on the necessity of development and how it would take place based on *gongsheng*. First of all, *gongsheng* argues that without reaching and embracing *gongsheng* and its moral principles, the world is destined to remain in darkness and away from the merits of civilization. As mentioned before, Wang Yangming refers this by stating that "intrinsic oneness—that is to say, a state of symbiosis—without the light of human morality, can only ever breed a dark and uncivilized society" (as cited in Li, 2021: 18). Thus, in order to progress, one should follow the basics of *gongsheng* and its moral principles. For instance, *gongsheng* argues that "different things, through constructive interactions, can together achieve

advancement" (Ren, 2020: 406). It requires cooperation rather than conflict – which is a must for certain Eurocentric theories- to progress. Adding upon this, it elaborates that "acting autonomously allows them [differences] to achieve progress and development together" (Ren, 2020: 406). Considering the technological developments, Zhang Xianglong refuses the current technology as something desirable and support the view that "The apposite technology for this theory of symbiosis and family-based structure is not the advanced technology we have now, but a science-tech best-suited to human-and-earth life that promotes human longevity and survival" (as cited in Li, 2021: 20). This approach to the latest technological developments returns back to the idea that without the merits of *gongsheng*, the civilization would not find a light to emancipate from darkness. Based on the picture that *gongsheng* depicts, it would be assumed that although *gongsheng* does not have clear cut stages for linear development as in the case of Eurocentrism, it still carries the thesis that there is a linear development in a blurry way. To simplify, it projects that before the symbiosis, all societies of the world are uncivilized and in the state of darkness. The special societies that adopt symbiosis - embedded in Chinese civilization - and its morality will pass the stage of civilization. This new era of civilization will "create life-time through the process of flourishing growth" (Li, 2021: 21).

Tsinghua (moral realism) is also a theory that is about progress and development, especially the progress of a rising state and China. "Moral realism is a theory of political determinism and attributes political leadership to the growth, stagnation, or decline" (Yan, 2016: 13). It is concerned with how a rising state would develop or get behind the developments. Because of this main purpose of *Tsinghua*, it cannot avoid from the theory of progress easily. Once the rising state will become the new dominant state in the international system, it will "determine the direction of the *evolution* [emphasis added] of international norms" (Xu & Sun, 2016: 168). It is important that Xu and Sun utilize the word evolution rather than choosing another concept that would refer to the idea that the dominant state decides the international norms. The concept of evolution brings the idea of development and progress from primitiveness to advancement. Based on this, regardless of the nation of the rising state, the system and international norms should evolve/progress constantly. Supporting this understanding, Zhou argues that *Tsinghua* "also provides insights into understanding the evolution of the future regional order in

East Asia" (2012: 34 as cited in Xu & Sun, 2016: 171). Here again, the concept of evolution is brought forward by Zhou and implies that the order of the East Asia is to progress and develop in the future, if the suggestions of *Tsinghua* are considered seriously. Therefore, *Tsinghua* also embraces the theory of progress in its research and argues that there was and will be a constant evolution/development of international system.

Wallerstein's argument that "the efforts of other non-Westerners to appropriate progress for part or all of the non-Western world, [are] pushing Europe out of the picture, but not progress" (1997: 31) seems to be valid in the case of the Chinese School of IR and its four main approaches. The approaches replace the West with China and Chinese civilization as the most appropriate example of development and advancement. Although they do not have a rigid form of stages that describes the progress of nations/societies, the School still argues that true progress would take through following the suggestions of their approaches. From this perspective, they challenge Eurocentric theory of progress by pushing Europe out of the picture, however, they cannot really challenge the theory of progress itself. All four approaches explicitly or implicitly argue that without embracing Chinese principles and civilization, true development/progress/evolution cannot take place. In order to have a developed and advanced world, the world should follow the Chinese values, norms and ideas. However, in order to meet the demands of non-Western world, which is to make their voice heard in the discipline of IR, the Chinese School should find ways to eliminate the idea that a certain nation is the prominent example of advancement and all others – who want to be as developed as the former - should follow its methods and principles to develop as well.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, strategies of the Chinese School to overcome Eurocentrism is discussed on the basis of the general methods of non-Western scholars. It is observed that the Chinese School avoids using the strategy of showing the Eastern origins of Western concepts and achievements. It seems a successful step to overcome Eurocentrism because such kind of an approach generally results in the reproduction of Eurocentrism by implicitly stating that it is still the West who is successful, but non-Western world also

contributed in this success. Two other methods are generally used by the Chinese School, that are to focus on indigenous resources and Chinese framing of world history.

Following, the Chinese School of IR is analyzed in the light of the seven main premises of Eurocentrism: Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric framing of history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress. Overall, the Chinese School is successful to challenge Eurocentrism by replacing it with Sino-centrism. All the four approaches engage in such replacing for almost each Eurocentric premise, except racism and *guanxi*an historical approach which does not have a proper Sino-centric framing of world history. All of them apply Chinese exceptionalism, universalizing the values of China, distortion of history to support the theoretical claims, superiority of Chinese civilization, Occidentalism and Chinese theory of progress in a loose content.

It is critically significant for the Chinese School that it avoids racism, Chinese framing of history and civilizing mission in its approaches. This is a considerable success that cannot be ignored by the scholars of the non-Western world. The Chinese School avoids granting superiority to the Chinese race while praising Chinese civilization and culture. It glorifies the latter, but this does not lead the scholars of the School to argue for the superiority of the Chinese race. The School avoids Chinese framing of world history while distorting history to support their theories. Lastly, the School avoids the call for a Chinese civilizing mission while claiming that the Chinese civilization is superior to others. Shortly, the School successfully avoids Eurocentrism and Sino-centrism considering racism, framing of world history and civilizing mission while challenging Eurocentric cultural/civilizational superiority and distortion of history with their Sino-centric counterparts. All these analyses would be found in Table 1 at the end of this section.

While the Chinese School challenges Eurocentrism with Sino-centrism, it only changes the subject who embraces these methods of -centrism rather than overthrowing parochialist centrist approach of IR. “As a result, the sanctioned Chinese theories almost seem to reproduce mainstream IR theory only with Chinese characteristics” (Christensen, 2019: 11). The Chinese School falls into the trap that Acharya has warned “scholars should avoid a ‘cultural exceptionalism and parochialism’ that presents ‘the characteristics of one’s own group (society, state, or civilisation) as homogenous, unique, and superior to those of others’” (2014: 563 as cited in Hwang, 2021: 318). It challenges

and criticizes Eurocentrism of the discipline, but it also "reproduce[s] the very ethnocentricities that are being challenged'" (Hurrell, 2016: 150 as cited in Hwang, 2021: 327). Because of all these reasons, it might be better to consider the Chinese School as a theoretical initiative leading to the "partial reproduction and partial overcoming of Eurocentrism" (Tolay, 2021: 693). It partially reproduces Eurocentrism in a way that it follows the same parochialist methods of Eurocentrism and replaces it with Sino-centrism, but still centrism. The School partially overcomes Eurocentrism because it challenges directly the West itself and almost totally ignores the influence of the West while developing their theories. The School does not mention about the West, does not provide a critical role to it in the history of Chinese thought and generally takes a very critical stance against the things that are Western. In order to have a true non-Western IR or global IR, scholars and the Chinese School of IR should avoid this parochialism and bring forward their original ideas. They should consider the suggestion of Chu that they should be more concerned with "taking lessons from the debates in IR – in particular the interventions of postcolonialism, feminism, and critical theory" rather than focusing on Sino-centrism and parochialism (2022: 80). As Peng explains "despite its academic potential, the movement has made extremely slow progress in theory building. This slow progress is attributed to the prevalence of the Sino-centrism in Chinese IR" (2018: 1).

Table 1: Analysis of the Chinese School of IR with regard to seven main Eurocentric premises

	Tianxia (All-Under-Heaven)	*Guanxi* (Relational Theory)	*Gongsheng* (Symbiosis)	*Tsinghua* (Moral Realism)
Exceptionalism	Chinese exceptionalism	Chinese exceptionalism	Chinese exceptionalism	Chinese exceptionalism
Racism	No (but cultural superiority)	No (but cultural superiority)	No (but cultural superiority)	No (but cultural superiority)
Universalism	Chinese universalism	Chinese universalism	Chinese universalism	Chinese universalism
Framing of World History	Distortion of history	No specific study of history	Chinese framing and distortion of history	No framing or distortion of history
Civilizational Superiority	Yes, including civilizing mission tendency	Yes (but no civilizing mission)	Yes (but no civilizing mission)	Yes (but no civilizing mission)
Orientalism / Occidentalism	Chinese Occidentalism	Chinese Occidentalism (lighter)	Chinese Occidentalism (lighter)	Chinese Occidentalism
Theory of Progress	In a loose structure	Stages exists but not clear	In a loose structure	Stages exists but not clear

CONCLUSION

Debates on the rising China have also brought the discussion on the Chinese School of IR among the scholars of the discipline both from the West and the non-Western world. Some scholars (Keohane as cited in Hobson, 2012: 17; Mearsheimer as cited in CFPPR, 2022, 36:24) consider it a useless effort since it is not possible and not needed to have another alternative IRT as the existing theories are well sufficient to meet demands of the scholars from all over the world. On the other hand, being not satisfied with the current hegemony of the West in the discipline, many scholars (Behera; 2010; Chen, 2011a; Ikeda, 2011; Inoguchi; 2010; Qin, 2010) – especially non-Western scholars – argue that it is necessary to overcome Eurocentrism and the Chinese School might be such an alternative. Together with this, some claim that the inherent aim of the Chinese School is to assist the peaceful rise of China on the path of becoming a world power (Callahan, 2008) while certain scholars reject this claim by stating that the efforts for the establishment of such a School are only an academic concern without a political agenda (Ren, 2020; Zhao, 2021). Regardless of its intrinsic aim, the Chinese School of IR has attained the attention of IR scholars and taken part in the discussion regarding challenging Eurocentrism and establishing a non-Western/global IR. Certain scholar of the School advocate that the School has so far come a long way to overcome Eurocentrism and it will be successful to produce a non-Western IRT soon. Such claims are the reason that led to the beginning of this study.

This study aimed to analyze whether the Chinese School of IR has been successful in overcoming the Eurocentrism of the IR discipline and providing an alternative perspective to mainstream IRTs. In order to reach that point, this study first revealed the underpinnings/premises of Eurocentrism and the four main approaches of the Chinese School of IR. Following, in regard to these Eurocentric premises, the Chinese School is analyzed in order to understand whether the School is able to overthrow them or not. Thus, this study focused on the research question: To what extent is the Chinese School of IR able to overcome Eurocentrism and produce a non-Western IRT?

Within this scope, this study initiated its research with Eurocentrism and its critiques. Since the 1990s, Eurocentrism has been severely attacked by scholars around the world. It is acknowledged as Eurocentrism is silencing the non-Western hemisphere and setting

the boundaries of social sciences. In other words, Eurocentrism decides what can and cannot be discussed/talked about, which does not provide much room for alternative non-Western ideas. Encountering such a discipline, non-Western scholars (Behera; 2010; Chen, 2011a; Inoguchi; 2010; Qin, 2010) argue that Eurocentrism hinders the development of the discipline by keeping it in shallow waters and not allowing others to contribute. They criticize that mainstream IRT is not sufficient to understand and analyze the events of the non-Western world in the current era. It is a significant criticism that occurs at a time that witnesses the declining hegemony of the U.S. and a rising China. Comprehending the importance of the issue, scholars aim to reveal the underpinnings/premises of Eurocentrism.

In this context, this study detected seven main premises of Eurocentrism: Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric world history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress. Each of them plays a crucial role in the construction of Eurocentrism while each of them is also connected. Some premises - such as Western exceptionalism, racism or Western civilization - sounds very similar to each, but they highlight a different aspect of Eurocentrism. Because of this, one cannot be detached from another and all the seven should be studied separately.

These seven premises (Western exceptionalism, racism, universalism, Eurocentric world history, Western civilization, Orientalism and theory of progress) construct a Eurocentric IR. All of them have a critical role in this construction and each should be defeated in order to defeat the hydra-headed monster of Eurocentrism. In order to reach a non-Western or global IR, scholars should avoid these traps of reproducing Eurocentrism in their studies. Each of these concepts should be treated carefully and none of them should be considered unimportant since each premise supports another.

Understanding the intrinsic Eurocentrism of the IR discipline, the reasons for such a construction is discussed. Two main arguments come to be prominent. That is the hegemonic status of the West in the Gramscian sense and the local discriminative conditions. For the first one, it is argued that the West has reached a status of hegemony through consent and coercion. The West has become the world power through its material power and the consent of the rest of the world. This consent was given when the knowledge produced by the West spread to other parts of the world. It takes place

intentionally and unintentionally. The ultimate result is the reproduction of the knowledge, that is coming from the hegemon, by the rest of the world. This process is also at work in the issue of Eurocentrism of IR discipline. Mainstream IR produces the knowledge and the rest are to acknowledge this knowledge by consent or coercion, i.e., accusing the ones refusing the hegemonic knowledge as being unscientific.

The second reason for the Eurocentric construction of the IR seems the local conditions that prevent/hinder the studies of non-Western scholars to challenge the mainstream IR. There are various aspects of these discriminatory conditions. The number of universities providing IR courses at the undergraduate or graduate level, the qualification of the scholars in these universities, the amount of funds aiming for the research on non-Western IR, the lack of free-thinking atmosphere, the state's perspective regarding the significance of the IR discipline and the role of media are examples of such discriminatory conditions. All or a few of them would be found from one country to another. Whichever condition exists in the concerned country, the result is the same: it prevents the production of non-Western IR because of discouraging and not assisting the scholars who are eager to study such issues. Therefore, Gramscian hegemony of the West and the local discriminative conditions appear to be the two main prominent reasons for the Eurocentrism of the IR discipline and its continuation like that.

Regarding the hegemonic status of Western IR, another discussion begins on whether a non-Western IRT is possible or not. There are two sides to this discussion. One – who is generally positivist – argues that it is not possible to have such an approach since there are universal and objective laws and mainstream IR discovers these laws. It is not possible to have a science that is filled with traditional subjective ideas. Even if it is possible to have a non-Western IR, there is no need to have it because the existing IRTs are well sufficient to understand and analyze the events of the current era. Therefore, it is a meaningless effort to research non-Western IR and try to bring new alternatives that are specifically relying on certain traditions and understandings.

On the contrary, there are some scholars (Acharya & Buzan, 2010; Behera, 2010; Ren, 2020) who stand for the idea that it is possible and also necessary to study alternative non-Western theories in order to emancipate the discipline from parochialism and open the path of further development. Acharya and Buzan (2010) claim that they are aware of the

hegemonic status of the mainstream Western IR, however, this hegemony also proves that a counter-hegemonic theory or a non-Western IR is possible. It provides an incentive for scholars to focus on their traditional, indigenous resources in order to bring new understandings forward, which would also be universalized as the Westerners have been doing. In order to reach that aim, it is observed that three methods are generally followed: showing the Eastern origins of the Western achievements, studying the indigenous resources and re-framing the history from the perspective of the East or the world.

The first method of showing the Eastern origins of the West refers that scholars strive to reveal the hidden connection between the Eastern and Western civilizations in order to demonstrate that the West owes its achievements to the East. This helps to break the exceptionalist approach of the West by rejecting the argument that the West has not been influenced by other civilizations throughout history. However, this method still benefits Eurocentrism by reproducing it through the implicit acceptance of Western success and progress. In other words, it means that this method leads scholars to accept that it is still the West that is successful, but it owes its success to the rest of the world. Therefore, this method is a risky method to overcome Eurocentrism.

As the second method, indigenous resources are focused to understand the international politics of their ancestors and re-frame it to analyze today's world. It is critical for scholars to avoid ahistoricism while following this strategy. Scholars would go astray because of the extensive focus on history and historical events in a way that they would start to consider today's world as similar to the past. Keeping this trap in mind, scholars would find alternative perspectives to world politics and transform them in a proper way to adapt the current events.

The last method that is utilized in the search for a non-Western IR or global IR approach is to re-frame the history in order to come up with truly a world history perspective against the current Eurocentric world history. It is argued that since Western history highlights the significant cornerstones of the West and glorifies it, it leads to discouragement in the non-Western world by implicitly claiming that the non-Western world has always been in failure and was not significant at all. The aim is to understand how the non-Western world has been influencing the course of history by revealing the significant historical events that are important for the non-Western world. Through this, they aspire to

understand how non-Western leaders/societies have been thinking about international politics. As being one of the Eurocentric premises, the world history perspective would be a critical move to avoid the Eurocentric framing of history.

Realizing that there are serious efforts to produce non-Western IRTs around the world, this study aimed to understand and analyze one of them in order to observe the level of achievement by the non-Western scholars in the research. The Chinese School of IR appeared to be an appropriate candidate for this purpose because the scholars of the School believe in themselves regarding their so-far success and almost inevitable future of the concrete establishment of a non-Western IR by the Chinese School (Ren, 2020). The need to make research in order to establish a Chinese School or IR with Chinese characteristics dates back to the 1980s of China. From that point on, considerable efforts have been put to find clues for the establishment of such a school. In the 2000s, the dream of a Chinese School of IR has come to be realized with the appearance of four main approaches: *tianxia* (All-Under-Heaven), *guanxi* (relational theory), *gongsheng* (symbiosis) and *Tsinghua* (moral realism). All of these approaches have a certain potential to be developed as an alternative non-Western IRT according to the efforts of the Chinese School. They focus on traditional resources of China and strive to establish a Chinese IRT.

This study aimed to understand the Chinese School of IR and analyze it to check to what extent the School is successful to overcome Eurocentrism by utilizing seven main Eurocentric premises as a tool of comparison. Before initiating this analysis, it is seen as fruitful to observe the methods of Chinese scholars to develop a non-Western IR approach. It seems that the School generally focuses on two main methods, which are studying traditional, indigenous resources and reframing the history in order to reach an Eastern or world history perspective.

The Chinese School of IR generally considers Confucian teachings, while *Tsinghua* (moral realism) also adds Taoism to it. The School only focuses on Chinese thinkers in ancient China rather than having a comprehensive approach that focuses on the thinkers of the East Asian societies of that time. For the history part, the School also specifically focuses on Chinese history and its significant events, especially in ancient China and the pre-Qin era. The tributary system becomes a significant guide to

understand the interstate relations of China in the past. Through these two methods of studying indigenous resources and changing the focus of the history from the West to China, certain scholars of the Chinese School (Qin, 2016; Ren, 2020) aim to produce a non-Western IRT.

Analyzing the Chinese School in regard to seven main Eurocentric premises, it seems that the School has had partial success in overthrowing Eurocentrism. It reaches this success through the intentional dismissing of the West while over-concentrating on China and Chinese values in their theory-making process This results in Sino-centrism. It challenges Eurocentrism by replacing it with Sino-centrism and breaks the glorified status of the West. The School almost totally ignores the influence of the West on Chinese tradition and solely focuses on Chinese ideas and values. Scholars (Ren, 2020; Zhao, 2021) have a clear tone of refusing Western concepts and ideas while claiming that these values were the reason for the worldwide conflicts in the last few centuries. Accordingly, the world needs Chinese contributions in order to reach world peace and safety. The general tendency is to vilify the West and glorify China. This leads to the replacement of certain Eurocentric premises with Sino-centric approaches. The Chinese School challenges Western exceptionalism with Chinese exceptionalism, Western universalism with Chinese universalism, Eurocentric framing of history with Sino-centric framing of history, the superiority of Western civilization with superiority of Chinese civilization, Orientalism with Occidentalism and Western theory of progress with Chinese theory of progress. Certain premises occurs to be more rigidly structured according to Chinese values and Sino-centrism while the remaining premises are slightly focused on such a replacement. For racism, there is not a direct claim of the Chinese School in its approaches regarding the superiority of the Chinese race over others. This is a significant achievement for the School to avoid one of the main premises of Eurocentrism.

Although Sino-centrism challenges the Eurocentrism of the discipline, the Eurocentric logic of parochialism still remains in the approaches of the Chinese School of IR. The change occurs at the subject who is specifying the theory to a certain region. The Chinese School brings new centrism to IR rather than finding ways to overcome such tendencies. It mainly glorifies Chinese civilization and culture over others, especially the West. Through its Occidentalist view, the Chinese School inevitably leads itself to a situation that is parochialist. In order to reach a truly non-Western or global IR, scholars should

find alternative ways to some centrism and have a more comprehensive approach. Otherwise, it would bring another monster of centrism that is to be attacked by the scholars of the non-Western world even without defeating the hydra-headed monster of Eurocentrism.

Considering the main weakness of this study, it was the language barrier regarding the Chinese School of IR. English resources on the School's approaches are considerably limited. Most of the available resources for English readers on the issue seem a product of a few books/articles that is written in English by Chinese Scholars. Studies of non-Chinese scholars, and ones who do not know Chinese, focus on these few resources and either analyze or criticize them. Because of this situation, it becomes difficult to go in-depth in the research on the Chinese School or comprehensively understand the approaches. Scholars having proficiency both in Chinese and English would overcome this obstacle and also contribute to the discipline by elaborating the knowledge about the Chinese School of IR.

Classifying the main premises of Eurocentrism, this study facilitates the process of analysis on a certain theory. Through these categories, the Chinese School of IR and other possible non-Western IRT attempts could be analyzed. Additionally, this study contributes to the discipline by revealing the possible traps for non-Western scholars that would lead them to reproduce Eurocentrism by focusing on and analyzing the Chinese School of IR. As mentioned, although the Chinese School challenges Eurocentrism in many aspects, it still falls into the trap of parochialism. This provides insight for non-Western scholars in their search for non-Western IRT. It also highlights that it is not an easy struggle to overcome Eurocentrism that is constructed from the Enlightenment period onwards.

As a final point, this study observes that non-Western scholars, especially Chinese scholars, seem to be acting in a hurry to produce a non-Western IRT. This haste results in scholars missing certain steps on the ladder that climbs to overcoming Eurocentrism. Missing these steps, scholars unintentionally reproduce Eurocentrism and the Eurocentric logic of parochialism. If the tendency of such parochialism is not recognized by the scholars during their research, it results in the reinforcement of parochialist approaches,

and therefore, Eurocentrism. As a result, this study suggests that non-Western scholars should calmly make progress to avoid falling into such traps.

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APPENDIX 1. ETHICS COMMISSION FORM

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TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KOMİSYON MUAFİYETİ FORMU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 08/06/2023

Tez Başlığı: Non-Western Challenges to Eurocentrism: The Case of Chinese IR

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmam:

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3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, mülakat, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

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Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

08.06.2023

Tarih ve İmza

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ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

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APPENDIX 2. ORIGINALITY REPORT

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MASTER'S THESIS ORIGINALITY REPORT

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