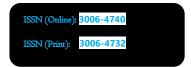# Foucault's Power, Knowledge, and Resistance: Reconfiguring East-West Dynamics in a Post-9/11 World

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Abstract

Power dynamics play a crucial role in shaping contemporary world politics, particularly concerning the East-West dichotomy and its implications for Islamophobia, xenophobia, and the refugee crisis. This study explores how conflicting interests influence political landscapes, revealing a continuum where power and resistance coexist. It examines the ongoing transformations in power relations and their impact on the post-9/11 sensibilities within the East, influenced by Western hegemony. Michel Foucault's concept of power highlights its pervasive nature, embedded and unfolded within repressive social structures, subtly shaping the relationships and interactions between the East and the West. This interconnected web of influence illustrates the gap between perception and interpretation, enabling those with power to dominate knowledge and reinforce arbitrary discrimination. Such exercises of power create inequalities that provoke significant real-world reactions. Consequently, this research investigates how power, knowledge, and truth shape the identities and experiences of the subaltern today, offering critical insights into the ongoing struggles against systemic inequities. The hallmark of this study is its emphasis on the narrative of resistance, and the refusal to accept Western hegemony and power.

Keywords: "power", "Islamophobia", "xenophobia", "refugee", "knowledge", "silence", and "resistance".

1.1 Introduction

The dominant rhetoric of the War on Terror (WOT) is expanding, revealing the predictive anarchy and chaos, inflicted by the West upon the non-Western world, notably the Muslim

world. The emerging world-order has raised a question about the unsymmetrical power structures of this century. It expounds on the hostile division of political, economic, and social power between the West and non-Western countries. Significantly, critical thinkers of their time, Gramsci, Bhabha Spivak, Foucault, and Said, forewarned about the hegemonic designs of the West to justify and uphold its dominance upon the Others. In the words of Gramsci, hegemony unfolds itself as, the "spontaneous" assent of the vast majority of individuals to the dominant fundamental group's accustomed guidelines, for social interaction. This agreement is "historically" the result of the prestige (and confidence) the dominant group enjoys, as a result of its position and function, in the global production system (Gramsci, 1971, pg 12). According to Bieler and Morton, "social forces can attain hegemony [...] through world order, by promoting and elevating a mode of production." In this framework, one may examine the hegemony of the US more closely, which began after the World War II, when it became evident that a new world order had to be established (Bieler & Morton, 2004). Following this, Jackson asserts that the post-war era is "characterized by profound shifts in the structure of society, the organization of production, and the associated pervasive hegemony" (Jackson et al., 2009, np).

Prior to September 9/11, Samuel P. Huntington published The Clash of Civilizations. He argues that Islam and the West are diametrically opposed, as their "histories, languages, cultures, traditions, and, most importantly, religions" distinguish them (Huntington, 2011, pg 25). According to Huntington, the West has been at its most strong since World War II, therefore the rest of the world has greater "desire, will, and resources to reshape the world in non-Western ways" (Huntington, 2011, pg 26). He continues to emphasize the East-West divide and appears confident that the conflict between the West and Islam will not end, because "Islam has bloody borders" (Huntington, 2011, pg 34). According to Huntington, East will continue to oppose the West's superior military power, superior economic resources, and its more advanced international institutions. Edward Said, on the other hand, writes that Islam and the West have a lot in common and that this type of dualism will make it harder for Islam and the West to get along, instead of helping them find ways to live together peacefully. In its response, "The Clash of Ignorance" which came out after 9/11, Said argues that Huntington "recklessly affirms" the intensity of such binary divisions (Said, 2001, pg 352) and that his discussion of the differences, between Islam and the West, is based on a superficial outlook of the two cultures. He upholds that the Western policymakers are especially interested in making other religions, especially Islam, seem less independent and legitimate. For Said, labels like "Islam" and "the West" can make it hard to understand the complex cultural issues, as they simplify and generalize them (Said, 2001, pg 356). Consequently, history affirms that the 9/11 attacks foreordained unparallel operation of the incomparable extent of economic, political, and cultural expansionism (Vyasulu, 1979). Western imperialist intentions were confronted with severe consequences. Significantly, contemporary social analysts assert that the West's crossroads to 9/11 (Carlton 2005), followed by the 7/7 (London), Madrid, and Istanbul attacks, were not unpredictable. Unfortunately, contemporary discussions on the ethnocentric and cultural biases delineate the West and their

ambition of writing the world (Abu-Lughod, 2015) had serious repercussions. Therefore, one may assume that the Western hegemony, nowadays, is the most potent type of global supremacy. As hegemony is exercised by embracing the civil society, that has the agreement of people and cultural leadership, it has grave ramifications (Gramsci, 1971). West legitimizes the acts of hegemony, by restricting the formation and participation of subalterns (refugees, migrants, asylum seekers) under its authority. In accordance with their own vested interests while rendering themselves the comprehensive entity of knowledge, logic, and enlightenment, the West has driven the world towards a dangerous path (Mutman, 1992, pg 43-58). Thus, the rest of the world denotes a territory, populated by Others, who are labelled as uncivilized, traditional, irrational, and violent. According to Said, this illustrates that Orientalism is an institution that deals with the East by fabricating claims, developing ideas about it, naming it, teaching it, residing in it, and, ultimately, dominating it. In short, Orientalism has developed into a tool for the West to govern, reorganize, and dominate the Orient (Said, 1995, pg 3). Hence, Orientalism is an independent - an institution that the Empire uses to support its fictitious knowledge with the tailored historical and scientific realities. Said refers to this type of information as "second-order knowledge" (Said, 1995, pg 46) and argues that it contributes to the notion that the Orient is a victim. In *Literature, Memory, and Hegemony: East/West Crossings* Sharmani Patricia Gabriel points out that the East and the West are essentially unpredictable opposing divisions, as the East is to be found in the West and the West can be found in the East (Gabriel & Mooneeram, 2018 pg, 4). Strikingly, as world politics has evolved drastically since 9/11, the mechanism of power has also witnessed a transition from the sovereign's power to kill to the disciplinary power, which victimizes individuals (Foucault, 1976, pg 254). Moreover, it shifts towards the adherence to power among radical communities, which intends to keep the existence of the individuals under surveillance as its fundamental aim (Ibid). Hence, Jabri illustrates that even in Foucauldian discourse, discipline attempts at the interrogation of individual bodies, who might be kept under invigilation, discipline, manipulation, and, if need be, punishment (Jabri, 1996, pg 71). Therefore, since the beginning, the political recognition of the East and the West has never been a neutral or apolitical process that occurs in a space devoid of power relations (Jabri, 1996, pg 10). The West has been primarily involved in legitimizing practices in the bourgeoise-territorial and imperialist procedures for power formation and consolidation through the regulation of knowledge. In his *Prison Notebook, Gramsci* writes, "The crisis lies exactly in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum, a large variety of morbid symptoms develop" (Gramsci, 1971, pg 276). The current advancements in the war on terror, xenophobia, and Islamophobia are demonstrated as morbid symptoms indicative of a conflict. Through the concept of "hegemony," Gramsci proposes a reinterpretation of the notion of "morbid symptoms." According to him, hegemony is a way to control people by making them think that the ideas of the elite are right and part of "common sense" (Gramsci, 1971, pg 323). He continues to explicate and trace the origin of this idea by making a distinction between the two main methods that social power is

used: coercion and consent. In contrast to the techniques of coercion, hegemony attempts to influence people to agree with a certain set of values and rules of a given dominant system (Gramsci, 1971, pg 327). So, the hegemonic position is a type of social power that individuals understand as "common sense" and later practice in their daily lives (Gramsci, 1971, pg 331). Judith Butler, in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, poses certain questions in relation to one's understanding of the phenomenon of othering, "who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? and, decisively, what makes for a grievable life?" (Butler, 1997, pg 282).

With this in view, one witnesses Bhabha's significant contribution to the postcolonial counter-discourse, which contributes not only to opening up the colonial sign or subject as différance, but also to shelter its emancipatory counter-hegemonic potential from the uncertainty of the sign, that could be engaged in the postcolonial struggle against dominant relations of power and knowledge (Bhabha, 1983, pg 33). Bhabha emphasized the significance of social power relations when he described subaltern social groups as the oppressed, ethnic minority, whose social presence was essential to the West's hegemonic institutions. In the same vein, he has taken a major step in rethinking the colonized subject, as an exiled group of contradictory and uncertain times, by attempting to identify liminal or ambiguous aspects of subaltern's culture. The colonial subject is neither the colonized nor the colonizer, according to his view. Instead, he or she occupies a liminal position, a third space that negates both the colonizer and the colonized. Whereof, it should be kept in mind, that Bhabha's praise of liminal subjectivity is equivalent to claiming that the world has moved beyond colonialism, despite the fact that it is still struggling with hegemonic systems of colonialism or its all-too-common successor, neocolonialism, which is "a repetition with a difference" (Shohat, 1992, pg 107). Homi K. Bhabha's propositions, in *The Location of Culture,* clearly explain a migrant's predicament in a foreign land. He asserts that the time has come to move beyond the narratives of individual and original subjectivities, and to concentrate on actions and events that are generated in the formulation of cultural differences that are theoretically innovative and politically necessary (Bhabha, 1994, pg 11). Hence, the liminal figure of a refugee would make sure that no political ideology could claim transcendent or metaphysical authority for itself. This political othering and violence are possible only when the subject of cultural discourse, which is the agency of a people, is split in the discourse of discursive ambivalence. This discursive ambivalence is possible only when the pedagogical and the performative compete for narrative authority (Bhabha, 1994, pg 148). These narratives cross boundaries, horizons, and edges while analyzing the cultural disruptions that Bhabha believes are unavoidable at such a disjuncture. In these places, he contends, differences bleed into one another, articulating something entirely novel that he names hybrid: the development of cultural hybridity into something new, unfamiliar, and distinct, a fresh space for negotiating meaning and representation (Bhabha, 1994, pg 211).

Necessarily, Western hegemony has also been brought into discussion by Gayatri Spivak in A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Spivak investigates how significant works of European

metaphysicians (such as Kant and Hegel) not only tend to remove subalterns from their discourses, but also bar non-Europeans from occupying positions as fully human individuals. Importantly, Spivak establishes the concept of "sanctioned ignorance" in relation to the "reproduction and closure of imperialist structures." Spivak's charge of sanctioned ignorance is, most frequently, levelled against the Western study of the "third-world" "oriental" or "subaltern". Therefore, it fits very well with recent attempts to incorporate the non-western into social theory (Spivak, 1999, pg 614-620). In order to counter such a phenomenon, the solutions must likewise be of an epistemic nature and designed specifically for this specific form of violence. It must be kept in mind that approaches aimed to counter social, economic, or other types of oppression might not perform well against epistemic violence. Arguably, Michal Foucault seems to explore the "how" of power and delves deep to "bring to light power relations, finding their position, locating its point of application and the mechanism involved in it"(Foucault, 1982, pg 212).

Now, as the Western hegemony is evident, the East is mercilessly excluded from economic, political, and social legitimacy in a global system, the Empire Writes Back to regain its legitimacy and identity.

1.2 Foucault's Discourse on Power and Knowledge

Michel Foucault (1926–1984), the French postmodernist, is considered the pioneer in formulating the understanding of power, describing it not only as a means of coercion but also formulating the concept that "Power is everywhere", dispersed and set in knowledge, discourse, and the "administration of truth" (Foucault, 1977, pg 63). For Gaventa, Foucault's work reveals, power being dispersed rather than concentrated, enacted and manifested rather than possessed, digressive rather than entirely aggressive, and establishing agents alternately rather than being deployed by them, set a radical retreat from the earlier approach attributed to conceiving power and, as a result, it can't easily be incorporated with preceding ideas (Gaventa, 2003, pg1).

Power is unique, since it is always derived from something other than itself (Foucault, 1996, pg186), and it is a component of all social relationships (such as warfare, ethnicity, family, the body, sexuality, and knowledge). The immediate results of these divides, inequalities, and social disequilibrium establish power relations. In contrast, the internal conditions of these disparities may be determined by law, language, culture, knowledge, or competence (Foucault, 1997, pg 3-14).

Hence, as one says, "Power is everywhere" and "comes from everywhere", in this sense it is neither an agency nor a structure (Foucault, 1976, pg 63). Instead, it is a kind of meta-power or regime of truth that pervades society, and which is in constant flux and negotiation. According to Foucault, if one speaks of structures or mechanisms of power since one assumes that certain individuals exercise power upon others, the word "power" exudes relationships (Foucault, 1982, pg 786). He argues that power is inherent in all social connections and that all social relationships are power relationships, regardless of whether they are between family members, inside the government, or among other social organizations. Thus, if one talks about the political

horizon, it incorporates interaction and mutual integration, and is exercised and invested in unravelling strained social relations. Foucault challenges the idea that "power is wielded by people or groups by way of acts of domination or coercion, seeing it instead as dispersed and pervasive" (Foucault, 1976, pg 63). Therefore, Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth; that is, the types of discourse that it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, and how each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1976, pg 38).

Foucault argues that the term "knowledge is power" is not representative of the power-knowledge discourse. It is a relationship that demonstrates how power is employed to conceal certain knowledge, and make other knowledge accessible to society. Both, knowledge and the repression of knowledge, are the outcomes of power. This Foucauldian idea is central to Edward Said's seminal work Orientalism, which demonstrates how much "knowledge" about the Orient was created and transmitted in Europe as an ideological component of colonial "power" (Said, 1995). Thus, in the contemporary context, Foucault's discourse on knowledge/truth examines the conditions under which a subject is manifested – to others and to herself – through acts of truth-telling (Foucault, 2011, pg 2-3). Foucault is concerned with how individuals constitute themselves while stating the truth. Instead of analyzing the forms by which a discourse is recognized as true, he proposes analyzing the form in which, in his act of telling the truth, the individual constitutes himself and is constituted by others as a subject of a discourse of truth, the form in which he presents himself to himself and others as a truth-teller, the form of the subject telling the truth (Ibid 3).

Power, in Foucauldian discourse, acts as a relational force that pervades the entire social body, and interconnects all social groupings into a web of reciprocal influence. As a relational force, power establishes the social order and hierarchy through constructing knowledge and truths, imposing discipline and order, and molding the desires and emotions of individuals(RAZA, SHAH, & ARSHAD, 2025). Therefore, "Power is both a social and multilayered construct... it derives from how people connect with one another and is created by culture, society, and symbols" (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2013, pg 25). Power is a social reality that is formed within society"(Pitsoe & Letseka, 2013, pg 25), and the rituals of knowledge and truth are strongly impacted by this.

Importantly, for Foucault, the relationship between power and knowledge can be illustrated through the interpretation of power, that depicts a terrain for viable actions—"particularly one that is structured by knowledge" (Faubian, 2013, pg 337). To emphasize this, power and knowledge must be understood in proportion, not vice versa, all at once conditioned: power relationships provoke and generate knowledge, considering that they are in need of technical expertise, in addition to discourses through which to identify with and refine their actions (Devetak, 2008, pg 43).

Foucault's concept of power and knowledge - when unraveled through the academic, political, and religious aspects - unfolds many hidden and implicit (and often deliberately hidden) power relationships operating at every level. In modern times, those who can speak and have influence and, those who cannot, are regulated by the same network of power connections and systems of knowledge. Ironically, refugees are considered the undesirable other, therefore as they resist towards the dominant power structures, resistance becomes the analytical element that inquire into the scrutiny of peaceful co-existence, thus being vigilant towards the repercussions of power imbalances. Importantly, a refugee's silence employs a political value, a mean to preserve certain rites and dimension for survival from regulatory power, from predominant violence, especially from the scorching rays of dominant xenophobic and Islamophobic rhetoric.

1.3 Subject and Silence in Foucauldian Discourse

Discourse is the main entity that either limits the production of knowledge, disagreement, and difference, or create "new" knowledges and differences possible (s) [Flohr, 2016, pg 7]. In Foucauldian discourse, the subject is not just the entity that is affected by the power relationship; it is also the compound that comes out of these relationships and processes. Foucault uses the idea of "subjection" to understand how power and subjects affect each other (Foucault, 1976, pg 60). Here, it is very important to identify the distinction between "constitution" and "determination." The fact, that a subject is "constitutioned" by power, does not mean that power is the only factor that causes its transition (Ibid 60).

It is important, that the concept of power profoundly impacts the actions and structures of possibilities within which the subject is 'free' to act: power relations govern the field of possibilities, not the subject's choices within it (Flohr, 2016, pg 8). Thus, the exercise of power is only fulfilled by the subject, whose acts are acted upon in this field of possibilities. This means that subject plays a dual function in the field of possible actions, formed by the exercise of power. It assumes as the role of both the passive object and the active subject of power, appropriating and navigating a field of possible acts and categories of self-interpretation that are extrinsic to itself (Ibid 8). Thus, Foucault's account of power does not deny the presence of agency; it presupposes it. However, it indicates that agency is intimately connected to the power exercised over it (Devetak, 2008, pg 202-3).

Significantly, Foucault's subject is neither sovereign nor transcendent; it cannot be separated from the fields of possible actions and self-interpretations, that power and knowledge relations create. For Foucault, "The subject is not a substance." Instead, power and knowledge affect and change the subject, so it is no longer the same as it was, or would have been, otherwise. It has a form, and this form is not always or mostly the same as itself (Foucault 1997, pg 290). Therefore, "subjection" must be seen as a way to understand how subjects are made and shaped, by their historical, social, and biographical circumstances, in terms of power relations. Foucault's new way of thinking about power does not deny that the subject and/or agency exists, but it does insist on putting them firmly in their context (Flohr, 2016, pg 9).

Within this framework, the questions that come up are about how some discourses keep their authority, how some "voices" are heard while others are not, who benefits and how, and so on. Significantly, these are the questions about power, empowerment, and disempowerment. According to Foucault, silence is a form of oppression, and a crucial component in the application of the discourse of power relations, whereby diverse groups and behaviors of individuals are excluded by society. In Silence, Philosophy, Literature, and Art, Steven L. Bindeman upholds when we begin to recognize that common notions like truth and identity are problems rather than foundations, we turn to the works of Michel Foucault, whose approach to the phenomenon of silence is almost entirely political. For him, silence is more fundamental than truth or identity, since it exists before discourse is ever initiated. "Discourse" is his term stands for the various ways societies impose power relations on their members (Bindeman, 2017, pg 144). As Karl Rogers, in his book On Foucault's Discourse, explains, "Until the discourse arises out of the silence of undifferentiated existence, there is no distinction between 'self' and 'other,' 'signified' and 'signifier,' 'subject' and 'object,' 'sign' and 'meaning,' 'true' and 'false,' or 'different' and 'same" (Bindeman, 2017, pg 1). Discourse is what creates these distinctions, since the very notion of differentiated reality arises out of it. In fact, for Foucault, there is no concrete reality outside of discourse. Concerning the silence out of which discourse arises, discourse can have nothing to say. While it can speak of the other forms of silence, namely those differentiated forms that are informed by discourse, it cannot speak of Silence (Bindeman, 2017, pg 144).

In The History of Sexuality, the relationship between silence and discourse is unraveled as thus: Silence itself—the thing someone doesn't say or isn't allowed to say, or the privacy that's needed between speakers—isn't the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it's separated by a firm stance. Instead, it's a part of strategies that works with and in relation to the things that are said. There is no clear line between what you say and what you don't say. Instead, we need to figure out the different ways to not say these things, who can and can't talk about them, what kind of talk is allowed or what kind of discretion is needed in either case. There isn't just one silence; there are a lot of them, and they are all part of the strategies that underpin and run through discourses. (Foucault, 1976, pg 17)

For Frances Sendbuehler, silence is the act of not speaking or producing a sound, also known as muteness, restraint, the omission of mention, remark, or note in the narrative; and the failure to communicate or reply in speech or narration. If discourse is an exhaustive representation that silences by leaving no gaps or pauses, then it says everything and leaves no room for more conversation. This implies that silence has significance. So, it is evident that, in today's world, we are dealing with two sorts of exhaustive representation: discourse that silences and silences that speaks (Sendbuehler, 1994).

Foucault decidedly trace the uncertainty of silence in relationship to power, elaborating that silence act not only as a "shelter *for* power", it also provides shelter "*from* it" (Brown, 2005).

Therefore, as silence works as a form of resistance to power, it works as resistance to dominant power hierarchies, emphasizing that silence is an echo back to domination and othering by the West. The contemporary refugee situation narrates the struggle and the voices of the 'other', the marginalized and the excluded. Layla AlAmmar writes in Silence is a Sense, "Refugees are not coming to suck up what's yours. We want to work, we want to go to school, we want to be full and active members of society. We are not leeches, or parasites, or vermin" (AlAmmar, 2021, pg168). In return, a refugee aspires to safety and guarantee of life, though if the security is threatened, one questions one's existence; yet one strives for peaceful coexistence. A refugee's optimism and hope to become fruitful in a foreign land, be accepted, and lead life without fear and anxiety becomes the sole purpose of life.

Subject and Silence in Foucauldian Discourse provides an apparatus for the other's to overcome the available structural apparatus ruined by war and othering, a refugees silence marks an effort to counter or resist against the set patterns of domination.   In order to render themselves constructive in a foreign land, they prove that power eventually transforms "individuals into subjects who secure their sense of what it is to be worthy and competent human beings" (Karakayali, 2012). Eventually, peaceful coexistence between refugees and host nation can be derived from power, knowledge and silence. Silence as means of resistance, thus enfolds that there are ethics for exercising power through the system and, in particular, by creating new knowledge and new identities (Hardy, 2003, pg 22).

Importantly, refugees struggle to build new knowledge and new identity marks to remind the world that our inability to comprehend or empathize with the war victims and refugees will not shun them to speak their truth. After so much war, bloodshed and destruction, it's time we open our ears to the tales of resistance and the modulated war-stricken sensibility which has provided solace and fortitude to refugees in the times of hardship and turmoil. These tales of truth and courage are empowering, as Foucault describes; "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (Foucault, 1977, pg 194). Silence is a mode of resistance, whereby the ultimate power comes from narration, as it provides possibilities for revealing the truth; one should shoulder one's responsibility cautiously; until there is nothing left except for souls wailing in the dark.

1.4 Narratives as Means of Resistance

"Narrative' may sound like a fancy literary word, but it is actually the foundation of all strategy, upon which all else – policy, rhetoric, and action – is built"

---------Michael Vlahos

In order to unravel the refugee's war-torn sensibility and the impact of a resistance narrative on social, cultural, historical, literary, and other discourses, further exploration is required. Numerous personal, national, and international factors influence how these narratives are told, accepted, perceived, and acknowledged. Neither the "refugee voice" nor the "refugee experiences" are a single phenomenon (Sigona & Hughes, 2012 pg 369-382). There are a

thousand distinct refugee narratives and characters, whose meanings and identities shift as they migrate from one place to another. Recounting these experiences is also not a simple task, as narratives are produced in relation to socially available and hegemonic discursive practices. They tend to highlight and explore the immediate and broader contexts (war, Islamophobia, and xenophobia) to which they are a dialectic response (Ibid).In a world replete with war and terrorism, what does it cost refugees to spread out their narratives? Meretoja, in The Ethics of Storytelling, establishes that narratives are political projects themselves. Each confrontation invokes a new reality, which ultimately leads to diverse interpretations, such as enlightening the individuals to narrate new stories by which we frequently formulate meanings (Meretoja, 2017, pg 75–83). Hence, power dynamics perform an essential task in formulating not only the chronicle webs that entangle us but also the individuals who operate our narration modules, by identifying and (re)interpreting ethically accessible narrative models. As narratives have become more prevalent in politics, the term "narrative" has expanded to encompass more than simply arranging events to tell a story. It currently refers to the skill of concocting ideas and putting them together in a logical manner. According to Coffey and Atkinson, 21 a narrative allows "social actors to develop, express, and situate their own experience and knowledge within a social framework" (Coffey, & Atkinson,1996). Power notably constructs the possibility of telling our life stories; however, it also configures the subject who intends to choose between and deal with multiple narratives (Coffey, & Atkinson, 1996). Primarily, narratives establish unique prospects of activity—an activity that possesses the ability to transform the world in which we live (Meretoja, 2017, pg 4-5).

Arguing over the political perspective of narratives, Andrews puts forward the view that communal and personal narratives are central to how power operates, together with how we construct our sense of identity and resistance, in a politically charged world. It is noteworthy that political narratives cannot be limited by micro-stories, which individuals narrate in relation to their understanding of the world as well as their sensibility of belonging (85). Along these lines, in order to understand the connection between micro and macro narration, it is essential to explore by what means narratives perform as political codes, and are comprehended within a network of power dynamics (Flohr, 2016, pg 13). Thus, it becomes necessary to acknowledge communal and personal narratives as being predictive of power exercises in the modern historical milieu, whereby the refugee rhetoric across the globe deepens inequality, conflict, and violence. In Foucault's work, subjects are constituted in and via power relations, and they embody and experience the social connections that constitute them. According to Butler, the Foucauldian subject "is never completely created in subjection." It is created repeatedly through subjugation, and it may be argued that subjection derives its unexpected power from the prospect of a recurrence that is contrary to its foundation. Nevertheless, the performative effort of naming can only attempt to bring its addressee into being, as the interpellated subject must know the name for this to occur (Butler, 1997, pg 94). Thus, the narrative of refugees' displacement and

asylum are constructed within a system of established discourses and power relations. However, by acting on these narratives and being politically active, refugees can create transformative chances, and challenge colonial-based facts about the humanitarian system and its moral order (Esin & Lounasmaa, 2020, n.p.). Henceforth, with life and identity both endangered, Foucault's words provide food for thought. In *A Postmodern Reader* Joseph P. Natoli and Linda Hutcheon writes;

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it; any more than silences are…... Discourse transmits and produces power; but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In the like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its hold and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance. (Natoli & Linda, 1993, pg 340)

Foucault decidedly trace the uncertainty of silence in relationship to power, elaborating that silence act not only as a "shelter *for* power", it also provides shelter "*from* it" (Foucault, 1976). Therefore, as silence works as a form of resistance to power, it works as resistance to dominant power hierarchies, emphasizing that silence is an echo back to domination and othering by the West. The contemporary situation narrates the struggle and the voices of the 'other', the marginalized and the excluded.

> In such dense political dynamics, the words of Foucault gain significance whereby he declares that "truth" is the consequence of social interactions and the political ties of power remain the fundamental ground on which the subject, the domains of knowledge and the relations with truth are formed (Foucault, 1980, pg 15). As a result, the Western political rhetoric and the Muslim terrorist discourse create a mechanism of social power. The power dynamics are reciprocally associated with the resistant capacities. So, the networks of power and knowledge work as places of resistance, since anyone involved in one such network may create and question the truth (Stoddart 206).

1.5 Foucault's Discourse on Resistance

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.

—Helen Keller

In the wake of 9/11, refugee narratives serve as personal testimonies to human suffering and loss, where war, migration, and othering fragment the sense of self. Consequently, displacement, othering, and a lack of belonging have alarming ramifications for refugees. Hence, in this complex political milieu, power can be viewed as an intrinsic action, particularly one with the following action(s) as its object (Flohr, 2016, pg 9), reevaluating the interpretation of power as improvising on actions. Eventually, these actions, as reported by Foucault, perform the role of opposer, targeting, backing, or adhering to power relations (Flohr, 2016, pg10), which actually is

the realm where Foucault detects what he designates as "resistance". The actions which later are simulated do not denote the exercise of power, but nevertheless, make up an essential section of the power relation. If one excludes these "resistances", eventually the application of power would employ ordinary action. Foucault continues to reveal these specific resistances, as the unusual denomination in the analogy of power as an irreducible opposite (Foucault, 1976, pg 96). In "Sex, Power and The Politics of Identity", Foucault goes on to explain how important he thinks resistance is, by saying, "Resistance comes first, and resistance stays better than the forces of the process; power relations have to change with resistance. So, I think resistance is the main word, the keyword, in this dynamic" (Foucault, 1976, pg 168).

In The History of Sexuality, Foucault writes, "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1976, pg 95). It is noteworthy, that resistance provides the possibility of challenging modern structures of power, in the same vein, apparently without reiterating what is being challenged. Foucault's theory of power not only highlights the prospects of resistance, but the reliability of resistance. Even though "resistance" is not as in the long-established practice of the word: it may not necessarily be performed in a direct conflict, or else in an outright negation of power, ultimately resistance evolves as an entity that is postulated and definitely might develop to formulate as an illustration of power. Consequently, it does not make resistance futile (Flohr 2016, pg 10). Verily, it affirms the relevance of resistance to establishing advanced and alternative configurations of power. Thus, it becomes significant that resistance should be recognized as an intrinsic and irresistible manifestation within the system of power relations. Resistance, ultimately, determines the sphere of possible development in society, paving the path for the contemporary prospect of political action, hence should be questioned and changed.

Along these lines, Tamboukou (94–102) specifies "technologies of resistance" as the ways and means in the formulation of the self. Therefore, Foucault's account of narratives essentially considers narratives as the consequence of distinct historical, social, cultural, political, and economic discourses, more or less than something essential and unquestionable (Tamboukou, 2013, pg 89). According to Foucault's approach to power, subjects can operate and confront the power relations established upon them simultaneously, as they encounter certain structures of power. It is through their narrative, their "technologies of resistance", that individuals might invent diverse forms of subjectivity, consistently performing between coercive reality and the thought of endless freedom, hence practicing unestablished rituals between them. While examining, the constituents of resistance is, in fact, the beginning of a Foucauldian investigation of power relations. As John McGowan asserts, in his book Postmodernism and Its Critics, "there are no relations of power without resistance, as it exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple" (McGowan, 1991, pg 130). Over time, the rationality of power is built upon the multiplicity of resistance, pointing toward the fact that it should never be compressed into a specific arrangement of insurrection or rebellion. If one approaches narratives as derivatives of power relations, which eventually constitute subjectivities

amidst distinct historical contexts, personal narratives as well become a site of subjectivity in which the narrator deploys "technologies of resistance (Flohr, 2016, pg 12). According to Foucault, Subjectivity is essential in terms of power relationship since it can only be a power relationship if "the other" is acknowledged and kept as a subject who acts and (for whom) a field of answers, reactions, results, and potential interventions opens up. (Foucault, 1982, pg 340).

Accordingly, refugees seek to resist or alter those processes of administration incorporating power relationships which "separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself, and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way" (Ibid 330). Under these circumstances resistance act as an intrinsic stimulus that tend to explore the political struggles either to change the power dynamics or that would lead in and or defend such constraining and isolating forces.

Hence, for Foucault, resistance is thus determined as a point of provocation, a site for struggle where subject tend to find a set of possibilities where several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available (Foucault, 1982, pg 342). It is important that subject and resistance unravel itself within a broader political configuration that it endeavors to displace and disrupt.

Maurice Florence in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault,* illustrates that for Foucault, "the question is to one of determining what the subject must be, what condition is imposed on it, what status it is to have, and what position it is to occupy in reality or imaginary the legitimate subject of one kind of knowledge or another" (Gutting, 2005, pg 317). Thus, Foucault's Discourse on Resistance unravels the struggle of the refugees whereby resistance unfolds itself as a means of empowerment. Hence, Foucauldian discourse on resistance aptly describes the struggle of refugees, who adopt resistance as a means of wielding power for their survival, thus reshaping their war-stricken sensibilities in the wake of Islamophobia and xenophobia after 9/11. To conclude, Foucauldian discourse envisions that resistance has the capacity to overcome the limitations of individual freedom and relativism, which continue to plague contemporary political theory (Flohr, 2016, pg 14). Foucault's new method of conceiving power places emphasis not only on the fact that people can resist, but on the reality that they do resist. However, this is not resistance in the conventional sense. It is not always an explicit contradiction or rejection of authority. Instead, it is a sort of power-based resistance that could become an example of power itself. This does not mean that retaliation is futile. Instead, it focuses on how resistance might result in novel and distinct power arrangements (Ibid14).

1.6 Conclusion

The present study shows that the suffering of the refugees is significant, and if neglected, it could endanger the peace and security of the global community. War and conflicts in many Eastern countries have forced millions to leave their homes. As demonstrated by the Palestinian/Syrian crisis, hostilities in one region of the world tend to spread well beyond the conflict zone's borders. Hence, the refugee crisis appears to be an immense challenge today. The world today is

plagued by war and civil conflicts. Peace, if achieved, is almost always uncertain. Violence and abuse continue to cause displacement and suffering, with many of those affected unable to seek or find effective protection. Significantly, the world has witnessed that war and conflict only generate turmoil and chaos. The globe seems to be drifting towards anarchy as the effects of the global recession are becoming visible day by day, with the result that insecurity and power imbalance are on constant rise.

Thus, this study has sought to untangle the complex interplay of power, knowledge, and resistance within East-West relations by positioning Foucault's theories alongside postcolonial critiques. In order to investigate the complex social scenario amongst West and East, it becomes evident that power is not merely exerted but embedded within the fabric of knowledge itself, producing discourses that shape and restrict the identities of the "Other." Foucault's assertion that power and knowledge are mutually reinforcing phenomena is central to understanding how Western narratives have historically constructed and constrained Eastern identities within limiting frameworks of understanding. The complex political scheme is best explored by incorporating Foucault's theoretical underpinnings on Power and Resistance. In *Conflict, Security and the Reshaping of Society*, Lago upholds that as the global social life is marked with war and conflict today, this causes changed social and political relations between the dominant West and the vulnerable East. Lago asserts that Clausewitz's maxim which says that "War is nothing but a continuum of politics by other means" is significant in the present political milieu. In *Society Must Be Defended,* Foucault asserts that techniques of power are susceptible to subversion, resistance, and delegitimisation. Power is viewed as a complex interplay of relationships that are never unitary, always diffuse and resistant, and flow inside and through society. Importantly, power operates through the discursive processes of politics and warfare. With this understanding of power, Foucault proclaims, "we can invert Clausewitz's proposition and say that politics is the continuation of war by other means" (Foucault, & François, 2003, pg16). Thereof, "the role of political power is continually to engage in a silent war to carve out that relationship of force, as well as to reinscribe its institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the individual bodies." This is the meaning of our initial inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism*: "Politics is the continuation of war via different methods."* (Huntington, 2011, pg 15-16). Therefore, the reality of an ensuing "silent war" and politics, which could be divided and comprehended between the "West and the Rest", is factually established (Huntington, 2011, pg 8). The current study has, arguably, given a framework for modern debate in which counter-discourse can criticize, evaluate, and, in a way, open up new spaces for imagination that can, in some ways, provide a way for the supposed East and the enlightened West to live together peacefully.

Hence, this study expands upon the Postcolonial theorists such as Spivak, Gramsci, and Bhabha, emphasizing how Western dominance is sustained through cultural hegemony and intellectual

marginalization. Spivak's concept of subalternity, for instance, illustrates how the voices of colonized subjects are systematically suppressed, rendering their perspectives largely absent from dominant discourses. In response, Bhabha's notion of hybridity introduces a theoretical counterpoint, suggesting that these identities are neither static nor purely shaped by Western influence; rather, they are dynamic, continually negotiated spaces where resistance emerges. Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony further contributes to this understanding, positioning resistance as both a reaction and a reconfiguration of imposed narratives.

Voiceless clearly delineates the necessity for a thorough globalization and democratization of knowledge, which is currently biased in favor of a partial universal knowledge based on the Western epistemologies and ontologies - thanks to the complementing role of localization of knowledge.

Importantly, in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak aggressively condemns such Eurocentric Western attitudes. She critically evaluates that knowledge is never innocent; it is incorporated to enhance Western economic interests and power. In line with Spivak, AlAmmar writes about the Western hegemony considering it is inherently embedded in the world politics: "Is that why you fear refugees and immigrants so much? Because you know that with determination and no small amount of violence, complete and total dominion will be achieved "(AlAmmar, 2021, pg 225). Thus, epistemic violence inflicted upon the Other in the words of Rob Nixon is the "slow violence," which means a form of violence that occurs gradually and invisibly, a violence of delayed destruction that is diffused across time and place, and an unforgiving violence that is generally not regarded as violence at all (Nixon, 2011, pg 2). Unlike the political violence that happens when people are left out of the definition of the "demos," Spivak's "epistemic violence" is much more widespread because it happens before the debate on recognition and representation (Pérez, 2019). It's almost a play on words, since epistemic violence doesn't "exclude," because to "include" first, you have to "exclude." Instead, it "precludes": it mutes, silences, or makes invisible before the debate about "inclusion" even starts (Savransky, 2011, pg 117).

In order to counter such a phenomenon, the solutions must likewise be of an epistemic nature and designed specifically for this specific form of violence. It must be kept in mind that approaches aimed to counter social, economic, or other types of oppression might not perform well against epistemic violence. Kristie Doston, in *Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression,* explicates the tilted power dynamics towards the East, indicating that we reformulate our "epistemic resources" and the epistemological system within which those resources prevail. In addition to efforts aimed at addressing other forms of violence (such as those that are frequently found in government or civil society programmes for "inclusion" and "non-discrimination") (Dotson, 2014). Unfortunately, the efforts of the Orient might not be enough to eliminate the persistent epistemic exclusions that are generating epistemic oppression.

Through a synthesis of these theoretical frameworks, the paper contends that the East-West dichotomy is not a mere geographical or cultural divide but a manifestation of sustained power dynamics embedded within knowledge production itself. These insights challenge the binary conceptualizations of East and West by illuminating the ways in which resistance operates within—and in response to—the structures of power. This study is significant as it examines resistance as a means by which the subaltern can express their political subjectivity. It achieves so by drawing on Foucauldian-inspired debates in the social sciences regarding agency and subjectivity. Ultimately, this theoretical approach underscores the transformative potential of re-examining postcolonial subjects not only as passive recipients but as active participants in a continually evolving discourse. This shift in perspective calls for an ongoing interrogation of power and knowledge in order to foster a more inclusive global epistemology, one that transcends imposed boundaries and embraces pluralistic understandings. Thus, in order to understand East's contest for security and survival, this study explicated Foucauldian discourse regarding resistance and power. Importantly, Foucault acknowledges that,

> Absolutely. I am not claiming that resistance and power are constituted of separate substances. Simply stating that resistance is possible so long as a power connection exists. We can never be ensnared by power because we can alter how it impacts us in certain situations and with a well-defined strategy. (Foucault, 2000, pg 123)

The current study has, arguably, given a framework for modern debate in which counter-discourse can criticize, evaluate, and, in a way, open up new spaces for imagination that can, in some ways, provide a way for the supposed East and the enlightened West to live together peacefully.

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