ABSTRACT
The study of social sciences in general and the discipline of international relations (IR) in particular always remain areas of less scholarly significance, because the leading academic circles remain less inclined towards the non-Western production of knowledge in the international system. The main discussions of IR generally revolve around Western discourses and approaches to knowledge. The end of the decades-long Cold War and the elimination of the Soviet Union from world politics allowed Western academic circles to influence the production of knowledge in the international system. In this way, the production of knowledge and the promotion of knowledge have ignored non-Western academic perspectives. Contrary to conventional academic patterns, there is a need to realize the significance of non-Western literature in academia while updating the conventional academic patterns. In this scenario, this paper attempts to address the questions of the production of knowledge and promotion of knowledge on the basis of alternative perspectives and different approaches to acquiring knowledge. While emphasizing non-Western or non-American approaches to knowledge, the central theme of the paper endeavours to highlight the importance of non-Western ways of looking at world politics.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 21 April 2021
Revised 1 July 2021
Accepted 3 August 2021

KEYWORDS
Academic discourse; Western discourse; international relations; knowledge production and Chinese literature

Introduction
The question of understanding the contesting attributes of the international system remains unanswered in the presence of a few Western theoretical domains. The familiarity with non-Western ideological domains and their presence in the world, in general, have remained academically less significant. The production of knowledge and the maintenance of knowledge in social sciences are generally considered as values of Western societies which predominantly try to define the conceptual foundations of the leading academic areas. Even the understanding of the non-Western features of the international system is defined by Western scholars. So, the quest to understand non-Western cultures and their ways of looking at the changing dynamics of power politics has become important for the academic community (Karan 2004). Western intellect and its popularity in academia not only affects the role of non-Western thought, but also makes social sciences
a discipline missing international characteristics. Before initiating the central argument of the paper, the main focus of the study needs a visible clarification of the Western and non-Western domains of the international system.

Generally, the Western world refers to the areas encompassed by the countries of Europe and the Western Hemisphere or the states from the European and American continents. This definition of the “West” is derived from the term “occident.” The geographical classification of the international system contains similar arguments, where the notion of the West normally indicates American and European societies. Another notion of the Western world denotes the Greco-Judaic-Christian traditions which describe the religious divisions of international society (Lee 2018). In contrast to the Western world, non-Western civilizations denote the communities beyond European and American nations, which usually includes countries from Middle Eastern, African, Asian and South American continents (Karan 2004). Here the discussion on Western and non-Western worlds of competing ideologies is based on capitalistic and communist formats of the international system, where American and Soviet ideas prevailed during the days of Cold War competition.

In the realism-driven international system strictly constructed under the principle of power politics, it is difficult to make an accurate description of international relations without a scientific approach based on interdisciplinary patterns of knowledge. The contesting ideological texts or the mind-opening features belong to alternative approaches to the international system assembled mainly in the world beyond the West. The non-Western approach to education has not been valued in a world of prevailing Western beliefs and the scope of theoretical autonomy diminished in the field of IR. The overwhelming wave of Western culture in academia and its worldwide promotion has degraded the importance of alternative viewpoints, but the existence of various non-Western prisms of viewing the international system should not be ignored. Therefore, this paper is an endeavor to comprehend the growth of academic approaches based on the knowledge produced outside Western communities. The non-Western way of analyzing the international system has become an essential element for healthy academic growth. The principal argument in this paper focuses on the discipline of IR for examining the competition between Western and non-Western explanations of the international system. It tries to explore the relevance of alternative knowledge production, which would further help the leading intellectual circles of IR attain a balanced and impartial understanding of the world today.

**Nature of International Relations as Discipline**

The academic foundations of international relations (IR) contain multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary values which are usually compromised. The autonomous theoretical nature of IR has become a serious problem in the world of Western-influenced knowledge (Jorgensen 2017, 74). As a discipline of study, IR generally discusses the interaction of states which illustrate the multifaceted attributes of the international system. Further study of international relations deals with the non-state actors that are smoothly functioning parallel to the sovereign states. The combination of state and non-state entities generally concern the changing contexts of world politics and their institutional development across the globe (Plantan 2002). In this way, IR interaction requires a generous
study of contesting viewpoints of opposing schools of thought, irrespective of their Western or non-Western origin. The study of international relations tries to explore logically the varying behaviors of the states along with different formats of states’ interaction, which is an amalgamation of conflicting paradigms. Moreover, the discipline of IR mainly focuses on intrastate and interstate political, social, economic, strategic and cultural developments. In this way, the working of the international system, coupled with various formats of cooperation and conflict between leaders and their respective states, maintains their theoretical description under the field of IR (Ransom 1968). An analytical survey and rational understanding of the above-mentioned characteristics of IR always need an alternative approach that provides different angles to evaluate the international system, and that adopts different explanations of world politics instead of relying on a unidirectional dimension of knowledge.

In the world of competing ideologies and the opposing governance structures of states, a practical approach to the study of IR lacks its actual conceptual foundations, varying due to different explanations of the international system. The promotion of the IR discipline in the world, actually, lacks a consensus-based approach for defining different political concepts. The description of various notions in IR presents multiple explanations which are the actual spirit of this discipline. But the availability of different approaches or familiarity with contesting themes of IR has been a difficult task. The overall contents of IR reflect a distorted picture in which a single approach to the study of world politics based on Western orientations is always available. The absence of non-Western knowledge to analyze the fluctuating relations between states stops IR intellectuals from adopting a balanced and impartial standing (Capan 2017). Actually, the main problem of the leading academic discourses of IR concerns their origin and advancement. The common approaches of IR are produced and maintained mainly by Western scholars. Various scholars expressed their intellectual insight into Western cultures and their states further promoted their ideologies in the world. The promotion of Western ideologues and their global reach effectively influenced the foundations of IR.

The involvement of the non-Western orientation of IR among academics has become an essential need because, in the realism-driven world of competing state patterns, an appropriate understanding of the world beyond Western communities could be an unexplored dimension of knowledge.

**The Post-Cold War Academic Monopoly**

The unforgettable decades-long period of Soviet-American confrontation under the atrocious shadows of the Cold War marked a long competition between Moscow and Washington. The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and his reorientation of Moscow’s strategic position in world politics dismantled the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991 (The Economist 2017). The dissolution of the Soviet Union let American policy makers declare the end of the 40-year-long antagonistic designs of the Cold War. The leading state officials of the Bush administration termed the converting of the Soviet Union into the Russian Federation as the defeat of Moscow. No doubt, the end of Communist rule over the 15 republics of the Soviet Union provided sufficient chances to the United States for the promotion of American values across the globe, but the strategic clash between the White House and the Kremlin remained an undeniable
reality of the international system. The subsequent political developments in Great Power politics witnessed the continuation of Washington–Moscow competition in the international system (Singer 1999). The post-Cold War phase of world politics observed various changes in favor of the United States. A wide range of scholarly engagements from different parts of the world supported the unchallenged role of Washington in international affairs. The advancement of the United States supported unilateral attributes in a brief Soviet-less period of world politics, admired by Western theoretical domains. Western scholars not only accepted the concepts of the New World Order of the Bush administration in the transitionary period of world politics, but also acknowledged the perceived unilateral American structure of international relations under Washington’s leadership (Levy 1996, 255). The prevalence of the Bush-coined term “New World Order” in the international system defined various features of the international system under American leadership. The fundamental purpose of the New World Order was to govern the post-Soviet period according to American-desired ways, while also enhancing Washington’s engagements across the globe. Another considerable development in the form of The End of History and the Last Man further supported the notion of American supremacy in the world (Hughes 2012, 6–7). This was an American way of looking at the international system which was created by Francis Fukuyama. He attempted to predict the international order under American values. The broader vision of his ideas advocated the widespread promotion of liberal democracies and capitalist-based market economies (Hughes 2012). Fukuyama advocated the dominance of the West in world politics. He said the West had started enjoying indeterminate satisfaction because the Western world had reached the end of history. The promotion of Western ideas and their acceptance had reached every corner of the world (Salem 2018). In this way, Fukuyama unrealistically selected the Western political attributes cemented solely in American values as the last format of human history. Apparently, his theory was an admiration of Washington’s increasing role in world politics in the absence of potential counterbalancing forces. Apart from Fukuyama, several other political scientists invested their intellectual capacities in lionizing the Soviet-less international system under American dominance.

The leading commentators of international relations advocating the expanding American values in the world were actually influenced by Washington, which heavily affected their pragmatic approach to analyzing world politics. Other theoretical versions of the international system were mainly ignored by the American influenced academic communities of the West. A brief period of crisis in Moscow during the regimes of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin gave sufficient space to the United States in world politics (Smyth 2018). In short, the end of the Cold War was a geographical incident which terminated US–Soviet ideological competition (Marcus 2018). The temporary demise of Russia’s status in world politics advanced the Western view of the international system across the globe. Now, an advancing version of the United States’ active role in world politics was challenged before the Realist driven standards of the international system, where the status quo can temporarily survive.

**The Paradigm Shift**

The undeniable realities of the twenty-first century and the emergence of non-traditional security threats under the globalized formats of world politics surprisingly changed the
course of human history. The transnational nature of security threats in the new world not only altered the strategic outlook of international relations, but also undermined the traditional approaches of states for managing their positions in world politics (Swaine 2011, 256). Such characteristics of changing the international system hampered Washington’s perception about on-going power politics which was exactly inheriting in the Cold War era. The American strategic thinking developed during the confrontational period of the Cold War lost its significance before the crisis of the twenty-first century. In the wake of the new century, the tragic incident of 9/11 acutely shocked the leading national security architecture of Washington. The conventional national security mechanism for addressing the traditional security threats emanating from the rival gathering of communist leaders became an outdated element for Washington (Bolton 2007, 170). In reaction to the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the security pundits of the Bush administration decided to initiate a global war against terrorism. The initiation of the War on Terror was perceived to be another factor that could effectively help Washington in maintaining its global superpower status (Holloway 2008, 4). No doubt, the US-led global counter-terror coalition was internationally considered another way of dominating the international system, and it intensified America’s engagement in world affairs. In this way, the world of new realities demanded the security establishment of the United States to change its traditional prism of analyzing the international system (Holloway 2008, 4). In order to achieve the main objectives of the counter-terror alliance, Washington preferred to prevent potential threats to the American position in the world. The divisions of states between the Axis of Evil and Rogue States apparently showed the United States’ commitment to managing international relations, and it dramatically deepened the American role in world politics, while also enhancing the role of counterbalancing forces. The widespread US engagement in diverse regions raised an unbearable wave of anti-Americanism around the globe. The US presence in various countries under the broader anti-terror alliance was considered to be a situation that could cause an outbreak of war. The majority of Muslim countries started to reflect the highest level of anti-American thinking as a result of Washington’s greater support of Israel. Moreover, Muslim countries during the War on Terror started to raise their concerns against anti-Muslim American policies. In addition to its support for Tel Aviv’s belligerent behavior against Arab states, the American invasion of Iraq in the search for weapons of mass destruction and the presence of its forces in Afghanistan added fuel to the fire (Miles 2013, 1–2). The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan caused irresolvable damage to both countries, while also posing a serious question about the American initiated war against terrorism. Moreover, the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East under the rubric of the Arab Spring further attached stigma to Washington’s global image.

In order to dominate international nuclear politics, the Washington-based advocates of global arms control efforts always supported the global non-proliferation regime. Effective implementation of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime by supervising the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) member states’ nuclear ambitions became another American way of increasing its global engagement. The American role in global nuclear politics reveals a dichotic version of Washington’s non-proliferation policies, which mainly display contradictory behaviors. Despite encouraging the NPT members to remain loyal to the international non-proliferation regime, the leading state authorities from Washington are busy with the signing of nuclear deals with
different allies and close strategic partners (Einhorn 2017). Moreover, critically evalu-
ing the nuclear and missile programs of a few countries also reflects an American behavior lacking impartial principles and increasing the White House’s role in the international system. An international non-proliferation policy unable to maintain a balanced worldwide approach has seriously questioned US policies about nuclear non-proliferation.

Additionally, the emergence of Russia and China as counterbalancing forces has developed a different scenario in which the leading state authorities from Washington are perplexingly unable to maintain the supremacy of the United States. Presently, an awful wave of ferocious political changes in the Middle East became an unacceptable challenge, mainly for the United States. On the one hand, American self-perception of its dominating global status has increased Washington’s global engagement. On the other, it has posed a number of serious threats to the United States. In this way, the conventional wisdom of the United States for managing international relations after the disappearance of the Soviet Union has become an outdated feature for Washington. No doubt, the disappearance of Sovietism from the face of the earth has provided excruciating confidence to the United States, but the architecture of national security strategy from Washington proved inefficient in stabilizing American supremacy.

In this way, the Western mode of analyzing the international system was a tool for maintaining American-oriented Western dominance in world politics. A combination of various security doctrines inherited in counter-terrorism and the counter-proliferation campaigns of the United States launched an international alliance of Western powers under American leadership which subjugated the role of non-Western approaches to managing global affairs. In order to analyze a disturbing equation of Western and non-Western thoughts in world politics, it is essential to comprehend the main problem between both approaches and their worldwide advancements.

The Asian Century and Non-Western Knowledge

The rise of China cannot be divorced from the geo-economic competition of the world. China’s economic emergence has raised the question of the traditional foundations of international economic competition. The future of economic struggle between developed nations has started counting the potential of Asian economic powers generally and the trading potential of China specifically. In response to the spreading attributes of Western economic values, leading economists from China have decided to reveal the potential of their country in the international system (Thaliyakkattil 2019, 40). In this way, the rapidly growing Chinese economy has challenged the Western powers while also introducing China’s way of managing international relations on the basis of global trade. In addition to the global economic struggle, the rise of Chinese economic values has provided alternative source for the conventional knowledge production.

In reaction to an overwhelming wave of Westernized production of knowledge, the involvement of Asian countries in global economic competition has changed the nature of world politics in which the Asian continent will be able to anchor the non-Western construction of knowledge. The international community has translated this change in global politics as the rise of Asian powers under the broader perspective of the Asian century. In this way, the leading economists of various countries, along with the mainstream
political leaders, are forced to adopt the changing dimension of knowledge mainly rising from Asian countries. From the academic perspective, political scientists of different regions have recognized China as the new center of world politics, because its worldwide trading connections have increased the business activities of various countries, while also helping them explore various financial revenues (Shang 2019, 16). With the help of China, a large number of countries enhanced their economic potential and upgraded their trade relations with other countries. Therefore, the emerging role of China in world politics has changed the nature of the international system and the emerging world of new realities has accepted the greater role of Asia in the global political order.

**China’s Rise and Academic Culture**

The changing nature of world politics and its impacts on the growth of academic literature in the international system cannot be ignored, because the rise of China under its global economic designs has become unignorably an important element of the contemporary world. The Chinese emergence, mainly based on its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has changed the nature of the international system, and a large number of countries have willingly decided to expand their economically cooperative relations with China. Apart from increasing the number of countries willing to cooperate with China in economic terms, some governments have decided to oppose the rise of China generally and the BRI specifically. With the growing number of Chinese trade partners around the globe, the international community has accepted the significance of Chinese values in the world.

An adequate understanding of China in general and of world politics in particular provides another dimension in the field of IR. The relevance of Chinese culture along with the promotion of Chinese culture has been raised internationally because of BRI. Apart from mega economic projects designed under the global network of roads and ports, the concept of the Asian century has increased the significance of Chinese values in the world. A widespread promotion of the Asian century refers to the promotion of Asian values in the world which could be treated as the increased significance of Asian values in the international system (Lee 2018, 96). This notion has provided substantial space to the emerging economies of the Asian continent, mainly Chinese economic growth, in world politics. Contrary to the political patterns of previous centuries, the contemporary era has provided a chance to Asian countries for the advancement of their roles and positions in the international system. Analogous to the nineteenth century of European values and the twentieth century of American ideas, the twenty-first century has marked a change in the world by highlighting Asia’s rise. In this way, the global Great Powers are going to provide considerable space to China by accepting its appropriate role in global politics. No doubt, the idea of the Asian century and its worldwide promotion has highlighted the role of a number of Asian economies, but the rapidly emerging Chinese economy has placed it ahead of other Asian economic powers. As a result, the global network of China-sponsored economic projects has launched an international campaign for the support of growing economies beyond the European and American continents.

The above-mentioned scenario has promoted the international community to accept China’s growing role in the world and to acknowledge Chinese values at a global level. The economic rise of China and the dramatic growth of its economic allies around the
The globe has started fascinating the whole international community, and the intellectual circles of the world have started re-reading Asian political patterns. In short, the academic communities of various countries mainly working on the political dimensions of the international system have accepted a change in the literature of IR in which the Asian philosophical centers are able to provide non-Western approaches to knowledge. From Asia, Chinese socio-cultural diversity and political attributes will continue the main debates of IR in future by making Asian countries alternative centers of non-Western schools of thought.

While collaborating with China in various economic fields, the intellectual circles of different regions have started realizing the role of Chinese values in the world. With the advancement of Chinese products in global markets, Chinese academic assistance to different countries has begun to introduce non-Western thought to academics. The combination of trade assistance and academic support has displayed an incomparable role of China in world politics. China’s plan to connect the world through BRI seems to inaugurate a new era of world politics (West 2018, 304). On the basis of structuring a new economic order, the Chinese government intends to create an international system based on non-Western values. As a result, Chinese academic communities have started providing non-Western or alternative approaches to understanding world politics. The leading intellectual communities from different corners of the world have not only accepted the role of Chinese literature in the field of IR, but the mainstream political leaders of various countries have also started learning China’s way of looking at the world. In this regard, the question arises as to the promotion of Chinese literature parallel to the changing global power politics in which China has provided non-Western alternative for Western values in the world.

**The Academic Puzzle**

In the presence of unending conflict between Western and non-Western approaches to studying international relations, the interdisciplinary nature of this academic discipline has been significantly compromised. In the contemporary age of globalization, the multidimensional knowledge inherited in different viewpoints has become an indispensable need of academics in which the availability of diverse approaches can broaden the scope of education. In the discipline of IR, familiarity with different approaches can potentially let its intellectuals explore further the new dimensions of subjects under investigation. The intellectual rivalry between Western and non-Western ideologues is an irrefutable issue because the description of various political developments and their academic classification in the international system leaves the intellectual community of both formats of the world in two opposing blocs. Both ways of analyzing world politics generally encompass not only different viewpoints, but they have also developed opposite ways of perceiving world politics. In this way, the intellectual attempts to build a consensus-based broader generalization of international affairs remain a difficult task, because scholars on the two sides are kept strictly in their opposite positions.

1. The Western approaches are massively produced across the globe. The production of knowledge under the Western umbrella is further advanced by Western state authorities. Instead of keeping such knowledge within specific countries, the Western
ways of studying IR have been heavily translated into different languages, which ensures the global reach of Western academics. Unlike non-Western approaches to examining international affairs in a specific way and further kept in specific areas, Western scholars explore the world with various forms of support in political, financial and even military terms. The combination of the language barrier and material restrictions to knowledge production in non-Western areas unexpectedly give rise to Western approaches to IR.

2. Political circumstances play a vital role in effecting the non-Western academic campaign in the world. The Western community working in the IR discipline usually belongs to the powerful states that remain the dominant power in the international system. Evidently, the end of two world wars coupled with the end of the decades-long Soviet Union–United States conflict granted victory to the Western powers, and the Western states greatly considered themselves the gravitational point of world politics. Such political developments not only let Western communities dominate international organizations (like the United Nations), but also permitted the Western states to suppress the intellectual voices rising from non-Western countries.

3. The quest to comprehend non-Western cultures along with the political orientations of the world beyond Western communities remain a theoretical aspiration of IR scholars. In the presence of the above-mentioned circumstances, non-Western knowledge remained an unexplored dimension of academics. Regrettably, the political, cultural and social description of the non-Western world is also coming from Western communities. Western intellectual circles are actively engaged in explaining the various characteristics of the non-Western world, which is indirectly becoming a non-Western narrative building by the West.

The abovementioned factors diminished the true spirit of IR in academia because the obstacles discussed above damaged the alternative way of analyzing the international system. The knowledge about different perspectives in world politics reveals several competing political practices across the globe, which eventually result in various theoretical undertakings. In the presence of a consensus-based and universally acceptable conceptualization of various political developments, the persuasion of a single explanation of the international system fractures the theoretical autonomy of IR (Esikot 2012).

The Way Forward

The colonial foundation of the discipline of IR is the main cause of the problem. The essential need is to decolonize the discipline of IR from Western influence because an independent status for the discipline of IR could be helpful in broadening its scope in terms of the production and promotion of knowledge in world politics. Apart from the colonial designs of Western imperialism in the international system, the colonization of knowledge describes the impacts of Western academics on the Third World. In response to the Western colonial shadows on the IR discipline, a multilevel approach is needed to liberate IR from Western influence, because a multidimensional approach could be helping in generating a complete non-Western way of understanding the international system. Such an approach will be further supportive in building a complete non-Western narrative by studying the non-Western theoretical domains. In this way, the
non-Western production of knowledge can provide a non-traditional version of IR in which the Russian and Chinese versions of studying international relations could be involved. The need to reorganize the intellectual foundations of IR by considering the importance of alternative approaches constructed in the non-Western world is seeking the appropriate attentions of the leading academics. An adequate measure for the maintenance of such an approach will further help in including the technically different and theoretically contrasting ideologies in the mainstream scholarship of IR. The adaptation of such an approach will further help in constructing a multicultural environment of cross-political representation of various schools of thought rising from the non-Western world particularly (Singer 1964). Moreover, the political attributes of the Korean peninsula along with the Latin American way of defining the international system is another missing dimension which should be appropriately considered in IR. The unfamiliar knowledge of the international political structure by the countries of the Third World needs to be observed as an essential part of the IR discipline. The inclusion of such attributes in the field of international relations cannot be considered an attack on Western values, but it should more appropriately be spelled out as an attempt at ensuring the balanced and impartial fundamentals of IR. Moreover, a comprehensive way of studying the non-Western aspects of analyzing world politics should not be considered as an attempt to neglect the significance of Western knowledge in IR.

**Conclusion**

The central theme of the paper revolves around the significance of non-Western approaches to the study of world politics in general and international relations in particular. It should be considered an attempt to reveal the role of alternative dimensions or non-American ways of looking at the world. The increasing familiarity with the non-Western literature for the study of international relations and its emergence in the international system will strengthen the scope of IR by including its role in global affairs. In reaction to the prevailing Western influences on the discipline of IR, the alternative approaches of knowledge to study the changing dimensions of Great Power politics have started emerging from various parts of the world. The intellectual debates on the study of world politics have started witnessing the rise of non-Western academics in the discipline of IR, where the role of Chinese and Russian literatures cannot be marginalized. Framing it in a theoretical way, the alternative approaches to the study of international relations provide sufficient place for the non-Western dimensions of knowledge in the discipline of IR. In this way, the fundamental objective of this paper is to introduce a robust international approach to studying the world under the broader dimensions of IR, which will not only ensure the hybrid description of IR, but will also develop a comparative approach in the discipline. The adoption of such an approach will lead the main scholarship of IR toward a greater recognition of other approaches of IR which are less popular but more important to study.

**Notes**

1. See [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/occident](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/occident).
2. See [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/west](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/west).
Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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