

Imperialism has changed its' form and machinations in modern times.

## Outline

### 1- Introduction

- Imperialism is the exploitation of the under developed nations by the developed ones.
- In modern times imperialism is practiced through political hegemony, economic dependency, cultural supremacy and various other mechanisms.
- Imperialism is still prevalent; it has evolved to suit the modern world order.

### 2- Imperialism and its' modern counterpart, neo-imperialism.

### 3- Imperialisms' changed form and machinations in modern times

3.1 Political hegemony of the developed world is a contemporary equivalent of colonialism

↳ Power held by permanent members of UNSC

3.2 Global military presence of superpowers undermines sovereignty of other states

↳ US has 750+ bases in more than 80 countries.

3.3 Interdependency model practiced globally favours developed countries at the expense of developing akin to colonizers extracting raw materials.

↳ 95% apple products made in China are sold through USA

3.4 Economic institutions thrive on neo imperialistic values, as it suits the defacto powerful states.

↳ IMF bailout dictates terms to countries

3.5 Liberalization of economy considered benchmark of prosperity even if individual situations do not favour it.

↳ Conditions of SAP's for Pakistan include privatization, broadening tax base, inflation.

3.6 Rising brain drain is as detrimental as resource extraction

↳ More than 2 lakh people have left Pakistan in the first 3 months of 2024

3.7 West has control over media and subsequently soft power that allows controlling narrative

3.8 Cultural imperialism has resulted in idealizing 'superior' cultures

↳ Americanization of world on lines of white mans burden.

3.9 Widespread education systems of the developed world hold academic monopoly.

↳ Spread of CAIE and IB systems.

#### 4- Future of modern imperialism

4.1 Rising nations such as China are challenging modern imperialism through pushing back on some fronts and creating parallel systems on the other.

↳ China raises questions on climate justice, advocating in favour of the developing world.

↳ Initiating parallel economic institutions, banks and trade systems.

#### 5- Conclusion

- Imperialism has changed its form and continues to affect and exploit millions
- Rising nations are a ray of hope in breaking this cycle of exploitation

It is often said that the British rule of India was like soaking a sponge in Ganges and squeezing it in the bank of Thames, this simple analogy explains the concept of imperialism and the associated exploitation. Unfortunately eradication of this concept has not been possible, instead it has taken new forms and adjusted well with in the dynamics of the contemporary globalised world. New organizational structures facilitate in maintaining political hegemony of the global north, which in turn ensures their military supremacy. Economic institutions are also pioneered by and located in these developed countries, while serving as the countries' institutional voices. Historical perspective shows how the developed countries were at an advantage since the inception of these institutions due to past world wars and their repercussions. Hold over economic institutions leads to various imperialistic practices such as weakening the weaker economies and setting the global trade interdependence in a way where developing countries are robbed off their raw materials. Global powers benefit through this, making their own economies specialized and tech orientated resulting in brain drain from the third world countries. Hence, modern imperialism not only extracts raw materials but also enriched human minds. Contemporary imperialism

also creates space for soft power, allowing them to control media narrative, making way for cultural supremacy. Subconscious idealization leads to global adoption of many norms and practices such as the education system. However, despite the overwhelming presence of modern imperialism, rising nations have begun challenging it by pushing back in some areas and creating parallel systems in other. In a nutshell, imperialism still exists as it did historically, the only difference is change in ways of exercising it to suit the contemporary world order.

Imperialism means exploitation of the colonized by the colonizers. Historically the term gained traction during the European colonization era, whereby the superpowers of that time had colonized vast areas, primarily Asia and Africa. The Europeans would use these lands and their resources to build their own wealth. From the example of sub continent, it can be seen how Britishers used spice trade to boost the British economy. Imperialism also implied heavily taxing the colonized to enrich the government back home. With the evolving global order, colonization has mostly finished and the concept of sovereign nation states has heightened. However, this evolution did not eliminate the norms and practices of imperialism, instead

new forms of imperialism are well embedded in the contemporary global system. International relations' theorists have coined it as neo imperialism and neo neo imperialism referring to political and economic control of the developed countries over the developing countries, and using that control in various spheres to benefit themselves. Neo imperialism translates the practices of imperialism in the current systems with the aid of biased institutions, that <sup>are</sup> influenced by the victors of World War 2 and Cold War.

The transition from imperialism to neo imperialism shows that the tenets of imperialism still prevail. The ideology is still practiced, the change is in ways and mechanisms. The next section of essay will focus on the changed of imperialism in modern times.

The developed world enjoys political hegemony currently, which is the contemporary equivalent of colonization. The modern nation state certainly has no room for blatant colonization, however political control by the global north is still prevalent. Instead of apparent control of territories, there are other mechanisms that reiterate the developed worlds control.

United Nations, a supposedly democratic institutions has a clear bias towards the developed nations. One of the most powerful subset of UN, the security council, has only 15 member states. Amongst those 15, only 5 are permanent members of the council and they have the power to veto any decision. Practically, if any one state out of these five members decides to veto a motion, nothing else matters. This sort of immense power in today's interconnected world is far more colonizers had. The countable few powerful nations of the world exercise political control in a different way but it is surely huge.

The superpowers also enjoy global military presence with far more advanced technology and interference than the traditional imperialism, ~~also~~ undermining sovereignty of other states. Even though the modern system clearly demarcates national boundaries, which should ensure military boundaries also. However powerful nations like the United States of America have military poweress extending on the global scale. America alone has 750+ bases around the world in more than 80 countries. Some are acquired through military alliances, some through friendships and some through other ways, but it is important to notice that none of these states can

deal with America on an equal footing because America always has the powerful upper hand in negotiations.

Pakistan also gave bases to America during the Cold War and War on Terror but it was more out of connected needs and obligations, not an impartial rational choice.

The presence of these bases undermines the host countries sovereignty whilst reiterating the super powers military might and boosting imperialistic tendencies.

Modern global trade is a prime example of Raul Prebisch's interdependency theory where the developed countries prosper through trade at the expense of developing countries. This is another contemporary form of modern or neo imperialism. The entire phenomenon is masked under the flag of free trade and specialized economies, however in reality, the developing world does hard labour and effort or extracts resources as it is their specialization. The developed side on the other hand packages and markets those products and proceeds to sell them at a higher profit margin. Apple products use the same principle of manufacturing, according to Al Jazeera, 95% of Apple's products are made in China in improvised conditions. These products are sent to America then, where they are



marketed and sold. The profits of those products go to USA, while labourers of China and other countries work on the same minimal wages. Trade interdependency in the current scenario is akin to colonizers extracting raw materials from the colonies and benefiting out of it.

The global economic institutions are used as a pawn of the developed countries and they project neo imperialistic values. In a very subtle way, these institutions have grasped the control of the countries reliant on them. It is also very evident that ~~the~~ a handful of developed countries control them. So, it is basically the control of developed countries who are rich over the poorer countries, but instead of colonization, it is done through legitimized institutions. IMF bailout dictates terms and conditions to the countries that requires bailout packages. These conditions are very important to adhere to, however there are not many other options that can be explored. The entire economic global system is set in a way that favours the richer countries and disadvantages the poorer. Reliance on IMF itself is a product of that and the further implications of those conditions are a practical demonstration of it. Through economic institutions

imperialism is exercised by the powerful states.

Another tool for modern imperialism is the overwhelming liberalization of ~~democracy~~ economies around the world without factoring in local and individual conditions. Liberalization of economy is considered the economic benchmark. The powerful states use their institutional voice to spread it without caring for the conditions of the country and their surroundings. Not every government or economy is mature enough to adopt all the liberal values but are bound to do so because of dependency and linkages. Conditions for IMF's structural adjustment programs are an example of the broad 'one size fits all' approach that is used. The conditions for Pakistan's program include privatization, broadening tax base which does not suit the country's current situation. Way is given to cronies and capitalists and the common public suffers. However, despite these problems, the country cannot opt out of these. No matter the negative implications, every reliant country has to adhere to the set rules otherwise the global community starts isolating them. The global leaders are very passionate about the liberalization of economy and capitalism and

during this age of modern ~~liberalism~~ imperialism, most countries' are bound to adopt it whether it suits them or not.

All the contemporary economic and political realities result in developing countries being left behind which leads to brain drain, as detrimental as traditional resource extraction. Traditionally natural resources were the only source of economic prosperity and trade, however now, times have changed. There are knowledge based economies, technology based economies all of which are human powered. With such advancement 'educated citizens moving abroad is equivalent to old times' resource extraction. In the first four months of the current year, more than 200,000 people have left the country in search of better opportunities. All of these were born and raised on Pakistan's soil, the country spent its' resources to enrich them and educate them. However lack of opportunities and the declining graph of governance and economy push people outside. Where as glimmering opportunities in the developed world pull them. This complex balance of brain drain and brain gain is a modern tool of imperialism, it can be equated to the traditional resource extraction phenomenon.

Western powers have control over media which gives them access to soft power. In the evolutionised world, media narrative holds immense value. Some theorists argue that it holds almost the same power as hard power. The control of media during a globalised age gives a nation the power influence what everyone thinks. A prime example is the prevalence of neo imperialism and most of it enjoyed by America, however the global narrative still being a beacon of liberty, flag bearer of democratic values and firm belief in equality. The power of media in modern world is unmatched, imperialistic powers historically had a tough time defending themselves, but now its easy to baptize all the doings. ~~and~~ Control of media power also gives an economic and military cushion to superpowers as they can subtly vilinize any perspective against them. Hence, soft power and grip over media serves as a tool for modern imperialists to further their interests.

Cultural imperialism is another phenomenon used that has resulted in idealizing the so called superior cultures. It enhances the neo imperialists soft power as well as consumerism that benefits them.

During the European colonial era, such a concept was 'white mens Burden'. The current happenings are not exactly the same but ongoing 'Americanization of the world' and 'white mens' burden' both have similar core foundations. Both are intrinsically based on a mission to teach the world a superior way of living, so that the global community can idealise them and accept their superiority. Cultural imperialism is an attempt to rob people off their identity and enrich them the imperialists' traditions and way of living, currently this can be seen happening using the power of media.

Spread of the developed worlds' education helps them in maintaining academic monopoly as well as intellectual property. Western education systems are now considered global education systems with their influence all across the globe. The CAIE and IB systems alone fetch millions of dollars each year. It serves as a two fold incentive for the west.

Firstly, people across the globe get to study whatever the neo imperialists' want them to. The curriculum treats english language superior and ingrains all the necessary values. Secondly, the revenue generated out of this practice is a lot. Through the far

reaching education system, the contemporary imperialists squeeze out revenue and pump in the education that they want the rest of the world to take.

Political, economic and cultural controls are all linked to each other. These factors together create an environment favoured by the modern imperialists.

Despite imperialisms prevalence, there are some hinderences in the future of imperialism. The section of essay will focus on its future.

Rising nations such as China are challenging neo imperialism in multiple ways, ~~that~~ are creating parallel systems and pushing back on some fronts. An imperialist regimes worst nightmare is accountability and an opposing force. Since modern times' show this isn't against a specific country, it is essential to challenge the system. China, in the past few years has risen to a substantial amount of power. Hence, it has started rejecting imperialistic notions. To break this cycle, China is developing parallel institutions, they might not be as grand as USA's since the beginning, but is enough to initiate the decline of

imperialism. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Belt-Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and China's military rise all are examples of parallel bodies to break imperialistic tendencies. China also pushes back on exploitative international matters such as climate justice. It advocates for the developed nations facing the brunt and costs of climate catastrophes as they are the ones who caused it. China is a rising power and it is challenging the norms of modern imperialism.

In conclusion, most of the global practices and frameworks assist the developed nations in exercising neo imperialistism. It is true that imperialism still exists, the difference is in the ways it was done before and the way it is done now. Traditionally colonisation led to imperialism and exploitation but there is legitimized backing of international institutions under the cover of democracy and liberalism. However, the future isn't all dark, rising powers have begun challenging the norms. This is done using the same frameworks and institutions that are used currently to exploit weaker nations. Rising nations are equipped with all the modern knowledge and aim to break

this cycle, without ruining the positives of the  
globalised contemporary world.

---