

Forum: The Fourth General Assembly

Issue: Analysing the impacts of modern neocolonialism

Student Officer: Ebrahim Aljabal

Position: Head Chair

Introduction

Neocolonialism still influences how formerly colonized countries develop in the geopolitical and economic context of today. In contrast to old colonialism, which focused on direct geographical control, modern neocolonialism relies on economic supremacy, political meddling, and cultural manipulation. Strong governments and multinational companies can continue to exert influence over developing nations through this covert method of control, frequently at the expense of the latter's sovereignty and economic development.

A lot of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are stuck in debt cycles with no end because of the strict guidelines set by global financial organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These circumstances frequently push local economies aside in favor of foreign investors and businesses, pushing governments to prioritize exports, enact massive budget cuts, and privatize vital services which continuously harm the local population as all of these policies raise prices high while keeping the income of the population low. As a result, local industries and labor forces suffer, and many nations continue to rely on foreign aid, which feeds the colonial cycle of exploitation.

Neocolonialism is clearly seen politically in the external pressures that emerging countries have to deal with. Richer nations, who abuse their economic strength to influence political outcomes, are frequently favored in trade deals and political coalitions. Nations that resist external pressures may lose independence as they risk being

diplomatically isolated or even face military actions disguised as humanitarian efforts, for example, the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya that was actually meant to overthrow the Gaddafi regime

Culturally, the impact of neocolonialism is profound. Global media, education systems, and cultural exports promote Western norms, values, and consumerism, overshadowing and marginalizing indigenous traditions and knowledge. This cultural domination is a powerful tool of modern neocolonialism, shaping the aspirations and world views of people in developing nations while reinforcing their dependence on the West.

Political instability, cultural deterioration, and economic inequality are all fuelled by these dynamics. Modern neocolonialism undermines national sovereignty and restricts their capacity to develop freely. In order to overcome the legacy of neocolonialism and promote true independence for emerging countries, it is essential to comprehend the complex interactions of economic, political, and cultural influences.

Definition of Key Terms

Neocolonialism,

A system in which powerful countries indirectly maintain control over developing nations through economic, political, or cultural pressures, rather than direct military or colonial rule.

Economic Dependency

When a country relies heavily on foreign investments, loans, or aid, often leading to external influence over its domestic policies and economic decisions.

Multinational Corporations (MNCs)

Large companies that operate in multiple countries, regularly playing a significant role in modern neocolonialism by exploiting resources and labour in developing nations.

Sovereignty,

The authority of a state to govern itself without external interference. In the context of neocolonialism, sovereignty is often compromised by external pressures from powerful nations or institutions.

Debt-Trap Diplomacy

A strategy in which a creditor country or institution lends money to a borrowing nation, often developing nations, with terms that ensure the borrower cannot repay, allowing the creditor to exert control over national assets or policies.

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)

Economic policies imposed by international financial institutions like the IMF or World Bank, requiring countries to implement austerity measures, privatization, and market liberalization in exchange for loans or aid.

Cultural Imperialism

The imposition of a dominant culture, typically from Western countries, on other societies through media, education, and global trade, contributing to the loss of indigenous identities and traditions.

Colonial exploitation

When colonial powers take resources, money, and labour from their colonies for their own financial benefit. Long-term economic and social effects were left on the colonized areas as a result of the colonizers' frequent use of cheap or forced labour, theft of natural resources, and the adoption of laws that favoured them over the native population.

Key Issues

Economic Dependency and Debt-Trap Diplomacy

Economic dependency remains one of the most obvious effects of modern neocolonialism. Many developing nations are trapped in cycles of continuous debt to international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, and even more powerful nations, leaving them vulnerable to external control. Zambia's debt crisis is a clear example of this issue: by 2020, its debt surged to 120% of its GDP due to loans from China for infrastructure projects. This led to the country defaulting on its sovereign debt, allowing foreign nations like China to gain significant leverage over its national assets. Similarly, Sri Lanka, in 2017, handed over its Hambantota port to China for 99 years after struggling to repay massive loans. These instances of “debt-trap diplomacy” often result in the loss of economic sovereignty, where vital national resources and infrastructure are leased or controlled by foreign powers. This accelerates economic instability and fosters long-term dependence

Political Interference and Sovereignty Undermined

Neocolonialism regularly happens through political interference in developing nations. For instance, the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya, initially justified as a humanitarian mission, resulted in long-term instability, with 80% of Libyans still reliant on humanitarian aid in 2020, according to UN reports. External forces typically dictate governance in these nations, undermining their sovereignty, and keeping them as a crutch for the use of more powerful governments.

Cultural Imperialism and Erosion of Indigenous Identities

Cultural imperialism is another subtle but powerful part of neocolonialism. Western culture, through media, education, and consumer goods, dominates much of the

developing world, leading to the erosion of indigenous cultures and traditions. In 2019, statistics showed that over 60% of media content consumed in developing nations originated from Western media firms. This has contributed to a growing disconnection from local cultures, with young generations adopting Western lifestyles and values, causing them to feel disconnected from their roots causing further issues such as emigration to western countries and leaving their country without the talent they could have provided. Furthermore, Western-based educational systems are increasingly prevalent in countries across Africa and Asia. This cultural oppression weakens the identity of these nations and fosters continued dependence on Western products, ideas, and institutions

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Nigeria

Nigeria, a former British colony, is an important example of a country impacted by neocolonialism. Despite gaining independence in 1960, it remains heavily reliant on foreign investment, especially in its oil industry. Nigeria's natural resources are predominantly controlled by multinational corporations from the West, which siphon wealth and resources from the country while contributing little to local development and the local economy. The country hopes and aims to reduce foreign control of its resources and increase domestic economic activity, yet its reliance on international loans and economic pressures limits these ambitions. Nigeria is also politically influenced by foreign governments, particularly through development aid and military assistance, further perpetuating its neocolonial relationship with former colonial powers.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The DRC is rich in valuable minerals such as cobalt and diamonds, yet remains one of the poorest nations in the world. Formerly colonized by Belgium, it has been subject to ongoing resource extraction by Western corporations and governments, particularly in the mining sector. The DRC's government has struggled to regulate foreign involvement, leading to environmental destruction and labor exploitation. The country's political instability, exaggerated by international competition for resources, leaves it dependent on foreign intervention. The DRC wants to assert more control over its resources but faces significant challenges due to economic dependency and global demand for its minerals, putting a strong blockade at any chance of development.

France

France, as a former colonial power, continues to maintain strong political and economic ties with its ex-colonies in Africa, particularly through military presence and bilateral agreements. They often justify this involvement as a way to ensure regional stability and promote development. However, many view these actions as a form of neocolonialism, where France benefits more from resources and strategic influence than the local populations do. Many examples exist of this, could be the fact that France has one of the biggest gold reserves in the world without ever having a single gold mine, where all the gold was taken from their African colonies. This ongoing relationship, especially through military interventions like in Mali and Niger, reinforces the perception that France is still exerting control over its former colonies.

The United Kingdom

Another significant colonial power, the United Kingdom, plays an uncertain position in modern neocolonialism. The United Kingdom maintains its influence over former colonies, especially in Africa and the Caribbean, through its diplomatic and financial

networks. The UK government frequently utilizes diplomacy and overseas aid to maintain influence, while British multinational firms are actively involved in resource exploitation and commerce in former colonies. Although the UK presents its involvement as development aid, many contend that British jobs hinder these countries from achieving genuine political autonomy and instead maintain economic reliance. Because of its history and current sway over international commerce and finance, the UK is still relevant to the subject.

China

China has a unique position in the topic of neocolonialism, especially in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Despite not being a usual colonial power, China's investments in Asia and Africa have raised concerns regarding a new kind of economic dominance. Chinese loans have caused major debt accumulation in nations like Zambia and Sri Lanka, raising concerns about debt-trap diplomacy. However, China disputes the term “neocolonialism” and argues that its investments represent a type of mutually beneficial growth. China is a major actor in the current dynamics of global power due to its expanding influence in the developing world.

United Nation Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

The UNCTAD is important in tackling the economic disparities brought about by neocolonialism. This UN organization was founded in 1964 and promotes fair trade policies and offers technical assistance to developing nations in an effort to integrate and develop them into the global economy. In order to prevent cycles of economic dependency, UNCTAD seeks and hopes to guarantee that developing countries can profit from global investment and trade. It still pushes for the global economy to be restructured to give developing countries' needs top priority.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
01/10/1960	Nigeria gained independence from the UK	Even though Nigeria is considered an independent sovereign country, its heavy reliance on foreign oil companies lead to issues such as environmental degradation, economic instability, and lack of wealth for its local population
14/12/1960	UN General Assembly resolution 1514—declaration on the grinding on dependence to colonial country and people	This resolution called for the immediate granting of independence to colonial countries, recognizing their right to self-determination. While it marked a significant step towards decolonization, many newly independent countries soon found themselves trapped in neocolonial relationships, with foreign powers continuing to exert control through economic and political means. The resolution laid the foundation for future discussions on

		neocolonialism and the need for true sovereignty in former colonies
15/03/1983	Introductions to structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in Ghana	Public sector jobs were slashed down, and many sectors such as healthcare and education were privatized, declining their quality for the poor, as well as resulting in them being less available
27/04/1994	End of the apartheid in South Africa	Even though the political system had changed, the majority of economic wealth remained concentrated in the hands of the white minority and MNCs, leaving the rest of the country in the same state as it was before
19/03/2011	NATO intervention in Libya	Libya was facing many political issues and civil war, NATO goes in with the official intent of it being a humanitarian mission, but with foreign powers vying for control of the nation's oil

		reserves, it caused the country long term instability
01/01/2013	China Belt and Road initiative expands into the African region	China gave massive unpayable loans to countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, making them enter debt and allowing them to take control over the ports or infrastructure in these countries for a term of 99 years, making them even more economically dependent and have foreign powers control its national assets.
19/12/2018	Sudan's increased political tension causes protests to erupt over the economic condition	Poor economic management and foreign influence makes Sudan heavily reliant on aid, leading to heavy inflation and increase in unemployment, with 8 months of protest, an agreement was reached to oust Omar al Bashir
11/03/2020	COVID-19 was declared a pandemic	Countries that already had massive debts saw their debts increase even further, with many loans and grants from the IMF worsening their

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

1. UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (1960)

One of the most important resolutions in the struggle against colonialism was the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, or UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV). This resolution, adopted in December 1960, highlighted each colonial people's right to independence and self-determination. It emphasized the necessity of international collaboration in assisting recently independent states and demanded an immediate end to colonial control. The resolution did not address the economic systems that kept these countries reliant on their former colonial powers, even if it was effective in giving many of them political independence. Despite many countries' political independence, foreign economic dominance remained, and this omission permitted neocolonial practices to flourish.

2. UNCTAD and the New International Economic Order (1964)

Another essential UN effort to amend the economic gaps left by colonialism was the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), founded in 1964. Promoting fairer trade practices and assisting developing nations in more equal integration into the global economy were the objectives of UNCTAD. Establishing the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the 1970s, which aimed to reorganize

international economic ties in favour of developing countries, was one of its main initiatives. Although there has been some progress in improving the trade positions of developing nations through UNCTAD, many critics contend that the organization's efforts have been hampered by the persistence of Western economic institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, which continue to impose economic conditions and austerity measures on developing countries.

Possible Solutions

Reforming International Financial Institutions

Reforming and rebuilding global financial organizations like the World Bank and the IMF is a crucial step in combating neocolonialism. These groups frequently enforce harsh policies that increase inequality and reliance in developing countries. These organizations can promote economic growth without pressuring nations to reduce vital services by eliminating such restrictions and granting greater flexibility in lending terms. Furthermore, expanding the participation of developing countries in decision-making procedures would guarantee that policies more closely reflect their long-term objectives. By doing this, nations would be better equipped to create sustainable economies and become less dependent on outside authority.

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Appendix