



Globalisation or Imperialism: The Dynamic Power Facades in the 21st century

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Abstract

Hegemonic powers of the United States are concealed by the prima-facie of development. The White man's burden that the 'civilised' nations have taken upon themselves is now manifested towards the whole world in the name of Globalisation. The growth of TNC's have accelerated the process of Imperialism masked as Globalisation which has further left the employees to be alienated. The project of neo-liberalisation has been used as an umbrella term to conceal the atrocities that the West has rendered upon the Third-World countries. The unattainable picture which it has rendered to the developing nations disguised as modernisation is nothing but the fake promises of the American Dream.

Keywords: Globalisation, Transnational corporations (TNC's), Immigration, Imperialism, Americanisation

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Introduction

Globalisation, which may seem to be a current phenomenon, has its roots entrenched in a process that has been continuing for generations (Harvey, 2005). Under the 21st century, it has reformed many economic and social relations, marking the widespread flow of trade, capital, technology, and information under one particular kind of global market (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). This leads to the development of society as a whole as an economy, denoted through terminologies like "Global village" (McLuhan, 1964). The characteristic feature of this stands to be the 'free flow' of information, ideas, and capital without any kind of state intervention.

However, there exists a contradictory ideology to the prevailing general parlance of a view that is often deciphered for globalisation. This view regards globalisation as an ideological tool that is used as a prescription while being correlated to imperialism (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). As part of imperialism, it denotes the interests of the capitalist class, whose major carriers are

the TNCs (transnational corporations), alongside the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc., that continues to form the "international financial community".

Literature Review

Globalisation, thereby emerges as a process that is inevitable in nature, as it ought to be undertaken by all countries, willingly or unwillingly (Harvey, 2005). Globalisation has been further recalled as U.S. Imperialism, as the world economy has been single-handedly dominated by U.S. economic power. In order to set upon this discourse, the global corporations have been acting as a tool that transcends the boundaries making the countries to be interdependent in nature, but in reality, it is the U.S. multinational corporations who have been exerting power play. This reflects upon the capacity of U.S. corporations to exploit the others in a way which would benefit themselves. Petras, and Veltmeyer (2001) argues that "Globalisation could be analysed to act as a code word for the projection of U.S. imperialism." Under

the fad for the creation of new markets, it has developed

the myths of emerging markets while fostering the dependency of underdeveloped and developing countries, marking the Third World dependency. This process entails the taking over and the privatisation of their companies by U.S. or European capital, making them take the lead within the spheres of banking, pharmaceuticals, communications, insurance, etc., but at the same time causing a full-time dependence from their side onto U.S.

Earlier, Asia was seen as an ally to the United States because of their easier access towards markets, facilitation of loans, and state regulations, but it becomes essential to consider the present-day scenario as well, wherein Asia is deemed to be one of the competitors which needs to be conquered in order to establish U.S. hegemonic power over it. Attempts in order to accrue the same have been made by liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation of its financial markets, which has led to the development of economic crises for Asia. Recalling the U.S. as an empire and not a globalised aspect is ascertained through the fact that U.S. economies continue to bloom, whereas Asia's economy continues to be degenerated in terms of facing massive bankruptcies. Mere interdependent relations through the transnational corporations cannot be held responsible enough for the same, because it is rather the intrinsic process of continuous buying out of TNCs, which has been following the Asian and Latin American collapse to be facilitated as a part of U.S. imperial order.

Discussion

Since Transnational Corporations seem to be one of the tools via which U.S. continues to exert its hegemonic power under the realms of imperialistic order while masking it under

the context of globalisation, it becomes quintessential to lay emphasis on the H-1B visa programs that are opened by the U.S. As part of the globalisation process, the free flow of labour becomes necessary for the creation of the global economy to be facilitated, but the issue resides under the manipulation of clauses of H-1B visa, which continues to benefit the employer at the expense of the immigrants and the domestic workers as well (Watts, 2001). This visa program has been subjected to many controversial political debates, as it acts as a way of providing temporary and skilled labourers to the United States. There seems to be a contradiction between the employers' ability to hire globally and the workers' rights, as stated by Watts (2001). The program policy of the visa is in itself burdened with many clauses, as even though it helps to increase the supply of workers, especially under the IT sphere, it continues to restrict the visa holders to compete under the open job market. On one hand, we see the free flow of labour from one country to the other, but on the other hand, we analyse the kind of diabolical situations the worker has to face, being a free labourer, making him subject to the dominant state's ideology and impositions (Watts, 2001). Due to the fact that the H-1B visa holders are bound to a specific employer (upon whom their visa was issued), the employers take advantage of this situation by paying them a salary even below the market level, as they are bound for a period of 6 years (Watts, 2001). Varma and Rogers (2004) emphasise how Indians are well-represented in the U.S. IT industry. They reflect upon their situation, as Indians hold the majority of the population that is outsourced, alongside Chinese, under the U.S. The transnational corporations are aided via the IT industry, which is characterised by the usage of brainpower under the information society. Varma and

Rogers (2004) under the sphere of globalisation emphasise how the Indians are well-represented under the IT industry of the U.S. They reflect upon their situation as Indians hold to be the majority of the population which is outsourced alongside Chinese under the States. The transnational corporations are aided via the IT industry which is characterised by the usage of brainpower under the information society. Varma and Rogers describe the growing presence of Indians under the IT sector who have broken the “glass ceilings” (Varma & Rogers, 2004), while reflecting upon their working conditions and the barriers that they face for career mobility.

The range of Indian workers who professionalise for IT industries seems to vary throughout the par but what is reflected is the dissonance between the increasing number of IT sector jobs and the lower numbers of skilled workers that are employed under them. (Varma & Rogers, 2004). The question persists, why is there a sudden rapid need for outsourcing being established in the United States? To which the author argues as to how there has been a tremendous decline among the students belonging to the IT, computer science, and engineering fields, which has been greater than ever in the U.S. (Harvey, 2005). Although, the US being an imperial power has not been that affected by this slowdown because it treats it to be temporary in nature wherein it has already devised measures to recover from. The historical actions of the US have not been friendly to the third-world countries as they have time and again backlashes individuals from this area with prejudices and stereotypes, considering them to be rather inferior (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). Due to the economic crisis being encountered, especially under the IT industry, it was around the Second World War that it changed its immigration policies from “skin to skill”.

The immigration Act of 1990 recalled for the development of a variety of workers upon H-1B visa upon the criteria of education and technical skills. There has been a high quota of H-1B visas being issued for engineering and computer-related arenas. Yet again, the argument put forth under “Unmasking Globalisation” holds its position as there has been a surge of MNC’s under the IT industry that leads to the control being reigned under the hands of the US (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). It is not uncommon to see western countries modifying their visa policies to call forth the skilled labourers from other countries by attracting them with top salaries, better living conditions, medical support, and an attentive work environment which indeed seems to be lacking in the case of India.

The argument would remain one-sided if one does not consider the reaction portrayed by the Americans because of the rapid immigration under the high-tech companies. Many of them have shown sharp criticism and have demanded restrictive visa policies especially after the 9/11 attacks upon the World Trade Centre. They continue to greet Indians with stereotypical slurs and practice racial discrimination which is very well showcased upon the internet and social media as well. This case scenario could be further resonated with the “sons of the soil movement” which took place in India that recalled the rights of the local people over the available resources of their region. The H-1B visa policy is further called out to be the “American worker replacement programme”. This visa policy is discriminatory in nature as those who work on this visa earn 25-30% less than their American colleagues (Watts, 2001). They tend to live in sophisticated apartments which have been recommended by their companies as they cannot afford separate apartments. The process of “americanisation” or “living the American dream” which has been widely generated

under the process of globalisation, seems to give the impression that the American society is indeed “colour-blind”. What the reality entails is something which is quite different even though the Indians are highly represented as professionalized beings (Harvey, 2005). This statement in itself turns out to be ironic; it is due to this very own reason that they are not allotted higher-level management work despite the fact that they are educated, well-trained, and law-abiding (Harvey, 2005). They are perceived as “good technicians, rather than managers” as they are not management material. This discrimination gets intensified when it cuts across gender, as Indian women working under the U.S. find it even harder than Indian men to achieve heights (Varma & Rogers, 2004). The plight of Indians working upon H-1B visas becomes denotable as they have to strive under a competitive environment wherein they are allocated duties which are meager to their intellectual levels, pertaining to rather maintenance-based work. Even though benching of workers upon this visa stands to be illegal, it does not mark its complete eradication. Their salaries stand to be much lesser than what was promised to them, alongside which they cannot switch their jobs because of the clauses that follow them. They would be fined to pay heavy compensation in the scenario of any change under the job profile, in addition to the constant fear of being sued or deported. Due to the economic crisis which occurs quite frequently, the first to suffer the wrath of the same are the ones upon the H-1B visas, where they are unemployed from their jobs and are sent back to their home countries (Watts, 2001). Under this scenario, considering the heavy number of layoffs being initiated, there have been certain amendments which are being made to ease the situation. The workers may ‘qualify’ to stay in the country if they are able to find a new company which is willing

to sponsor them, in certain extraordinary circumstances.

Conclusion

With the prevalence of widespread migration taking place from India to the U.S. due to various reasons, it becomes important to analyse the emerging regional issues in the Indian American cultural identity alongside the Indian American approach to American political processes, as has been stated by R.S. Khare. There has been an upsurge of the community activities that take place abroad in order to reside under the socially closed enclaves comprising their regional food, language, and beliefs and rituals. Discrepancy starts to emerge under the second generation of younger Indian Americans who do not fully accept or reject the norms relating to culture which have been laid down. There have been many reciprocal relations established between the Indians and the Americans for acknowledging each other's cultures, wherein there still exists many differences between them which still have reconciled. The Indian Americans are increasingly engaging under professional and business organisations in order to assert their dominance and their existence to make an impression for their economic, social, and cultural interests. Although, what Khare argues is that under this minority culture which is present under the U.S., there has been a lack of co-ordinated agenda and support for their policies. David Harvey, while analysing the facilitation of conditions for the accumulation of profit rendered by the U.S. as a part of the state apparatus, recalls it to be a “neoliberal state” (Harvey, 2005). Although, the project of neoliberalization is either viewed as a utopian project to reorganize international capitalism or as a political project in order to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation for restoring the power of economic elites. It is the latter entity which it has been more

successful in. It has led to the financialisation of every aspect where we see the building up of new market relations in order to open up possibilities for buying and selling cheap and dear. The ventures for the creation of freedom in terms of the world economic market which continues to transcend the barriers of any country, according to Polanyi, have been rather authoritarian in nature. The authoritarian regime may even take the route of Fascism where the main focus resides to restore the power of the narrow class of capitalists, by doing this they have also led to the mass concentration of corporate power.

Polanyi's argument thereby confers in nature where neoliberalism is accused of conferring the rights and freedoms through the prior activation of assets as there indeed exists an unclarified set of private property rights, making competition extremely rigorous. Neoliberals seem to be suspicious of democracy because the rule of the majority is seen as a threat to individual rights and liberties; they favour the rules by experts and elites. They tend to rely upon undemocratic and unaccountable institutions like the IMF and the Federal Reserve to make the crucial decisions who opt for the elements of deregulation to provide integrity. The above arguments reflect upon the U.S.'s tendency to only promote the interests of the upper-class power under the processes of financialisation. Flexible civilisation and means of accumulations become the key characteristic features of neoliberalism, which results in low wages, job insecurity alongside loss of job infidelity (Harvey, 2005). Harvey states that the main work of neo-liberalisation has been to redistribute and not to generate wealth and income (Harvey, 2005). Privatisation and commodification become quintessential wherein the corporatisation and modification become a signaling feature (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). It leads to development of new ventures of

capital accumulation for profit gain. Commodification leads to the assurance of rights over property, processes, things, and social relations (Harvey, 2005). State intervention becomes crucial but only for its own benefits, there is development of new modes of authoritarianism which is facilitated via electoral processes and freedom of individuals under the civil society (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). This interplay of privatisation and corporatisation when looked from an imperialist perspective hints at the monopolisation of power and control under the hands of a particular economy which is running under the umbrella of the world economy (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). As U.S. companies continue to progress and transcend the national boundaries under the IT service fields, the debates regarding outsourcing become heated (Varma & Rogers, 2004). What could be thus concluded is the fact that neo-liberalisation has transformed the positionality of labour as the labour is now reduced to a mere commodity who is stripped of its protective layers (Harvey, 2005). Within the realm of H-1B visas, there have been certain improvements made at the whims of the U.S. government in itself where it has legislated to make this visa rather portable by allowing the visa holder to transfer from one sponsoring employee to another instead of re-applying again yet the debates regarding this issue still remains a contested issue (Watts, 2001).

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