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## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEO-COLONIZATION FRAMEWORK

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### **Abstract**

*Sustainable development is emerged as a pivotal issue that needs to be instantly faced and solved by the developing nations. International organizations have set different objectives for countries to follow in order to achieve sustainability and fight crises such as climate change, poverty and inequality. The United Nations, for example, has set an urgent Agenda for Sustainable Development for all countries to follow which is made up of 17 sections, named the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these goals need to be achieved by 2030. These SDGs aim for the end of poverty and hunger, the enhancement of people's well-being and education, the accessibility to clean water and sanitation, and other objectives that lead to the spread of peace of prosperity among the world's different populations. In this paper, using neo colonized framework to analysis and observe how world's developing countries try to gain sustainable development goals in different difficulties and barriers emerged by developed nations.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, International Organizations, Colonization, Neo Colonization, Developing Nations.

### **Introduction**

Currently, sustainable development has been one of the most discussed topics. There are different conceptualizations and theoretical backgrounds regarding sustainable development, but colonization and its effects are usually overlooked by them. Basically, sustainable development is a long-term solution to how we plan our indefinite progress in the future without causing damage to the environment so as to guarantee a safe habitat for the next generations, who will continue to develop their economies, societies, and care for the environment with a similar ideal in mind. It satisfies our

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needs without sabotaging the opportunities of others. The concept covers a broad scope of matters such as environmental, social, and economic development which continues to prove its importance in our lives as it affects all aspects of them. The United Nations have set out a number of Sustainable Development Goals and targets to serve as guidelines for the future and optimal conscious development.

During the UN Sustainable Development Summit of September 2015, which took place in New York, the Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the 193 countries belonging to the UN General Assembly and clearly outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. All of which must be accomplished by 2030. The UN Agenda for Sustainable Development is clear that moving towards sustainability requires the broadest possible international cooperation, an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. Crucially, this includes decreasing international disparities between developed and developing countries, such as in international decision-making, control and use of natural resources and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. This paper talks about how internationally neocolonialism holds the developing countries under its paws of advanced technology, development, western culture superiority, economy, global culture inclusive processes, and ways to sell it while simultaneously demeaning the culture of these developing countries. Developed countries have a way to turn things around in their favor, first, they colonized and established a direct control and now, consequently have “neo- colonized” which simply means that they have now established an indirect control through their products and so on. This paper also provides an understanding of all are the effects on the developing countries in terms of the superiority which is posed on the ethnic practices of the neo-colonized countries

### **What are Developing Nations?**

A bright development in the world was the mushrooming of newly independent States emerging from colonialism. However, these new States faced some common challenges, mainly as a result of their colonial past. They were underdeveloped, lacking in strong institutional structures and possessed no voice at the international level. At the same time, they had a strong desire to support other countries which were still under the yoke of colonialism to become independent. By definition, developing countries have a lower quality of life, income, economic development, and industrial growth

than the global average. Moreover, they are vulnerable to social, economic, and environmental issues – all of which harm their quality of life. Even though they may have faced issues that are similar to developed countries, the impacts on them are often more severe. The Human Development Index (HDI) measures a country's economic development, life expectancy, health, education, and quality of life. According to the United Nations and the HDI, countries with an HDI rating of less than 0.8 are classified as underdeveloped, or still developing. By that standard, there are 122 nations still developing, and are in need of support to develop sustainably.

Today we live in globalized world. Economically, states around the world are not only interconnected, but interdependent, on one another under a system called globalization. An official definition of globalization is “the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets,” but that is limited (Merriam-Webster). In reality, globalization is the new, more-acceptable term for the exploitation of human labor and natural resources on an international scale. Structurally, globalization is a continuation of the previous systems of exploitation of slavery and colonization but with a nicer connotation.

Two International institutions — the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank — made sure exploitation and the ten key tenets of neoliberalism would spread around the world. In 1994, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was formed as part of these two economic institutions. Membership into the WTO is crucial, as it is the doorway to participating in international trade. Moreover, the IMF and World Bank prioritized product-led development rather than manufacture-led development. This means that states entering the international trade scene were incentivized to centralize their economy around one or more commodities — such as cotton, rubber, oil, or precious minerals and metals such as gold, diamonds, tungsten, and tin — which severely stunts an economy, particularly a new economy. This form of development leads to a trap where developing countries' economies are dependent on trade and foreign investment rather than domestic manufacturing. Thus, states in this position can grow their economies only as much as western economic superpowers allow it. It is under this system that developing countries go into massive debt to try and participate in global trade, which is another way these economic institutions purposely stifle their economies. If a government is preoccupied with paying off their debt, paying for infrastructure and social security programs will not be an urgent priority.

Another extremely tool of neocolonial control, in developing countries is the mechanism for monitoring and controlling foreign currencies within the IMF. To be a member of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, a state must agree to “peg” its currency on the United States dollar, the European euro, or the British pound sterling. Prior to this system, currency value was based on the gold standard. States were required to have the same amount of gold in their central reserve as they did money in circulation. This means that powerful currencies are no longer based on tangible, material wealth. Instead, the United States dollar, for example, is powerful simply because the United States is the largest economic and military superpower on the planet.

In the present era, Multi Nationals Corporations assume the role of colonial powers. Instead of exploiting land to make a royal family rich, the benefactors are CEOs and corrupt politicians. Technology keeps advancing, but the systems of production stay in the exploitative past. Slavery, colonialism, and globalization are all methods of exploitation of human beings by human beings for the purpose of making a profit. This is called Neo Colonization. German philosopher Karl Marx accurately highlighted that a system of political inequality will always culminate in a system of economic inequality. Karl Marx argued that capitalism represented a stage in the socio-economic development of humanity. He believed that ultimately and inevitably, the capitalist system in industrially developed countries would be overthrown by a revolution of the working class; this would result in the establishment of socialist utopias. In 1916, Vladimir Lenin however, modified this thesis, claiming that the rapid expansion of European imperialism around the world in the last decade of the nineteenth century had marked the highest stage of capitalism. With the granting of independence to colonies, a theory of modernization took hold. This suggested that independent countries would begin to develop very rapidly, politically and economically, and would resemble “modern” Western countries. It soon became clear, however, that this was not happening.

### **New Colonialism is new Avtar of Colonialism**

Colonialism and Neo-colonialism (1964) of Jean Paul Sartre contains the first recorded use of the term “neo-colonialism”. The term has become a dominant theme in African Philosophy, and particularly in African political philosophy. Sartre argues in the book for the immediate disconnection of France’s grip upon its ex-colonies and for total liberation from the influence

of French policies on those colonies. However, the term was first officially used in Africa in one of the All-African People's Conferences (AAPC), a powerful political group, which held various sessions in the late 1950s. Neo-colonialism is a continued survival of the colonial system in many of the African states, by turning them into victims of political, economic, social, military and technical forms of power.

Neo-colonialism can be described as the continuation of the colonialism in the form of economic model after a colonized territory has achieved formal political independence. Europeans had colonized many countries in the late nineteenth century, instituting a system of economic exploitation in which the raw materials, particularly minerals, were appropriated and exported to the benefit of the colonizing power. Once colonialism came to an end, a new type of colonization emerged with a new strategy. Neo-colonialism therefore suggests that when European powers granted nominal political independence to colonies, they continued to control the economies of their earlier colonies. According to the Social Contract Theory of Thomas Hobbes, "it is because of our self-serving desire for security that we agree to subordinate ourselves completely to an absolute sovereign power." But when this power overpowers us in varied ways then we find injustice all over.

Thus, Climate and Environmental change is neo colonial practice created by Developed nations. Under the effect of increasingly tight and expensive environmental regulations, emerging nations who have historically contributed little to anthropogenic atmospheric pollution may now become the victims of global climate policy. The "collective West" nations are entirely to blame for anthropogenic climate change since they did not consider the environment at all when they built their industrial foundation. But by forcing everyone to adhere to stringent rules, they are really Under the guise of environmental concerns, they are essentially denying the world's poorest nations their right to progress. As a result, environmental inequality is still a pressing issue. Once more, the phrases "climatic neo-colonialism" and "carbon neo-colonialism" are frequently used. Even though international organizations are officially promoting the idea of "common but differentiated responsibilities" in the battle against climate change, developing nations continue to worry that actual practices will not adhere to it.

### **Contemporary Relevance of Neo Colonialism**

1. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): Criticized as a form of debt-trap

diplomacy—a neo-colonial strategy to control strategic infrastructure in countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and parts of Africa.

2. IMF Conditionalities and Structural Adjustment Programs: Developing countries are forced to liberalize markets, cut public spending, and privatize services—leading to inequality, poverty, and loss of sovereignty.
3. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India: While FDI can boost development, unchecked foreign control in critical sectors like retail, agriculture, or data economy raises neo-colonial concerns.

### **Digital Colonialism: The New Frontier**

- Tech giants from the Global North (Google, Meta, Amazon) dominate the data and digital infrastructure in India and other developing nations.
- Sociologists call this “data colonialism”, where personal and national data becomes a commodity controlled by foreign players.

Thus, the disparity between the North and the South continues to exist in terms of access to resources, investment, and technology, as well as and this is no less significant in terms of opportunities for the development of social infrastructure and human capital. All of this occasionally results in the phrase “neo-colonialism” being employed in both political and expert discourse. Since it first arrived fifty years ago, it has not vanished anywhere.

Against this background, the work of specific international organizations that have a large representation of developing nations and give them a greater voice is particularly significant, these consist of numerous regional bodies, such as the G20 and BRICS. In order to achieve global equality, legality and development, the BRICS are forming their own set of political ideas and values. India’s current G20 Presidency has proposed a similar strategy.

### **NAM: Key of Sustainable Development for Developing Countries**

The world is undergoing a period of transformative change, with many countries facing social, economic and environmental crises and other parallel crises in the aftermath of the COVID19 pandemic. This ‘polycrises’ has accelerated global economic and political fragmentation, further widened inequalities among and between nations, and reversed progress made in some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The NAM was born in 1961 against the backdrop of the Cold War tensions between the two blocs. It did not wish to belong to any military alliance itself and stood for “the end of colonialism, the realization of the right of self-determination of peoples, equal rights of races and peoples, nuclear

disarmament and peaceful international cooperation of all peoples and states". Yet, there was also a common desire among them "to co-operate with any government which sought to contribute to the strengthening of confidence and peace in the world". NAM Member States hoped that the 'solidarity of the weak' could defend their common interests at the international and regional levels.

The NAM has been fighting for an alternative world order to address several important issues for developing and least developed countries such as poverty and existing inequalities. NAM also came forward to help these countries in trying to assert their sovereignty and economic rights, including at the UN, in cooperation with other country groupings. For instance, the NAM has maintained a close relationship with the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, especially through the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) of the G-77 and the NAM, which was established in 1994 with the objective of promoting coordination and cooperation between both, wherever possible at all relevant multilateral fora to address issues of common concern to both groupings subject to their respective competencies.

The emergence of newer country groupings, both within and across regions, has also influenced the NAM. Many NAM Member States are now engaged in economic and regional country groupings such as the G-20, BRICS, ASEAN etc.

### **Major Achievements of The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**

The NAM has been an important international force which aims at the promotion of economic and cultural cooperation, development, peace and security, and to oppose colonialism and neo-colonialism. In particular, the NAM countries have historically engaged in a dynamic process of strengthening the United Nations and providing a platform for countries to engage in meaningful discussions towards global peace and preventing polarization of the world. Despite some proclamations to the contrary<sup>42</sup> the NAM has stood the test of time as it has been adapting to the changing international scenarios. In particular, it has played an important role in protecting and preserving the interests of the developing countries in the economic and political arena.

1. **Decolonization:** The struggle against colonialism was one of the initial challenges for the NAM. During the early days of the Movement, its actions were a key factor in the decolonization process, which later led to the attainment of freedom and independence by many countries



and the establishment of new nation-states. While the colonial powers continued to apply apartheid and racial discrimination in countries such as Namibia and South Africa, the NAM sponsored a series of resolutions supporting the adoption and implementation of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

2. **New International Economic Order:** During the 1970s, the NAM aimed at building up a multilateral system supportive of economic development and fundamental freedoms, calling for the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO)<sup>46</sup> that recognized the existence of a “gap between the developed and the developing countries (which) continues to widen in a system which was established at a time when most of the developing countries did not even exist as independent States and which perpetuates inequality”<sup>47</sup>. It also established a set of principles recognizing the need for the respect of sovereignty of States over their natural resources, self-determination of all peoples, and the full and effective participation of all countries in the global financial and economic systems. It also gave special attention to developing countries seriously affected by economic crises and natural calamities, among others. The adoption of the Declaration on the NIEO marked a milestone for furthering the relevance of the human rights aspects in the international economic system.

The world is currently facing multiple crises, some of which are existential ones. These crises require a set of systemic, structural, innovative and global solutions. In order to contribute effectively to this transformative process for our common future, the NAM is required to increase solidarity and coordination among its Member States, with the objective of overcoming differences and resistance at the world stage

## **G20 Recommit to SDGs**

“We are One Earth, One Family, and we share One Future.” This is the opening sentence of the Group of 20 (G20) New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration, in which the leaders pledge to “leverage the G20’s convening power and its collective resolve to fully and effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and accelerate progress toward the SDGs.” The G20 is made up of 19 countries and the EU. It is a group of developed and developing countries. The leaders commit to “taking collective action for effective and timely implementation of the G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs,” including through actions on eliminating hunger and malnutrition, strengthening



global health and implementing One Health approach, and delivering quality education, with culture acting as a transformative driver of the SDGs.

The leaders acknowledge the role of G20 cooperation in determining the course the world takes. They recognize the “cascading challenges and crises [that] have reversed gains” on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, land degradation and desertification, rising commodity prices and cost-of-living pressures, poverty, inequality, and conflicts. The leaders “affirm that no country should have to choose between fighting poverty and fighting for our planet.”

## Conclusion

In Conclusion, Colonialism may have ended, but the problem of neocolonialism has arisen, where many of these former colonial powers still hold sway over their former colonies. This can be seen in the instance of economic imperialism, globalization, cultural imperialism, and conditional aid that leads to indirect control of the country by establishing a sort of hegemony. In this way, the unity of third world developing countries on different platform like NAM, G-20, BRICS, ASEAN and many more groups pay attention to fight against big colonizers power which are create obstacles towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals till 2030.

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