

THE NEW COLONIALISM: GENESIS AND PROSPECTS IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE WORLD ORDER TRANSFORMATION

The study of the problem of colonialism and its reinterpretation open up prospects for understanding the modern processes of transforming the system of international relations. Relevance of the theme of colonialism is associated with studying the consequences of the colonial era for developing and establishing modern states, as well as with understanding current international relations and internal processes in countries. The global political and economic space is dominated by the principles of the indirect influence of neocolonialism, and the internal political space of some states is dominated by the principles of internal colonialism, which require additional research and analysis. Colonial institutions and organizations have remained in the cultural and political space of modern states.

Colonialism is often given a narrow definition. Some researchers limit it to either a geographical region or an epoch. Others, convinced that colonialism is outdated, view it as a system that no longer operates in Africa and the world as a whole. The third group of researchers reduce it to a system imposed and serving only residents of Western countries.

In Africa, classical colonialism began in the 19th century. Like the colonization of America and the Atlantic slave trade, this was systemic violence – organized and deliberate. Colonialism was an integral part of capitalism, it was based on such fundamental principles of Western civilization as racism, a sense of superiority, and contempt for other cultures. Instead of exploiting defenseless people on foreign lands, as in slavery, classical colonialism held populations captive on their own land, forcing them to serve the same economic and ideological motives that gave rise to and supported the Atlantic slave trade.

Long-lasting occupation of lands, exploitation of human and material resources, and suppression of resistance required destruction of social bonds, beliefs, values, identity, and knowledge of indigenous peoples. From the very beginning, colonialism had an economic, political, cultural, and psychological component. Its economic and political motives were most obvious at the beginning; the cultural and psychological aspects inherent in it became more intense and manifested themselves in subsequent historical stages. Moreover, consequences of colonialism are numerous and pervasive; its development and expansion influenced thinking, behavior, and overall life of the colonized peoples. Methods and agents of colonialism, as well as its main foci of impact, have changed.

When in the middle of the 20th century, the colonial era seemed to have ended, the enslaved peoples believed then that the Europeans were gone forever, and that, therefore, they could move forward unhindered, for enjoying freedom and prosperity that were in the immediate vicinity, as the people believed. Time has shown that this is not the case. Even on the most cursory examination, Africa should be much richer and more prosperous now. The continent has rich natural resources, most of the world's reserves of gold, platinum, diamonds, cobalt and uranium are located there. Despite this, the entire continent has the GDP that is about two trillion dollars less than that of Japan, a country with the population and the land size more than five times smaller than Africa¹. This discrepancy indicates the continent's depressed economic state and shows how much Africa's potential has been crippled. Soon after gaining independence, the euphoria and rising expectations were replaced by disappointment and despair, because colonialism left behind a lasting legacy – not only political and economic, but also cultural, intellectual and social legacy, – which supports European domination. The most

¹ Kotkin J. The Coming of Neo-Feudalism: A Warning to the Global Middle Class. Encounter Books, 2020. 288 p.

important consequence of colonialism, which has not been sufficiently analyzed, is the way, in which previously colonized peoples obtain knowledge, understand their history, comprehend their world and identify themselves.

Modern concepts of colonialism highlight not only its various consequences, but also the eurocentric epistemology, ontology and ideology originating from the European monopoly on power, hegemonic knowledge, distorted history and deformed existence of the colonized, supporting and affirming it. Colonialism is based on epistemological and ontological biases that promote establishing European hegemony and superiority, while devaluing, marginalizing and undermining knowledge, experience and rights of colonized peoples. We will not be able to understand why the aspirations of Africa and other previously colonized regions for freedom and expected prosperity failed to happen after gaining independence, if we do not understand historical foundations that gave rise to colonialism, its social and intellectual basis.

The effects of long-lasting impact by colonialists' alien civilization led Africa to the protracted crisis of cultural identity. This impact results in establishing quasi-capitalist economy and the so-called democratic governance system. Colonialism destroyed or distorted original African forms of state organization. Pre-colonial states to be focused on local communities and based on the principles of consensus and separation of powers, were demolished by colonialism. Thus, colonialism replaced the political culture of leadership of the people, based on accountability, separation of the power and consensus, with the culture of oppression and autocracy, which persisted after gaining independence.

Imperialist domination continues in the postcolonial period, when neoliberal market forces impose globalization, a hidden form of colonialism. The famous pan-Africanist, politician and President of Ghana in the 1960s, Kwame Nkrumah, in his work "Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism"

(1965)², wrote about the relationship between neocolonialism and imperialism. According to Nkrumah, neocolonialism is the worst and most aggravated form of imperialism. Neocolonialism provides power without responsibility and uncontrolled exploitation of the former colonies' population. He explains that neo-colonialist exploitation can be implemented in the political, religious, ideological, economic and cultural spheres of society.

Indeed, for controlling the lives and destinies of billions of people in their former colonies, modern colonial powers need neither military might nor occupation. They just need values. The colonizers of Africa have replaced their military uniforms with business suits and now sell Africans “democracy, human rights, and free-market economy”. For the developing economy, the main effect of neocolonialist globalization is dependence. Saturation of the lower economies with foreign aid on bonded terms strategically reduces the capacity of African countries' national self-development. Another goal is transforming local residents' consciousness into capitalist one for the ultimate profit of Western capital. The main indicators of well-being in such newly colonized countries are the quantity and quality of imported tangible goods that people consume, the houses they live in, and the gadgets they own.

Under the cover of the so-called “free-market economy”, the new colonizers prefer to remain in the shadows, for the purpose of manipulating local political and economic elites, bribing their individual representatives, and inciting conflicts when this becomes profitable. Neocolonialism resulted in the constant “client – patron” relationship that was – and has been in some cases – between the former colonial powers and the establishment of the former colonies. External dependence, promoted and supported by neocolonialism, makes African states constantly dependent on resource-based economies, unable or unwilling to defend

² Kwame Nkrumah. *Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism*. New York: International Publishers, 1969.

their independence and develop their nations. The “patron – client” relationship between former colonialists and the rulers of the neocolonial elite serves as the foundation, that is, the structural basis, for ensuring compliance with neo-patrimonial rule in neo-colonial states. Thus, the exploitation of local workforce, the export of the country’s important resources and, most importantly, the dependence of developing countries has increased many times. Leaders, such as Nkrumah from Ghana and Sekou Toure from Guinea, openly opposed neo-colonialism because of its detrimental economic and political consequences for African states.

World trade is a tool used for controlling over former colonies’ development. Open markets with artificially cheapened products to be sold are imposed on poor countries, thereby undermining the efforts of local producers. The dependence destroys development opportunities. No wonder, that several rich countries and corporations currently dominate the global scenario. Today, sub-Saharan African countries are characterized by low living standards, growing income inequality, low productivity, and lower income per capita. Globalization has indeed failed to eliminate these problems and, on the contrary, has worsened them. Thus, globalization can be defined as the last stage of Western economic and cultural domination over the rest of the world, which began with colonialism, passed through imperialism and has now reached the stage of globalization. Globalization is indeed the driving force behind the spread of neo-colonialism and new imperialism in Africa.

New colonialism, neo-imperialism, meta-colonialism, recolonization – all these definitions are currently used by scientists for describing what followed neocolonialism in the middle of the 20th century³. The new colonialism revives the old system of colonial exploitation and oppression, which disguises itself

³ Hussein A. Bulhan. Stages of Colonialism in Africa: From Occupation of Land to Occupation of Being // *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*. 2015, Vol. 3(1), 239–256; Charles Chukwuemeka Nweke. Global South Neo-Imperialism // *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Philosophy*. 2018. No. 1; David Harvey. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press. 2003.

under the more piquant euphemism of globalization. Ideologists of globalization tend to assess it as the system of universal innovations, which are the future of humanity. Nevertheless, these works rarely provide an answer to the question: who really benefits from this trend, and who should be sacrificed for future prosperity?

Unlike earlier forms, which were national or regional, the new colonialism not only grows globally and penetrates deeper into all peoples' psychology and social relations, but also manifests its global power of hegemonic mystification, which erases to some extent the former differences of social class, ethnicity and race. The old and crude forms of colonial rule were replaced by more a subtle and sophisticated, as well as more intense and expansive form consolidating capitalism, liberal democracy, and Western culture into a unified and globalized force for economic, political, and cultural domination. In the new colonialism, domination is mainly aimed at economical, cultural, social and psychological common existence of the colonized. The guiding values, ethos, and ideology of the new colonial way of life include the interrelated and interdependent world with a common set of international laws, markets, and monetary standards formulated and regulated by so-called "neutral institutions", such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. It was the latter two institutions that were behind the implementation of structural adjustment programs in Latin America, Africa and Asia. They have liberalized the economies of the global South by ripping off protective tariffs and imposing capital controls, cutting wages and eliminating environmental laws, reducing social spending and privatizing public goods, doing all these for the purpose of clearing the way for foreign capital and restoring access to cheap workforce and resources.

It can be said that today, colonialism is more rooted objectively and subjectively than it was in the past, being a specific modern phase of historical development. Neoliberalism is the ideology of the new colonialism.

Neoliberalism is more than a set of economic strategies: it is the foundation of the ideology and policies necessary to maintain the dominance of neo-imperialism.

In the light of the above, theories that consider the Arab Spring of a decade ago as a manifestation of the systemic, structural crisis of the social order of neoliberal globalization are of undoubted interest⁴. By many macroeconomic indicators, the Arab uprisings were not unexpected. Poverty and mass unemployment, characteristic of the Arab countries of the 2000s – 2010s, are natural results of neoliberal policies and, consequently, create objective conditions for an uprising. The Arab revolutions were not just the manifestation of the growing wave of discontent with authoritarianism, but also the reaction to the socio-political transformations associated with the socio-economic reforms carried out since the 1970s, that is, the reaction to the failure of the neoliberal model of economic development, imposed by the West on the Arab region. After the end of the Cold War, the United States, endowed with economic and military superiority, succeeded in creating a global empire and pursued the imperial geopolitical strategy aimed at establishing and maintaining the neoliberal world order focused on the interests of transnational groups of American capital. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, neoliberalism led to the consolidation of power by the Comprador classes, closely linked to the interests of international financial capital. This was accompanied by the working class' pronounced material decline and the local petty bourgeoisie's marginalization. For consolidating the neoliberal project, authoritarianism in the region was necessary for restraining popular resistance. The subordinated integration of the MENA region into the global capitalist system was carried out by the dominant

⁴ Mustapha Jouili. Imperialism and Neoliberal Redeployment in Post uprising Tunisia // *Middle East Critique*. 2023, No. 32:2, p. 195–215; Amin, S. *Geopolitique de l'Imperialisme Contemporain Geo-Politics of Contemporary Imperialism* // *International Review of Sociology*, 2005. No. 15(1), p. 5–34; Apeldoorn, B., & Graaff, N. Beyond Neoliberal Imperialism? The Crisis of American Empire, in: Overbeek, H. & Apeldoorn, B. (eds) *Neoliberalism in Crisis*, 2012. P. 207–228. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

ruling class, closely linked to the interests of international capital. This naturally resulted in growing social polarization and socio-economic inequality.

The Arab uprisings were the continuation of decades of struggle against the efforts of the United States and international financial institutions to establish the neoliberal world order, against the MENA region's subordinated integration into the dynamics of the world market. The Arab Spring can be interpreted as part of an emerging global movement that appeared at a time when the internal contradictions of neoliberal globalization became increasingly apparent. They illustrate the intersecting crises of neoliberalism and American hegemony.

Although leading to some democratic progress in a number of countries in the region, the uprisings of the Arab Spring did not call into question the current model of development anywhere. The imperialist states, with the complicity of the ruling classes of the Arab countries of the region, were able to retain power in the attempt to restore neoliberalism, thereby exacerbating the process of social polarization. In this context, it is to be expected that the social struggle may escalate again, taking on diverse forms and uniting increasingly broader segments of the population.