Impact of Imperial Discourses on Changing Subjectivities in Core and Periphery: A Study of British India and British Nigeria

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Abstract

Eurocentric imperialism incorporated the non-European geographical region in the economic and political milieu of Europe and made the world a global whole. To Mitchel Foucault, the process started with endo-colonization of European people and advent of rational governance exercises experimented first in European states and later exported to non-western regions. The study aims to analyze the different outcomes of European governmentality in European core and non-European periphery and changing subjectivities and cognitions in non-European world with ruptures accompanied by European modernity. The theoretical frame and conceptual toolkit of Archaeology/Genealogy, Governmentality, Power/knowledge etc. are borrowed from Michel Foucault the postmodern historian of ideas. For analytical purpose, the concept of Archeological historicity is linked with World System approach as employed by Lenin and Immanuel Wallerstein. The analytical scheme is to describe events in longue durée from sixteenth century; record shifts in the core Europe, and parallel shifts in peripheral colonial/postcolonial world, to understand the material and discursive conditions of existence. The finding of research is that events and processes lead to different outcomes in core

and periphery. A two-level comparison is made: the comparison of European Core with two peripheral regions, i.e., British India and British Nigeria and comparison of two peripheral regions incorporated in the world system as reservoirs of raw material and market.

Keywords: Archaeology/Genealogy, World System, Imperialism, Governmentality, British Nigeria, British India

Introduction

The world system theorists consider the 15th and 16th centuries with the hallmark year of 1492 as a point of origin of the modern world system. Wallerstein drawing on Italian historian Gondhio accounts the transformations taking place in the 16th century as "the map of the world was drawn" and humankind learned to situate it in geographical spaces, the merchandise was growing and "a world scale market emerged as a vector of economic development". (Chase-Dunn, Vol 41: Issue: I 2012)The developments led to a bureaucratic, mercantilist absolute state in Europe. The cumulative development during these centuries is signified as the Renaissance of Europe. To Samir Amin (Amin, 2010, pp. 72-73) in Europe Renaissance was not only a break from tributary system of the Middle Ages, it was the point of rupture for dominance and conquest of the world by capitalist Europe. Though a single world economic milieu was created and European imperial administrative structure was transplanted to the rest of the world; a great divide prevailed to date between the center and peripheral world. The whole world was restructured and assigned a functional division of labor in accord with the need of metropole. How Europe not only changed the administrative structures and pre-colonial cultural formations remains a paradox for historians. Foucault is of the view that the **east** for the **west** was everything that west was not and an object to be known. Foucault considers it necessary to the history of this "great divide". (Janet Afary and Kevin B., 2005, pp. 16-18)Foucault believes that intervention in the non-western

world was made possible through the normalization strategy of subjection, where colonized accepted and acted according to their assigned relegated status in hierarchy. Sarter identified the bridge between the core and peripheral world in preface of Frantz Fanon's seminal work "the Wretched of the Earth", that between the two there were bourgeoisie, overlords, and hired knights that served as go-betweens. (Fanon, 1963, p. 7)

Reflections on Literature

Imperialism remained a relevant concept to date as it bonded the divergent economies, cultures, polities and territorial regions in a single system of relations and functional core peripheral divides. Reflections on Literature of Imperialism reveal that a divide also prevails between theorists, historians and academicians indicating their standpoints and subjective comprehension of consequences of imperialism.

Social Darwinism and concept of race were inherent since its inception and even the most liberal thinkers of time like J.S. Mill (Martin I Moir, Douglas M Peers & Lynn Zastoupil, 1999) justified imperialism on basis of supremacy of the European civilization. The concept echo in the most recent writing of Jermey Black (Imperial Legacies: The British Empire Around the World, 2019). To Black, Anglo-American exceptionalism is a truth that cannot be denied. He believes that British imperial strategies are criticized in an exaggerated manner but the shortcoming of other imperialists like Ottomans, Mughals and Qing receives little attention from the researchers. The criticism is part of cultural war and identity mania in postcolonial states in efforts of state-building. Another reason, the British receive lashes from postcolonial historians is because of present strategies of US neo-imperialists and internal colonial policy of postcolonial states. In defense of British empire, Jeremy Black owes the developments like Railways and rule of law to the British.

The other standpoint can gaze in postcolonial authors like Shashi Tharoor (An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India, 2016) who consider British responsible for the death of thirty-five million Indians in famine, epidemic, communal riots and slaughters like the 1857 war of independence and 1919 Amritsar massacre. British rule impoverished India. As evidence to his argument, Tharoor presents that at the time when East India Company took control India's contribution to World GDP was 23 percent that dropped to 3 percent at the time of independence in 1947. Reiterating Jawahir Lal's argument Tharoor believes that British arrested the growth of India by not only draining its vital resources but also destroying the manufacturing potential of India in textile, steel making, and shipping industries. British policies led to negative transformations in agriculture making food a commodity for sale in the national and international markets leading to an artificial rise in food prices. On one hand, purchasing capacity of people were on the constant decline and on the other food was exported by the British middle man in the international market, ending in famine. Tharoor's thesis validates the claim of dependency theorist Andre Gunder Frank that the present state of underdevelopment is an outcome of a conscious strategy of "development of underdevelopment". (Frank, 1966)

Andre Guder Frank was not the first to think on the pattern that imperialism was responsible to create an economic lag between developed and un(der)-developed. Lenin the revolutionary leader of the Bolshevik revolution refuted the case established by British liberal economist Hobson (Hobson, 2005 (1902)) that capitalism as an economic system can be executed without imperialism. Lenin (Lenin, 2010 (1916)) and declared imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. According to Lenin Capitalism need the imperial state for effective working. Lenin also established that the world is divided into two functional categories of core and periphery. The core peripheral divide signifies the relegated status assigned to colonies by imperial masters.

Robert Gilpin drawing on Lenin and Karl Marx established that colonies were the reason that capitalism survived the crisis of closed market and saved itself from Karl Marx's prediction that the system will collapse due to its inherent contradictions. The troika of laws, i.e. of disproportionality, concentration of capital and of falling rate of profit were all refuted by imperial states as the external periphery was there to overcome the crisis of demand, profit and capital. (Giplin, 1987) The Marxist and Liberal standpoints interpret the fact that empire was an outlet for population differently. Whereas Hobson calls it that colonies will benefit from the skilled workforce, Marx and Engles call it creating the aristocrats amongst the working class of England to the disadvantage of the cause of class solidarity. Ralph Fox (The Colonial Policy of British imperialism, 2008) is of the opinion that capitalist monopolies were the main feature of British imperialism. British monopolies were established on cotton, tea, rubber, tin, gold silver, Chilian Nitrates. Britain was established as free trade country as a metropole of highly protected empire as satellite.

Erik Hobsbawm (The Age of Empire: 1875-1914, 1989) is about the climax of European imperialism in the Nineteenth-century, an era of unparallel peace leading to unparallel wars and revolution, as empire was not in actual one world but two. The historians of empire focus on economic effects of empire/imperialism on the core as well as periphery, but the process was absolute in nature as it led to a change in conception of self and subjectivities. The transformations in self and society were inevitable as the economy of imperialism required a peculiar kind of individuals and society. Empires were administered by a peculiar governance reason or what Foucault attributed as governmentality or the "conduct of conduct". The study is rooted in a theoretical framework borrowed from Mitchel Foucault.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Archaeology to Foucault is "history of present", a study of continuity and ruptures from the past (Foucault, 2004), whereas Genealogy is "diagnostic of present". It problematizes the taken-for-granted assumptions. (Dean, 2010, p. 3) Discourses according to Foucault are building blocks of Archaeology, and violence made to things. Discourse according to Foucault is both negative and positive in nature as it destroys but at the same time brings to life new formations, silencing many ideas while normalizing certain discursive formations. Hence discourse demarcates the delicate lines between legitimate-illegitimate, true-false, right-wrong. (Mills, 2003) Discourse in turn depends on power/knowledge that penetrates to the capillary level having an effect on self and subjectivities. (Foucault, 1966, 1989) Foucault believes that power rests on individualizing techniques and totalizing procedures that discipline the subject. Foucault heralds the "death of man" and the birth of a utilitarian wealth-producing disciplined subject that fulfils the requirements of capitalism. The new being (human) has severed all the traditional bonds with land and clan. The birthplace of this new human was the newly created towns of Europe. The towns according to Foucault was artificial spaces where disciplinary power was exercised on individuals. (Foucault, 2004) These towns were also seats of sovereign power who at dawn of modernity was learning to rationally govern and "conduct the conduct" of population. Foucault defines governmentality as rationality involved in governance. As colonies were annexed with territory of metropole, not as external areas but as part of economic and political milieu. The rational exercise of governance demanded a different set of rules to administer the colonial territories as well as to mold the conduct of colonial subjects' particular set of norms. As a multi-layered diagnostic is part of study it can be attributed as an Archaeological/Genealogical study. Foucauldian Archaeology is vertical multi layered analysis accounting for horizontal and vertical shifts, tracing the impacts of events

and spaces on the multitude of spaces. (Foucault, 2004) Sara Mills is of the view that Foucault's anthropological study is meant for politically, economically marginalized excluded in relation to center/core. The world system approach establishes a structural relation between dominant-subjugated power dynamics. (Mills, 2003)For purpose of study two colonies of the British Empire, i.e., British India and British Nigeria are selected

Research Questions and Suppositions of Study

As imperial subjects of Great Britain were embedded in different cultural ethos and traditions and imperial rule was not just a change of rulers but the comprehensive changes in structures of governance required a changed mode of society and collective as well as collective and individual norms and ethos. Hence imperial rule was not only had political or economic implications but psychological as well. In Foucauldian syntax, power was exercised on free subjects and so far when they were free and not internalized the coded behavior ascertained by colonizers. The prime research question of the study are

- How consent for the imperial rule was created among the colonial subjects of Asia and Africa?
- What were the responses of colonial subjects to the phenomenon of rupture accompanied by colonial governmentality?
- If the process of rational governance were similar in Europe's core and non-European periphery what factors can be attributed to the socio-economic and political lag of Eurocenter and peripheral underdeveloped world.

The supposition of study is that imperial governmentality was designed to create core-peripheral divide and for the advantage of imperial state.

Discussion

As the study is comparative in nature drawing parallels between not only core and peripheral regions but also between two peripheral regions with different conceptions of self and subjectivity yet similar in many respects. Here the question arises that do people from European core were always following the same material deterministic conception of the enlightenment was a result of ruptures in economy and political dispensations. To Foucault, the process of colonization of subjects started in Europe first and later transplanted to the rest of the world. The site of this colonization for both Foucault and Ashis Nandy was individual. The discussion incoming lines revolve around the how, what and if of the process of colonization in core as well as in the rest of the world.

Hegemonic Governmentality, Endo-Colonization and Changing Subjectivities in Core

Foucault's works deal with subjectivities and Endo-Colonialism. Foucault gave the concept of disciplinary power that disciplines the subject and makes them subject to power. (Geoff Damaher, Tony Schirato and John Webb, 2000, p. 106) The term *hegemony* was coined by Antonio Gramsci and is part of the Marxist critique of capitalism and state. Hegemony is a state of mind individually and collectively where those dominated accept the ideas, ideologies and ethos of those in power and act in accord with them to the extent that they declare these ideas as their own. Governmentality is reason and rationality involved in the practices of governance, and the purpose of hegemonic governmentality is a tacit consent by the rule not only for the sovereign power but also for the economic system that expects a sort of behavior from the general population as consumers as well as worker involved in production activity. To Foucault "individualizing techniques" and "totalizing procedures" were the techniques of rational governance. Employing the power/knowledge matrix Foucault provides

a vivid analysis that population was the prime concern of ideas of 16th & 17th century like Mercantilism and Cameralism. Population was considered to be the source of sovereign/state wealth and hence was subjected to regulatory apparatus of state like police. The cite of disciplinary powers was newly established town in the king's estates. These towns emerged around the castles of king where surplus population from other fiefs came as free citizens subjected to sovereign authority. To Foucault, markets were the central location of these towns where surplus products from fiefs including food were available for sale, hence these towns were nodes in economic circulation.

Capitalism created consent in general as an efficient system accompanied by political and economic freedoms and individual rights. (Foucault, Security Territory Population, Lectures at the College De France 1977-78, 2004, pp. 67-71) Liberalism as an ideology of capitalism emerged in the capitals of Europe apparently giving blows to the absolute authority of the sovereign. Mitchell Dean is of the view "liberalism presented itself as a critique of excessive disciplinary power in name of right and liberty of individual", but generalization of disciplinary techniques was a precondition of liberal government and democratization of state, where citizens owe habitual allegiance to sovereign authority. The law was no more a mere expression of sovereign authority but an integral component of liberal technology of governance, named as rule of law, making citizens fundamental affinity with new norms. Foucault attributes this consent for law and norms as the birth of bio-power. Hence liberalism created a bio-political domain that was inclusive of society, economy and polity. (Dean, 2010, pp. 133-34)

The nation-state system emerged after the treaty of Westphalia (1648) and newly emerging capitalism had to face the problem of a closed market economy as states-imposed tariffs in name of economic sovereignty and protectionism. Trade between European states was considered to be a zero-sum activity. The problem associated with the closed market was solved by incorporating external

areas and colonies in the world system. Core narratives of history remain silent about the precolonial governmental reasoning of external areas or colonies. The story of people/places start with the history of west and state formation. Colonial states introduced capitalist activity in peripheral regions. (Barker, 1998, p. 27) In Europe if purpose of the capitalist activity was economic growth of nation-state imperial governmentality in peripheral region was designed for the sole purpose of embedding the economies of these places with economies of the metropole. Capitalism and state were a new advent in traditional societies and a rupture from previous conceptions of authority and economic activity. The rupture demanded new types of self and subjectivity.

Hegemonic Governmentality in Europe and Making World a Milieu

The twin concepts of territoriality and governmentality were at the heart of state-making practices in Europe. Territoriality was about making state territory an ordered whole by building artificial givens like bridges, canals, intercity roads, ports on natural givens like rivers, passages, etc connecting manufacturing core with agricultural peripheries. States penetrated in the manner to the capillary level. When colonies were incorporated in the imperial milieu the concepts were extended to colonial areas as well. Stavrianos generate a picture of "global ecumene". (Stavrianos, 1971, p. 293) A global milieu for economic circulation was created and European powers were the architect as well as regulators of this milieu and functions were assigned to spaces. The age diffused man, animal and plants of divergent places that were previously separated by natural barriers. Barriers became artificial passages like the Suez canal making distances squeeze. Though the political map indicated the presence of states yet all states were operating in a singularity. i.e., global economy. (Stavrianos, 1971, pp. 293-95) It was an age when cultural particularities made space for universal European cultural ethos endorsed

by European enlightenment. The colonial state was patronized on pattern of European states through comprehensive economic, political and social reforms.

Ashis Nandy believes that reforms were hegemonic in nature because their targets were the minds of the colonized; as "the colonialism colonizes mind in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter the cultural priorities once for all". It was the inception of a world view in the colonial world, that "believe in the absolute superiority of the human over the nonhuman and subhuman, the masculine over feminine, the adult over a child, the historical over ahistorical, and the modern or progressive over the traditional and savage". (Nandy, 1983, pp. x-xi)

Imperialism and Changing Subjectivities in Colonial World

Imperialism was an absolute system that covered all aspects of life not only politico-economic domains. To Bhabha it was the conduct of conduct (governmentality) that marked out the "subject nation" and appropriated, dominated and directed every sphere of life. The Colonized was produced as a social reality as other as subject to be known and then acted upon by power. The governmentality according to Bhabha was a sort of discourse or discursive structure; a narrative with production and circulation of signs. (Bhabha, 2004, p. 101) This subject was bonded in geographical spaces that were created by the architect of Milieu. Home is of the view that British were not only the greatest builders but creators of towns. The legacy of British can be witnessed in English language, urbanization with norms of urban living and port towns built around the global circumference. (Home, 1997, p. 2)

In the late 18th century when British economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo were advocating a liberal trade regime based on absolute and comparative advantage the greatest advantage available to British capitalists was the octopus grip of maritime structural facilities covering the

entire globe. The sun ever shone on British port cities. The network was completed in second half of the twentieth century. These port towns linked the periphery with the core as a reservoir of raw material. Port Harcourt was established in 1915 to give access to British state and capitalists to Eastern Nigeria coal deposits. Haifa was restructured after the First World War for oil transportation from Iraq to the world market. These port towns like the Core towns of 16th century Europe attracted the migrants from inland peripheral countries. But these port towns were different from European towns in that they were global cities from the very beginning. The Indian and Chinese subcontinents along with Africa were reservoirs of not only raw material but cheap, docile utilitarian wealth-producing laborers. The Cities like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lagos, and Johannesburg attracted internal migrants. The small less populous remote islands of Mauritius, Fiji and West Indies imported labor on large scale from India, Africa and China. (Home, 1997, p. 64) To Home, each port town was not one town but three segregated towns. The one part was meant for the White colonial masters, the second for local colonial administrators and a third space on the margins of the cities as slum areas giving refuge to the immigrant labor force. Every three parts were culturally exclusive regions.

These towns were artificial spaces and had yet to evolve their own civic norms. As many Indians and Nigerians were previously part of subsistence village communities, the towns eroded their bonds with tradition and weakened the grip of traditional authorities on immigrants of newly established towns. Individualism started to take root and secular hierarchies incompatible with traditional order emerged as singularity. "These hierarchies opened up new vistas for many, particularly for those exploited or cornered within traditional order. To them new order looked like first step towards a just and equal world". (Nandy, 1983, p. ix) But it was not a simple case of accepting new norms given by colonial masters due to their worth, as materialism and money was a new category in the old world where tradition valued the qualities of sharing, community bonding. It was a

sort of primitive communism where need of all was satisfied status was not determined on basis of wealth. Head taxes in India and Nigeria were imposed and it created a need for money. Head taxes and land revenues were a strategy that forced people to leave their lands and work in port towns, mining compounds, and tea farms. (Wallerstein, 2017)

Imperial British India and British Nigeria were created as administrative states by combining diverse ethnocultural regions. The three regions of British Nigeria, East, West and North were not only culturally diverse but also different religiously. The case of India was even more complex, where Christianity had to meet not only Hinduism further divided on caste lines but also Islam that has a history of ruling India for more than a millennium. The reforms introduced by the British created a competition between diverse ethnoreligious groups paving way for traditional divide and rule strategy of British. British emerged as a benevolent colonial master seemingly arbitrating the interests of diverse groups and regions.

The apparent objective of political reforms in both British India and Nigeria was preparing the countries, in terms of Bhabha for mimicking the Westminster model of democracy. Yet the reforms resulted in communal tensions between the followers of diverse regions. One possible explanation is that different cultural and religious groups interpreted British politico-administrative reforms in different manners. In India Muslim population accepted British educational reforms with a delay and hence there was a time lag between them and fellow countrymen of different religions. This time lag resulted in inequality between Hindus and Muslims but also inequality of power of different groups. In Nigeria, Eastern Nigeria fell under Christian missionary influence fairly early and educated in missionary schools. As a result, converted Christian populace of East Nigeria was more educated than the Muslims of North Nigeria. These educated Christian Africans occupied the lower bureaucracy of whole of Nigeria, a case very similar to the Hindu middle classes of India. The education created new hierarchies and, in a way,

increased the already existing communal tension. (Nawaz, 2014)

Conclusion

The study reveals that rational government (governmentality) emerged in Europe under the absolute monarchs. The sole objective of these monarchial states was to compete better and attain a better status in the European hierarchy of states. As the economies grew in size, they faced the challenges associated with closed markets. The competitive environment provided incentives for the mastery of the world and external areas were incorporated as periphery. The world system became Eurocentric in nature. The Eurocentric system was erected on twin pillars of state and capital. The process of state-making relied on individualizing techniques and totalizing procedures. Individualism replaced community and state became the clan. Though it was a liberating idea yet it converted humans into economic beings.

Governmentality in the periphery was a replication of same individualizing techniques and total procedure. Urban centers, port towns were established. Railways provided a linkage of inland with these centers. Railways were actually a route from tradition to modernity, providing means to break with tradition. The internal migrants though faced degraded living conditions yet a hope of upward mobility of succeeding generations and motivation to find a place in new hierarchies as authority kept them pegging.

Difference between the governmentality of core and periphery was of evolution and imposition. The diverse regions and cultural groups were incorporated in an administrative state having no history of power-sharing earlier. The level of acceptance of imperial reforms were different in different ethnoreligious regions. Economic and cultural lag and distribution of power in this administrative structure intensified the cleavages.

The economic and cultural lag between different regions widened as a result of administrative reforms leading to

communal tensions. Communal nationalism was the result of political reforms meant for self-rule and democratization. To date regional disparities, mar the rational governance enterprise in the postcolonial world. Though self and subjectivities underwent transformation yet still the subjects of the peripheral world are divided hybrid selves longing for equality, rights and democratization yet admiring the traditional authorities in form of populist rule.

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