



NEOLIBERALISM AS 21ST-CENTURY IMPERIALISM: ANALYZING ITS MULTIFACETED DIMENSIONS AND THE ROLE OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

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Abstract

This paper makes the argument that neoliberalism represents the evolution of imperialism in the 21st century and can be considered a distinct form of imperialism itself. It comprehensively analyzes imperialism's economic, political, military, and cultural or ideological dimensions. It highlights the transition from traditional colonial powers to contemporary global players, focusing on the United States as an imperial power and the quintessential neoliberal state. This transformation involves shifting from overt colonization towards subtler strategies centered on securitization, economic dominance, and capital accumulation. The paper also explores how modern neoliberal imperialism relies on the global market as a powerful tool to advance dominant nations' interests while maintaining the facade of independence for peripheral countries. It also examines the relationship between the ruling classes and their complex relations with global capitalism and their significant role as instruments for promoting the agendas of leading nations.

Keywords

Neoliberalism, Capitalism, Multifaceted Dimensions

Introduction

The new paradigm, neoliberalism, has been the dominant economic model for the last five decades, represents a distinctive form of imperialism from colonialism. Colonialism typically involved powerful countries' direct political and military control over weaker territories. In contrast, neoliberalism does not rely on direct control but exerts influence through economic policies, financial institutions, and globalization. Neoliberalism is seen as a pivotal factor in the evolution and intensification of imperialism. It represents a shift from territorial conquest to economic and ideological domination. Through promoting free markets, privatization, and reduced government intervention in the economy, powerful nations and multinational corporations can dominate and influence less powerful countries, often leading to significant economic disparities and influence over their policies.

Neoliberal strategies have significantly transformed global politics. Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that neoliberalism has shifted the traditional roles of nation-states to various other spheres and levels of governance, resulting in the dispersal of power and regulatory functions among different actors (Roberts, 2010). This shift fundamentally changes how policies are formulated and implemented globally. Instead of relying on direct control, neoliberalism exerts influence through economic policies, financial institutions, and globalization (Roberts, 2010, p.335). For example, neoliberal ideology promotes 'inclusion' and 'empowerment' by privatizing welfare responsibilities and transferring them to private entities such as corporations, nonprofit organizations, or semi-public bodies (Roberts, 2010, p.335).

This approach is intended to engage and empower individuals within communities by leveraging decentralized and informal networks of 'partnership.' Through this process, these diverse organizations are seen as more capable of addressing and fulfilling the specific needs of local populations, under the guise of promoting more direct and effective community involvement and support (Roberts, 2010, p.335).

The global landscape has seen a marked shift towards a neoliberal welfare state model, which relies on informal governance mechanisms. This trend involves nation-states transferring some of their welfare obligations to alternative governance structures. However, this delegation does not imply a diminution of state power over capital flows (Roberts, 2010, p.335). On the contrary, nation-states continue to play a pivotal role in the regulation

of capitalism. The United States, in particular, has taken a leading role in propagating these informal neoliberal governance strategies on a global scale (Roberts,2010, p.335).

This has been achieved through promoting financialization internationally, establishing a form of dominance that justifies the implementation of neoliberal principles via informal governance channels (Roberts,2010, p.335). This approach represents a strategic maneuver to spread neoliberalism, ensuring its integration and acceptance across various economies and societies through subtle and flexible governance tactics, rather than through overtly rigid or formal institutional frameworks (Roberts,2010, p.335).

The neoliberal evolution signifies that entities beyond the conventional state apparatus are now critical players in global governance, affecting policy and economic decisions on a worldwide scale (Roberts,2010, p.836). At the same time, the focus of people worldwide on the framework of international power gets progressively directed through entities outside of state control, such as the United Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), global media outlets, social media, and diverse international social organizations (Roberts, 2010, p.836). These changes suggest a transformation in how global power dynamics are organized, with a growing emphasis on supranational institutions and networks that reflect and influence power distribution globally. These institutions primarily represent the interests of U.S. multinational corporations and its military-industrial complex. These institutions, along with U.S. allies, its dominance of global circuits of capital, and transnational networks, are the source of the U.S. expansive reach. They also represent a contemporary form of imperialism, which is critical in allowing the U.S. to maintain dominance to shape international policy in the 21st century.

The paper delves into the multifaceted nature of this new imperialism by examining its economic, military, and cultural impacts. It pays particular attention to analyzing neoliberal imperialism within the framework of global power relations and its structuring elements, the core countries, and the peripheral regions of the global economy. This exploration aims to uncover the complexities of modern imperialistic practices and their implications for global power distribution and cultural exchanges.

The Neoliberal Order

The contemporary global system, which originated in the 16th century, began primarily in areas of Europe and the Americas before gradually encompassing the entire planet (Wallerstein,2014). This system has consistently functioned as a world economy, rooted in capitalist principles from its inception (Wallerstein,2014). To fully understand the intricate historical evolution of this modern world system—including its beginnings, geographic spread, chronological progression, and current structural challenges—it is crucial to clarify the meanings of two key concepts: 'world economy' and 'capitalism' (Wallerstein,2014, p.56).

A world economy, as defined by Braudel, refers to a vast geographical area characterized by an internal division of labor, leading to significant internal exchange of essential goods, capital, and labor (Wallerstein,2014, p.56). This type of economy transcends a single political structure, comprising multiple political units that are part of a broader modern world system interconnected through an interstate system (Wallerstein,2014, p.56). Within a world economy exist diverse cultures, languages, religions, habitations, and discursive life practices that coexist in the midst of differences. Although this diversity might lead to the emergence of some shared cultural elements, referred to as a geoculture, it does not imply political or cultural uniformity (Wallerstein,2014, p.56).

The primary unifying aspect of a world economy is the interconnected division of labor established within it. (Wallerstein,2014, p.56). The global imperialist structure assigns specific roles to each nation based on their economic, political, and ideological attributes (Mentan,2015, p. x). Nations differ in their contributions to the world roles (Mentan,2015, p. xi). For instance, Brazil and, until recently, Iran, have played significant roles in supporting imperialist interests in South America and the Middle East, respectively (Mentan,2015, p. xi). The system creates a hierarchy that promotes the productive capabilities in 'developed' imperialist countries while impeding growth and reinforcing dependence in less developed nations (Mentan,2015, p. xi).

The global capitalist system benefits the bourgeoisie in developed nations, who gain from both the exploitation of their domestic workforce and the labor of workers worldwide; this dynamic not only maintains but also exacerbates economic inequalities across nations, creating a cycle where the wealth and progress of developed countries are often built on the limitations and exploitation of less developed nations (Mentan,2015, p. xi). A critical insight from this analysis, as described by Charles Bettelheim in 1972, is the understanding that merely shifting foreign policy or repositioning one stance toward global powers does not free a nation from the grips of imperialism (Mentan,2015, p. xii).

As Charles Bettelheim (1972) illustrates in Mentan's (2022) work, a country that remains under domination, or one that has been dominated and does not change its role in the global capitalist labor division, perpetuates its disadvantageous position (Mentan,2022, p. xii). The more such a country focuses on producing goods that its assigned "place" in the global market dictates, the more it contributes to the deterioration of its unfavorable circumstances (Mentan,2022, p. xii). Additionally, it's crucial to recognize that escaping the impacts of imperialist control and exploitation requires a protracted and intricate battle (Mentan,2022, p. xii).

Capitalism entails more than just individuals or businesses selling goods for profit, as this practice has been widespread worldwide for centuries (Wallerstein, 2014, p. 56-57). Similarly, wage labor alone does not encompass capitalism, as it also has a long historical precedence (Wallerstein, 2014, p. 57). The defining feature of a capitalist system is its focus on the perpetual accumulation of capital (Wallerstein, 2014, p. 57). This concept means capital is marshaled for immediate gain and continuous and unending growth (Wallerstein, 2014, p. 57). In such a system, structural mechanisms exist that discourage alternative motivations and eventually phase out those not aligned with this goal (Wallerstein, 2014, p. 57).

Conversely, those pursuing endless capital accumulation are incentivized, and if successful, they gain wealth and prominence (Wallerstein, 2014, p. 57). Petras and Veltmeyer (2013) describe the current epoch as one characterized by significant, though largely regressive, changes in governance and the ongoing evolution of the global system, echoing Wallerstein's observations (2014, p. 56). This period is marked by major political disruptions from socio-economic strategies implemented over the last fifty years and exacerbated by a deepening economic crisis (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2013, p. 179).

These changes are further driven by a worldwide movement led by the financial industry, affecting both the general public and the working class (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2013, p. 179). Hardt and Negri describe the modern global system as simultaneously 'dispersed' and 'all-encompassing' (Robert, 2010, p. 336), serving as a critical component of the Empire's apparatus. Hardt and Negri argues:

. . . we think it is important to note that what used to be conflict or competition among several imperialist powers has in important respects been replaced by the idea of a single power that overdetermines them all, structures them in a unitary way, and treats them under one notion of right that is decidedly post-colonial and post-imperialist. (As Quoted in Roberts, 2010, p. 336).

The metaphor of a 'machine' used by Hardt and Negri (2000) offers insight into the paradoxical nature of 'Empire.' Like a machine operating autonomously, following its own set of logic and processes, the Empire enacts a global governance framework rooted in a universally accepted ethical code of conduct (Roberts, 2010, p. 336). This notion introduces the concept of a mechanized system of control that transcends national boundaries, functioning as a self-regulating entity that enforces a standardized moral code across the globe (Robert, 2010, p. 336). Through this lens, the Empire is not just a political or economic force, but a complex mechanism designed to maintain a specific order and ethical standard worldwide, suggesting a new form of sovereignty that is both omnipresent and diffuse (Robert, 2010, p. 336).

Neoliberalism exhibits imperialistic tendencies by infiltrating and colonizing every societal domain, including governance, class dynamics, economic structures, political liberties, and national sovereignty, as outlined by (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2013, p. 1). In addition, Hardt and Negri (2000) advance the idea that contemporary imperialism operates through less tangible means than historical empires. That modern imperial endeavor extends its influence via a complex web of formal and informal agreements, partnerships, and networks, and power is exercised and maintained through strategic alliances, economic pacts, and diplomatic engagements (Roberts, 2010, p. 336). The emphasis on immaterial mechanisms highlights the transition from physical control to a more nuanced manipulation of economic, cultural, and political spheres. That also implies the emergence of global governance structures that leverage technological advancements and information networks to exert influence, thereby redefining sovereignty and state power.

Originating in urban centers of the so-called "global north," neoliberal ideology has spread globally, reaching the developing regions of the "global south." This expansion led to a scenario where capital accumulation's mechanisms operate globally (Petras & Veltmeyer, p. 1). The far-reaching effects of this influence transform the fabric of society, resulting in a centralized accumulation of power and wealth and modifying the established economic and social order. Additionally, it threatens the autonomy of national policymaking and decision-making, steering them toward alignment with international market-oriented ideologies. The dominant influence of neoliberalism reshapes governance and economic models and significantly affects cultural identities and personal freedoms, shaping them to fit its doctrines.

Unlike the past, modern imperialism often allows nations to maintain the semblance of independence on the surface. However, this independence is contingent upon their willingness to align themselves with the economic interests of the imperial power. This new form of imperialism relies heavily on economic forces such as the "market." The idea of "the market" is pivotal in realizing imperial goals. The worldwide market serves as a potent instrument for dominant countries to promote their interests, allowing them to wield control over peripheral and dependent nations.

Ellen Meiksins Wood (2003) insightfully points out that in modern times, imperialism harnesses the economic dynamics of the market to achieve its goals. However, it heavily relies on non-economic means for successful execution (Christiansen, 2020). Neoliberal ideology has effectively transformed the labor market, reshaped the class structure, reasserted class-based power dynamics, overhauled welfare systems, reshaped

approaches to warfare and defense, and exerted its influence on tax legislation and the formulation of social laws (Lösche,2009, p.7).

Crucially, as the neoliberal agenda advanced, labor unions, traditionally seen as the defenders of workers' rights and interests against the capitalist class, came under increasing pressure (Milić,2022, p.49). Governments and corporations sought to curtail their influence, placing workers in more vulnerable, marginalized, and precarious positions. This strategic maneuver aimed to preemptively quell any future discontent, organized rebellions, or strikes that might threaten the neoliberal order.

Neoliberal and Imperialism

Imperialism, as elucidated by Michael Parenti in his work "Against Empire," denotes a system wherein economically dominant factions and influential ruling classes of powerful nations further their political and economic agendas by assuming authority and sovereignty over the territories, resources, and markets of subjugated nations, primarily for their gain (Petras,2020, p.x). In a broader context, imperialism encompasses a government's strategy or pattern of enhancing its influence by acquiring dominion over other regions worldwide. This can happen by directly acquiring territory or, more frequently in the period following World War II, by subtly influencing the political and economic policies of other nations. Such strategies are designed to enhance the economic benefits for the ruling elites in developed capitalist countries (Petras, 2020, p.x).

That often entails the utilization of state power to safeguard and advance what is perceived as the national interest, invariably linked with the economic interests of the dominant class (Petras,2020, p.x). In this perspective, imperialism is practiced by dominant countries through official strategies like military occupation, colonization, biased trade deals, and global financial and banking institutions. Additionally, it can unfold informally, which is evident in multinational corporate investments and financial activities typically conducted via local allies and collaborators in less influential societies. This process underscores a broad spectrum of influence, ranging from direct political control to subtle economic dominance. The global reproduction of capitalist production relations and productive forces perpetuates class struggle on a global scale. This phenomenon also gives rise to an interconnected international hierarchy of national entities, primarily because the development of capitalism gets characterized by uneven progress (Mentan,2016, p. x).

Some countries experience significant advancements in their productive forces, while others encounter obstacles to such development. These disparities are shaped by the nature of production relations and the distinct roles assigned to different national entities within the hierarchical structure (Mentan,2016, p. x). Hegemonic power is pivotal in sustaining and ordering the world system. It serves as the architect of the global order, dictating international policies and alliances and playing a decisive role in shaping global economic, political, and social dynamics (Mentan,2016, p. x). Since the fall of the Soviet Union more than thirty years, the United States has held the position of hegemonic power, bolstered by the backing of its allies and network of alliances.

In essence, the perpetuation of global capitalism not only perpetuates class struggles but also fosters a complex web of nations with varying degrees of economic development and influence, all operating under the guidance of the predominant hegemonic authority (Mentan,2016, p. x). This intricate network of nations functions as a web of interdependence, with hegemonic power at its core. This system is shot through with economic disparities and power imbalances perpetuating and contributing to ongoing global inequalities and tensions (Mentan, 2016, p. x).

Furthermore, the influence of hegemonic power extends beyond just economics and politics; it also exerts a profound ideological impact. The dominant ideology propagated by the hegemonic power bloc not only shapes cultural norms, values, and belief systems, as noted by the political theorist and philosopher Achille Mbembe (2003). This concept underscores the power of sovereignty as a means to dictate the status and worthiness of people within a society, effectively deciding who is deemed valuable and who is considered expendable (Airewele, 2015).

For the darker nations, imperialism operates as necropower- In these spaces, "Politics is, therefore, death that lives a human life" (Airewele,2015,p.6); in war-ravaged Gaza, Sudan, Syria, and the displaced consigned to the death worlds like those of "the Camps." Today, millions of stateless individuals are on the move, not just fleeing wars but environmental disasters and gangsters and narco-states that are too weak or too corrupt to protect their citizens. All of them are the subjects of necropower (subjected to the power of death) because they are seen as not contributing anything of value and, therefore, have no value.

This ideological hegemony can influence nations' behavior and individuals' aspirations and perceptions worldwide (Mentan, 2016, p. x). The ideology of imperial expansion can take diverse forms (Iikowski,2017, p.11). The motivation for imperialist expansion gets sold in some instances as a struggle of "civilization with savagery" (Iikowski,2017, p.11). It can take the form of an ideological struggle that has been repackaged as fighting for and promoting "freedom and democracy against the chains of communism", or the crucial mission of preserving "stability" in various regions (Petras, 2020, p. xi).

Nevertheless, no matter the cause, the justification is almost always the same: they (powerful nations) were not serving in any way their interests "but rather took on this burden for the good of all humanity" (Iikowski,2017,

p.11-12). The recent decade-long World Bank research on global poverty acknowledges a substantial rise in poverty levels. It's evident that relying solely on multinational corporations for development is insufficient for achieving economic growth and progress. That suggests a need to explore diverse economic models and strategies, such as local entrepreneurship, sustainable resource management, and inclusive policies that prioritize the well-being of all societal segments, especially the underprivileged. Emphasizing local economies and small-scale industries is vital in driving equitable development and reducing dependency on large corporate entities.

Instead of facing direct colonization by imperial powers, less powerful nations under the influence of these powers often get presented with the perception of self-governance and the appearance of freedom. That can frequently be observed in the guise of purported liberal multi-party democracies (Petras, 2020, p. xi). As noted, imperial powers are commonly concealed behind euphemistic terminology such as "commonwealths," while their overseas territories get officially designated as "territories" or "dominions" (Petras, 2020, p. xi).

Imperial ambitions have deep historical roots, extending well before the advent of modern capitalism, as indicated by Petras (2020). Long before the rise of modern empires of the Ottomans, Spain, Britain and the United States, ancient empires like Persia, Macedonia, Rome, and the Mongols thrived. These earlier epochs were defined by leaders whose primary aims included the acquisition of wealth, tribute, and fame (Petras, 2020, p. xi). War, calamity, and death have been a constant companion of humanity since its beginning.

Henderson (2010) notes that from 3500 BC to the late 20th century, there were approximately 14,500 conflicts, resulting in the death of 3.5 billion people and leaving a mere 300 years without war (Moosa, 2019, p. 3). The emergence of states around 5000 years ago led to an increase in the use of military power globally. Furthermore, since the late 18th century, over 150 military conflicts, encompassing around 600 battles, have occurred in Western Europe (Moosa, 2019, p. 3).

The invasion and eventual conquest of Timor's 12th-century campaigns spanned 35 years, resulting in 20 million deaths. In the 13th century, Mongol invasions led to 60 million fatalities. The Taiping Rebellion, a large-scale uprising or civil war in China from 1850 to 1864, resulted in 40 million deaths (Moosa, 2019, p. 4). The An Lushan Rebellion against the Tang Dynasty accounted for 36 million deaths. The Qing Dynasty's overthrow of the Ming Dynasty was another conflict in China that resulted in the loss of 25 million lives (Moosa, 2019, p. 4).

The Second Sino-Japanese War, spanning from July 1937 to September 1945, resulted in the loss of 20 million lives (Moosa, 2019, p. 4). World War I saw the deaths of 19 million individuals. The most devastating conflict, World War II, engaged over 100 million people from more than 30 countries and led to the deaths of at least 69 million individuals (Moosa (2019, p.4). The majority of those who died were civilians, particularly in the Soviet Union and China, with some estimates suggesting the death toll could be as high as 80 million, according to Moosa (2019) on page 4. The historical pattern highlights a persistent theme in global politics: the relentless pursuit of power, wealth, and supremacy often manifested through conflict and a ruthless drive for economic and political dominance.

Mearsheimer (2001) further elaborates on this theme, suggesting that significant powers get perpetually caught in a cycle of fear and power-seeking. Their fundamental objective is to extend their influence worldwide, frequently to the detriment of other nations. This pursuit goes beyond mere superiority over peers; these powers aim for complete hegemony, positioning themselves as the supreme and uncontested leaders in the global arena. Such aspirations underscore the relentless and often aggressive nature of international relations, where power and control remain central motivations (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.1).

This relentless pursuit of power and preeminence has been a recurring theme throughout history, transcending the specific economic frameworks in place. In international politics, only some powers are content with the existing state of affairs unless an occasional hegemon is determined to protect its dominant position against potential challengers. Typically, great powers exhibit a persistent inclination to reshape the prevailing power distribution in their favor (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.1). These states often nurture revisionist ambitions and may use force to alter the power balance if achievable at acceptable costs and risks. However, there are instances when such endeavors' associated costs and risks become prohibitive, causing great powers to wait for more favorable conditions, highlighting the inherent uncertainty in international relations (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.1).

Nevertheless, pursuing increased power remains an unceasing driving force, except for realizing the ultimate objective—global hegemony, which is highly improbable. Consequently, the international arena remains in an enduring cycle of great-power competition (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 1). Nevertheless, when we delve into the analysis of imperialism spanning the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, a distinct form emerges, commonly referred to as capitalist imperialism (Petras, 2020, p. xi). While the specific mechanisms of imperialism have transformed over time, American imperialism's contemporary objectives remain aligned with its historical counterparts.

These objectives include investing in the economies of third-world nations to secure raw materials and agricultural products at the most advantageous prices, extracting economic surplus from these economies, and exploiting their populations as a source of inexpensive labor (while also using them as a potential labor force within the core) (Elwell, n.d.). Within this framework, peripheral economies get structured to meet the external demands of the United States and other core capitalist nations rather than prioritizing their own internal needs (Elwell, n.d., p. 2).

What distinguishes neoliberal imperialism is its systematic approach to amassing capital, marked by the methodical exploitation and deep infiltration of foreign markets (Petras, 2020, p. xi). Capitalist imperialism transcends mere economic exploitation; it involves substantial investments in foreign nations that lead to the profound transformation and dominion over their economies, cultures, and political landscapes (Petras, 2020, p. xi). This process seamlessly integrates their financial and productive structures into a meticulously designed global system dedicated to ceaseless wealth accumulation. It represents a more intricate and finely orchestrated mode of imperialist expansion, propelled by the inherent dynamics of capitalism and the pursuit of economic gains on a global scale (Petras, 2020, p. xi).

In addition, the contemporary neoliberal imperial world stands apart from any preceding era, characterized by its distinctive secular orientation. As articulated by Mentan (2017), it is a realm where even the concept of morality gets commodified, religion has been demoted from its traditional prominence, humans and nature, once framed in mystical and otherworldly terms, have been stripped of their sanctity, reduced to a mere tradable commodity. The outcome of this paradigm shift is the creation of an immensely dynamic yet ruthlessly exploitative system of production and consumption, unprecedented in human history, and its imperialistic reach extends far and wide, transcending geographical boundaries, with the dominant nation's influence permeating the global stage (Mentan, 2017).

In the broad context of capitalism, it is crucial to understand that the forces of competition and conflict transcend the scope of individual companies and are pervasive even at the level of capitalist-imperialist nations (Mentan, 2017). These countries get caught in a relentless struggle to dominate markets, secure essential resources for industry, develop a competent and trained workforce, and acquire advanced technologies to stay ahead in the race. They also pursue various strategic goals to maintain supremacy (Christiansen, 2020, p. 341).

This intense rivalry among capitalist-imperialist states exemplifies the complex reality of modern imperialism. It highlights how imperialism gets entangled with the fundamental capitalist urge for growth and domination. The relationship between economic dynamics and imperialism is not just a parallel development but a deeply interwoven aspect of the capitalist framework. This fusion points to imperialism's more profound, systemic nature, where economic agendas and geopolitical strategies are inextricably linked, shaping global relations and power dynamics.

A comprehensive study unveiled a striking reality: a select group of colossal corporations undeniably influence the global economy (Christiansen, 2020, p. 341). What is particularly remarkable is that the top 500 corporations collectively command a staggering 40% of the world's total revenue (Christiansen, 2020, p. 341). This concentration of financial power is so immense that most other firms in the world economy find themselves ensnared within the orbit of these corporate giants, often functioning as mere subcontractors (Christiansen, 2020, p. 341).

The stark implications of this economic concentration have ignited extensive discourse and debate among scholars and policymakers alike. Divergent perspectives abound regarding the root causes of this phenomenon. Some argue it is an inevitable byproduct of the free market system, where competition naturally favors those with a competitive edge (Christiansen, 2020, p. 340). In contrast, others contend that the ascendancy of these mega-corporations is not solely a result of market dynamics but also stems from a web of unfair practices and policies that disproportionately favor these giants over small and medium-sized enterprises (Christiansen, 2020, p. 340).

It is crucial to highlight the significant consequences of wealth accumulation within a few dominant corporations. Moreover, the vast resources at the disposal of these corporations enable them to influence public policy in ways that can protect and expand their interests, sometimes at the expense of the public good. "Economic imperialism," driven by the influence of capital, has historically resulted in significant global inequality and super-exploitation, particularly in the Global South (Christiansen, 2020, p. 340). Multinational corporations based in core countries have been pivotal in destroying traditional agricultural practices. As economic imperialism and global capitalism advance, traditional agricultural systems often struggle to compete (Christiansen, 2020, p. 340).

For globalization to succeed, there must be an international alliance among capitalist classes, supported by establishing institutions and ideologies that operate nationally and globally (Mentan, 2016, p. 130). In today's globalized landscape, the rivalry once fueled by competition among national capitalists is waning as a source of international discord (Carroll, 2013). Large corporations can extend their reach into foreign markets and decouple from their domestic origins by engaging in direct investments (Carroll, 2013, p. 3). Consequently, we are witnessing the emergence of a transnational capitalist class whose primary interests revolve around the global economy and a system of international private property facilitating unimpeded capital mobility between nations (Carroll, 2013, p. 3).

The multinational corporate system exerts a strong influence towards developing a global class awareness among capitalists (Carroll, 2013, p. 3). That makes it possible for the corporate business structure, which allows the top 1% of the population, who own the majority of corporate shares, to maintain control over significant investments with a growing global impact (Carroll, 2013, p. 3). At the same time, these shareholders delegate the routine management tasks to professional managers (Carroll, 2013, p. 3).

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According to Carroll, Robert Cox's theory in "Production, Power, and World Order," suggests that the emergence of a transnational capitalist class is pivotal in shaping a hegemonic world order (Carroll,2013, p.6). In this framework, the production processes of individual countries intertwine within a global economic system, forming interconnected global production systems (Carroll,2013, p.6).

Dominant social classes in leading countries establish alliances with similar classes in other nations, and these alliances create a network of mutual interests and shared ideologies across different nations, leading to the formation of global classes (Carroll,2013, p.6). Additionally, an emerging world society develops in conjunction with the interstate system. This development results in the internationalization of states, where their policies and mechanisms align with the dynamics of the global order (Carroll,2013, p.6).

This group perceives its role as organizing, orchestrating, and creating the conditions where the diverse segments' objectives and those of the entire system (which may only sometimes align) are promoted in specific national and community settings (Carroll, 2013, p. 8). This indicates a singular, overarching international capitalist class responsible for overarching decisions, linking with localized TNC capitalist factions in each area, district, and nation. Extending this concept, it suggests a dynamic network of power and influence where this central body makes decisions and shapes policies and economic trends that transcend borders (Carroll, 2013, p. 8).

It highlights a complex web of interactions between global and local economic forces, reflecting an intricate balance of power and influence in the world economy. This relationship might also involve a reciprocal influence, where local economic realities and cultural contexts can, in turn, impact the strategies and decisions of the transnational capitalist class, creating a continuous cycle of influence and adaptation (Carroll, 2013, p. 8).

For globalization to achieve its full potential, it necessitates the formation of a global capitalist alliance complemented by establishing institutions and ideologies operating at both the national and global levels. Additionally, the long-term process of cultural assimilation among Southern elites, resulting from centuries of Western dominance, has progressively solidified prevailing worldviews and behaviors on a global scale. According to Bond (2012), postcolonial elites frequently perpetuate governance practices that duplicate the "imperial mode of living with all of its "destructive ecological practices, consumerist orientation, excessive financialization, and climate-altering development model" (Bond,2012).

In Cox's formulation, the "transnational managerial class" is broken down into three main components: (a) top managers and directors of Transnational Corporations (TNCs), (b) Individuals who control large national enterprises, smaller capitalists who get connected to the global capitalist network (Carroll,2013, p.7). However, as a hegemonic bloc, the transnational class extended to a host of support agents, such as organic intellectuals providing indispensable support (Carroll,2013, p.7). These are officials in economic management agencies that focused on managing economic policies or systems. Technical experts, business educators, corporate lawyers endowed with specialized knowledge, all of whom provided crucial support (Carroll,2013, p.7).

Military force is required to protect the alliance and, when necessary, to project power, giving rise to permanent war. Globalization has ushered in the era of neoliberal imperialism. In a recent examination of the relationship between U.S. state capitals and the challenges associated with Robinson's TCC (Transnational Capitalist Class) and TNS (Transnational State) formulations, Van Apeldoorn and De Graaf shed light on a significant aspect of the American political landscape. Their research delves into how the U.S. corporate elite has maintained a prominent presence within the highest echelons of power during the post-Cold War era, spanning from 1992 to 2011 (Carroll, 2013, pages 11-12).

This perspective challenges conventional views of foreign policy and underscores the intricate interplay between economic interests and global political influence within the United States. Both Robinson and Van Apeldoorn and De Graaf investigation highlights the extent to which corporate elites have shaped not only domestic policies, in addition, rather than acting solely as a representative of the global capitalist interests, predominantly serves the needs of American transnational corporations (TNCs) (Carroll,2013, p.12). These TNCs, while having a global presence, are heavily rooted in the U.S. economy, with the domestic market often being their most significant (Carroll,2013, p.12). Additionally, their deep integration into the U.S. political scene is apparent through the extensive connections between American TNC executives and government officials.

These relationships emphasize the corporations' national objectives and dispute the idea that the U.S. government is just a conduit for worldwide capitalist interests (Carroll,2013, p.12). As Carroll's analysis further reveals the complex interplay between domestic policies and worldwide economic activities, national interests and connections remain influential in determining global economic policies and strategies, even in the context of an increasingly globalized environment (Carroll,2013, p.12). The domestic entrenchment of these TNCs influences the U.S. government's policy and strategy decisions, revealing a more complex interaction between national governments and international capital than what was traditionally understood (Carroll,2013, p.12).

Open-Door imperialism, a geographically specific initiative, is not intended to create a global system serving the Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC) (Carroll, 2013, p.12). Rather, its primary goal is to promote the

long-term and general interests of U.S. transnational capital (Carroll, 2013, p.12). That approach is fundamentally about keeping opportunities available, not just for existing U.S. corporations but also for any that might arise in the future, as explained by (Carroll, 2013, p.12).

It is imperative to underscore the profound consequences of this concentration of economic power in the hands of a select few corporations. "Economic imperialism," driven by the influence of capital, has historically resulted in significant global inequality and super-exploitation, particularly in the Global South (Christiansen,2020, p.340). Multinational corporations based in core countries have been pivotal in destroying traditional agricultural practices. As economic imperialism and global capitalism advance, traditional agricultural systems often struggle to compete (Christiansen,2020, p.340).

That leads to the displacement of rural communities, forcing them into urban areas in search of alternative livelihoods. However, the need for more economic opportunities in these urban areas exacerbates the problem, leaving many individuals needing employment and meaningful work. In this precarious situation, these populations become susceptible to the demands of local employers (Christiansen,2020, p.340). Desperation drives them to accept employment with endlessly long hours and wages that barely allow for basic sustenance (Christiansen,2020, p.340). This exploitation is not limited to low wages; it also involves poor working conditions, lack of job security, and limited access to essential benefits.

The complex interplay between capitalism and imperialism is highlighted through their diverse forms. According to Christiansen (2020), economic imperialism emphasizes the lengths capital goes to penetrate foreign markets. This effort is driven by the need to secure vital resources, which are crucial for the production of commodities. This dynamic showcases the aggressive expansionist nature of capitalism in its quest to maintain production and profit.

Commodities such as cobalt and coltan, essential for manufacturing iPhones, proceed regardless of the labor conditions of working in the mines, even if those miners are young children (Christiansen,2020, p.340). The dynamics at play here encompass a carefully orchestrated set of strategies and policies to advance the dominant capitalist class's geopolitical and economic agendas. These strategies coincide with their concurrent hold on political power, as noted by Petras in 2020. This alignment underscores the close interplay between the pursuit of capital accumulation and the exercise of state authority in furthering the objectives of the ruling economic elite (Petras,2020, p.xii).

Moreover, the prevalence of the imperialist system dominated by monopolies whose interests intertwine with state interests serves as a crucial backdrop for understanding the imposition of economic sanctions on nations labeled as "rogue states," such as Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela that do not fall in line with aims and goals of the imperial bloc main constituents (Gurcan,2020, p.25). The power wielded by these monopolies allows them to exert significant influence over political decision-makers, effectively shaping state policies to align with their economic interests (Gurcan,2020, p.25). The symbiotic relationship between giant monopolies and the state blurs the lines between their respective interests, emphasizing the interconnectedness of economic and political power, which underscores the intricate web of relationships and motivations that drive international policies and sanctions, thus revealing the true nature of modern geopolitics and economic hegemony. As Ellen Wood explains in *Empire of Capital* (2005):

The new form of imperialism is rooted in the enforcement of market demands (Ilkowski,2017. p.69). While the economic influence of capital can extend beyond military and political boundaries, this expansion relies on the global application of capitalist principles, which often requires support beyond economic means (Ilkowski,2017. p.69). This includes assistance in shaping domestic class dynamics and exerting imperial control (Ilkowski,2017. p.69). On an imperial level, both central and local governments have been instrumental in embedding market compulsions, however, this does not imply that imperial powers are fostering the development of capitalist economies identical to their own everywhere (Ilkowski,2017. p.69). Rather, it means that subordinate economies are compelled to become susceptible to the demands of the capitalist market (Ilkowski,2017. p.69). This vulnerability is achieved by obliging these economies to open up to imperial capital and through certain societal transformations. Such dynamics underline the complex relationship between economic power and political influence in shaping global capitalism, as discussed by (Ilkowski,2017. p.69).

Generally, it is the task of the United States, often in concert with its allies, to bring in line those states that seek to operate outside the rules-based system it has established (Ilkowski,2017, p.76). In analyzing U.S. foreign interventions, Schwartz (2011) discusses the concept of economic warfare as a means of exerting control over regions that were either independent or resistant to U.S. policies. According to Bjork (2010), this approach aims to undermine competing claims of sovereignty, thereby facilitating the submission or alignment of the targeted populations. These actions aim to lay the groundwork for establishing a more extensive and encompassing form of colonial dominance (Bjork,2010). Economic warfare through sanctions is a strategic use of economic measures to expand influence and establish control in international relations.

Imperial powers will weaponize economic sanctions as strategic tools to exert influence and create instability in nations possessing valuable resources, such as Russia's energy exports or Venezuela's oil and gas sectors get targeted to destabilize their economies, disrupting their financial systems, trade networks, access to

international markets, and supply chain disruption. Sanctions also aim to make accessing essential goods and technology difficult for the targeted nations. That can hinder their overall economic performance. By restricting access to global markets and technology, sanctions limit the ability of targeted nations to compete on a global scale. Economic sanctions are not only used to stifle their economic growth and development but also to gain access and control over the market share of the targeted nation(s).

Although sanctions can have a devastating effect on the overall health of the nation's economy, they also hurt the general population, who, despite claims of the targeting nation, are the primary targets of sanctions. The elites within targeted countries can insulate themselves from the hurt and harm due to sanctions. The population, however, is harmed and suffers hardships, and the logic behind the sanctions is that they would rise and change the targeted regime. Beyond economic aspects, sanctions can also be a tool to exert geopolitical influence. They may push targeted nations to alter their foreign policy, align more closely with the sanctioning country's interests, or comply with international norms and agreements. In this complex landscape, economic sanctions are not just economic tools but instruments of power and diplomacy that can have far-reaching consequences on global politics, economics, and security.

From this perspective, sanctions are tools wielded to maintain or extend imperialistic dominance, and leverage can instill fear or pressure countries that oppose embracing their desired economic and strategic objectives (Hosseini-Zadeh, 2006, p.3). In their various forms, sanctions often serve as a potent instrument for enforcing the will of dominant global powers, such as the United States. These sanctions can encompass economic restrictions, trade embargoes, and diplomatic isolation, all aimed at compelling nations to align with the interests and aspirations of the imperial power.

However, in most cases, sanctions do not have the desired effect of changing a regime's behavior or causing regime change, but what it does do is weaken and destabilize the economies of some targeted nations to such an extent that gradually, the people begin to leave their native countries in search of a better life elsewhere. The irony here is that so many nations are the targets of U.S. and E.U. economic sanctions and wars, a refugee crisis is triggered, and the U.S. and E.U. are the primary destinations of these multitudes. The penetration of the U.S. and E.U. has created a major political crisis and destabilized and undermined the liberal democratic principles of the West in the form of ultra-nationalist forces and a return of fascism. There are many things that the West refuses to acknowledge and take responsibility for. As Ian Patel (2021) reminds us, one of them is that "They are here because we are there."

That can involve the implicit or explicit use of military (imperialism) force to protect corporate interests. The concept of a military-industrial complex suggests that there may be a symbiotic relationship between the defense industry and military decision-making. This relationship can sometimes result in the promotion of military actions or interventions that could open up new markets or enable the expansion of existing ones for corporations, ultimately leading to increased corporate profitability (Hosseini-Zadeh, 2006, p.3). In this dynamic, the defense industry and military institutions might collaborate in ways that serve both their interests. Military actions or interventions can create opportunities for corporations to enter regions with untapped markets or enhance their presence in regions where they operate.

That, in turn, can boost corporate profits as they capitalize on the economic possibilities presented by these situations. In the twenty-first century, the U.S. military gets tasked with doing more than its traditional role. Today, it is positioned to play a central role in U.S. foreign policy, maintaining its global influence and protecting its strategic interests to supporting economic interests", securing international order" and shaping the global balance of power and norms. The military's role in this context can either stabilize or disrupt existing international arrangements, making it imperative to understand its influence.

Military Imperialism

A fascinating dimension of U.S. imperialism lies in the emergence of two distinct and evolving approaches to imperialism. The first approach can be described as a militaristic, resource-inefficient, or exploitative and parasitic form of imperialism (Hosseini-Zadeh in 2006, p.3). This particular style of imperialism has witnessed the significant outflow of trillions of dollars from the American taxpayer's pockets, ultimately translating into substantial gains for the defense industry (Hosseini-Zadeh in 2006, p.3). The second paradigm encompasses the dynamic expansion of multinational corporations, primarily those operating in the extractive sector, as they undergo substantial growth and capital accumulation in regions such as Latin America and various other parts of the global arena. This economic upswing frequently materializes through collaborative efforts and the host country's active invitation, reflecting a complex interplay of interests and opportunities (Petras, 2020, p.3).

The 2010 National Security Strategy (N.S.S.) continued the objectives outlined in its predecessor" from the Bush era (N.S.C. 2006), with a dual goal of not only increasing U.S. influence within its current sphere but also expanding it to encompass "additional countries and capitals." This broader reach was intended to establish and mold an international framework capable of effectively tackling contemporary global challenges, as noted by Schwartz in (2011).

Neoliberal economic imperialism is closely intertwined with military imperialism, where the U.S. military-industrial complex has, like many other sectors, undergone a significant neoliberal transformation. The Allies

victory over the Nazis and Japan was a transformative period for the United States. It emerged as one of the most powerful countries in the world and the leader of the West. The Cold War's emerging challenges and responsibilities led many Congress members to believe President Truman's reliance on a limited group of White House aides for foreign policy was inadequate (www.britannica.com). Consequently, Congress enacted The National Security Act of 1947, significantly restructured the U.S. Government's foreign policy and military frameworks www.britannica.com. The act established critical institutions like, National Security Council (N.S.C.), the Department of the Airforce, Department of the Army, Department of the Navy and notably the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), all designed to assist the President in developing and executing foreign policy (www.britannica.com).

With the establishment of the National Security State, the NSC-68 provided the essential ideological and theoretical foundation for the development of the "iron triangle" in the military-industrial complex (Cypher,2007, para.18). This concept intertwined the interests of manufacturing and advanced technology sectors, the state's political mechanisms, the civilian leadership of the Pentagon, and the professional military, creating a mutually reinforcing system. (Cypher,2007, para.18). NSC-68 introduced the radical idea that the American economy, characterized by surplus capacity, could benefit from sustained high military expenditure (Cypher,2007, para.19). This approach was seen as a catalyst for economic growth, using military spending to harness idle labor and unutilized industrial potential, thereby generating employment and boosting overall spending (Cypher,2007, para.19).

The document outlined the global community's contemporary challenges and the military commitment needed to meet them. Specifically, within the Middle East, the (N.S.C, 2010, p.ii,1,4) outlined a vision to engage comprehensively across the region (Schwartz,2011, p.190). According to N.S.C. (2010) American foreign policy for the new century twenty-first century centered around military interventions. This military-centric approach focused on hard power and intimidation is at the forefront of U.S. efforts to mold, reshape, and maintain the global capitalist order in its image. One of the objectives behind current U.S. military spending is to assert its authority beyond its own political territory, as stated by Gaffney in 2018 (p.333). Since the previous objective of securing the homeland has already been accomplished, a significant portion of the discretionary military budget can be attributed to the expansion of territorial influence or territorial endeavors (Gaffney, 2018, p.333). This can be referred to using various terms such as global policing, naval patrols, counterinsurgency efforts, providing technical assistance, surveillance operations, involvement of the CIA, maintaining overseas military bases, offering military aid, promoting democracy worldwide, or engaging in humanitarian interventions (Gaffney, 2018, p.333).

However, despite the benevolent claims of bringing democracy to the world when there is so precious little of it at home. The United States is an imperial power. However, its motivations extend beyond the basic Leninist interpretation of pursuing market expansion and see its security as inextricably linked to its ability to exert control over other nations (Stokes,2005). Furthermore, the United States is perceived as an imperial state at the helm of a worldwide empire, which predominantly advantages itself with its European counterparts and allies, ensuring that the benefits of its global dominance are not uniformly distributed.

U.S. military spending is seen as a "public good." However, contrary to common belief, the reality is this: U.S. defense spending primarily benefits private business interests, predominantly multinational corporations involved in extracting global resources like oil and minerals (Gaffney,2018, p.333) and the war manufacturers. Gaffney (2018) highlights the military's involvement in protecting corporate interests overseas, particularly through the support of political leaders aligned with U.S. corporations and opposition to hostile regimes (Gaffney,2018, p.333). He further explains that, beginning in the 1930s and 1940s, corporations have methodically secured land rich in natural resources at bargain prices, often postponing their exploitation for many years (Gaffney,2018, Abstract). Strategy like these required a focus on long-term profit, prompting these firms to form cartels to regulate and limit the global availability of these resources (Gaffney,2018, Abstract).

He also discusses how corporations, to guarantee the effectiveness of their long-term strategies for controlling natural resources, frequently depended on the backing of the U.S. military. This support was crucial for maintaining their dominion over these resources for prolonged durations (Gaffney,2018,Abstract). Such strategies often had the effect of stifling democratic initiatives in many nations, highlighting the complex interplay between corporate interests and political movements (Gaffney,2018,Abstract).

Moreover, the dominant presence of these corporations in resource extraction has been a pivotal force in shaping U.S. foreign policy over the past century, leaving an indelible mark on international relations and global power structures ((Gaffney,2018,Abstract) Adding to this, the intertwining of corporate strategies with military support not only underscores the economic motives behind foreign interventions but also raises questions about the ethical implications of prioritizing corporate profits over local sovereignties and environmental sustainability. The implication of this is that the U.S. Department of Defense acts as a subsidy for these corporations, funded by American taxpayers.

Consequently, categorizing such military expenditure as a public good is seen as a significant error, resulting in patriotic support for what is essentially imperialistic behavior (Gaffney,2018, p.333). The usurpation of large multinationals of the country's political life is achieved mainly by economic means backed up by military

power. The foundations of American imperialism are deeply embedded in the principles of capitalism and its global system. As Foster notes, this phenomenon originates in the early phases of capitalism, dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Particularly during its monopolistic stage, capitalism in each leading nation-state are compelled to dominate access to essential resources and labor in less developed regions (Elwell,2009, p.1).

Although the tactics of imperialism have evolved, the underlying objectives of American imperialism remain consistent: invest in the economies of less developed nations to gain access to their raw materials and agricultural outputs at minimal costs (Elwell,2009, p.2). This strategy involves extracting the economic surplus from these regions and exploiting their populace as a low-cost labor force, which also serves as leverage against the workforce in the core countries (Elwell,2009, p.1-2). Furthermore, Elwell argues that the economic systems in these peripheral regions lacking in technological advancement and digital infrastructure are configured primarily to serve the needs of the United States and other dominant capitalist nations rather than addressing the domestic demands of their constituents (Elwell,2009, p.2).

From the early colonial and revolutionary periods onward, there has been an unbroken thread of economic, political, and military expansionism aimed at establishing and expanding an American empire (Magdoff,1970). The early phase of territorial growth, requiring substantial military expenditure, was driven by three main goals: (1) integrating the nation across the continent, (2) establishing supremacy in the Caribbean, and (3) achieving a strong presence in the expansive Pacific region. This strategy was not just about land acquisition but also about projecting power and influence in these strategic areas (Magdoff,1970, p.238).

The knowledge acquired during the initial phases of empire expansion proved highly valuable when the world's dominant nations transitioned into the era of imperialism (Magdoff,1970, p.238). Several critical and concurrent developments marked this shift during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; however, economic influence was notably consolidated within a select group of industrial and financial behemoths in advanced nations (Magdoff,1970, p.238). While competing interest groups persisted, the fortunes of advanced economies became intricately tied to the well-being of these emerging corporate giants. These corporations operated on models that demanded control over global sources of supply and markets, amplifying the connection between their success and the prosperity of advanced economies (Magdoff,1970, p.238).

Capitalism, as an economic system, transcended national boundaries from its inception. Technological advancements, particularly in transportation and communication, exceeded national confines. In the eyes of Karl Marx, the driving ambition of bourgeois society was always to establish a global marketplace (Magdoff,1970, p.239). Since the post-Soviet era, the United States has embraced its role in initiating and maintaining trade and investment across the globe (Magdoff, 1970, p.240). Given the scale of this endeavor, it's unsurprising that the U.S. now operates an unparalleled global "peacetime" military presence, surpassing any other nation in history. Such imperialistic pursuits inherently require a militaristic approach (Magdoff, 1970, p.240).

As a matter of fact, the historical connection between imperialism and militarism is well-established and continues in contemporary times. The present magnitude of the United States' military capabilities is unparalleled, exceeding those of even the most formidable colonial empires of earlier times, as highlighted by Dyvik in 2023. This observation aligns with Magdoff's assertion in 1970 that no previous imperial entity or alliance had ever marshaled a military presence as vast and widespread as that of the United States (p. 240). Moreover, this trend suggests an evolving geopolitical landscape where military power not only asserts dominance but also becomes a central aspect of national identity and global influence.

The dismantling of Soviet constraints enabled the U.S. to broaden its imperialistic goals, with its superior military providing the necessary means (Elwell,2009, p.2). U.S. capitalism fueled this drive, encouraging military force to sustain government contracts and secure access to international markets and resources (Elwell,2009, p.2). According to Foster, the administration of George W. Bush does not signify a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign policy (Elwell,2009, p.2). It's not a scenario where a neo-conservative group has overtaken the American government and military, leading to a novel path of military-imperialist expansion (Elwell,2009, p.2)

Instead, the Bush II administration's military actions to extend the American empire aligned with the imperial tendency seen in the late 20th century (Elwell,2009, p.2). Bush II epitomizes the ongoing nature of American imperialism, a bipartisan approach in foreign policy since World War II, which intensified after the Soviet Union's collapse (Elwell, 2009, p.2). Throughout its history, the United States has been notably active in foreign military engagements. According to Shah (2020), from 1948 to 1991, the U.S. was involved in 46 such interventions. This trend significantly escalated in the subsequent years; a 2017 report in "The National Interest," a notable international affairs magazine, highlighted a remarkable increase in these interventions (Shah,2020, para 8).

Between 1992 and 2017, the U.S. engaged in 188 military actions, marking a fourfold rise from the previous period (Shah, 2020, para.8). These figures bring to light two critical dilemmas. The first is the paradox of the increasing frequency of military interventions despite a noticeable decline in effectiveness and success (Shah,2020, para 8). The second puzzle is understanding the reasons behind the surge in these interventions post-Cold War, a period typically associated with reduced global military tensions (Shah,2020, para 8). This trend raises questions concerning the strategic objectives of U.S. foreign policy in the 21st century.

This insight continues to hold significance in the current context. For instance, the United States, in 2022, maintained its position at the forefront of global military spending. It dedicated a substantial 877 billion U.S. dollars to its defense budget, accounting for nearly 40% of the worldwide military expenditures, which amounted to 2.2 trillion U.S. dollars, as noted by Dyvik in 2023. This pattern of escalating defense budgets shows no signs of abating. Forecasts from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office suggest an upward trajectory, predicting an increase in the U.S. military budget from 746 billion U.S. dollars in 2022 to an estimated 1.1 trillion U.S. dollars by the year 2033 (Dyvik,2023).

It underscores the U.S. military's immense size and global reach, which is unparalleled compared to past imperialist empires. The reference to military spending data from 2022 and projections for the future provides concrete evidence of the United States' substantial investment in its military. This data emphasizes the U.S.'s unparalleled military dominance in the contemporary world. It surpasses historical imperialist powers in terms of military capacity and demonstrates a sustained commitment to a massive military budget well into the future.

In April 2009, General David Petraeus, who had recently taken command of the U.S. military in the Middle East during the Obama administration, delivered his scheduled testimony before the House and Senate Armed Services committees (Schwartz,2011, p.207). This testimony represented a high-ranking official's first official policy statement in President Barack Hussein Obama's newly established administration. Although it followed a routine procedure, it offered the public valuable insights into the core elements and motivations of U.S. foreign policy and National Security Strategy for the Middle East and beyond. General Petraeus began his speech by outlining the scope of his command; in military parlance, it is called Area of Responsibility (A.O.R.) within the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) (Schwartz,2011, p.20).

General Petraeus highlights the strategic importance of CENTCOM's area of operation in the context of global energy markets (Schwartz, 2011, p.207). He emphasizes how the region's vast energy resources make it a critical player in the global energy landscape, providing valuable insights into why CENTCOM's role is of utmost significance. (Schwartz, 2011, p.207). He stressed that CENTCOM's jurisdiction encompasses the planet's richest energy hub. This region is a crucial hub for global energy resources, encompassing a substantial 64% of the planet's petroleum reserves.

Additionally, it contributes 34% to the world's crude oil production (Schwartz,2011,p. 207). Furthermore, this area is home to nearly half of the world's natural gas reserves, holding about 46%, as highlighted in (Schwartz's 2011, p. 207). These figures underscore the strategic importance of the region in the international energy landscape, potentially influencing global energy policies and economic stability. The speech underscores the critical strategic importance of this region to U.S. interests and the crucial role played by CENTCOM's in making sure that this strategic area is available to the global energy markets.

Schwartz noted a distinctive approach in General Petraeus's description of his Area of Responsibility (A.O.R.) under CENTCOM (Schwartz, 2011, p. 207). Instead of emphasizing the region's long history of military challenges or portraying it as a perennial hotbed of violent conflicts that have persisted for over fifty years, Petraeus chose a different narrative (Schwartz, 2011, p. 207). He avoided labeling the area as an "arc of instability" or as a base for "Islamic extremists" to attack the U.S. and its allies, a depiction common among some analysts (Schwartz, 2011, p. 207). Instead, Petraeus's speech provided critical insight into longstanding policies that proceed regardless of the present leadership. He chose to portray his A.O.R. through an economic and commercial lens, in addition to the emphasis on the region's remarkable mineral wealth, labeling it "the world's most energy-rich region" (Schwartz,2011, p. 207).

Moreover, he underscored its substantial commercial importance, particularly highlighting its critical role in global trade and commerce through "vital transportation and trade routes." Furthermore, he drew attention to the strategic significance of maritime choke points within the region (Schwartz, 2011, p. 207). In his presentation, Petraeus depicted integrating military and economic interests as a standard practice, positioning the U.S. military as a critical tool for safeguarding the interests of leading economic entities worldwide (Schwartz, 2011, p. 208).

The traditional approach of the United States towards energy security, particularly with regard to oil, emphasizes ensuring a stable and affordable supply of oil to Western countries (Telhami,2002). The strategy not only involves addressing immediate disruptions in oil supplies and preventing sharp increases in prices but also heavily relies on partnerships with countries like Saudi Arabia, which possess significant surplus production capacity (Telhami,2002, para.8). Such collaborations are crucial for leveraging Saudi Arabia's ability to influence the global oil market towards stability (Telhami,2002, para.8).

While the immediate justification for U.S. military interventions in oil-rich areas has often been framed around protecting national interests, a more complex and less discussed motive is the strategic goal of preventing potential adversaries from seizing control of these critical energy resources (Telhami,2002, para.8). The concern is rooted in the belief that if hostile nations were to dominate these oil reserves, their capacity to influence global affairs would grow exponentially, representing a significant security threat (Telhami,2002, para.8).

This strategic dimension of American foreign policy highlights a larger game of global geopolitics, aimed at preventing any single rival from leveraging oil wealth to fundamentally shift the international power dynamics (Telhami,2002, para.8). Through such actions, the U.S. aims to preserve not just its own national security, but also

the broader framework of global economic and geopolitical stability, ensuring that no nation can use energy resources as a weapon to challenge the established order and disrupt global economic order (Telhami,2002, para.8).

The U.S. is not alone in securitizing critical resources. According to Murray Brewster, in the eastern Ukrainian region of Dnieper-Donetsk roughly 80 percent of Ukraine's coal production reserves and natural gas can be found, and in western Ukraine, the Black Sea Area, both of which has been the central focus of Russia's military operations to "liberate" the country (Brewster,2022).

Globally, Ukraine holds the fourth position in terms of the estimated worth of its natural resources, generating an annual output of approximately \$15 billion (Brewster, 2022). According to the report, these resources have a potential assessed value that could soar up to \$7.5 trillion (Brewster, 2022). Furthermore, Ukraine is considered to possess the most extensive reserves of unexploited rare earth elements in Europe, such as cerium, yttrium, lanthanum, and neodymium. (Brewster, 2022). These minerals and their alloys are crucial for the manufacture of common devices including computer memory, rechargeable batteries, and cellphones (Brewster, 2022).

The significance of Ukraine's gas sector is paramount to the country's progress. According to Cahill and Palti-Guzman (2023) in their study, this industry is a critical feature in Ukraine's present and future infrastructure. Going forward, post-conflict rebuilding efforts, Kyiv is poised to utilize its abundant gas reserves and existing infrastructure to play a vital role in bolstering the energy security of Europe (Cahill and Palti-Guzman, 2023, p.1). Furthermore, Ukraine's gas industry is seen as a crucial contributor to the continent's shift towards more sustainable energy sources. This strategic move, as highlighted by Cahill and Palti-Guzman, could transform Ukraine into a key player in the European energy landscape, aiding in the region's energy transition (Cahill and Palti-Guzman, 2023, p.1).

The Ukraine energy sector, natural gas, for instance has the possibility to be a cornerstone in rebuilding the economy after the conflict (Cahill & Palti-Guzman,2023, p.1). However, securing investments will be complex due to various factors, including security concerns, regulatory ambiguities, and uncertain governmental policies (Cahill & Palti-Guzman,2023, p.1).

Blending military and economic objectives broadens the military's traditional role, which was previously seen as an extension of political strategies, suggesting a deeper, more intricate relationship between military power and economic dominance (Schwartz, 2011, p. 208). What Petraeus highlighted was the intricacy of this military-economic partnership, wherein military power becomes a key enabler of economic agendas on a global scale. It exemplifies how modern geopolitics is intricately tied to economic dynamics and how military operations are not solely driven by traditional notions of national security but also by economic imperatives. This perspective challenges the conventional understanding of military strategy, expanding its scope to encompass the protection and advancement of economic interests as a significant and interconnected dimension of national and global security.

A significant departure has emerged from the conventional link between imperial military endeavors and economic advantages. This shift in perspective has been particularly pronounced since the conclusion of the Cold War. It underscores the notion that justifying U.S. military interventions cannot be exclusively based on economic interests when ethical concerns are disregarded (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.2). Furthermore, U.S. military involvements have grown more expensive and less efficient in the post-Cold War era, signaling additional factors and incentives guiding these actions beyond mere economic profit War (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.2).

Hossein-Zadeh (2006, p. 2) distinguishes recent U.S. military aggressions from traditional economic or classic imperialism, raising questions about their origins and nature. To better understand this, it is essential to explore the historical patterns and actions that have shaped the U.S.'s approach, particularly in the context of neoliberal policies and ideologies. If these military actions do not align with the typical motives of economic imperialism, as Hossein-Zadeh suggests, what exactly characterizes them? It is crucial to investigate the underlying motivations driving the U.S.'s recent military expansions, expeditions, and operations, as identified by (Hossein-Zadeh,2006, p.2).

Lt. Colonel Neil W. Heoll analysis, observed a paradigm shift in the approach to defense preparedness post-World War II (Meoni,1984, p.11), this new perspective extends beyond traditional military preparedness to include the ready availability of specific plant equipment, machine tools, strategic planning, and raw materials. This approach is geared towards enabling a swift escalation in arms production when necessary (Meoni,1984, p.11). Furthermore, Heoll explains a significant compression in the timeframe of warfare, alongside a broadened conflict spectrum ranging from limited engagements to comprehensive strategic nuclear warfare (Meoni,1984, p.11). This evolution in defense strategy reflects the complex and dynamic nature of global politics in the post-war era (Meoni,1984, p.11).

Jacoby and Stockfish pointed out that even when the concept of defense is strictly limited to direct military threats against the United States, the country is confronted with the possibility of engaging in various forms of warfare. Each form necessitates its unique set of defense equipment (Meoni, 1984, p. 11). Unlike the civilian market, where products are manufactured first and then consumers decide whether to purchase them, this process does not apply to military weapons (Meoni, 1984, p. 12). The survival of the U.S. hinges on producing a

large quantity of superior military weapons (Meoni, 1984, p. 12). Furthermore, as the U.S. defense strategy increasingly relies on advanced technological weapon systems to counter a range of threats from limited to all-out war, the military services have shifted away from using their own labs and arsenals for the design and production of these weapons (Meoni, 1984, p. 12).

The defense sector develops unique capabilities distinct from those required in civilian markets, resulting in a mutual dependency between the industry and the defense sector (Meoni, 1984, p.12). Security services rely on the defense industry for the research, development, and production of advanced weaponry due to their lack of capability in these areas (Meoni, 1984, p.12). Similarly, defense suppliers depend on government contracts to sustain their large teams of technical experts (Meoni, 1984, p.12). While the military is driven by national security concerns and the responsible use of public funds for defense systems, it is undeniable that the defense industry's main motivation is profit (Meoni, 1984, p.13). Expecting the industry to set aside its profit motive overlooks the fundamental reason for its involvement in defense (Meoni, 1984, p.13).

In essence, arms manufacturers rely on government support to ensure their profits, a dynamic that echoes the military Keynesianism critiqued by Michal Kalecki in the 1950s (Toporowski,2023). Kalecki highlighted how, during the peak of the Cold War, Western governments funded private industry through defense contracts financed by public funds (Toporowski,2023). That practice was central to what some non-traditional economists inaccurately call a 'golden age,' a period they regret seeing replaced by neoliberal policies; however, the actual threat lies not [solely] in neoliberalism but in corporate interests' dominance of state functions (Toporowski,2023).

Corporate control poses a significant risk to democratic principles, both domestically and internationally, due to the unchallengeable nature of these industrial powers in the face of perceived threats to democracy (Toporowski,2023). Large corporations not only play a critical role in military initiatives and constructing weaponry for the Pentagon, but all-American companies with investments abroad also reap the rewards of U.S. military expenditures (Gaffney,2018, p.332). As a result, the overall impact of corporate involvement in the military has bolstered the influence of these corporations, skewed the American political system in favor of elite interests, and fostered inefficiency in the utilization of productive resources (Gaffney,2018, p.332).

The emergence of global neoliberal militarism, initiated in the 1980s alongside the Reagan/Thatcher period following Vietnam's failure, marks a significant shift (Cypher,2007, para. 22). In the U.S., this militarism, fueled by military expenditures that not only enhance large corporations' profits but also lead to innovations like the Internet and support policies to tackle recessions (Cypher,2007, para. 22). Unlike the era of military Keynesianism, current objectives disregard reducing unemployment, increasing wages, or improving workers' financial stability (Cypher,2007, para. 22).

Neoliberalism advocates for minimal state intervention, primarily focusing on safeguarding business ownership rights and maintaining military strength (Cypher,2007, para. 23). Neoliberal ideology promotes the privatization of military operations, viewing every aspect of military activity as an opportunity for private sector profit (Cypher,2007, para. 23). The fundamental principle of this approach is to redirect military spending into the private domain, where it can yield higher profits (Cypher,2007, para. 23). Recently, the trend of engaging private military and security companies (PMSCs) for roles traditionally performed by military forces in conflict zones has seen a notable rise (Moosa,2019, p. 119).

The surge in PMSC participation does not represent a new phenomenon in warfare; however, there has been a significant increase in their prevalence and a shift in the scope of their operations, effectively leading to the privatization of military engagements (Moosa, 2019, p. 120). The growth in the PMSC sector is attributable to the prevailing neo-liberal ideology, which prioritizes free market principles and the escalation of international hostilities, creating vast opportunities for PMSCs to expand and flourish (Moosa,2019, p. 119). Roles traditionally managed by military engineers, such as managing communication networks across battlefields and logistical operations to control the battle space, are increasingly being outsourced to PMSCs (Moosa,2019, p.119). These firms have expanded their services to encompass multiple arrays of activities, including the protection of military personnel and assets, training personnel, and advisory services to armed forces, upkeep of weapon systems, conducting detainee interrogations, and sometimes directly participating in combat operations (Moosa,2019, p.119).

The integration of private contractors in sensitive and critical security roles extends beyond the military realm, impacting various national security agencies such as Department of Homeland Security, NSA, and even the CIA where the workforce of private contractors now surpasses that of government employees (Moosa,2019, p.119).

Outsourcing has advantages, such as driving innovation, enhance operational efficiency by leveraging the specialized expertise and advanced technologies of third-party providers. It also provides businesses with the adaptability to adjust their operational scale in response to fluctuating market demands, free from the burden of a sizable permanent staff. However, outsourcing often results in increased costs or reduced labor expenses, enabling substantial profit margins. The strategy effectively diminishes the state's role in these areas, redirecting public funds to private enterprises where they can be used for profit maximization (Cypher,2007, para. 23).

Critiques of the relationship between the military and defense contractors are, in essence, critiques of the basic principle of supply and demand (Meoni, 1984, p.14). In a free-market economy, suppliers and consumers are

naturally drawn to each other, each with needs that can be fulfilled by the other (Meoni, 1984, p.14). So far, no viable alternative to the military-industrial complex has been found, and this "complex" has demonstrated its compatibility with the political, economic, and social framework of our nation (Meoni, 1984, p.14).

The unique and increased threat posed by the U.S. military-industrial complex, Hossein-Zadeh (2006) argues, does not arise solely from its distinctiveness; instead, it is the "industrial" aspect of this complex that distinguishes it and magnifies its dangers. In contrast to the military industries of past empires, the U.S. military-industrial complex operates within the confines of capitalist market dynamics, adding a new and potent layer to its influence and consequences (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.4).

The United States stands out in this regard due to its emphasis on private ownership and market-driven dynamics in the arms sector (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.6). This unique approach has profoundly altered the traditional relationship between the supply and demand for arms. In the contemporary context, the imperatives of supply and profit often stimulate the demand for arms, contrasting starkly with historical situations where imperial wars and the need for arms were primarily driven by other factors (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, pp. 6-7). This shift represents a departure from the practices of past imperial powers, as highlighted by Hossein-Zadeh (2006, pp. 6-7). It underscores how the contemporary arms industry operates within a framework that prioritizes market-driven considerations, transforming the dynamics of arms production and demand in a way that diverges from the historical norm.

President Eisenhower's warning towards the end of his second term about the dangers of the military-industrial complex likely stemmed from its tendency to cultivate a culture focused on warfare and militarization (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.7). This complex may not only perpetuate a cycle of conflict but also potentially prioritize defense spending over domestic needs. Furthermore, it could lead to a scenario where foreign policy decisions are unduly influenced by defense contractors' interests, thereby impacting international relations and global peace efforts.

That underscores the idea that the intricate connections between defense contractors, the armed forces, and government institutions tend to prioritize military interests and potentially lead to an environment where war and militarism are more likely to thrive. Eisenhower's concerns highlight the need for vigilant oversight and balanced policies to mitigate these tendencies and ensure a more peaceful and equitable society. From this perspective, the propensity for engaging in foreign conflicts can be understood as emblematic battles waged for control over domestic public finances. It underscores a subtle and covert strategy aimed at benefiting the wealthy by reshuffling national resources, curtailing investments in vital socioeconomic infrastructure, and dismantling the progressive reforms championed by the New Deal era, all achieved through an expansion of military spending (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.7).

Additionally, the escalation of overseas military activities can partly be attributed to the internal conflict among the two leading groups in the government: those in favor of multilateralism and neoliberalism, who mainly speak for the non-military global capital, and those advocating for unilateralism and militarism, typically backing the military-industrial complex and domestic industries that lack competitiveness (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p. 7). This harmful merging of interests is akin to a parasitic relationship, primarily aimed at boosting the profits of defense contractors.

When a world power attains overwhelming powerful military force gains enough control to direct the foreign policy for its own interests, this can be termed military or parasitic imperialism (Christiansen, 2020, p.346). In such cases, the initiation of international conflicts and overseas military operations is driven less by territorial logic or economic expansion for the empire or nation, but more by the military's aim to seize a disproportionate amount of the current wealth and resources for itself (Christiansen, 2020, p. 346).

In recent years, the faction opposing militarism and warfare has been significantly overshadowed and sidelined by its counterpart, leading to a notable increase in tendencies towards military expansion and aggression (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.7). This shift in the political landscape has effectively weakened resistance from groups that prefer stability and traditionally opposed to war, thereby facilitating an escalation in militaristic tendencies (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.7). Using increases in military spending as a fiscal policy tool to revitalize sluggish economic conditions has been a longstanding practice in many countries.

This method is commonly used to combat or alleviate the impacts of economic downturns. It serves a dual purpose, advantaging the defense sector and the political leadership (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.9). Political leaders increase defense spending in this mutually beneficial dynamic to revitalize the economy (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.9). This infusion of capital creates employment opportunities and boosts demand across different industries, focusing mainly on defense and security projects (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.9).

Not surprisingly, substantial increases in military expenditure occurred in the early 1950s, early 1980s, and early 2000s, coinciding with the recessions during those periods. Conversely, during extended economic growth and prosperity, economic nationalism and unilateral militarism tend to diminish, while economic liberalism and multilateralism become the favored economic policies, as noted by (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p.9). In times of economic expansion, high demand, and robust sales, most domestic and international businesses prefer stability and predictability over international political turmoil and military ventures (Hossein-Zadeh, 2006, p. 9).

The imposition of the market has been the basis of the new imperialism (Iikowski,2017, p.69). While geopolitical disputes and global clashes, like the ones witnessed in Ukraine, often bring sorrow and devastation to those directly affected, they can also present beneficial scenarios for entities looking to justify increased spending on military and security (Robinson,2022). Additionally, these conflicts can create fresh avenues for profit in capitalist systems, especially during prolonged economic stagnation and widespread societal dissatisfaction (Robinson,2022, p.22).

World War II finally lifted the world out of The Great Depression and inevitably save capitalism from itself. William I. Robinson argues that the Cold War justified an extensive increase in military spending over fifty years, while the prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan helped sustain the faltering economy amid persistent stagnation in the early 21st century (Robinson, 2022, p.23). Throughout various historical periods, such as the Cold War's strong stance against Communism, the intense focus on combating terrorism, the emerging tensions in the New Cold War, and the current situation following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, global leadership, with the United States at the forefront, has consistently identified and opposed different adversaries.

That pattern has often been seen as a strategy to justify and drive an economy heavily reliant on military development and expansion. This approach, as outlined by (Robinson,2022, p.23) suggests that the creation of these adversaries may be a deliberate mechanism to sustain and fuel a militarized economic model (Robinson, 2022, p.23). That strategy also serves to shift the focus from internal crises of state legitimacy and capitalist dominance to external foes and fabricated dangers (Robinson, 2022, p.23).

Economic motivations and market requirements have substantially influenced the development of the U.S. military-industrial complex. It points out that the growing allocation of funds to the Pentagon serves a dual purpose: to enhance national defense and as a subtle tactic to decrease governmental investment in social and economic infrastructure. This approach is perceived as a discreet maneuver to weaken progressive endeavors, such as the New Deal and similar social welfare schemes. It is a strategic redistribution of national wealth and resources, favoring the wealthy, especially those who profit from military endeavors. This system perpetuates a cycle where defense spending is prioritized over social welfare, reflecting a deeper socioeconomic strategy rather than mere national security concerns.

Right after Russia invades Ukraine, there are two things to note here. First, the United States, NATO, and its allies immediately initiated charges that Russia violated the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (Moosa,2019, p.89). Crimes of aggression are dealt with harshly because they are considered threaten international order and undermine the international community. Russia was, according to the U.S. and its allies, guilty of violating the UN articles against Acts of aggression, by its invasion and bombardment of Ukrainian infrastructure (Moosa,2019, p.89).

The narrative suggests a biased perception that often portrays only "non-Western" nations (labeled as adversaries) as perpetrators of war crimes and initiators of wars of aggression (Moosa,2019, p.89). The bias of the Court is reflected in the predominance of African and Slavic defendants before the International Criminal Court (ICC), with notable pursuits against Arab leaders such as the former dictator of Iraq Saddam Hussein, the tyrant of Sudan Omar Bashir, and the son of Gaddafi (Moosa,2019, p.89).

The invasion aimed at ousting Saddam Hussein was rationalized with accusations of his involvement in the 9/11 attacks, harboring Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and ties to terrorism, claims that were never substantiated (Moosa,2019, p.89). Furthermore, the post-9/11 "war on terror" was promoted as a mission to enhance global security. However, since March 2003, global instability has only escalated; the cycle not only underscores the selective accountability in international justice but also highlights how continuous conflicts serve geopolitical interests and the bottom line (profits) from endless cycles of violence. Violence and conflict provide fertile grounds for further military engagements that create more global insecurity and perpetuate cycles of violence.

The second thing of note is that began to increase military funding and supply Ukraine with a considerable amount of military equipment. This escalation in conflict led to a notable increase in the profits of military and security companies (Robinson, 2022, p.1). For example, following the onset of the conflict, the stock prices of major arms manufacturers experienced a significant rise: Raytheon's shares increased by 8 percent, General Dynamics by 12 percent, Lockheed Martin's by 18 percent, and Northrop Grumman's by 22 percent (Robinson, 2022, p.1).

At the same time, war stocks in India, the E.U., and others who sent military hardware saw rises in profits. A Pentagon contractor is "unquestionably the best thing to happen to an F-35 salesman of all time." "The Russian invasion was a Christman's gift for the defense industry (Robinson,2022, p.1). The United States' global war on terror, initiated nearly two decades ago with the invasion of Afghanistan, has incurred a staggering cost of \$8 trillion and resulted in approximately 900,000 deaths, as revealed in a recent report by the Costs of War Project at Brown University (Kimball,2021). This initiative, launched more than a decade ago at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs and jointly led by scholars from Brown University, published its yearly report ahead of the 20th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks (Kimball, 2021, p. para.1). These attacks were

the catalyst for the continuous American efforts to combat terrorism in the Middle East and other regions (Kimball, 2021, p. para.1).

Catherine Lutz, who serves as the co-director of the Costs of War project and is a professor of international and public affairs at Brown University, characterized the war as protracted, intricate, dreadful, and ultimately futile (Kimball, 2021, para.2). She emphasized that the conflict extends to over 80 countries, with the Pentagon and the U.S. military consuming a significant portion of the federal discretionary budget, a fact often overlooked by the public. The project's mission is to raise awareness about the funding mechanisms for these wars and the vast scale of resources dedicated to them (Kimball,2021, para.2).

The report's findings underscore the immense human and financial costs associated with the U.S. war on terror, which has persisted for two decades. The \$8 trillion expenditure and the substantial loss of life are sobering figures that prompt reflection on the long-term consequences of such military interventions. Catherine Lutz's call for greater public awareness regarding war funding is a critical point, highlighting the need for transparency and informed debate on the priorities and policies shaping U.S. foreign and military engagements (Kimball,2021, para.2). There is no use kidding ourselves any longer. The cause of the allies is lost.

We now owe you (American bankers, American munitions makers, American manufacturers, American speculators, American exporters) five or six billion dollars. If we lose (and without the help of the United States we must lose) we, England, France and Italy, cannot pay back this money ...and Germany won't. (As Quoted in Moosa, 2019, pg.8).

Lily Dane (2015) echoes Butler's sentiments, concluding with the phrase "[War is a Racket]." She expands Butler's critique to contemporary times, discussing the current state of major war profiteers (Moosa,2019, p.8). She explains that wars, especially major wars, not only come with a significant cost to human lives, but they are extremely costly to taxpayers. She also notes that every hour, taxpayers in the United States are paying:

- \$312,500 for the cost of military action against ISIS (Moosa,2019, p.8).
- \$10.17 million for the cost of war in Afghanistan. (Moosa,2019, p.8)
- \$365,297 for the cost of war in Iraq. (Moosa,2019, p.8)
- States have been paid \$10.54 million for the total cost of wars since 2001. (Moosa,2019, p.8)
- \$8.43 million for Homeland Security since 9/11. (Moosa,2019, p.8)
- \$58 million for the Depart of Defense (Moosa,2019, p.8)

The production of bombs and rockets represents a significant financial investment. Without conflict, manufacturers of these armaments risk financial instability or even bankruptcy (Moosa,2019, p.8). Recently, there has been an unprecedented surge in US foreign military sales, setting a new record, which is primarily attributed to the geopolitical ramifications of Russia's conflict in Ukraine (Narea,2024) In the fiscal year concluding on October 1, 2023, the United States saw its government-led arms exports, including defense services and security cooperation initiatives, soar to \$80.9 billion (Narea,2024, para.1).

That marks a significant increase of over 55 percent from the \$51.9 billion recorded in 2022 (Narea,2024, para.1). Additionally, direct sales from US arms producers to foreign nations experienced growth, climbing from \$153.6 billion to \$157.5 billion within the same timeframe (Narea,2024, para.1). While the US government sanctions both categories of sales, its direct involvement in the former underscores these transactions as a more accurate reflection of the nation's foreign policy objectives (Narea,2024, para.1).

Foreign military transfers hit record levels in 2023

The total value of US-transferred defense articles, services, and security cooperation activities, by fiscal year.



Source: US Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs

Vox

Note: From America is exporting more arms than ever. Here's why. © Nicole Narea/Vox
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War, therefore, becomes a critical factor for the financial success of companies involved in the defense sector (Moosa, 2019, p.8). Furthermore, conflicts centered around regime change often lead to profitable contracts for these firms. Additionally, nations that are persuaded to participate in wars by leading countries often turn into clients for the military contractors from the nations that advocated for the war, creating a cycle of economic dependency in the military-industrial complex (Moosa, 2019, p.8). This dynamic not only perpetuates conflict but also strengthens the economic ties between countries through the lens of warfare and defense.

Goodman (2009) posits that the global arms industry thrives on maintaining global unrest and conflict to justify the enormous defense expenditures, as highlighted by Moosa (2019, p.8). The perpetuation of fear and the circulation of uncertainty is essential for sustaining the multi-trillion-dollar defense budgets. For example, Trump's initial pledges to foster better ties with Russia did not go over well with the defense sector or the deep state. Trump was forced to back down from his promises and adopted a more stringent stance towards Russia (Moosa, 2019, p.109).

Expanding on this, Gilmer et al. (2004) argue that economic interests, particularly in oil-rich regions, often dictate American military engagements. This assertion is supported by Moosa (2019, p.109), who notes the pattern of U.S. military interventions in oil-rich nations like Colombia, Venezuela, Kuwait, Iraq, and Libya. This insight introduces a critical perspective on how economic imperatives, under the guise of national security and foreign policy, have historically influenced America's decision to engage in conflicts abroad.

In their work, Freeman and Hartung (2023) discuss a less frequently mentioned speech by President Eisenhower, titled "The Chance for Peace," which he delivered in April 1953, early in his first term. Eisenhower highlighted the inherent trade-offs in military spending in this speech, expressing it poignantly. He stated that producing military equipment, like guns, warships, and rockets, essentially robs resources from vital societal needs. He argued that the expenditure on arms is not just a matter of financial spending. However, it also consumes the hard work of laborers, the brilliance of scientists, and, critically, the aspirations of the younger generation (Freeman & Hartung, 2023).

Cultural Imperialism

Contemporary Western imperialism, as noted, encompasses an economic, political, and military dimension. It has a cultural dimension referred to as "cultural imperialism." Cultural imperialism is a form of the subordination of other cultures, albeit in differing intensities and depths (Quijano, 2010). Quijano emphasizes that the core of colonialism lies in the colonization of the imaginations of those dominated. It infiltrates and becomes a part of the internal landscape of their thoughts and creativity (Quijano, 2010, p.23). Initially, colonialism manifested through the systematic suppression of beliefs, ideas, images, symbols, and knowledge that did not align with the goals of global colonial domination. In contrast, colonizers appropriated valuable knowledge from the colonized, particularly in areas such as mining, agriculture, and engineering, as well as their products and labor (Quijano, 2010, p.23). Colonial suppression primarily targeted how knowledge was created and expressed, including the production of perspectives, images, and symbols and the tools and methods for formalized expression, whether intellectual or visual (Quijano, 2010, p.23).

The rulers introduced their forms of expression, beliefs, and supernatural imagery (Quijano, 2010, p.23). That hindered the cultural output of those under their rule and served as an effective method of social and cultural control, especially when direct and systematic repression was no longer persistent (Quijano,2010, p.23).

The concept entails the extensive dissemination and supremacy of Western culture, values, and norms over other societies and cultures. It typically occurs through diverse channels such as media, technology, language, fashion, music, and popular culture. The outcome of Western cultural imperialism often leads to the establishment of cultural hegemony, in which Western values, beliefs, and practices serve as the standard against which all other cultures get evaluated. That can result in the marginalization and erosion of indigenous cultures, "histories and identities." The subjects of cultural imperialism are not just there. Instead, they are the convergence or assembly of social and political forces and technologies of making kinds of people (Popkewitz et al.,2017).

The concept of forming or reconstructing identities can also be viewed as a "fabrication" process. Initially, categorizing colonized individuals is an imaginative construct guiding our perceptions of various people within evolving historical contexts (Popkewitz et al., 2017, pp. 5-6). Subsequently, these categorizations manifest in various forms, such as programs, narratives, stories, and theories (Popkewitz et al., 2017, pp. 5-6). These not only provide substance to the identities of individuals but also influence their actions, as noted in (Popkewitz et al., 2017, pp. 5-6).

Cultural imperialism is orchestrated by media and non-profit corporate complexes that have harnessed the media and civil society to manufacture popular consent (Gurcan, 2022, p.2). Cultural imperialism's suppression of adverse conditions through various forms of oppression through controlling the information space. Also, controlling and stamping out critical dissent would undermine the neoliberal imperialist aim and shape the world in its image (Mentan,2014, p.i). Furthermore, U.S. cultural imperialism pursues two primary objectives: one economic and the other political. It seeks to capture markets for its cultural products and establish hegemony by molding popular consciousness (Petras,2019, p.1).

Entertainment exports have become a pivotal source of capital accumulation and global profits, supplanting manufacturing exports. In politics, cultural imperialism plays a central role in disconnecting people from their cultural heritage and traditions of solidarity, replacing them with fabricated needs propagated through ever-changing media campaigns (Petras,2019, p.1).

The political impact of this phenomenon is the estrangement of individuals from traditional class and community ties, resulting in their isolation and separation from one another (Petras,2019, p.1). Cultural imperialism underscores the fragmentation within the working class, as stable workers are encouraged to distance themselves from temporary workers, who, in turn, distance themselves from the unemployed. Even within the category of the unemployed, further divisions emerge within the 'underground economy' (Petras,2019, p.1).

Cultural imperialism promotes the idea that working people should perceive themselves as part of a hierarchy that accentuates minor differences in lifestyle, race, and gender, thereby diverting their attention away from the significant inequalities that separate them from those in positions of more extraordinary privilege (Petras,2019, p.1). It is essential to recognize that imperialism cannot be comprehended solely as an economic or military system of control and exploitation; cultural domination constitutes an integral dimension of any enduring system of global exploitation (Petras,2019, p.2)

Concerning the Third World, cultural imperialism can be defined as the deliberate and methodical infiltration and control of the cultural aspects of the popular classes by the ruling Western elite. The objective is to reshape the values, behaviors, institutions, and identities of oppressed populations to align with the interests of the imperialist class. Cultural imperialism manifests in traditional and modern forms (Petras,2019, p.2). In past centuries, significant roles were played by the Church, educational systems, and public authorities in indoctrinating native peoples with notions of submission and loyalty, often invoking divine or absolutist principles. Although these 'traditional' mechanisms of cultural imperialism continue to operate, contemporary institutions have increasingly assumed a central role in imperial domination, employing new, modern instruments (Petras,2019, p.2). In the current global landscape, the influence wielded by entities like Hollywood, CNN, and Disneyland is paramount, often surpassing that of traditional institutions such as the Vatican, the Bible, and political public relations strategies (Petras,2019, p.2). This shift, highlighted by (Petras,2000, p.2), underscores how mass media, advertising, and secular figures in the entertainment and intellectual spheres significantly shape our world. Their cultural impact is deeply intertwined with the wielding of political and military power and economic exploitation. This phenomenon reflects the evolving nature of power and influence in a globalized society (Petras,2019, p.2),

Cultural imperialism thrives by utilizing intermediaries who have been culturally colonized, often called cultural collaborators (Petras,2019, p.5). These individuals, typically hailing from the developing world, emulate the lifestyle and values of their Western patrons. They exhibit subservience to the West while displaying arrogance toward their people, embodying archetypal authoritarian personalities (Petras,2019, p.5). With substantial support from banks and multinational corporations, these collaborators amass significant influence through control of the state and local mass media (Petras,2019, p.5). In their endeavor to replicate Western lifestyles, these cultural collaborators firmly adhere to the principles of unequal competition, exposing their nations and populations to harsh exploitation under the guise of embracing free trade (Petras, 2019, p.5)

Among the leading advocates of this cultural partnership are institutional intellectuals who, despite their professed objectivity within the domain of social sciences, vehemently deny the existence of class domination and the dynamics of imperialistic class warfare (Petras, 2019, p.5). They hold the market in high regard, presenting it as the ultimate arbiter of morality and justice. Under the pretext of "regional cooperation," these conformist intellectuals launch attacks on working-class institutions and national bodies that aim to regulate the flow of capital, resulting in their supporters being marginalized and isolated (Petras, 2019, p.5). In contemporary times, across the Third World, intellectuals funded by Western powers eagerly embrace the concept of concertation, essentially endorsing class collaboration (Petras, 2019, p.5).

This shift has led to the promotion of interdependence as an alternative to imperialism, with the unregulated global market being promoted as the sole route to development. Ironically, today, the "market" has proven less favorable to the Third World than ever before. The United States, Europe, and Japan have become increasingly aggressive in exploiting Third World nations (Petras, 2019, p.5). This glaring disparity between rhetoric and reality underscores the intricate challenges these nations face as they navigate the complexities of the global landscape (Petras, 2019, p.5).

In their pursuit of emulating Western lifestyles, these cultural collaborators steadfastly adhere to the principles of unequal competition, willingly permitting their countries and populations to endure harsh exploitation under the guise of embracing free trade (Petras, 2019, p.5). Among the foremost proponents of this cultural alliance are institutional intellectuals who, despite their professed impartiality in the realm of social sciences, vehemently deny the existence of class dominance and the dynamics of imperialistic class warfare (Petras, 2019, p.5). They hold the market in high esteem, portraying it as the ultimate arbiter of morality and justice.

Under the pretext of "regional cooperation," these conformist intellectuals launch attacks on working-class organizations and national institutions that seek to regulate the flow of capital, resulting in their supporters being marginalized and isolated (Petras, 2000, p.5). In contemporary times, in various Third World regions, intellectuals funded by Western powers eagerly embrace the concept of concertation, essentially endorsing class collaboration (Petras, 2000, p.5). This shift has promoted interdependence as an alternative to imperialism, with the unregulated global market touted as the sole path to development.

Ironically, in today's world, the "market" has proven to be even less favorable to the Third World than in the past. The United States, Europe, and Japan have grown increasingly aggressive in exploiting Third World nations (Petras, 2000, p.5). This stark disconnect between rhetoric and reality underscores the intricate challenges these nations face as they navigate the complexities of the global landscape.

Cultural imperialism's success often hinged on the deliberate erasure of native cultures' histories, religious beliefs, and artistic expressions. In its place, European literature, art, religious symbols, iconography, language, and other forms of cultural representation were imposed to rationalize and perpetuate imperialist endeavors. This process involved manipulating literary works and cultural creations to establish and uphold colonial dominance. Schiller's central argument, as highlighted by Boyd-Barrett (2018), regarding the media's role in cultural imperialism is far from coincidental, considering that our understanding of social practices heavily relies on media representations (Guran, 2022, p. 69). Drawing inspiration from Schiller's work, Boyd-Barrett (2018) defines "cultural imperialism" as a phenomenon mediated through a network of technological infrastructure, including mediums such as film, television, publishing, recordings, and social media. This infrastructure is currently dominated by U.S.-based media monopolies, which harness these sources and more to advance their imperialist foreign policy objectives (Gurcan, 2022, p. 69).

In essence, the relationship between culture and imperialism has evolved in the modern era to encompass not only the erasure of native cultures and the imposition of European values but also the strategic utilization of media and communication networks to further imperialistic goals, both economically and ideologically. During times of crisis, conflict, or war, the unrestricted dissemination of reliable information becomes paramount. This is because all parties involved in the conflict strive to shape the narrative and garner public support to legitimize their actions. Global media outlets, due to their extensive reach, wield a significant "agenda-setting effect." This phenomenon revolves around the ideological aspects of political disputes, particularly how key players in conflict endeavor to manipulate public perceptions of disagreement (Bajraktari & Parajon, 2007).

In any conflict, the actors involved will employ strategies to downplay or exaggerate the situation, depending on their relative power positions. Weaker actors often aim to "socialize" the conflict, rallying allies against a more formidable adversary and amplifying the perception of suffering (Bajraktari & Parajon, 2007, para.5). Conversely, dominant actors seek to "privatize" the conflict, minimizing its visibility and public awareness (Bajraktari & Parajon, 2007, para. This leads to the inquiry about the media's reaction to these opposing attempts at shaping the narrative. What are the determinants of the media's focus on a specific conflict (Bajraktari & Parajon, 2007, para.5)?

The media's role in mediating and disseminating information is crucial because it determines what should be seen as natural rather than real or things that are not problems are shown as problems (Coban,2018, p.105). Cognitive imperialism can be understood as a strategy of cognitive manipulation aimed at undermining and devaluing alternative systems and cultural values. Its objective is to validate and elevate a particular source of

knowledge through public education (Battiste, 1986). This approach has historically excluded diverse groups while granting privilege to a select few who portray themselves as inclusive, normative, and ideal (Mentan,2015, p.57). Cognitive imperialism erodes many communities' linguistic and cultural identities while endorsing the legitimacy of only a single language, a solitary culture, and a sole frame of reference (Mentan,2015, p.58).

This outcome has predominantly been achieved through the educational system, as pointed out by Minnick (1990), who highlights that education plays a critical role in perpetuating and enacting the thinking a society embraces, rejects, or discredits (Minnick,1990, p.11-12). Furthermore, in instances where non-Western knowledge is considered pertinent, noteworthy, accepted, and blended with Western knowledge, it frequently leads to the creation of a perceived hierarchy of superior and inferior knowledge, and consequently, of superior and inferior individuals (Hassan & Sajjad, 2022).

A constituent feature of cultural imperialism, while not given the intellectual attention it deserves, is language or language imperialism. Language is not only a fundamental aspect of culture. It is also a form of imperialism that serves as a powerful tool for enforcing cultural norms. It profoundly involves the imposition of one language over another, often suppressing indigenous or local languages in favor of the imperial language (Ravishankar,2020, p.1). The significance of language within the context of colonialism cannot be understated; it is not a random element but intricately woven into the fabric of colonial rule, as emphasized by (Ravishankar, 2020, p.1). This phenomenon often leads to the erosion of indigenous cultures, traditions, and languages, contributing to a homogenized global culture influenced predominantly by the dominant nation's perspectives and values.

Language imperialism is a potent weapon employed by colonial powers to inflict deep-seated harm upon the cultures they sought to subjugate. This form of linguistic oppression or violence represents an assault on the very essence of a culture, potentially leaving lasting wounds that may prove exceedingly difficult to mend (Ravishankar, 2020, p. 1) fully.

Language "is a social phenomenon and a cultural tool used to legitimize one's socioeconomic class, political status, racial and ethnic identities, gender" and, more importantly, facilitates the sharing of culture. Language serves as a fundamental pillar of culture, functioning not just as a tool for transmitting and communicating cultural values but also as a repository of an entire civilization's essence. It bears the weight of an entire culture and civilization on its linguistic shoulders. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o aptly describes it as a "collective memory bank," highlighting its pivotal role in preserving a culture's historical narrative and experiences (Thiong'o,1986, p.15).

When a language faces the threat of erasure, it is not merely a linguistic loss but also a profound obliteration of pre-colonial history (Kwak & Campanella,2020). The degradation of a language reflects the fading away of the distinct perspectives, customs, and knowledge that have developed over time. Language acts as a custodian of a culture's essence, and its extinction represents a significant loss of the diverse human legacy and cultural wisdom (Kwak & Campanella, 2020). The elimination of a native or indigenous language is not merely about losing vocabulary; it involves the deep loss of a community's historical roots, heritage, and self-identity (Kwak & Campanella, 2020).

Ravishankar (2020) astutely noted that the disappearance of a language signifies the loss of its rich historical fabric, encompassing the events, stories, and the experiences and identities of those who spoke it (Ravishankar, 2020, p. 1). Moreover, it's crucial to recognize that the vanishing of a language also results in the loss of unique worldviews, distinct thought processes, and invaluable cultural insights and wisdom (Ravishankar, 2020, p. 1).The extinction of a language is not just a linguistic loss but a profound cultural and intellectual impoverishment for humanity.

This process is not just about linguistics; it is a cultural obliteration because it is through language that people define themselves, express their worldviews, and make their stories heard. It serves as the medium through which individuals comprehend their existence and relate to others. Essentially, speaking a particular language is tantamount to adopting a cultural identity, claiming it as one's own, and experiencing a profound sense of unity within a group, as Ravishankar (2020, p.1) emphasized. Hence, speaking a particular language not only signifies alignment with a culture but also entails the adoption of its customs, values, and worldviews. It manifests cultural assimilation, where one communicates in a specific tongue and internalizes that culture's essence. This process extends beyond mere communication; it involves the incorporation of cultural norms, beliefs, and traditions, resulting in a profound sense of belonging and unity within a community (Ravishankar, 2020, p.1).

In conclusion, the intricate relationship between neoliberalism and imperialism shapes the current global order socially, culturally, and linguistically. Adopting neoliberal policies has catalyzed furthering imperialistic agendas, leveraging free market ideologies and deregulation to expand influence and control internationally. This symbiosis has marked a significant evolution in the practice of imperialism, adapting it to the modern economic and political landscape. The spread of neoliberalism has facilitated globalization, leading to increased interconnectivity, trade, and cultural exchange and cooperation.

On the other hand, neoliberal imperialism has an exacerbation of socio-economic inequalities between nations and within them while benefiting multinational corporations and the wealthy comes at the cost for the working and middle classes. Neoliberal policies pushed by the U.S. and the imperial center compromise the

sovereignty of weaker states, subjecting them to the influences and interests of foreign corporations, international institutions, backed up by the military that dictate economic and political terms detrimental to local interests and development. It is no secret that neoliberal policies that emphasize reduction in public services and welfare support, along with imperial practices that deny economic growth to poorer nations, contribute to public discontent and erosion of trust in democratic institutions. This disillusionment with democratic processes can pave the way for authoritarian tendencies, as citizens may prioritize economic stability over democratic principles.

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