

Challenging the Postcolonial Quasi-liberal Paradigms of Globalization and Neo-imperialism: A Critical Investigation into the Alternative Forms of Cosmopolitanism

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a critical examination of how postcolonialism and globalization—two influential intellectual and socio-economic forces—shape contemporary life in an increasingly interconnected world. It foregrounds the complex and often conflictual relationship between these frameworks, arguing that while they intersect in their analyses of power, culture, and mobility, they diverge sharply in their ideological foundations and socio-political implications. Central to this discussion is the persistence of neocolonialism within global capitalism, wherein former colonial powers continue to exert dominance through economic dependency, development discourse, multinational corporations, and global financial institutions. By extending beyond the historical legacies of empire, postcolonial studies provide diagnostic tools for engaging with modern crises such as ecological degradation, neo-imperial exploitation, mass displacement, and cultural fragmentation. Conversely, globalization, despite its rhetoric of integration, has intensified inequalities by reinforcing structural asymmetries between the global North and South. The paper also interrogates the Eurocentric underpinnings of conventional cosmopolitanism and calls for alternative, inclusive models that foreground subaltern agency, ecological responsibility, and multicultural coexistence. Ultimately, the discussion lays a theoretical foundation for reimagining global structures in more equitable and sustainable ways.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Globalization, Capitalism, Neo-Imperialism, Alternative Cosmopolitanism.

INTRODUCTION

This paper turns to a sustained examination of how two pervasive intellectual and socio-economic forces—postcolonialism and globalization—have come to shape nearly every aspect of contemporary human life in an increasingly interconnected and cosmopolitan world. The discussion foregrounds the intricate relationship between these conceptual frameworks, demonstrating that while postcolonialism and globalization often intersect in their analytical concerns, they also diverge significantly in their ideological underpinnings, operational logics, and sociopolitical consequences.

To begin with, this paper addresses a central issue: the threat of neocolonialism embedded within the global expansion of capitalism. As global capitalism intensifies, it becomes increasingly evident that erstwhile colonial powers continue to exercise economic, cultural, and technological dominance over formerly colonized regions. These new hierarchies replicate older colonial patterns, not through direct political control but through financial

dependency, development discourse, multinational corporate expansion, extractive economic arrangements, and the global regulatory mechanisms of institutions such as the IMF or the World Bank. Thus, beneath the veneer of global integration lies a renewed form of imperial governance, propagated through market rationality and economic coercion.

The paper subsequently explores the conceptual complexities and critiques surrounding postcolonialism, globalization, and cosmopolitanism. Postcolonialism, as a field of inquiry, resists the homogenization of historical experience. It challenges any universalized account of colonialism by foregrounding the local histories, cultural specificities, and heterogeneous trajectories of formerly colonized societies. In the contemporary moment, postcolonial studies extend far beyond the examination of colonial violence and its afterlives; they now encompass a wide range of concerns, including the rise of neo-imperial capitalism, ecological crises, species extinction and animal rights, religious fundamentalism, terrorism, mass displacement, and the socio-cultural fractures produced by global mobility. Postcolonialism therefore functions not simply as a retrospective critique of the past but as a diagnostic tool for understanding the present global condition.

Globalization, despite being initially hailed as a process of cultural convergence and economic integration, has generated new forms of exclusion, exploitation, and inequality. Instead of fulfilling the promise of an interconnected, democratic global community, globalization has consolidated power in the hands of transnational corporations and developed nations. Although it has blurred geopolitical borders and facilitated the circulation of people, commodities, and information, globalization has simultaneously intensified socio-economic divides between the global North and South, between metropolitan centres and peripheral regions, and between privileged elites and economically marginalized populations. In this light, globalization appears as a structurally biased force—promoting mobility for some while restricting opportunity and agency for others. Consequently, one of the central claims advanced in this section is that globalization has failed to realize the postcolonial aspiration for a more equitable world. Instead, it has become a mechanism through which neocolonial powers maintain and extend their influence.

Cosmopolitanism, often framed as a liberal ideal of openness, cross-cultural affiliation, and global citizenship, offers yet another lens for understanding contemporary global realities. At its core, cosmopolitanism involves the capacity of individuals to negotiate between local identities and global cultural flows, cultivating a sense of belonging that transcends national boundaries. Yet, while cosmopolitanism is conventionally celebrated for its inclusive, humanistic ethos, the concept itself bears traces of Eurocentric genealogies. Its philosophical foundations—rooted in Enlightenment universalism—frequently privilege Western forms of rationality, mobility, and cultural hybridity, often obscuring the structural exclusions experienced by the global poor, refugees, and the socially disenfranchised.

Thus, this paper argues for the necessity of alternative cosmopolitan frameworks—models that challenge neoliberal globalization and Eurocentric universalisms. These alternative forms of cosmopolitanism must illuminate how transnational solidarity can emerge through multiple contexts: through the co-constitutive relationship between the familial and the foreign; through the empowerment and visibility of subaltern communities as global actors rather than passive subjects; through ecologically responsible human practices that resist extractive capitalist development; and through the nurturing of multicultural coexistence within cosmopolitan urban spaces. By critically engaging with these intersecting ideas—postcolonialism, globalization, and cosmopolitanism—this paper lays the theoretical foundation for examining how contemporary global structures can be reimagined in more just, inclusive, and sustainable ways.

Understanding The Neocolonial World in the Era of Globalization

Predominance of Neo-Colonialism

In the present socio-political scenario, the mutual interconnection between globalization and postcoloniality is considered to be one of the most significant subjects influencing the global politics. The paradigmatic transformations of the world culture brought forth by the alterations in the socio-economic relationships and instigated by the discursive forces of globalization have blurred the divisional boundaries of the nation-states. Contemporary postcolonial notions and criticisms seek to transcend the homogenous, pejorative and Eurocentric narratives of the changing geopolitical development of the world. On the other hand, globalization despite being a postcolonial phenomenon has become a subject of contradiction as it simultaneously bears the principles of universalism and also provides scopes for reconciliation of interests of both the local and the global cultural bodies. In postcolonial criticism, globalization is held to be responsible for incurring new multicultural flows to the prevalent Eurocentric culture of the global population. In this context, Nederveen Pieterse (1998) has observed that globalization can function both as a force of unification and also as a power-structure that causes disunification or disruption to any progressive socio-political development. Pieterse (1998) has also described the moment of convergence between the local and the global due to globalization as the 'momentum of newness'.

But Arjun Appadurai (1996) has viewed globalization as the site of cultural conflicts between homogenous cultural apparatuses and heterogeneous cultural practices. Appadurai (1996) has attempted to critically distinguish between the older and rational form of global culture, as has been described in the Weberian (1947) theories, with the reciprocal economic relationships, established through the new global culture among different countries across the world. Therefore, globalization in the postcolonial world seems to have appealed to cherish new hybrid culture so that the harmonization between the universal/global and the local/particular can be processed which will lead to breed multicultural relationships unknown to the imperial culture of the colonial era. But both for Bhabha (1994) and Pieterse (1998), the reflections of socio-economic unsatisfaction of globalization have necessitated the articulation of such subjectivities that are both transnational and cosmopolitan in nature.

Etymological and Cultural Impacts of Globalization

Apart from that there had been another category of invaders who had invaded countries but they cannot be categorized as a colonial power in the sense as it signifies for the European colonizers (Revathi Krishnaswamy and John Hawley 2008). For example, China had been attacked and occupied by certain tribal groups in history who had ruled over this country over centuries but at the end they had imbibed the Chinese culture into themselves. From these perspectives, Sankaran Krishna (2009) has stated that a number of questions arise for how colonialism can be defined or colonialism stands for what. The probable answers that may come under consideration are, does colonialism refer to the dominating colonial forces that eradicate the native socio-cultural and political values or it should be considered as an additional etymological and cultural wave that totally transforms the existing socio-political conditions of the occupied nation-states. In this context such additional beneficial socio-cultural changes during colonialism can be compared with the liberal socio-economic reconfigurations brought forth by globalization to the postcolonial nations. Therefore, we cannot think that the colonial outcomes had been the same everywhere. Moreover, Anibal Quijano has asserted that these colonial experiences could never be the same either for each different ethnic, cultural and political class or even for different genders (Anibal Quijano 2000).

As for the present-day globalized world, it is the capitalist transnational networks of the European nations which are influencing every aspect, for example culture, politics, trading, knowledge, religion, army, topography etc., of the global life of the postcolonial populations. Simultaneously, Patrick Chikendu has observed that there is a very deep inter-connection between the concept of the nation-state and the European colonialism (Patrick Chikendu 2004). The relationships between the two are so complex that it is very difficult to say whether the idea of the nation-state emerged right from the very beginning of colonialism, with the flowing in of the foreign capital to the colonized nations, or it was the nation-state that had invited colonialism through the functioning of its nation building apparatuses.

But now due to globalization any such restrictions have been removed and the developing countries have started to revive their cultural values which had been obliterated earlier by the Eurocentric cultures (Anthony Ballantyne 2002). Therefore, it can be assumed that in a sense capitalism has empowered the once subjugated nations to find their alternative always to respond back to the cultural monopoly of the European nations. But contemporary postcolonial criticisms have accused this globalized capitalism of creating cultural contentions among nations. According to I. Bruff (2005), the capitalist interests of globalization have given birth to certain elite classes within the developing nations. Then these elite classes have been integrated into the capitalist operational structures in such a way that now they seem to play the same role that the earlier colonizers used to play in the past. So, these societal class divisions lead to the cultural violence or conflicts among different classes within the nations. Gradually, these differences take the shape of extremist nationalism and keep the nightmarish experiences of colonialism alive in the memories of the national citizens. Therefore, Ankie Hoogvelt (2001) has asserted that the colonial experiential awareness of the marginalized people of the globalized world enforces them to not to accept the assimilating cultural principles of capitalism.

Restructuring Sovereignty of the Nation-States

According to Smith, Owens, and Baylis (2014), when globalization is critically understood as a multidimensional and ever-increasing process of interconnectedness between diverse communities and societies of the world, it becomes evident how any single event, occurred at any single point in the world, is to influence the global population across the globe. While focusing on the globalization-driven dynamics of interconnections, Scholte (2005) has observed that globalization promotes 'transplanetary' connections which in a more particular way can be described as a 'supraterritorial' connection that engages people transnationally and also reduces territorial restrictions and barriers. With the notion of territoriality, an inevitable characteristic of a nation-state, comes the postcolonial ideas of sovereignty because both notions are crucially entangled to each other for the development of a, what Morgenthau (1948) calls, restructured and decolonized national identity. Therefore, Mcgrew (2014) has asserted that the 'Westphalian' notion of sovereignty of the nation-states has been challenged by the globalized dynamics of an economy promoted by the nuanced interconnected networks of globalization.

Hence, the 'Westphalian' notions of sovereignty demarcate or hold strict territorial divisions and thereby make distinctive separation between domestic and international political affairs. But Baylis' (2014) observation holds grave significance in stating that it cannot be said that globalization has rendered the 'Westphalian' notions of territoriality, for the nation-states, completely obsolete. Yet it has adversely affected those notions in shrinking the distinctive division between the domestic and international space. But still, political identities for the citizens of every nation are very essential though the cultural plurality spread by globalization has reduced differences in physical borders and transnational economic activities. This exponential transnational economic and cultural interconnectivity has made it very unpredictable to see whether globalization can eradicate the 'Westphalian' notions of nation-states or is to face pre-emptions while coming into conflicts of interests with the 'Westphalian' totalitarian nation-states in the upcoming future.

Through transnational capitalism globalization has made the populations of the developing nations to return back to the colonized conditions. The postcolonial critics assume the idea of transnational civilization as an idea that promotes capitalist neocolonialism (Jean Paul Sartre 2001). David Harvey (2003) has asserted that when the marginalized populations of any nation try to convert their cultural values to meet the standards of the capitalist idea of civilization, they get deprived of their cultural purity. In the absence of their pure cultural ethos, they fail to challenge any neo-imperial cultural invasion.

Globalization and Transnational Capitalism Giving Rise to a New Colonial Discourse

Transforming Legacies of Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

This section is to focus upon how globalization, at the moment of decolonization in the aftermath of the World War II, represents a new way of perceiving the world that has distinguished the present from the world of colonialism and neocolonialism to such a degree that even the vocabulary of colonialism appears distant. Through its reinvention capitalism has opened itself up to the formerly colonized to participate in the global operations. The cultural legacies eliminated by Eurocentrism are revived through new entrants into the dynamics of capitalism which claim alternative routes to the future. The former 'contact zones' of the colonies are brought into the centre of the earlier colonialist societies. The 'mother' countries are in the process to be colonized by the former colonials. The need to redefine both the nation and the national culture has been caused by the force of these motions of people. The ideals of the Eurocentric knowledge and the cherished notions of progress are called into question by the postcolonial intellectuals after their arrival in the first world. The postcolonial criticism in recent times irrespective of its virtues has also become an elite affair which narrates the cultural conflicts and the contradictions within the global elite. After being incorporated into the new global system the former colonials do not have any interest to criticize the system rather through various forms of cultural nationalism, they display their new found power.

The memories of colonialism are kept alive through such perceptions to be termed as embarrassment or pain and it also bears awareness to the legacies. These memories are assumed to engender cultural and psychological inhibitions in getting assimilated into the system whereas this assimilation becomes easier through forgetting and acceptance. The contemporary criticism is thought to be accountable for its relationship to its present circumstances. It criticizes the earlier postcolonial narratives by obliterating the ideologies of the past and it also celebrates the present-day discretion over the fallacies of the past. The transformations in the world situation and the transformations that are partially the results of decolonization extend the much-needed force and plausibility to the contemporary postcolonial criticism. The recent changes in capitalism, brought forth by the anticolonial struggles of the past also contribute to that process. Though colonialism is no longer playing the role of a central force in shaping the present world yet it is in no way lifeless either. The Palestinians are struggling for their liberation, as are the different ethnic groups such as Kurds in Turkey, Tibetans in China and many other different native peoples across the world are suffering extortions and oppressions. The majority of the world's population is existing in a precarious condition and is marginalized due to the consequences resulted from colonialism and that is also acknowledged by the President of US when he states that: "a world where some lives in comfort and plenty, while half of the human race lives on less than \$2 a day, is neither just nor stable (Bush 2001)."

Globalization and Preoccupying Monopoly of Capitalism

Historical and cultural studies have long centred on colonialism, neocolonialism, and postcolonialism, but in a rapidly changing world it is uncertain whether this focus can still retain its centrality. Contemporary identities—both cultural and political—continue to be shaped by past colonialisms, even as they serve as reminders of oppression and erased histories. Although inequality, racialized hierarchies, and other colonial consequences persist, the restructured global power systems of today demand a reconsideration of these older frameworks. The nation-state and capitalism have changed significantly, and terms like colonialism and postcolonialism can obscure rather than clarify the present global order. Globalization now plays a key role in redefining these conditions.

By mobilizing capitalism to reorganize global space, globalization has turned colonialism—once described by Lenin as “the highest stage of capitalism” (1969)—into only one phase of its larger historical trajectory. Modern colonialism and its effects have become more ambiguous and controversial than ever. Modernization discourses often dismissed colonialism, or treated it as historically necessary. Even Marxism maintained an ambivalent stance, condemning colonial exploitation while portraying colonial rule as a force that propelled stagnant societies into modernity.

By the 1970s, colonialism was understood mainly as political domination. Neocolonialism described nations that, despite political independence, remained ideologically or economically dependent on former colonial powers. These concepts also describe broader global relations in which the Third World remains subordinated to the First World. Capitalism, however, is not unique to colonial systems; socialist states also engaged with it, since global capitalist network structures colonial relations. Socialism was imagined as the means to escape colonial legacies by establishing sovereign and autonomous economies. In all these formulations, colonialism appears as secondary to the larger dynamics of global capitalism.

Reaffirming Colonial Discourses through Contemporary Socio-Political Engagements

Earlier postcolonial discourse focused on the links between colonialism, racism, and capitalism, arguing that colonial domination was structurally tied to capitalist exploitation and could be overcome only by dismantling capitalism itself. Anti-colonial struggles were therefore seen as part of the larger conflict between socialism and capitalism. Lenin, more than Marx, highlighted the deep interconnection between colonialism and capitalism. The cultural relationship between colonizer and colonized was often framed as a “Manichean” (1985) opposition, where both sides recognized a structural dialectic shaping new social classes and practices. Colonialism created a native elite that collaborated with the colonizers, making domination easier, while “contact zones” (1969) intensified cultural exchange and racial tensions. These racial and class ideologies were viewed not as foundations of national identity but as foreign impositions to be removed for true sovereignty.

Recent postcolonial criticism, revisiting earlier discourses, has exposed internal contradictions within colonialism. As a result, the very meaning of colonialism has become ambiguous. Third World critics challenged earlier Marxist readings for reducing colonialism to capitalism, insisting that cultural and psychological dimensions—especially racism—must be central. This shift marked a turn from socio-economic analyses to cultural and experiential interpretations of colonialism.

These changes also reoriented Marxist thinking, giving culture a more autonomous role and separating cultural identity from economic structures. As postcolonial discourse distanced colonialism from capitalism, colonialism itself became the primary focus of modern history, though increasingly unclear in definition. Contemporary postcolonial studies reveal contradictions previously obscured by structural narratives of capitalism, socialism, and nationalism. The failures of liberation movements further exposed these tensions.

Robert Young, drawing on Sartre and Memmi, highlights the dialectical nature of the colonizer–colonized relationship, noting Memmi’s emphasis on the “excluded middle” and Sartre’s insistence that the colonial relationship must be understood as a system rather than a mere situation (Young 2001).

Globalization, Hybridity and Postcolonial Rejection of the ‘Three Worlds’

Young (2001) notes a significant shift in postcolonial studies by contrasting Sartre and Memmi. While Memmi explicitly critiqued the systemic nature of colonialism, contemporary postcolonial criticism—shaped by experiential and situational approaches—has refined and moved beyond his framework. This emphasis on contingency challenges the earlier totalizing view of colonialism and disconnects it from capitalism, making colonialism appear as a regressive system when viewed through this situational lens.

These shifts also contributed to the emergence of the “Three Worlds” model (1969), which became central to anti-colonial politics. The “Third World,” positioned between the capitalist First World and the socialist Second World, became the focal point of debates on neocolonialism and postcoloniality. While the First and Second Worlds were understood as developmental categories, the Third World was imagined as a site of political solidarity and alternative futurity. With the decline of global socialism by the late twentieth century, the notion of the Second World lost relevance, and contemporary postcolonial theory rejected the entire “Three Worlds” schema as a metanarrative that oversimplified global structures—especially in an age shaped by globalization and hybridity.

Today, “hybridity” has become a key concept in postcolonial analyses of identity. Human identities are increasingly viewed as hybrid formations produced through long histories of cultural contact, not simply by European colonialism. Contemporary hybrid identities differ from earlier forms because they lack the rigid, bifurcated structures that marked colonial subjectivities. Although this hybridity results from centuries of cultural encounters—including exploitation, violence, and forced assimilation—its historical roots often become obscured in celebrations of cultural mixing. Examples such as modern Chinese culture or African-American identity illustrate how colonial histories continue to shape national and cultural belonging.

Colonialism, therefore, cannot be seen merely as a modern phenomenon; it is deeply entangled with the very idea of civilization. European colonialism, in particular, must be understood through its relationship with capitalism. While hybridity offers a way to critique Eurocentric narratives, contemporary cultural identities ultimately emerge from intertwined processes of hybridization and the global spread of capitalist values.

Neo-Imperial Appropriations and Epistemological Violence

Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that the contemporary world has undergone a radical transformation, producing what they call the “Empire”—a new, decentred system of global governance distinct from earlier imperialism. Unlike past empires dominated by specific nation-states, Empire operates through dispersed networks of power and postmodern forms of control. Colonialism has not vanished but become more complex, generating contradictions beyond simple binaries like colonizer/colonized or East/West. These contradictions create spaces for critical thought and alternative possibilities.

Globalization, as a system of governance, works through socio-political, economic, and cultural mechanisms of appropriation and exploitation. It also generates counter-resistances that reveal its continuity with older imperial structures. Postcolonial politics therefore requires deconstructing the links between colonial forms of domination and contemporary epistemologies, alongside the new systemic violence embedded in global capitalism. Despite the promise of independence, many postcolonial states were denied meaningful sovereignty and excluded from global productive systems. Through its universalized worldview, globalization reinforces the West as the cultural and geopolitical centre, operating not only as material dominance but also as epistemic violence.

Globalization’s ideological and cultural systems rely on homogenization and Eurocentric universalism, legitimized by selective historical narratives. These discourses extend colonial logics into the present, shaping global culture and influencing political and economic life. Postcolonial studies, informed by materialist critiques of history, interrogate contemporary forms of colonialism, focusing on unequal capital flows, labour hierarchies, and the structural inequalities maintained by transnational capitalism. Terrorist attacks, in this context, express historical discontent with global corporate power.

While transnational capitalism now includes subjects from formerly colonized regions, it simultaneously demands a redefinition of nation and culture. Postcolonial elites remain caught between neoliberal globalism and traditional frameworks, struggling to imagine alternatives beyond global capitalism. As everyday life becomes increasingly colonized by these forces, the idea of colonialism as a historical category becomes less relevant, even as its logic persists through globalization’s hegemonic structures.

Globalization Posing Challenges to Examine the Relevance of Postcolonial Criticism in Future

Renegotiating the Neo-Liberal Advocates of Globalization

Today it is increasingly difficult to claim that we live in a genuinely postcolonial world. Colonial domination has not vanished; rather, new forms of power and resistance define global politics. Postcolonial studies now focus on contemporary neocolonial tendencies, especially after the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which signalled the rise of a new American imperial project. Globalization has transformed the world so profoundly that older postcolonial binaries such as centre and margin no longer adequately explain current power relations. Instead, transnational networks better describe how economies, cultures, and identities intersect across blurred borders.

Yet these new paradigms cannot be detached from colonial and anti-colonial histories. Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that the current global power structure mirrors earlier European empires, though now dominated by a single sovereign power that imposes order through postcolonial and post-imperial logics. While globalization intensifies exploitation and inequality, it also creates new possibilities for resistance through the “multitude”—diverse subjects across different sites who challenge global hegemony. Neoliberal defenders of globalization claim that mobility dissolves old hierarchies, though these claims remain contested.

Robert Young (2012) notes that dismissing postcolonial studies in Western academia reflects persistent anxieties provoked by decolonization’s transformative force—its ability to reshape political visions and renegotiate colonial histories within global capitalism. Similarly, Loomba (2005) observes that the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 made it absurd to imagine the world as postcolonial, given the clear structural continuities between past imperial practices and present neocolonial power. These continuities demonstrate why postcolonial critique remains essential despite new global discourses.

Reconstructing Hermeneutic Parameters of Postcolonial Studies

The shift from modernity to a neocolonial global order has generated major socio-political, cultural, and intellectual debates. After 9/11, Western historiography framed the event as a decisive rupture that redefined contemporary history and exposed new dynamics of power. Globalization, understood as a complex economic,

political, cultural, and epistemic process, has produced new discourses that reshape historical understanding and challenge established postcolonial frameworks.

Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that emerging global power structures and borderless networks introduce new modes of governance that appear to supersede traditional postcolonial analysis. These developments have reoriented Western knowledge systems while prompting postcolonial studies to reassess its trajectory from colonialism to global neocolonialism. New socio-economic and cultural configurations demand fresh inquiry into the relationship between national and transnational forces, revealing how postcolonial critique remains vital for understanding the capitalist logic underlying globalization. Although globalization introduces new forms of authority and violence, postcolonial categories such as race, caste, gender, religion, and nation continue to hold analytical power.

Central to postcolonial studies is a sustained critique of imperial history and colonial discourse, as well as an examination of how global power operates through cultural practices and biased epistemologies. Recognizing the deep structural link between colonialism and globalization has compelled postcolonial scholars to develop new strategies for interrogating contemporary forms of domination. This ongoing critical project seeks to dismantle neocolonial power configurations, rethink production and knowledge systems, and expose the ideological foundations through which Western epistemologies continue to frame globalization.

Postcolonial Understanding of ‘De-Territorialization’ and ‘Re-Territorialization’

Postcolonial studies increasingly examine how globalization reproduces colonial and imperial violence through its structures of authority, economic manipulation, and political dominance. Because globalization operates through ambiguous multi- and transnational networks of power, national capital appears absorbed into abstract socio-economic and cultural systems. This dissolution of national frameworks—masked by ideologies of deterritorialization—has become a central concern in postcolonial critiques, which argue that global governance often obscures the continued significance of the nation-state within contemporary imperial formations. Western discourses of domination, deeply rooted in historical violence, shape the postcolonial reading of globalization and expose the persistence of neo-imperial power.

A key task of postcolonial critique, therefore, is to reclaim the epistemological legacy of decolonization in order to challenge globalization’s economic, geopolitical, and ideological narratives. The structural parallels between colonial and contemporary global hegemonies suggest that globalization remains a terrain where colonial power endures and must be critically deconstructed. Spivak’s reflections after the “Global War on Terror” (2004) indicate that the events of September 11 exposed globalization to visible violence and provoked new critical scrutiny that earlier postcolonial work had largely avoided due to the phenomenon’s complexity.

Postcolonial scholars like Cooppan (2005) reject the notion that globalization embodies “nationlessness,” arguing instead that the national and the global now function as intertwined modalities. Krishna (2009) further notes that postcolonial critics have become sceptical of celebratory ideas such as hybridity, globalism, and metropolitan reterritorialization, which fail to account for historically entrenched hierarchies of power. Spivak (1988) argues that hybridity has not displaced the Western sovereign subject despite its promise of empowerment. These homogenizing discourses, driven by Western logocentrism, suppress cultural diversity and erase difference. As Benhayoun (2005) observes, the world cannot be read as a unified whole, for its historical, cultural, scientific, and imaginative dimensions are inherently contradictory and plural. In this context, transnational capitalism continues to reshape and dilute subjectivities while the West perpetuates its dominance through powerful discursive narratives.

Dynamics of Discursive and Hegemonic Paradigms:

Said (1993) argues that imperialism, as a transnational arm of globalization, continues to shape cultural, socio-economic, ideological, and political practices. Globalization’s discourse reproduces the historical homogeneity of Western imperial power by drawing on Eurocentric epistemologies and hegemonic cultural norms, thereby silencing alternative perspectives (Benhayoun 2006). To counter this dominance, postcolonial studies must critically interrogate Enlightenment philosophies and the structural foundations of Eurocentrism. Globalization is not an abstract economic or cultural process; it is sustained by intricate power relations that privilege Western values as universal.

In this global order, territory, culture, and identity become contested sites for resisting hegemonic forces. Hardt and Negri (2000) note that although decolonization once enabled nations to assert sovereignty and build epistemological resistance to colonial constraints, globalization has destabilized these gains through its flexible, deterritorializing structures. Foucault’s (1972) understanding of discourse suggests that when homogenizing tendencies prevail, cultural diversity and historical difference risk erasure.

Contemporary critiques of history, geography, politics, and culture therefore seek to reframe postcolonial struggles and generate counter-narratives to globalizing ideologies. Events such as the wars in Afghanistan and

Iraq exposed the ideological contradictions of globalization, while the “Global War on Terror” (2004) signalled a new discursive order in which Western nation-states are redefined as agents of transnational corporate power. This shift illustrates the growing inability to contain power within territorial boundaries, resulting instead in diffuse and often paradoxical global formations.

Intensifying Global Asymmetries and Prejudiced Constrictions

Simon Gikandi (2001) observes that globalization has appropriated key postcolonial concepts such as hybridity and otherness—terms once marginalized by earlier social science. This section examines why it is inadequate to assume that the emerging globalized postcolonial culture reflected in literature has significantly transformed contemporary socio-cultural relations. Although globalization has expanded access to information technology and created economic opportunities for some, many critics argue that the rise of fluid and hybrid global identities has detached populations from their socio-economic roots.

P. Sainath (2001) contends that the mobility of global capital has not fostered openness but has instead reinforced new forms of restriction and inequality. While colonial-era globalization created a unified yet divided world of rich and poor, the new global order produces similar disparities despite promoting transnational mobility and progress. World Bank statistics from the late twentieth century indicate a rise in global poverty, revealing how globalization deepens existing asymmetries. This paper therefore argues that globalization, despite its cosmopolitan rhetoric, reproduces structural inequalities and often obscures the workings of contemporary neo-imperial power.

Joseph E. Stiglitz (2003) links globalization directly to colonial legacies, suggesting that IMF policies resemble the interventions of former colonial authorities—forcing developing nations to question whether colonialism has truly ended. Advocates of the new global order even call for a renewed form of imperialism led by the United States. Robert D. Kaplan (2003) illustrates this continuity, claiming in “Supremacy by Stealth” that American dominance mirrors earlier imperial networks. Just as European empires co-opted local elites, modern transnational systems similarly integrate nation-states into their ideological and economic apparatuses. This section highlights why postcolonial studies must confront such global threats by critically reassessing both colonial and pre-colonial histories.

Contemporary globalization also renders the “native” figure hybrid, contaminated, and therefore no longer constructible as a pure Other. Through its diffuse transnational power, globalization transforms national authority into an abstract economic and cultural form, overshadowed by the operations of global institutions and neo-imperial ideologies. Postcolonial analyses demonstrate that the global and the national remain historically intertwined within Western structures of domination. To effectively critique globalization, postcolonial studies must move beyond examining its discourses of violence to interrogate the material systems of production and circulation that sustain contemporary neo-imperial power.

Critical Views on the Global Impacts of Postcolonialism, Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

Critiquing Postcolonialism and Threats of Nationalism

The term postcolonial is inherently complex because it groups together diverse formerly colonized nations despite their vast historical and cultural differences, aligning them through their relationship to contemporary globalization (Martin Wolf 2014). Yet postcolonial studies also emphasize these differences, showing how distinct colonial histories continue to shape today’s global economic and political structures. By revisiting imperial pasts, the field interrogates how ideological and cultural biases persist within the neocolonial logic of globalization. As Ania Loomba (2005) observes, the links between colonialism and current global processes have opened new avenues of inquiry. Anti-colonial struggles, both during and after formal decolonization, helped generate major global transformations driven by capitalism. Contemporary postcolonial criticism therefore challenges both the assumption that colonial ideologies have disappeared and the celebratory narratives of independence that obscure ongoing inequities. Although colonialism no longer structures the global system in the same way, it remains far from irrelevant (Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur 2002), as evidenced by continuing struggles in places such as Palestine, Tibet, and among marginalized ethnic groups in Turkey.

Capitalism, consolidated after the Industrial Revolution and accelerated following the Second World War, enabled formerly colonized nations to enter global economic systems while reshaping socio-economic structures worldwide (Ramon Grosfoguel 2002). In some cases, this shift even allowed these nations to exert new forms of dominance over former imperial powers. Such developments illustrate the constant reconfiguration of global political forces that Robert Holton (2005) identifies as globalization. As a result, postcolonial scholars have reassessed the distinctions between colonial-era global structures and the forms of neocolonial power that emerged after independence.

Partha Chatterjee (1986) highlights an irony in anti-colonial nationalism: although it sought liberation from European domination, post-independence nation-states often reproduced centralized and homogenizing

administrative models inherited from colonial rule. This created new forms of internal colonization in which dominant national identities were imposed upon culturally diverse populations. These dynamics have fuelled ethnic tensions, as marginalized groups assert local identities in opposition to both nationalist assimilation and renewed global hegemonies (Walter Mignolo 2000). Nevertheless, some theorists argue that national cultural identities existed long before colonial rule and therefore cannot be reduced to its legacy (Robert J. C. Young 2001). Such perspectives turn to indigenous and ethnic identities as counterforces that resist contemporary political agendas and the continuing shadows of colonialism.

Globalization and Classified Postcolonial Complexities

Globalization is broadly understood as an interactive process that integrates people socially, culturally, and economically across the world. Although the term gained popularity in the late twentieth century, its roots extend far earlier, even to pre-modern exchanges among civilizations. By the 1960s, globalization had begun to acquire meanings close to its contemporary usage, and its rapid expansion was driven by intensifying global economic and cultural connections (Paul James and Manfred B. Steger 2014). The IMF highlights four major features of globalization: financial transactions, capital flows, migration, and the circulation of knowledge. Operationally, globalization may be viewed in three broad forms—economic, cultural, and political.

The term itself first emerged within the social sciences. French economist F. Perroux (1962) was among its earliest users, followed by Theodore Levitt (1983), who popularized it. Yet the conceptual foundations of globalization can already be seen in Karl Marx's recognition of capitalism's tendency to increase global interdependence and to generate a universal socio-cultural order (Marx 1998). Sociologists such as A. G. Hopkins and Roland Robertson (1992; 2002) later defined globalization as the formation of a single global society in which local structures are shaped in accordance with worldwide economic and cultural forces.

Historically, globalization can be divided into several phases. The archaic phase, beginning as early as 3000 BCE with trade between the Sumer and Indus Valley civilizations (Andre Gunder Frank 1998), expanded through networks such as the Silk Road connecting Europe, China, Arabia, and South Asia. The subsequent proto-globalization of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries involved European imperial expansion and maritime dominance (Hopkins 2002; Bayly 2018). The modern phase, emerging in the nineteenth century, was propelled by post-Napoleonic political stability, technological innovations in transport, the growth of military-industrial markets, and a seemingly liberal global order (Daudin 2010; O'Rourke 2002; Escosura 2021). This phase was a direct outcome of the Industrial Revolution.

In the twenty-first century, globalization operates as a transnational economic system that has weakened older binaries of centre and periphery, even as it produces new neo-imperial forms of inequality. It encompasses economic, political, cultural, and epistemic processes (O'Rourke and Williamson 2002) and has generated new discourses that reshape historical interpretation and challenge the frameworks of postcolonial studies. With its intense cross-border flows, globalization has dismantled older institutional structures while creating new networks of power (Bakari 2013).

Although initially associated with aspirations for global equality, globalization has increasingly functioned as a mechanism of exclusion, marginalizing populations in less-developed regions and reinforcing hierarchical divisions within global politics. Its implications are particularly significant for postcolonial societies, where it has reshaped power relations and intensified new forms of neo-imperial domination. Consequently, postcolonial studies must interrogate how globalization reconfigures violence, exploitation, and cultural authority.

The shifting terrain of globalization has also redirected Western epistemologies, producing critical re-evaluations through concepts such as post-nationalism and transnationalism (Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King 1990). These developments signal an epistemic shift within postcolonial studies, demanding renewed historical inquiry into the movement from colonialism to global neocolonialism. As contemporary nation-states navigate new socio-economic and cultural terrains, postcolonialism becomes crucial for understanding the operations of capitalist power. Far from dissolving inequalities, globalization often intensifies existing asymmetries, challenging postcolonial theory's capacity to analyse contemporary global power structures.

Rise of Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Heterogeneity

Globalization, despite early expectations, failed to create an egalitarian postcolonial world, and this inadequacy provided the ground for the emergence of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism broadly refers to an openness that enables individuals to move beyond cultural conservatism and engage aesthetically and intellectually with an expanding global world. It is both an imaginative and ethical process that encourages individuals to relate to transnational spaces and to embrace cultural identities that are no longer tied to fixed territorial boundaries. As U. Beck (2000) argues, contemporary cosmopolitanism can be seen as an empirical outcome of globalization's varied operations.

Modern cosmopolitanism, however, is not simply about feeling “at home” in the world. Shameem Black (2006) suggests that it involves understanding global realities through the intimate lens of everyday, familiar environments. In this sense, cosmopolitan culture emerges from dense networks of interconnections among diverse local cultures, grounded in relations that resemble familial bonds. Cosmopolitanism operates as a socio-political mode of learning—both individual and collective—through which people encounter alternative cultural forms that reshape their sense of self.

Because its conceptual and experiential dimensions are inseparable, cosmopolitanism resists rigid or reductive definitions. Z. Skrbis and I. Woodward (2007) argue that this ambiguity gives cosmopolitanism its reflexive, self-analytical character. Such cultural openness equips individuals to engage with foreign values, whether through direct contact or through reflective exploration of the transformative possibilities created by cross-cultural interaction (Anjali Gera Roy 2012).

CONCLUSION

Therefore, this paper has sought to engage comprehensively with several crucial dimensions of postcolonial studies, particularly in its critical interrogation of the neocolonial tendencies embedded within the socio-economic dynamics of the contemporary globalized world. It has been argued that modern postcolonial inquiry now extends far beyond the historical legacies of colonial domination to encompass a wide spectrum of present-day socio-cultural, religious, political, economic, and environmental concerns that shape—and often threaten—the lives of both human and non-human beings across the planet. In doing so, the chapter underscores the growing relevance of postcolonial critique in addressing the complex interdependencies and inequalities that define today’s global realities.

The discussion has also illuminated how the dominant conceptual frameworks of globalization and cosmopolitanism, despite their liberal rhetoric of openness, equality, and interconnectedness, remain deeply rooted in Eurocentric assumptions and continue to reproduce neo-imperial structures of power. Although these ideas initially appeared to promise an egalitarian global order in which all races, classes, religions, and nations might participate on equitable terms, they have ultimately failed to realize this postcolonial utopian vision. Instead, globalization has accelerated the expansion of capitalism, and this capitalist regime has further stratified the cosmopolitan landscape into privileged elites and marginalized, deprived populations.

In response to these contradictions, the paper has examined various alternative modes of cosmopolitan thinking that have emerged as counter-discourses to the hegemonic global order. These alternative cosmopolitanisms emphasize the potential of fostering meaningful connections between the local and the global, empowering marginalized communities, and encouraging environmentally responsible human practices. Together, they suggest possible pathways for resisting the neocolonial pressures of the contemporary world.

However, the paper has intentionally refrained from exploring a critical question that remains unresolved: what might happen if these alternative cosmopolitan visions themselves become susceptible to manipulation by the very neo-imperial forces they seek to oppose? The implications of such a transformation—where counter-hegemonic cosmopolitanisms risk being absorbed into the capitalist logic of globalization—remain open for further inquiry and will require deeper theoretical engagement in future.

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