

# Colonization of Concept of Capitalistic Development in Post Colonial Societies

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the capitalistic concept of development that has been taken for granted, without any prior examination and critical investigation by post-colonial societies. Capitalism is not just an economic system rather it is an encompassing system that encompasses all aspect of life. It subsumes all other orders, remold all orders and aspects of life according to its own order i.e. capitalistic order.*

*In addition, this paper will also argues that capitalism as an encompassing and subsuming all other systems is not a-historical or natural rather it is historical and has been injected in the colonial social fabric by the western settlers. This concept of development has been developed in modern west based on a particular conception of self i.e. capitalistic self hence the article at hand will inquire the metaphysical conceptions working behind this concept of development.*

*In due process, the article will excavate this concept of development using Gustavo Esteva and Gilles Deleuze to elaborate how capitalistic conception of development de-territorialize the social space and values where it emerges and then re-territorialize them through its own prism, resulting in a dilemma of freedom and a identity crises among the individuals of the Post Colonial World.*

**Keywords:** Capitalistic Self, Development, Colonization, De-territorialization/Re-territorialization

## Introduction

From the onset of western modernity and enlightenment, the aim of it was to free man from the "self imposed tutelage" (Kant, 1996) i.e. to free man from any other transcendental

authority and to make individual its own authority. To achieve freedom or to bestow freedom on man was the major premise of modernity. The best manifestation of freedom is only possible when there is an

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uninterrupted supply of resources (capital) and to ensure uninterrupted supply of resources in the different colonies of the world. During 17th and 18th century many different colonies appeared in South Asia.

The argument of the article at hand is that westerners that colonized South Asian countries not only ensured uninterrupted supply of resources to their homelands but also infused a particular conception of individuality/self in the natives of the South Asia. They indoctrinated a particular capitalistic conception of individuality/self in this region and since Conception of Development presumes a particular conception of self therefore through the capitalistic conception of self only capitalistic conception of development is possible and since then the conception of development that prevails in south Asia is nothing but capitalistic conception of development.

This article argues that capitalistic conception of development is historical and has emerged from a particular conception of self which is inevitable for it therefore in the first section the article will focus on the capitalistic conception of self and elaborates the basic presumptions of that self.

In the second section the article will focus on the relation of capitalistic self and its importance for the capitalistic conception of development. While the third section will explore that the capitalistic conception of development colonizes all the aspect, it subsumes all other orders than de-territorialize it i.e. destroy those orders

and values in which it emerges and further re-territorialize that space with the capitalistic values.

In final section it argues that this colonization phenomenon of capitalistic development results in a serious implication of lack of originality which results in identity crises among the individuals of Post Colonial World and creates a continual state of confusion.

### **Capitalistic Conception of Self:**

The metaphysical foundations of capitalistic self could be traced back to the modern philosophy in general and enlightenment project in particular. Modern philosophy presumes such a self that is inherently capable of finding and excavating absolute universal truths and reality with the help of the capacities of faculty of reason without any divine or transcendental guidance. One could find this line of argument in almost all major contributors of modern philosophy. Though it's Descartes or Kant or Husserl or any other modern thinkers this theme is evident in all of them.

Descartes as the first modern philosopher, also known as father of modern philosophy, claims priority of self which means that "Human" prior to all through its God or its world Human is prior to all. Descartes claims that he has discovered the absolute, ultimate, universal indubitable, clear and distinct Truth which will serves as the foundation of this new era of modernity as well as his philosophy and that is "I think, therefore I am." Through this "Cogito", Descartes

proclaimed a new concept of self. This self i.e. "Human" for the first time in the history of mankind becomes epistemologically prior to everything i.e. self become prior to God, Self become prior to World. Now Self (Human) exist therefore God exist similarly self exist therefore world exist. Modernity turns the table upside down in the sense that before it God was the measure of all and everything revolves around God including man and the world but after modernity human became anthropocentric i.e. human become center of all and the measure of all. Therefore one major characteristic of Capitalistic Self is that it's anthropocentric i.e. "a self centered rational, acting as a meaning giving agent, individual who is measure of all in himself".

But the fundamental presumption of capitalistic self is belief on "freedom." Kant claimed that one of the most important things for one self to be enlightened and to be modern is belief on Freedom and "if it's only allowed freedom, enlightenment is almost inevitable" (Kant, 1996). So for Kant freedom is not only important rather it's a necessary condition for modernization, Kant goes further to say that if one denounce freedom than it's not only a mistake rather it is a violation against humanity and against the divine right of individual.

For Kant, in his famous article "An answer to the question: What is Enlightenment", freedom seems to have a dual meaning on one hand it seems to mean Critical Attitude i.e. an individual's ability to publicly criticize the shortcoming of any institutional or any socio-political and traditional value etc. By

publicly criticizing he meant an individual in the capacity of a scholar have enough freedom to maintain a critical attitude towards everything and every matter but in public sense only. Kant believes that everyone should "enjoy in the public use of reason an unrestricted freedom to use his own rational capacities and to speak his own mind" (Kant, 1996)

On the other hand, one can imply from his article that by freedom it means self determination. Kant believes that humanity at large was in state of immaturity. He argued that men in general depend upon divine authorities for determining him/herself. Man, in general, take guidance from external/transcendental authorities. Kant considered this attitude of dependency on other authority as immature. For Kant, man has himself imposed it i.e. a self imposed state of immaturity. The only way of escaping this immaturity is self determination i.e. determination of self using one's own reasoning.

Kant believed that man has rational capacities; every individual on the face of the earth has same structure of mind and faculty of understanding. He claims that man has been equipped with all those tools that one requires for determining what one wanted to be. Therefore, it's one's responsibility to utilize those faculties and determine self independent of authority. Still if one took guidance from others in determining oneself than it's nothing but self imposed immaturity. Therefore enlightenment is to break these self imposed shackles and freely determine

oneself. That's why freedom is one of the most important fundamentals of modern capitalistic self.

The movement of English Enlightenment also played a vital role in carving the capitalistic self. David Ricardo and Adam Smith both were English enlightenment thinkers and played important part in it. Both consider that human beings have unlimited desires and wants i.e. human beings have an inherent tendency to ask for more and more but the resources that they have are limited i.e. scarce. Scarcity becomes the central keystone of modern economics and "it's postulated as a universal condition of social life" (Esteva, 2010, p.15). The presumptions of English Enlightenment strengthen the capitalistic conception of self and developed two central characters of capitalistic self i.e. "Acquisitiveness and Competition" (Ansari & Zeeshan, 2006, p.16)

The logical outcome of these assumption i.e. unlimited desires/wants were nothing but a continuous strive for the attainment of uninterrupted supply of resources which means acquisitiveness (Avarice). Furthermore, since resources were limited (Scarce) than the other aspect of the self that appears is Competitiveness. Every individual self will be in a competition to have more and more resources. Hence Acquisitiveness and Competition are the two important aspect of Capitalistic self.

These two leads self toward an unending urge of maximization of resources and accumulation of capital. This is a self evident

truth that for capitalistic self uninterrupted increase of resources becomes an end in itself as elaborated by Ansari & Zeeshan (2006) and furthermore, it molds the society into a capitalistic Society in which individuals "accumulates for the sake of accumulation and evaluates all activities in terms of their contribution to accumulations" (Ansari & Zeeshan. 2006, p.17)

One could say that capitalistic self is one that presumes priority of individual over all and considers man as a measure of all, which have belief on freedom i.e. rationally capable of self determination and one that accumulates capital as an end in itself. It is this concept of self that is required for the capitalistic development and hence it's impossible that capitalistic development can prevail without capitalistic concept of self. It presumes and relies on the Capitalistic self.

### Capitalistic Conception of Development:

In the above section the article argued about the capitalistic concept of self. In this section the focus will be on the concept of development. This section will explore Capitalistic development.

The term development initially was used to describe "the natural growth of plants and animals" (Esteva, 2010, p.3) and "the process through which organism achieved their genetic potential: the natural form of the being preseen by the biologist" (Esteva, 2010, p.3). Actually what Esteva wanted to highlight here is that development as being considered today is historical. Esteva wanted

to highlight the fact the term development was initially used in biological sciences. Prior to 17th century, development was seen a term that was applicable for the description of living being, even Darwin also used this term in biological sense. It was the time when development and evolution were used interchangeably as Esteva (2010) elaborates.

Later on during late 17th and 18th century the term development started being used to explain social change and political situations and afterward the term becomes central to the discourse of economics especially after the English Enlightenment. It is here that development started being considered as continuous increase in industrial mode of production or industrializations and development started being seen as increase in consumerism, it is here that development started being seen as increase in GDP and GNP and more concretely it is here that development started being considered in terms of increase in Per Capita Income. More importantly "It (development) converted history into a program: a necessary and inevitable destiny" (Esteva, 2010, p.4)

Development is nothing but maximization of profit (capital). The more one maximize the profit the more developed one will be and more free as well. All the above, stated about the development can be summed up in the maximization of profit. Development or maximization of profit depends upon the establishment and continuous expansion of the market. Market is the place where capitalistic self endeavors for capitalistic development. Ansari and Zeeshan (2006)

define market as a place where self interested free individual contract with anonymous individuals for an exchange of formally equivalent values and through this mutual understanding maximize profit or in other words increase their freedom.

It is market where capitalistic self operates and participates and it is this participation that made capitalistic development possible, it's the place where per capita income increases and where maximization of profit becomes possible. Market, where capitalistic self exist, made capitalistic development possible. Hence, it's evident that capitalistic development presupposes capitalistic self and the only concept of development that can emanate from it, is capitalistic development.

Furthermore, development in 20th century took a new look according to Esteva (2010). Development got dual mandate in 20th century i.e. development means economic growth on one hand and welfare of individuals and social world on the other hand. These are not two different positions rather they are identical as per Esteva (2010). This point was also endorsed by Wolfgang (1990) that the identification of level of civilization with the level of production, the dual mandate collapsed into one: Development.

The development thinkers of 20th century emphasize on the human aspect of development i.e. social welfare. On one hand development means increase in profit/profit maximization and on the other it means welfare of the society. Though these two initially may seem at odd but they are not,

rather “two side of the same coin” (Ansari & Zeeshan, 2006, p.227). Maximization of profit leads to maximization of welfare. More profits can only be made through more and more consumption and more consumption is welfare in real sense. Hence capitalistic self made capitalistic development possible.

### **Capitalistic Development: A Colonizing Concept.**

If someone considers that capitalism is only an economic system which plays part in only one aspect of life then this might be considered as a myopic view of capitalism. It though starts with economic aspect of life but soon it captures and conquers all aspect of human life. It colonize all the spheres of life as “capitalism subsumes the social order from which it emerges and creates its own social order – its own individuality, its own society and its own state” (Ansari & Zeeshan, 2006, p.14).

Similar was the effect of capitalism in the region of South Asia. The first interaction of this region with West was during 16th century when Europeans colonizers initially arrived for trade and soon through trade the whole region went under the direct influence of colonizers. Western colonizer not only brought trade to this region but also brought capitalistic way of life with them and then capitalism started subsuming the prevailing order in which it appeared.

Capitalism in general and capitalistic development in particular colonizes all aspect of life. This all starts with devaluing

of the prevailing values system of that social fabric in which capitalism emerged and according to Deleuze this is the de-territorializational aspect of Capitalism i.e. Capitalism has ability to devalue all the values and made freedom possible. The more the de-territorialization will be, the more the increase in freedom/profit and that’s why “Deleuze contends that capitalistic machine has provided comparatively more freedom than the earth and despotic machine” (Bukhari, 2014, p.49). Through deterritorialization capitalism bulldozes the value structure and enhance the space for freedom of individual and that’s why deleuze considers that deterritorialization is “positive because it prevent bodies from regulation of codes” (Bukhari, 2014, p.49)

But according to Deleuze “de-territorialization is always accompanied by re-territorialization” (Bukhari, 2014, p.49) which means that though capitalism destroys the prevailing value structure but it cannot itself exist in a valueless structure therefore it re-territorialize the social fabric with the capitalistic value. Here after re-territorialization everything is valued in term of its contribution to the process of accumulation of capital. The higher the contribution of one in process of accumulation of capital the higher the value it may possess. Through re-territorialization capitalism economizes the society and that’s why Esteva considers that capitalism subsumes all other orders, for him “economics strives to subordinate to its rule and subsumes under its logic every other form of social interaction in every society it invades” (Esteva, 2010,



p.14)

Capitalism converts a man into economic man i.e. capitalistic self (one who believes in competitiveness and avarice) because if it does not convert man into capitalistic self than it won't survive as well. Therefore the "transmogrification of autonomous men and women into devalued economic man was in fact the precondition for the emergence of economic society" (Esteva, 2010, p.15) and here Esteva by economic society means capitalistic society.

### Colonization in Post Colonial Era:

As Esteva (2010) stated that Capitalistic Development converted history into a necessary and inevitable destiny/program. This reflects as truth in Post Colonial Capitalistic societies. One common observation about Post Colonial societies is that a general consensus prevails over the Capitalistic Development as the only concept of development even though it may have serious repercussions on individual's world. But still it must be the ultimate end of life, as Esteva (2010) highlighted. Accepting it without any prior epistemological inquiry, this is the influence of Capital and this is what one can say "Colonization of Capitalistic Development".

Capitalism colonizes every aspect of life, subsumes all identities and reproduce a single identity i.e. Capitalistic Identity. Although one may have some religious, cultural, social or national identity, but the most sacred and valuable identity, one that is prior to other identities and provides meaning to life, is capitalistic identity whereas the capitalistic

identity revolves around one's contribution for the accumulation of capital.

The dilemma of Post-colonial Societies is that the self/individual in process of transmogrification of traditional identity into Capitalistic Identity loses the very originality that provides uniqueness to it from others. Every single aspect of one's life world becomes nothing but a copy of capitalistic life world. The language transmogrified into language of economics, ethics transmogrified into Business Ethics, cultural and historical studies transmogrified into Modern Sciences whereas only that science prevails which is instrumental to accumulation of capital. It seems that the Post Colonial World is just producing a replica of the Capitalistic World in every aspect of life. Such a world in which everyone seems to be a copy of the Capitalistic World, nothing but a "Xerox" copy considering one free whereas in reality everyone is still colonized.

### Conclusion:

From the above argument one can conclude that Capitalism in general and Capitalistic Development in particular de-territorialize the Life World including the prevailing value structure but since it can't survive in void therefore it further develops a particular value structure which establishes its authority based upon one's ability to accumulate capital. In this transformation of Post Colonial societies, individuals of this part of the world are colonized by Capitalistic Development. Considering one is free when in reality one is still under influence.

Hence the individual of Post Colonial world finds himself in a unique dilemma. On one hand the individual is still colonized, although living in a Post Colonial so called "Free" world, and feels comfortable in this colonization since it strives more and more

for this freedom. On the other hand the Post Colonial Individual seems distressed on the issue of identity crises that appears due to acceptability of Capitalistic concept of Development. Logical culmination of it is a "Continual state of Confusion".

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