The Cold War and the Deepening of the North-South Divide

By

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Abstract

This work brings to limelight the effects of cold war on the North-South Divide. It explains the meaning of the North-South divide, the implication of cold war on the North-South Divide. The work also traces the history of the North-South divide. The North South divide rose to prominence during the cold war. It was more of a socio-economic than a geographical categorization. In this work the secondary sources such as textbooks, journals and the internet was used. The historical and multi-disciplinary approach was used to extensively discuss the issue at hand. The multi-disciplinary was used inorder to obtain relevant information from other disciplines such as Geography, and Political sciences etc. The findings of this work reveals that the North-South divide will continue to widen as the cold war which which was said to have ended in 1945 has not ended practically. The work therefore recommends that categorization in the world shouldn't be prioritized and should be eradicated as all nation do not develop at the same time. The role of cold war in the deepening of the North-South divide cannot be over-emphasized.

Introduction

The North South Divide is a socioeconomic and political categorization of countries. The cold war era generalization places countries in two distinct groups: The North and South. The North is comprised of all first world countries and most second world countries while the south is compromised of third world countries. The categorization ignores the geographic position of countries with some

countries in the southern hemisphere such as Australia and New Zealand being labeled as part of the North.

The Cold War era heightened the usage of the term North-South divide. During the cold war the world was divided along two lines based on their alignment with the Russian (East) and the American (West) bloc. While those countries that do not have the capacity to be classified as the first and second world countries and were not involved the ideological war (cold war) were termed as the third world countries. After the war, the first and second world countries submerged to form the North divide and the third world countries formed the South Divide. This was not based on geographical reasons as some countries found in the southern hemisphere are classified as the North divide.

Conceptual Clarification

North divide

The North divide is not a geographical but a socio-economic categorization. The North divide originated from the cold war of the mid 29th century. It consists of countries with developed economies. These countries are Japan, China, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Britain, UK, Canada, South Korea and all countries in Western Europe. The countries are about one quarter of the total population of the world yet, they control 80% of the total income earned in the world. The countries of the North divide are technologically advanced. They have a developed economy with a high GDP. Their leaders are visionary and dedicated to improving the general standard of living.

South Divide

The South Divide is comprised of countries with underdeveloped economies which were initially referred to as third world countries during the cold war. They are about three-quarter of the world population but account for only fifth of the globally earned income. The countries of the South divide are characterized by lots of negativity such as low GDP, high population, general poverty, economic backwardness, Unemployment, bad leadership, lack of basic amenities, hunger, political instability etc. They are not technologically advanced and as such they export their raw materials and in turn import finished products at exorbitant rates. The countries of the South divide are mainly African countries, South America,

Asia and all African and South American countries being African and South American countries from the South except Japan and South Korea.

Cold War

The war was a lengthy struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union that began in the aftermath of Hitler's Germany. In 1941, Nazi aggression against the USSR turned the Soviet regime into an ally of the western democracies. But in the post-war world increasing divergent viewpoints created rifts between those who have once been allies. "The term cold war refers to that unprecedented state of tension that suddenly emerged between two former friends, the USA and USSR. After the Second World War in 1945, the world changed dramatically, having witnessed the surrender of Japan in 1945, the victory of the allies had been made clear. But the tension in their separate camps immediately reared its ugly head. Then, there began total disintegration of the imperialist domination and a near total collapse of European hegemony of the world". (ArjunDev, 2009).

According to Ikunga (2014,p.102) "cold war is an ideological war, not an armed struggle in which all sorts of means can be used to weaken each other. Since political propaganda is involved, it is called propagation war, with all potentials of actual war". The United States and the USSR gradually built up their own zones of influence dividing the world into two opposing camps. The cold war therefore not exclusively a struggle between the US and USSR but a global conflict that affected many countries particularly the continent of Europe, Indeed Europe divided into two bloc and became one of the main theatres of the war. In western Europe, the European integration process began with the support of the United States while the countries of Eastern Europe became satellites of the USSR.

Methodology

The study mainly relied on secondary sources of information, which involved using written materials or documents. These sources, which include textbooks, academic journals, and news articles authored and published by numerous historians, are crucial for reconstructing historical events. A multidisciplinary approach was also used, allowing us to draw on data or expertise from other fields that are closely related to the humanities and social sciences. These models were

utilized to generate the data that was used to rebuild this work and to ensure that there was little chance of content distortion.

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"The North-South divide refers to the economic and development disparities between the wealthier, industrialized countries (the Global North) and the less developed countries (the Global South), Obuah (2016,p.103). The idea of categorizing countries by their economic and developmental status began during the cold war with the classifications of East and West. The Soviet Union and China represented the East and the United States and the allies represented the West. The term 'third world' came into parlance in the second half of the twentieth century. The third world countries excluded themselves from the conflict (cold war). The practiced the non-alignment policy. Third world countries were not aligned to any of the blocs, this was because they did not want to serve as tools in the hands of former colonial masters. According to Ikunga (2014,p.148), The term non-alignment has been commonly used to refer to the foreign policies of the newly emergent nations of Africa and Asia which recently had been endeavoring to reiterate their independence and to protect themselves from the influence of bi-polarization and cold war. The non-alignment movement of the south divide during the cold war strengthened or already traced a line for the divide. Third world countries were already removing themselves from the crisis of the superpowers (first and second world countries). Ikunga (2014,p.150) stated that the polarization of the world and the subsequent emergence of cold war was an inducement for the formation of the non-aligned movement by the independent nations of the third world who desired to play a crucial role in international politics.

The North-South divide, on the other hand, refers to the economic and developmental disparities between the industrialized, wealthier nations of the northern hemisphere and the less developed nations of the southern hemisphere. The North-South divide was largely a consequence of historical colonialism and imperialism, which resulted in the exploitation of resources and labor in the Global South by the Global North. As a result, countries in the Global South faced challenges such as poverty, underdevelopment, and a lack of access to basic services like healthcare and education.

World War II was a turning point when the United States ascends on the world scene. Because European countries were so weakened after the war, the United States was able to edge them out. The United States became the dominant imperialist power worldwide and in Africa. Of all the imperialist powers, the United States becomes the principal beneficiary of the post-World War 2 neocolonial order. Meredith (2006,p.52), "The U.S.A. was a worthy successor to Britain as the leading force and policeman of the imperialist/colonialist world from 1945 onwards." The United States continues to play the role today in Africa and the Third World generally. It was not until the Second World War had destroyed the old world order that the issue of development of the societies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America came on the agenda of policy-makers and scientists in the North. On January 20, 1949, US President Truman declared in his Inaugural Address that a daring new program would be needed to utilize the benefits of modern science and technology for the development of the South, emphasizing that his concept of fair trade on a democratic basis would have nothing in common with the old imperialism of the European powers which had rested on the exploitation of colonies in the interest of foreign financiers. "With the spread of communism in Europe, Asia and scientific socialism in Africa, the fear of Washington was expressed in the Atomic Energy Act of 1946. The act excluded France from post-war nuclear co-operation and consequently prohibited the transfer of American information to any other country to reduce of American nuclear information to any other country to reduce the spread of the weapon, as well as, maintain a high ranking among nuclear power states. The French, on the other hand, had been involved in pre-war nuclear research, but we're far from becoming a nuclear power, their reliance on the allied forces during the war for liberation amounted to a risk they were not willing to take again, as such, they desired a super power status." (Masi 2020, p.94).

In retrospect, it can be said that the rising power of the anti-colonial movements, the declining power of the European imperialist states, and the fact that the South had gained strategic importance in the context of the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union all contributed to a new interest in the fate of the former colonies. This interest led to the establishment of development theory as a separate academic discipline at American universities during the 1950s, a discipline that was dominated by the modernization paradigm

until the late 1960s. The Cold War and the North-South divide were two distinct but interconnected phenomena that shaped the global political landscape during the second half of the 20th century. "The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension and ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, along with their respective allies. It lasted roughly from the end of World War II in 1945 until the early 1990s when the Soviet Union collapsed. The Cold War was characterized by a competition for influence and dominance between these two superpowers, with each side promoting its own political and economic systems around the world. The United States championed liberal democracy and capitalism, while the Soviet Union advocated for communism and state socialism." (Masi 2020,p.96)

The Cold War and the North-South divide were deepened in several ways. First, the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union often played out in the Global South, as each superpower sought to gain influence and secure allies among newly independent countries. Both sides provided economic and military aid to countries in the Global South, often with political strings attached. This led to a proxy war dynamic, where conflicts in countries like Vietnam, Korea, and Afghanistan became battlegrounds for the larger Cold War struggle. Second, the North-South divide was exacerbated by the Cold War competition between the superpowers. The United States and the Soviet Union often supported authoritarian regimes in the Global South that aligned with their respective ideologies. These regimes often prioritized maintaining power and suppressing dissent over pursuing inclusive development and social welfare. As a result, many countries in the Global South experienced political instability, human rights abuses, and economic stagnation. Third, the North-South divide was perpetuated by global economic structures that favored the interests of the Global North. Institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were established during the Cold War to promote economic development, but their policies often prioritized the interests of the industrialized nations. This, coupled with trade imbalances and unequal terms of trade, contributed to the economic disparities between the North and the South.

The US continued to blame the Soviets for illicit arms deal with Jordan and Syria, stockpile of missiles and nuclear warheads in Cuba and for supporting the Iraqi

reactor and reprocessing plant at Osirak which the Israeli undercover operation took out in 1980. Masi (2020,p.83), "Going by the power equation of the cold war, Osirack would have balanced the deficit in the Middle East created Israeli bomb, but it's bombing by Israel create a vacuum which seemed more likely to be filled with the Iranian Blusher nuclear reactor. During the period, Sweden, South Korea, Brazil and Argentina were identified as potential nuclear spots, but they made significant foreign policy effort to halt its development. Nuclear optimists have argued that Israel could not have been adjudged the same given the precarious peculiarity of its security in the Middle East." In the face of the bizarre nuclear arms race, the United Nation International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA and the Nuclear Safeguarding Agency in Vienna proved to be very helpless; their continued effort to secure international inspection of nuclear facilities was rarely taken seriously while nations like Israel viewed it as a compromise of sovereignty.

The increased disagreement and hostility between India and Pakistan was responsible for the need to balance the power equation between the East and West. This unending search for equilibrium in the power equation as well as to halt of nuclear weapons, a fact demonstrated by the Nixon -Kissinger administration. The administration made little effort in stopping the spread of the weapon, despite the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of the Cold War which the Moscow relation with an anticipated ripple effect on the Middle East, Asia and other parts of the world.

Impact of the Cold War on the deepening of the North-South Divide

The Cold War had a significant impact on the North-South divide, exacerbating and perpetuating the economic and developmental disparities between the industrialized nations of the Global North and the less developed nations of the Global South. The Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union played out in the Global South through proxy wars. Both superpowers supported and intervened in conflicts in developing countries, often to advance their own political and ideological interests. These proxy wars not only caused immense human suffering but also hindered development and stability in the affected regions, further widening the North-South divide. Many developing countries became battlegrounds for the ideological and geopolitical rivalries of the superpowers. The conflicts, such as the Vietnam War, Korean War, and Afghan

War, caused immense loss of life, displacement, and economic devastation, further deepening the North-South divide and hindering development.

The Cold War fueled a massive arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both superpowers invested heavily in military buildup, diverting significant resources away from social and economic development. The arms race and military spending disproportionately affected the Global South, as these countries were often forced to allocate scarce resources to defense rather than addressing pressing development needs. Both the United States and the Soviet Union provided economic and military aid to countries in the Global South as part of their efforts to gain influence and allies. However, this aid often came with political conditions and tied the recipient countries to the interests of the donor nations. It created a cycle of dependency, where many developing countries became reliant on aid and loans, perpetuating their economic vulnerability and hindering self-sustained development. The economic aid provided by the superpowers during the Cold War is criticized for creating a cycle of dependency in the Global South. Developing countries became reliant on aid and loans, which often came with conditions that favored the interests of the donors. Additionally, unequal terms of trade and the imposition of structural adjustment programs by international financial institutions further perpetuated economic disparities and hindered self-sustained development in the Global South.

The Cold War was not only a political and military rivalry but also an ideological one. The United States and the Soviet Union promoted their respective political and economic systems, capitalism and communism, around the world. This ideological competition influenced the policies and governance of many developing countries. Some nations aligned themselves with one superpower or the other, adopting policies that aligned with the ideology of their chosen ally. This often resulted in authoritarian regimes and policies that did not prioritize inclusive development and social welfare. : The ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War influenced the policies and governance of many developing countries. This influence often resulted in the adoption of extreme ideologies, authoritarianism, and policies that did not prioritize inclusive development or social welfare. It furthered divisions within societies and hindered the pursuit of balanced and equitable development paths.

Rodney (2005,p.123), "The establishment of global economic structures and institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These institutions played a role in shaping the global economy and development policies. However, their policies often favored the interests of the industrialized nations, perpetuating the North-South divide. Structural adjustment programs imposed by these institutions often required developing countries to implement austerity measures, privatize key industries, and open up their markets to global competition, which disproportionately impacted the Global South." And as well it gave support of authoritarian regimes in the Global South by both superpowers. In their quest for influence and containment of communism or capitalism, the United States and the Soviet Union backed dictators and autocratic governments that prioritized maintaining power over fostering democracy and human rights. This led to political instability, human rights abuses, and inhibited the development of democratic institutions in many developing countries.

Critics argue that during the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union pursued their global interests at the expense of the Global South. They contend that the superpowers exploited the resources and labor of developing countries, perpetuating a neocolonial relationship. This exploitation is seen in terms of unequal trade, resource extraction, and the support of authoritarian regimes that served the interests of the superpowers without addressing the development needs of the Global South. Overall, the Cold War contributed to the North-South divide by intensifying conflicts, diverting resources to military spending, creating economic dependency, promoting ideological divisions, and shaping global economic structures that favored the interests of the Global North. These dynamics continue to have lasting effects on the development prospects of countries in the Global South.

The Way Forward

The way forward regarding the Cold War and the deepening of the North-South divide, based on historical knowledge up until September 2021. Please note that the geopolitical landscape is dynamic, and specific recommendations may vary depending on the current context. The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union that lasted from the end of World War II until the early 1990s. While the Cold War as we knew it has ended,

there are still remnants of its influence in international relations. It is crucial to maintain open lines of communication and engage in constructive dialogue between major powers. Diplomatic efforts should focus on building trust, resolving conflicts through peaceful means, and finding common ground on global issues such as nuclear disarmament, climate change, and regional conflicts. Efforts to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons should continue. Existing arms control treaties should be upheld, and new agreements should be pursued. Nuclear non-proliferation efforts should be strengthened, and diplomatic solutions sought for areas of contention, such as the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East. Economic interdependence and cooperation can help foster stability and reduce tensions. Encouraging trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges can create mutual benefits and build bridges between nations.

Addressing this divide requires a multifaceted approach, whereby Developed countries should fulfill their commitments to providing development assistance to poorer nations, including financial aid, technology transfer, and capacity building. This can support infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and poverty reduction initiatives. Addressing trade imbalances and providing fair market access to developing countries can contribute to their economic growth. Reducing trade barriers, promoting fair trade practices, and ensuring a level playing field for all countries can help bridge the North-South divide. Encouraging sustainable development practices is crucial. This includes promoting renewable energy, environmental conservation, and climate change mitigation strategies. Developed countries can support developing nations in adopting sustainable technologies and building resilience against climate change impacts.

Strengthening international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund can enhance global governance and ensure the interests of all nations are represented. Reforms should be pursued to increase the voice and participation of developing countries in decision-making processes. It's important to note that addressing the Cold War's legacy and the North-South divide requires long-term commitment, collaboration, and adaptability to the evolving global landscape. The specific strategies and actions undertaken will depend on the prevailing geopolitical dynamics and the will of

the international community to work towards a more equitable and peaceful world.

Conclusion

The cold war has a great role to play in the emergence of the North-South divide. Since the international scene is dominated by nations of great economic power, the less developed nations of the world should strive for development inorder to be able to compete fairly in the international scene. The less developed nations mostly found in the South should learn from the North.

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