National Interest and the Deepening Of the North and South Divide

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Introduction

In todays interconnected world, discussions around the global divide between the North and South have become increasingly relevant. The North-South divide is commonly used to describe the economic, social, and political disparities that exist between developed (North) and developing (South) nations. Although most nations comprising the "North" are in fact located in the Northern Hemisphere, the divide is not primarily defined by geography. The North is home for four out of five permanent members of the United Nation Security Council and all members of the G8. The "North" cover mostly the West and the first world, with much of the second world, while the "South" covers the third world countries (undeveloped) Robinson, 1(1996).

Amidst this divide, national interests play a crucial role, in shaping the actions and policies of countries in both hemisphere. Carl Oglesby used the term "global South" in 1969, writing in catholic journal 'commonwealth' in a special issue on the Vietnam War. Oglesby argued that countries of the North had dominance over the global South and has converged to produce an intolerable order.

According to him the term gained appeal throughout the second half of the 20th century, which rapidly accelerated in the early 21st century. The idea of categorizing countries by their economic and development status began during the cold war with the classification of East and West. The term third World came into parlance in the second half of the twentieth century. It originated in a 1952 article by Alfred Savvy entitled "Trois Mondes, Une planete"

Over view of the North-South Divide

The concept North-South leads easily to an over-simplified picture of a world divided into rich and industrialized countries on the one hand and poor and underdeveloped countries on the other. In reality, however, the countries of the North and those of the South are highly diverse even among themselves as regards levels of development and economic, social and political structures.

The North-South divide is characterized by a stark contrast in terms of economic development technological advancements, access to resources, and overall living standards. Developed countries in the North, including the United States, Canada, and European nations, they have robust economies strong infrastructures, and high level of industrialization. On the other hand, developing countries in the South, such as African, Asian, and Latin American nations, often struggle with poverty, limited access to quality education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

The gap is not just in economics or production system, it is political too. While the North has high degree of political stability necessary for economic growth and development, the south has more enduring political crises, which are a deceptive to social harmony and economic development. Technology makes all the difference. North has the productive technology, while most countries in the south are technology dependent.

The North and South divide has its roots in centuries of historical and political factors. One major factor is colonialization, which saw many countries in the south being colonized by countries in the North. During the colonial era, the North extracted resources and wealth from the south, often at the expense of the local population. This created a legacy of underdevelopment and poverty in many parts of the South.

After colonialism the North continued to maintain unequal trade relationship with the South, which further perpetuated the economic disparities between the two regions. The north established a global economic system that favoured their interest and created barriers to trade and economic development for countries in the South.

According to Mimiko (2012) many countries in the South have been affected by conflict and instability, which have hindered their economic growth and development. This has made it difficult for them to catch up with the more developed countries in the North. Today, the North-South divide continues to exist, with the north having greater economic and political power and the South struggling to achieve sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty.

The Concept of Development and Underdevelopment

We cannot talk about the North-South divide, without coming into terms with the gap between them. Political divisions are fostered by attempt to use economics as a tool of state foreign policy. According to Rodney, Walter (1973:p2) development in human society is a many sided process. At the level of individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, responsibility and material wellbeing. He further observed that the term 'development is used in an exclusive economic sense, the justification being that the type of economy is in itself an index of other social features. A society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. It is only when man is skillfully developed that he can contribute to the society, solve his problems and make the environment better than it was.

> "Lay man sees the provision of social infrastructure as development-tarred roads, electricity, and portable water supply and son on. These things to my mind, are not development per se. they are inanimate things put in place by a skilled and developed man" (Ralph, 2001:p20).

Therefore, the developed worlds are such countries that their income per capita is high, high life expectancy ratio and produces secondary goods for exports to other developing countries. Underdevelopment, on the other hand refers to low level of development, widespread poverty, lower level of literacy, low life expectancy, and underutilization of resources.

According to Rodney Walter (2005) underdevelopment is not absence of development, because every people have developed in one way or another and to

a greater or lesser extent. Underdevelopment makes sense only as a means of comparing levels of development.

The gap in wealth and technological advancement between European countries, North America, and on the other hand Africa, Latin America, and some of the Asian countries that are in the class of the countries of the South or that are less developed. In comparison with the first, the second group can be said to be backward or underdeveloped. The rational behind underdevelopment is in comparative analysis. It is possible to compare the economics of two or more countries at any time to see their level of development.

According to Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) in their book why nations fail; they dives into the reasons why economic inequality is so common in the world today and identifies that poor decisions of those in political power are the main reason for unfairness rather than culture, geography, climate or any other factor.

> "As we will show, poor countries are poor because those who have power make choices that create poverty" (Daron Acemoglu, 2012).

Nations fails to develop because of their inability to develop inclusive economic institutions. Developed countries are wealthy because of inclusive economic institutions.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, argued that a country can have either inclusive or extractive economic institutions. Inclusive economic institutions pave the way for economic success because they encourage citizens to participate in economic activities. They are strong in economic freedom. Examples of this include U.S., U.K., these countries have benefited from three to four centuries of a virtuous circle in which institutions have become gradually more inclusive, which has created increasing incentives for entrepreneurs and economic growth.

An extractive economic institution receives income from one group in society for the benefit of another group. An example of this is colonial Latin America, African,

which had a system built on the exploitation of indigenous people to benefit colonizers. Extractive institutions were first established by a colonial power upon independence, became even more extractive under colonial rulers.

National Interest and the North-South Divide

At the heart of international relations lie national interests, which motivate countries to pursue particular policies or actions. According to Donnelly Jack (2000) within the field of international relations, national interest has frequently been assumed to comprise the pursuit of power, security and wealth.

Gordon de Brouwer (2020) argued; that national interest has three components-security, prosperity, and social wellbeing and they should all be part of framing the problem and solutions.

Former U.S. secretary of state, made the assertion below, when relating to national interest of her country, in relation to other world powers.

> "By necessity, our relationship with Russia and China have been rooted more in common interest than common values. With Russia, we have found common ground, as evidenced by the "strategic framework" agreement that president George W. Bush and Russian president Vladimir Putin signed in Sochi in March of this year. Our relationship with Russian has been sorely tested by Moscow's rhetoric by its tendency to treat its neighbors as lost spheres of influence" and by its energy policies that have a distinct political tinge"

In the context of the North-South divide, national interests further contribute to the deepening disparities between the two hemispheres. However, national interest influences the two divide as follows:

Economic Interest

Developed countries in the North have vested interest in maintaining their dominant positions in the global economy. They strive to protect their industries,

preserve intellectual property rights and secure access to resources from the resource-rich countries in the South. This often leads to unequal trade agreements and economic exploitation, exacerbating the divide between the North and South.

Security and Defence

National security is the primary concern for all countries. In the north, developed nations often prioritize securing their interest by investing heavily in military capabilities, intelligence networks and alliances. This can lead to power imbalances within global security structures, with the south having limited influence and resources to assert their interest on the global stage. National security has been described as the ability of a state to cater for the protection and defence of its citizenry Makinda (1998).

Global security, on the other hand evolved from the necessity that nature and many other activities, particularly globalization have placed on states.

Climate Change and Environmental Challenges

Climate change and environmental issues have a profound impact on both the North and South. However, the differing national interests and priorities of developed and developing countries often result in unequal burden-sharing.

According to Shalmali Guttal (2016), historical and contemporary inequality are exemplified in the climate crisis and problemized in contrasting approaches to reduction of Green-House Gas (GHG), emissions between some countries of the North and South.

> "Climate change is one of the greatest moral disasters of human history, because the people who will suffer the most have been the least responsible for its cause. Those of us in the developed countries somehow think that we will escape its results, turning away from the hundreds of millions who will be caught in the whirlwind of misery that is coming" (Rabbi Lawrence Troster).

The huge disparities in consumption, quality of life and environments between the poor and upper classes within countries are equally evident between many North and South countries, at both individual and societal level.

The impacts of catastrophic climate change, especially climate driven displacement will serve as an acid test of how north and south countries cope with climate refugees: large influxes of people "competing" for resources, but pushed to do so because of actions take in the past by those who enjoy these resources today. UNDP's 2007-2008 human development report estimated that 330 million people could be displaced if the global temperature rises beyond 3 degree Celsius. Even a rise of 2 degree Celsius will disrupt food production cycles and trigger severe storms and droughts.

Developed countries tend to focus on their economic growth, while countries in the south strive for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change. This divergence in priorities further contributes to the deepening North-south divide.

At the UN conference on sustainable Development in Brazil, in June 2012, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon former UN Secretary General called on World leaders to step up their political commitment to sustainability. Member states agreed to take practical measures for implementing sustainable development and addressing climate change, which includes promoting more sustainable agriculture, enhancing resilience to climate change, improving energy efficiency, addressing ocean acidification, and enhancing strategies that integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into decision making.

Former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon fought tirelessly to ensure that climate change stays at the top agenda of global leaders, this is to ensure mutual collaboration and benefit between the global North and South.

Over the years concern has deepened about the many adverse environmental consequences of world economic growth. Much apprehension has been expressed about such dangers as global warning and damage to the ozone layer that certain

production and consumption patterns have created for the global environment. Increasingly, other type of environmental damage, such as the denudation of important watersheds, desertification, and the destruction of tropical forest, calls have been made for sustainable development and for establishing environmental standards in industry, and important international and regional protocols have been drawn up to control the emission of certain dangerous gases. (Wikipedia.com.2014).

The direct environmental hazard faced by the nations of the south are many and varied. They include the continuous degradation of land under cultivation, desertification in the arid and semi-arid zones of the south; degradation of water resources; deforestation in tropical areas; threat to fish resources, both sea and freshwater, from pollution through the dumping of chemicals and other waste, from pollution through the dumping of chemical and other waste, or overfishing; the release of anxious gases.

Reasons for the Global North-South Gap

Global North-South divergence have been historically characterized by major gaps in the access to resources required for crucial developmental outcomes. "Industrialization", for example the south has been skewed in the favour of advanced economies since the early 1960s and no major evidence of global convergence was found in this regard. Most of the nations which were once colonized failed to join the different phases of industrialization and therefore remained in the underdeveloped and developing parts of the world. The way existing divides has further exacerbated, not only have the countries faced different challenges in dealing with initial phases of the pandemic, but the social and macroeconomic implication being faced today have been far worse for the global south. (Sounya, 2022).

The low level of control it exercises over imports and exports condemns the south to conform to the imperialist system. The South lack of development and the high level of development of the North deepen the inequality between them and leave the south a source of raw material for the developed countries of the north. The states that are generally seen as part of the North are wealthier, more democratic,

with sophisticated technological advancement, who in return export technologically advanced manufactured products to the south

The North will always want to maintain the gap of development with the south, to maintain supremacy or remain on top of the game, because the south is the market for the finished products of the North.

Therefore, resolving the gap between the global North-South is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach. One potential solution is to prioritize and invest in sustainable development initiative in the global south, such as renewable energy, infrastructure, and education and for these strategies to work, accountability mechanism must be put in place, because most times when provisions are made for these aids, they are been diverted by the leader's, this is common in Africa.

SDGs and Spillovers

According to Souinya, B. (2022). The recent SDG report published in 2022 by Cambridge, scores regions and countries by their international spillover quotient-which indicates the positive or negative effects that a nations activities can have on other countries. These can be environmental and social impacts embodies in trade, economy or finance and security. Domestic resources are often needed to be diverted to counteracting the effects of foreign activity, which is highly counter productive when one has nothing to do with the activity in the first place. A higher spillover score is a result of proportionately fewer negative externalities caused by the country in question and vice-versa, although the richer parts of the world such as the EU (North) rank higher in terms of overall SDG achievement, they impose major challenges on the poorer region through negative environmental and socioeconomic spillover that are perpetrated through unsustainable trade and supply chains.

Development Report 2022, the disparity over the north and south is evidence of how developed nations tend to have far worse spillovers onto other nations than developing or developed nations, impeding the latter from reaching their SDG objectives. Since the developed economics have been estimated to overcome their

pre-pandemic growth prediction by 0.9 percent. Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa are the worst affected by this phenomenon. Stable relationship between countries are essential to achieving SDGs. Cooperation and accountability mechanism must be built up to make sure that the recipient countries of such negative spillover do not have to completely bear the burden of implementing the recovery efforts as a step forward toward greater equity in global sustainable development framework.

Challenges of the North-South Divide

Global North-South divide has been historically characterized by major gaps in the access to resources required for crucial developmental outcomes. Industrialization, for example, has been skewed in favour of advanced economies. Since early 1960s, and major evidence of global convergence was found in this regard. Most nations which were once colonized failed to join the different phases of industrialization and therefore remained in the underdeveloped and developing parts of the world. (Soumya Bhowmick, 2022).

Firstly, differences in the political economic and demographic makeup of countries tend to complicate the idea of a massive south. Globalization has also challenge the notion of two distinct economic spheres. Globalization has largely displaced the North-South divide as the theoretical underpinning of the development efforts of international institutions such as IMF, World Bank, WTO, and various United Nations affiliated agencies, though these groups differ in their perceptions of the relationship between globalization and inequality.

The North South divide can impact global trade by creating unequal power dynamics between developed and developing countries. Wealthy countries in the North often have greater access to resources, technology, and markets, which can make it difficult for developing countries in the South to compete and benefit from global trade.

The North-South divide also have consequences in the developing nations, which includes: limited access to resources and opportunities for people in the global

South increased global inequality, political instability and conflict and environmental degradation.

The term "North South divide" was first coined by Willy Brandt, the former chancellor of West Germany, in 1980

However, Scholars like Jason Hickel and Robert Wade (2004) have suggested that the global south is not rising economically and that global inequality between the North and South has risen since globalization. Hickel has suggested that the exchange of resources between the South and North is substantially unbalanced in favour of the North with global north countries extracting a windfall of over 240 trillion dollars from the global South in 2015. This figure outstrips the amount of financial aid given to global south by a factor 30% Hickel, (2016).

Hickel further maintained that globalization has largely displaced the North-South divide as the theoretical underpinning of the development effort of international institutions such as the IMF World Bank, WTO, and various United Nations affiliated agencies, though these groups differ in their perceptions of the relationship between globalization and inequality.

Future Development

According to Dados and Raieoyn (2012) some economists have argued, that international free trade and unhindered capital flows across countries could lead to a contraction in the North-South divide. In this case more equal trade and flow of capital would allow the possibility for developing countries to further develop economically.

As some countries in the South experience rapid development, there is evidence that those of states are developing high levels of South-South aid. South-Africa, Brazil have experience high level of growth and economic development. The United Nations has also established its role in diminishing the divide between North and South through the Millennium Development Goals, all of which were geared towards encouraging economic growth amongst the countries of the South.

These goals seek to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve global universal education and healthcare, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDs, Malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. (Tomlinson, 2003).

Protection of the Environment

The world shares a single environmental system. The fourth of humanity like in the south. The south has to be carefully concerned about safeguarding the life support systems of the planet. Though the North is responsible for the bulk of the damage to the environment because of their discharge of chemicals to the atmosphere (production lifestyle). However, poverty is also a great degrader of the environment, and an effective strategy for the removal of poverty is in the final analysis, a strategy for protecting the environment. But different development strategies have different environmental implications.

The South's development strategies must take explicit account. The concept of sustainable development serves to draw attention to the need for compatibility between growth and the preservation of the environment and to warm against a narrow minded and short sighted approach to development and economic modernization.

Degradation of land and water and deforestation already constitute a serious threat to the sustainability of the development process in many developing countries. Since it takes a long time for measures to protect the environment to yield results, the countries of the south must not lose any further time in building environmental concerns into all developmental processes.

These concerns should receive prominent attention in development strategies and planning and environmental cost should be reflected in national accounts. Society has to be mobilized in support of life-style that do not put excessive pressure on scarce natural resources. Strategies for the utilization of land and water must prevent their over exploitation.

Lastly, the environmental impact of uncontrolled population growth has to be fully appreciated both by government and by society at large. Environmental issues should become an essential component of all educational programmes.

Conclusion

The North-south divide (rich-poor divide) is a socio-economic and political division of popularized in the late 20th century and early 21st century. The north is made up of mostly developed countries in the Northern hemisphere, those of Europe and North America. The south is made up of mostly developing and undeveloped centuries, those in African, Latin America, and Asia; however, there are countries in South (Asia) that are well developed and are seriously competing with the countries in North, like Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia etc. though the division is not primarily defined by geography. The North is home to four out of five permanet members of the G8. The North-South divide can result in disparities in access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, among other things. The concept is often used to describe the challenges facing developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty. But the North is deepening the gap still want to maintain their superior position over the South by making south a dumping ground and market for their finished products, without providing adequate technology for their advancement, and enabling environment, the south is often faced with environmental pollution, degradation deforestation etc. but with right policy and implication and good cooperation the south can bridge the gap.

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