



‘Diabetic Modernity’, COVID-19, and downfall of Neoliberal Global Capitalism

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Abstract

It has been discoursed, over decades, that global neoliberal capitalism and modernism is coming to an end. This paper aims at answering the question: Can novel coronavirus pandemic spell the death of neoliberal global capitalism? This study, which is based on secondary data related to Neoliberal Global Capitalism and COVID-19, along with development discourses, theories and ideologies, is guided by qualitative research methodology and inductive research approach. Critical Discourse Analyzing (CDA) method has been used to analyze data. The study reveals that modernity has gradually transformed into *diabetic modernity* owing to its integral properties: irrational human overconsumption and environmental degradation. As revealed in the study, not only does COVID-19 bring forth the end of neoliberal global capitalism, but also the rise of an even more threatening new form of capitalism in the post COVID era: ‘non-democratic state-centered capitalism. Under such hegemonic power transformation, *diabetic modernity* is capable of leading the human civilization to crisis; thus, the study proposes the new ideology of ‘Democratic Green Socialism’ to bring *diabetic modernity* under control.

Keywords: COVID 19, Global neoliberal capitalism, Diabetic modernity, Democratic Green Socialism

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INTRODUCTION

Vector borne diseases including deadly Ebola virus disease (EVD), SARS coronavirus (SARS-COV), Kawasaki disease and Dengue fever (DENV) have steadily been increasing during the past few decades on a global scale by forming public health crises along with socio-economic and political crises having had significant effects, especially on the most urban and semi-urban spaces of Africa, Asia and Latin America, which have adopted or been superimposed with neoliberal global capitalist socioeconomic and political structure (Gubler, 2006). According to scientists, the impact of global change including land use, water storage/irrigation, human population growth and urbanization, trade and travel, chemical pollution and climate change and climate variability, on vector-borne diseases is extremely significant (Sutherst, 2004). Currently, between 100 - 400 million of people residing in these particular regions are at risk (World Health Organization, 2020a). New coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak likely started first in Wuhan in China in December 2019 and soon became a global pandemic making the Euro-American region the hub of the global spread and crippling majority of countries in other world regions including the United States of America, Brazil, India by 2020. Even if the developing countries are the most affected by dengue virus, the most threatened by COVID -19 are the capitalist developed and/or politically powerful countries (WHO, 2020b).

Although there is no basic agreement on the origin of COVID 19, it is significant that in many of these affluent core countries, the disease was rapidly exacerbated by the dawn of an unusually hot winter (Carrington, 2020). In this situation, the global neoliberal capitalist economic model was deeply questioned in numerous ways.

The capitalist system can simply be defined as a 'profit-oriented economic system in which the trade and industry of a country is run by private owners without the authority of the government' (Thrift, 2005). Capitalism flourished in the 17th century, in parallel with the old traditional feudal system (Sender, 1980), thus, capitalism was regarded a more forward-looking development approach driven by market growth on a rational basis (Weber, 1922- 2019; Durkheim, 1893-2013). However, on occasions, the capitalist socioeconomic and political system was in crises and had to be adapted differently to avert its collapse. Bringing it in line with time and space, paradigms changed liberalism to Keynesianism and then to global neoliberal capitalism, what we have today, but the fundamentals of all these are theoretically based on capitalist ideology. It is widely debated that contemporary neoliberal capitalism is in a serious crisis, especially as capitalism is increasingly failing to respond to environmental crises and economic issues created by itself (Vergara-Camus, 2019). Zizek in his book '*Living in the End Times*' (2011)



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analyses the end of capitalism at the hands of 'four horsemen': the global environmental crisis, imbalances in the economic system, biological revolution, and the rise of social divisions and cracks. Further, the modernist ideology, coupled with capitalism, has now collapsed, and the world is in need of a new development ideology. That being said,, the first section of the article provides a theoretical explanation on global neoliberal capitalism and its downsides, whereas the second section provides an analysis of possible changes expected in global neoliberal capitalism and possibility of newly developed political-economic autonomy and hegemony, since it is clear that world political-economic autonomy and hegemony has been challenged during COVID 19, regardless of the reason to its origin.

Capitalism, together with capitalist modernization, has theoretically and practically failed as a development approach in underdeveloped /developing states in world's southern peripheral areas as exemplified in the core-peripheral dependency theory. Thus, opposed to 'capitalist development theories and discourses, the radical dependency theory was introduced by neo- Marxist thinkers (Grosfoguel, 2000).

Even though the core-peripheral dependency theory has faced the difficulty of explaining its own ideologies that challenge its validity as a development discourse, for example, growing economic development of

some formerly poor countries like the 'Asian tigers' (Desai and Robert, 2013), it is clear that prevalent global environmental crises and pandemics such as COVID-19 are triggering the collapse of global neoliberal capitalism or any other model of capitalism. We, the researchers of this study, have chosen to call this current stage of modernism '*diabetic modernity*' and this term converge to some extent with the idea of a modern "diabetic" society and propose the ideology of 'eco-socialism' to control the 'diabetic' syndrome of a collapsing system. The later part of this paper examines theoretical and practical usefulness of eco-socialism as an ideology to address the issue of global neoliberal capitalism module.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical background of modernism and capitalism

The medieval period of Europe is generally considered a dark age of human civilization, and for the further development of human evolution it needed to be demolished (Sweezy and Maurice, 1950). After the industrial revolution, the feudal system collapsed and capitalism gradually arose in Europe and through colonization, this profit-based capitalist economic model was superimposed on peripheral countries. Pioneer scholars such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who have profoundly contributed to the development of capitalist ideology, have referred to capitalism as 'the progressive end of human



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development'. As Smith pointed out in *The Wealth of Nation* (1776), leaving the lagging features of the feudal socio-economic system, which established laws and property rights to protect the privileged classes, human civilization reaches the progressive end of human development by building a modern society (full capitalist society) characterized by free markets with new institutions for market transactions (Smith, 1776-2018). He further stated that human development can be achieved through a type of economic system in which a country's trade and industry are governed by private owners for profits. For this purpose, there should be three laws; first, the law of self-interest: people work for their own goods, second, the law of competition: competition makes people come up with a better product, finally, the law of supply and demand: enough goods would be produced at the lowest possible price. These three ideologies lay the foundation for liberal capitalism (Smith, 1776-2018).

Marking the onset of a different development approach, the Communist Manifesto (1848) was published by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in which they presented the ideology of communism against the liberal capitalist (Marx and Engels, 1848-2002). It greatly challenged the basic principles of liberal capitalist philosophy. 'Dialectic of materialism' developed by Marx and Engels based on Hegel's "metaphysical" mode of dialectic philosophy (Hegel, 1817-

2015), explains the progress of human civilization: human civilization grows linearly from the internal struggles of each class based on the class struggles or exploitation of one class by another. They also pointed out that capitalism was not the end of human civilization, but that the complete end of human development would be accompanied by complete communism. According to Marx and Engels, dialectic materialism produces a five-step process of human civilization, for example, 'primitive communism, ancient mode of production, feudal mode of production, capitalist mode of production and finally communist mode of production' (Marx and Engels, 1848-2002). Consistent with Marxism, one of the hallmarks of capitalism development is inhuman exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class. Consequently, struggles emerging from the working class would mark the end of capitalism (Marx, 1867-2016).

Challenges to the capitalism discourse

Against the mainstream capitalism, Marxism and socialism discourses became popular in the world and created two metaphysically different worlds. As the first socialist country, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic was established in 1917, however, it collapsed in 1991 as a result of internal crises started from the 1980s; it led to the abolition of the ideological values of Marxism and Socialism (Therborn, 1991). Similarly, liberal capitalism has at times been subjected

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to serious crises, for example, the economic consequences of the Credit Crisis originated in London in 1772 - the protests of the Boston Tea Party became a major factor in the American Revolution (Kosmetatos, 2018). Consequently, the Great Depression of 1929–39 was the worst financial and economic disaster of the 20th century. Many believed that the Great Depression was triggered by the Wall Street Crash (1929) and then worsened by the US government's poor liberal capitalist policy decisions (Bernstein, 1987). As well, the OPEC Oil Price Shock (1973) began with the decision of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) member states, primarily Arab nations, to retaliate against the United States in response to the supply of arms to Israel during the Fourth Arab-Israeli War. This was a direct result of the dictatorship of American liberal-capitalist politics. This phenomenon is considered the era of 'liberal capitalism stagflation' (Herbert, 1999). The Financial Crisis of 2007–2008 is believed the worst capitalist financial crisis after the Great Depression of 1929. The collapse of the US housing bubble, built on an irrational basis, has plunged the world into an economic crisis. This can be seen as the beginning of the downfall of global neo-liberal capitalism (Kotz, 2009).

Adaptations to capitalism

Nevertheless, capitalism had the unique ability to recover itself from changes and to re-version every time it

collapsed. The world economic crisis of 1929 and World War II approximately brought liberalism to its end, yet, capitalism restructured itself in the Keynesian economic model introduced by John Maynard Keynes (1936) by adopting some of the socialist ideas such as welfare state to restore its theoretical and practical weaknesses (Keynes, 1936–2018). This new model revived the declining capitalist economy and was applied by major capitalist states from 1945 to 1970 (Wincott, 2013), however, capitalism failed to last long in Keynesian model since this welfare state model did not support maximizing profits and this has been analysed in Marx's 'crisis theory': any crisis occur in the rate of profit on which the capitalist system depends mainly, can mark the end of capitalism (Marx and Engels, 1885-1959).

It is in this backdrop that neo-liberal capitalism has been rising since the 1970s, thus, defined as a 'modernized form of liberalism favouring free market capitalism (Alfredo and Johnston, 2005). This structure is primarily based on the idea of granting the right to acquire property across state boundaries (Alfredo and Johnston, 2005; Kotz, 2002). The fundamentals of neoliberalism are formulated to end the regulatory welfare functions left in capitalist states, privatize public affairs and assets, slash social welfare programs, and reduce taxes on business, freedom of movement in the international

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sphere and giving individual investors the freedom to move their property across national borders. Under the neo liberalism ideology, capitalism was able to maximize profit without any state interference or other obstruction (Alfredo and Johnston, 2005; Kotz, 2002).

Globalization and the growth of multinational corporations are largely seen in the neoliberal economic model, whereby state boundaries are economically and politically dissolved (Kotz, 2002). The ideological principle of this approach was to create a global 'modernized society' that facilitated the world development while creating a fully capitalist universal economic and political context.

At the beginning of liberal capitalism, Weber and Durkheim- the pioneer scholars of modernism ideology- stated that 'human development would be complete by breaking the traditional backward society and reach to modernized world' (Schroeder, 2016; Weber, 1922- 2019; Cohen, 2008). The theoretical model of 'stages of economic growth' of Rostow (1960), is crucial for understanding the ideology behind modernism. The model states that capitalist core states are 'the countries where development has reached perfection' and other lagging peripheral states can achieve this modernity in five stages: First, the traditional society, then the preconditions to take-off followed by take off stage, fourth, driving to maturity and finally the age of high

mass consumption (Rostow, 1960-1990). The dominant thought of modernization is that peripheral countries can achieve development through a capitalist economic system and capitalist core countries can assist this by providing knowledge and technology (Rostow, 1960-1990).

If the ideology of modernism, which is inseparably tied to capitalism is realistic as Rostow and other thinkers have pointed out, the poor/developing countries must have gradually reached their development goals by now as done by capitalist core countries but in actual settings capitalist countries are becoming more developed and poor countries are increasingly moving further away from development goals. Similarly, World Wars have seriously questioned the ability of modernity built on 'technology and knowledge' to produce 'real' human development (Inglehart, 1997). To fill in these philosophical gaps, postmodernism and neo-Marxism were planted, especially, neo Marxist thinkers have developed 'radical dependency theory' as an antithesis to ' modernization and neo-classical development ideology' (Vernengo, 2012).

In the radical dependency theory, capitalist economic processes as well as the political and historical roots and flows of the development process have been examined and deconstructed. According to this theory, the main reason for world development processes that give rise to underprivileged poor states while the

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capital of rich states is enhanced, is that resources flow from 'peripheral' under developed countries to 'core' developed countries but not vice versa. Thus, the 'core' develops because of the 'periphery' while the 'periphery' becomes peripheral because of the 'core' (Costantinos, 1998; Sekhri, 2009). According to Conway and Heynen, "Dependency theory emerged as a critical lens through which the history of Latin American development, marginalized as it was by Western hegemony, could be better understood; the 'development of underdevelopment', no less" (2002: 97), yet, Radical Dependency theory has to struggle with its own ideologies when it explains the economic development of some formerly poor countries like the 'Asian tigers' that challenged its validity as a development ideology (Desai & Potter, 2002; Friedmann & Wayne, 2012).

Francis Fukuyama - a foremost philosopher of the neoliberal democratic front in the 1990s, declared that 'great ideological battles between the East and the West are over, and that Western liberal democracy has triumphed'. As he explained, 'history is over and there are no remaining countries in the world, which do not conform to the liberal democratic model' (Fukuyama, 2006). The basis of Fukuyama's analysis was Hegel's philosophy, which defined human social development as a linear procession of eras. Fukuyama's vision was long-term remained strong against

the challenges of the left, but in 2007 with global economic crisis it began to dissipate.

Ideological issues in modernism and capitalism

Many philosophers, including Alain Badiou and Slavoj Zizek, have strongly questioned and challenged Fukuyama's view, and developed strong arguments for the failure and collapse of neoliberalism (Badiou, 2012; Zizek, 2011). Postmodern intellectuals such as Ulrich Beck, who uses the term 'second modernity' and 'reflexive modernization', have stated that global neoliberal society is a 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) and Anthony Giddens, favouring this view, has stated that the consequences of neoliberal globalization is creating an unsafe society and institutions such as nation states, family and religion cannot offer security and stability to people (Giddens, 2003), also, Zygmunt Bauman refers to this phenomenon as 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2013), where all 'solid' things of modernity been 'liquidize' in the contemporary era.

'Diabetic Modernity'

All these theoretical evidences demonstrate that irrational over-consumption promoted in the neoliberal capitalist system has negatively influenced the carrying capacity of natural environment and resulted in dreadful and recurrent environmental crises, pandemics and

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epidemics leaving world human population at risk. Hence, we (the authors of this paper) have chosen to call this type of modernity '*Diabetic Modernity*' and this idea converge with the idea of a 'diabetic' society, which better describes how contemporary society has gradually become diabetic in its constant attempt to achieve socioeconomic development and to participate in modernity with a growing conviction of surpassing the predecessors with technological and organizational advances. As a medical term, 'diabetic' is used to describe a metabolic disease in which the body's ability to produce or respond to the hormone insulin is impaired, resulting in abnormal metabolism of carbohydrates and elevated levels of glucose in the blood. Impaired insulin production and high sugar intake can lead to exacerbation of diabetes. The disease does not cause sudden death, yet it becomes the root cause of many other diseases. Although it is not completely curable, diabetes is a manageable condition. In this sense, we have taken the term 'diabetic' to describe modernity and modern society. The characteristics of *diabetic modernity* are alarmingly degrading natural environment, which can be compared to reducing levels of insulin-producing beta cells and irrational over-consumption accelerated in modernization, which is compared to excess sugar intake and poor life-styles. These consequences of diabetic modernity, same as the illness, can be controlled but never be fully cured.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) How can we evaluate the drawbacks of neo-liberal capitalism and disaster capitalism during COVID 19? (2) Does this pandemic have a direct impact on world's wealthy core states? If so, can it break the global neoliberal capitalist autonomy and how will it happen? (3) What type of socio-economic and political model will replace the current system?

METHODOLOGY

'Qualitative methodology and 'Inductive Research Approach'

In order to understand socio-cultural, economic, and political phenomena, qualitative research methodology is considered more useful than the quantitative methodology, since this methodology focuses on comparing social experiences, practices, norms and philosophies, rather than collecting and analysing numeric data. Thus, collecting data through a qualitative methodology copes with 'words' not with 'numbers'; i.e. this approach aims at answering 'what', 'how' and 'why' of social phenomena (Bryman, 2012). Thus, qualitative methodology is adopted in this research since the key research components are to understand, describe and interpret social theories and structures.

Considering the fact that qualitative methodology and inductive research approach are profoundly correlated

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(Bryman, 2012), inductive research approach was applied in this research. Following that, first, data was extracted from secondary sources and then findings were linked with relevant theories, discourses, and concepts (Bryman, 2012; Thomas, 2012) adhering to Critical discourse analysis (CDA) method.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a trans-disciplinary approach used to study discourse, and has been applied in this study for data analysing. Discourse, which we assume here to be an important facet of the dominance of ideology, can be considered a 'flow of knowledge through time' associated with power relations (Wood & Kroger, 2000; Hall 2001). According to Foucault, knowledge is built in association with power relations and power relations are important for identifying the orientation of discourses and analysing the content of discourses (Gordon, 1980), and ideologies connected with power relations can shape discourses (Tenorio 2011). In theoretical terms, society which sustains the accumulation of specific knowledge, political and socio-economic relations and its identity, creates discourses. Hence, through a critical approach to power, CDA can grasp the common perspective of the discourse domination, ideology, and inequality (Sikka, 2020; Van Dijk, 2013; Wodak, 1995; Fairclough, 1995). Thus, this study is concerned about the notion of 'socio-economic power' and

'political dominance' of the capitalism ideology while analysing discourse (Van Dijk, 2013). Neoliberal global capitalism and its downfall are linked with the concepts of political and economic autonomy and hegemony. Therefore, one of the main objectives of this paper is to examine global political and economic autonomy and hegemony and its change as well as reasons for the change. CDA method helps to achieve the objectives of this study given that CDA is primarily aimed at describing how power autonomy and hegemony operate in the functioning of ideology (Sikka, 2020).

'Development' is generally defined as a process that changes a situation for the betterment, yet it is a constructed ideology and keeps changing along with time-space variables (Desai & Potter, 2014; Perroux, 2010). Global development theories and discourses are rooted in 'capitalist' and 'socialist' ideologies, which have heavily influenced international policymaking and management planning. At present, neoliberal global capitalist structure is playing a dominant role in the global economic structure, especially in the west (Aslund, 2002).

The dominant capitalist development model has sporadically absorbed different ideologies such as liberalism, Keynesianism, neoliberalism, economic globalization, and privatization to maximize profit while spreading stable capitalist markets (Gamble, 2001) and capitalism is

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associated with several interrelated ideologies such as modernism, individualism, competition, materialism and mass consumerism (Glennie & Thrift, 1992). However, the socialist and communist ideologies, which are based on Marxism and post-Marxism collide with capitalism and a link has been observed between the core socialist development ideology and concepts/theories of postmodernism, liquid modernism, vulnerable society, disaster capitalism, post-neo-liberalism, core-peripheral dependency, eco-socialism, and post-colonialism. In this paper, the hegemonic stability and power transition theories were used to analyse the possible changes in global power struggle, and available secondary data about the influence of Coronavirus pandemic was analysed by following the phases of CDA such as data understanding, categorizing, coding under themes, connecting with the mentioned concepts, ideologies, theories, and discourses, then, the findings were narratively described (Description/Interpretation/Explanation) (Fairhurst and Mary, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spread of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Global Neoliberalism

Gradually increasing vector borne diseases, such as EVD, SARS-COV and DENV create public health crises and subsequent socio-economic and political crises, especially in peripheral

developing countries and result in a 'risk society'. Environmental degradation and global warming, which is based on overuse of natural resources, deforestation, and pollution have in/directly contributed to the development of these virus diseases (Morin, Andrew and Kacey, 2013; Redding, Atkinson and Andrew, 2019), however, the neoliberal global capitalist core typically experiences comparatively low risk, since it is minimally impacted. Yet, COVID-19 targeted on the 'neoliberal capitalist core' making the entire world a risk society.

The origin of COVID-19 has been widely debated. Social and other media have expressed their fears that it could be a bio-weapon manufactured by either the US or China to seize global geopolitical autonomy. Another suggestion was that this virus is a result of a laboratory accident and this viewpoint has been confirmed by Luc Montagnier- French virologist and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine (2008) for his contribution to the discovery of AIDS (Awasthi, 2020). However, according to a growing body of research, COVID-19 has a natural origin (Andersen et al 2020), and as suspected by scientists, changes in the ecosystem under the influence of intense human activities and climate change in/directly can accelerate the spread of such a virus (Vidal, 2020). It cannot be overlooked that the countries where COVID-19 is spreading fast had

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their warmest and extreme winters this year (Carrington, 2020).

China's 'state capitalist system' also known as 'the socialist market economic system' has been heavily contributing to environmental pollution, and now is in crisis due to this pandemic (Faber 2018). Yet, the political form of the Chinese state autonomy, which has been criticized by the 'neoliberal capitalist democratic core', was able to control the pandemic shortly (WHO, 2020) and epicentre of the COVID-19 plague then travelled to Euro-American region. It is noteworthy that the geographical belt of this region has a temperature range between around 05 C° to 15 C° this year, which is above the normal temperature range (Sajadi et al., 2020). Developed neoliberal European core-countries were the most affected by COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020 and the neoliberal capitalist democratic model was not strong enough to control the pandemic (WHO, 2020). In March 2020, COVID-19 spread to the United States, thereby shattering the neoliberal capitalist democratic core. The USA, which has extreme military and technological capabilities, was catastrophically overmatched by the novel coronavirus. This pandemic spreading across the globe based on core states has pragmatically shown the inefficiency of neoliberal global capitalism and provides a fine illustration of the ambiguities in the modern life. Here arises the question

that how can we theoretically analyse this situation?

It can positively be seen when the countries with a state capitalist structure or socialist orientation backgrounds such as China, North Korea, and Cuba are better equipped for the pandemic than neoliberal capitalist core states. As Harvey (2007) argues, alienation from state welfare functions has resulted in collapse of neoliberal global capitalism (Harvey, 2007), for example, the homeless population in the USA has grown to about 4 million, and about 11 million people there are unauthorized immigrants. These people who have contributed to the growth of the American economy in numerous ways, are the most vulnerable group during this pandemic but there is little public intervention in their welfare (Caminero-Santangelo, 2012; Mitchell, 2011) and since health facilities are an expensive service in the neoliberal capitalist structure, if infected they are secluded from getting better treatment. Thus, the virus raged across the middle /bourgeoisie class and puts the entire population at risk. The manner the European and American political authority worked with the crisis made it clear that 'neoliberal capitalism works not for human development or human existence but only for profit, for example, in order to control the plague, the country had to be shut down at its earliest stage, but president Trump and his administration was weeks behind the curve in reacting to the viral spread:

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“Our country wasn’t built to be shut down, this is not a country that was built for this” said Donald Trump. In fact, COVID-19 brought so much destruction to the neoliberal capitalist core states, ‘because of their cruel hidden intention to save the strong and let the useless weak to naturally destroy’ (Chalfant and Samuels, 2020).

Neoliberal capitalism can be seen neither as a human nor environmental centric development model and politically and economically it has placed developing countries at risk, which reached an extreme level at the beginning of 2010s. It is in this background that ‘post neoliberalism’, which is often associated with left-wing economic policies of welfare, nationalization and wealth redistribution, emerged after the struggles in Latin American countries against neoliberal capitalism and orientation of capitalist development (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012). However, ‘post neoliberalism’ had hard times confronting with the hegemony and autonomy of neoliberal capitalism, for example, Lennon Moreno, the current president of Ecuador abandoned post-neoliberal policies and returned to neo-liberal capitalism (Chiasson-Lebel 2019). This sudden shift of policies made Ecuadorians sustain heavier casualties in the unseen COVID-19 adversary during which germ-filled dead bodies were abandoned on streets and the lives of a large human population were at risk and helpless (Gallón, 2020).

According to Davis’ logical explanation, large slums in developing countries are just another example of ugly and unfair exploitation caused by neoliberal global capitalism (Davis, 2006). In a pandemic such as spread of coronavirus in the Dharavi slums of India, which is considered the largest slum of Asia, marginalized poor urban people are placed in crisis and resultant downfall of the entire political and economic system of the elite can put all citizens at risk. Hence, this pandemic indicates failure of neoliberal capitalism and its elite class.

COVID-19 and Upsurge of Disaster capitalism

The concept ‘disaster capitalism’, which explains characteristics of a modern neoliberal global capitalist society, was first developed by Naomi Klein, and further developed into the concept of ‘dangerous society’ by Anthony Giddens’, then to ‘risk society’ by Ulrich Beck. According to Klein, the ‘risk’ ‘danger’, ‘disaster’, and ‘shock’ involved in modern society is constantly utilized by the autonomy of neoliberal global capitalism to create its own ugly market. Consequently, neoliberal global capitalism grows viciously through its own crisis (Klein 2006). A close observation of the behaviour of disaster capitalism shows how far Weber's view that ‘the early capitalist market is built on rationalism’ (Weber, 1922- 2019) has changed presently.

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The statement made by Wilbur Ross, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce during the times China was hit hardest by COVID-19 and struggling to overcome it: "the deadly coronavirus outbreak in China could be positive for the American economy. I think it will help accelerate the return of jobs to North America" (Ward, 2020), clearly exhibits the nature of disaster capitalism. This indicates the reasoning of people dealing with neo-liberalism. The U.S. lacked a coherent, urgent and effective plan to mitigate the harm done by COVID-19 to its citizen, especially the working-class, because it was more concerned with economic benefits that they could gain out of the disaster and the profits it could make. In addition, they fully believed in the capitalist system, and they never could imagine a virus could challenge it and outflank their defence. The situation in Europe was not different. According to Jones (2020); "Even during a pandemic, capitalists are sacrificing us on the altar for profit" and as stated by Adams (2020), the Katrina disaster in the US, 2005 'ended up causing great damage to the working-class and a huge profit to a few contractors.' In its twofold attempts to maximize profit in the face of distressing conditions and to minimize losses, the neoliberal capitalist system has ignored humanity and harm done to people, especially the working-class. One main reason that COVID-19 was widespread in Europe and the US was the application of 'herd immunity' policy to control it (Stephens, 2020) than involving in early

stage control. If the rationale behind this approach is analysed, it is understandable that it is more profitable to let the dying to die than losing money to control the disease. The second example is; as coronavirus spreads "it's time to go home" said the Australian Prime Minister to international students and visitor visa holders, yet the international visitors with critical skills were an exception. In profit-oriented entrepreneurial practices in the fields of education/research and 'academic capitalism' associated with neoliberalism (Slaughter, Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004), university education has been marketed to attract the wealth of marginalized countries to the capitalist core. Following neoliberal capitalist dreams, young people from peripheral countries flow to rich countries with large sums of money (Slaughter, Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). Most students arrived in these core countries are likely doing part-time hard jobs to survive, sometimes without minimum labour rights (Nyland et al, 2009). In this sense, the contribution of international students to generate revenue in capitalist core is considerable, however, during the plague it was more profitable for the government to send them back to their homelands, because they were of a burden than a blessing. This viciousness and lack of humanitarianism in itself has led neoliberal capitalism to collapse as a realistic ideology. To understand the reality of neoliberalism towards



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humanity, we can study the part of global role played by Cuba as a socialist country during the crisis, for instance, providing medical aid to affected countries, and rescuing British cruise ship MS Braemar.

If the impact of coronavirus is analysed in terms of disaster capitalism, it can be viewed as a catastrophe based on several disasters. The ugliness and malfunction of neo-liberal capitalism can be seen throughout the network, for example, the vast majority of people who died from COVID-19 have already been suffering from chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory diseases, and diabetes. It is not unreasonable to argue that the rise in chronic conditions is a product of neoliberal capitalism accelerated by multinational corporations and globalization (Adams, 2020). The homeless, the refugee, and the slum dwellers are the most vulnerable in this pandemic (Mike, 2006) and neoliberal capitalism is indirectly responsible risking these lives; for example, 72% of the people died from coronavirus in Chicago were from poor, marginalized, black community (Perrett, 2020).

COVID 19, neoliberal capitalist autonomy and hegemony

Based on the analysis presented hitherto, it is clear that deceptive global neo-liberal capitalist ideology is in a crisis at present. According to Klein, 'what was really happening is the dying neoliberal capitalist system gets an evolutionary leap to die by COVID-

19 (Klein, 2020). As discussed, fake capital accumulation, irrational over-consumption, lack of anthropomorphism, and decreasing environmental carrying capacity have heavily contributed to this downfall. David Harvey has stated that 'COVID-19 is nature's revenge for over forty years of nature's gross and abusive mistreatment at the hands of a violent and unregulated neoliberal extractives' (Harvey, 2020). Zizek (2020) identifies this pandemic as a 'cruel punishment for human beings for the merciless exploitation of nature and other life on earth'. Consistent with our *Diabetic Modernity* concept, COVID-19 is an opened-up ooze filled diabetic blister and it would be recurrent unless the syndrome is controlled. Hence, the global authority of neo-liberal capitalist democracy is about to fall.

The current situation can be analysed in view of 'Hegemonic Stability Theory' developed by Charles Kindleberger, Robert Gilpin and Stephen Krasner in the mid-1970s. It explains how the world's 'autonomy' and 'hegemony' is centred and exchanged: a nation-state must take political and economic 'autonomy' with a hegemonic power in order for the international system to stabilize (Webb and Krasner, 1989). The hegemonic state must make some sacrifices to maintain its autonomy and the other states must accept its authority: the hegemonic country should be the leader of others and the others should accept it. After the

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Industrial Revolution, Great Britain and France had the hegemonic power, and with the 1944 Bretton Woods Convention, the leadership shifted to the USA (Webb and Krasner, 1989). Now with the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper provides evidence on how the supremacy of global neo-liberal capitalism led by the autonomy and hegemony of the USA is eroding.

One of the best examples for this is the global behaviour of the United States during the pandemic: With the outbreak of the virus, the US president demanded a supply of Hydroxychloroquine from India threatening that he would “retaliate” India if it refused (Vembu, 2020). Simultaneously, Chinese-made masks imported to France and Italy are abducted (Okello, 2020). All these countries are allied and well-connected with the American autonomy. Thus, this political behaviour has direct impact on the liquidized American authority and hegemonic power. Moreover, the U.S. president has also accused the WHO for being ‘very China-centric’ during the pandemic and threatened to stop funding (Gramer and Lynch, 2020). The failure of the US to maintain the global health care system in the interests of world’s public health would be a major blow to their hegemonic power. Conversely, with the breakdown of the hegemonic power of the US-led ‘neoliberal capitalist democratic front’, China which represents different capitalist system- ‘socialist market economic

system’, seems to acquire global political economic hegemony and autonomy. In this backdrop, we can read the China’s plan to send a satellite (Tianwen-1 project) to Mars, especially during this crisis (Jones, 2020) as a symbolic celebration and display of their world domination.

As we constantly argue here, neo-liberal global capitalism is theoretically and practically coming to its end with the pandemic, however, the world ought not to be convinced that a humanitarian socialist approach or a similar ideology would replace the void created by the collapse of neoliberal capitalism. According to Žižek “there is no return to normal, the new “normal” will have to be constructed on the ruins of our old lives, or we will find ourselves in a new barbarism whose signs are already clearly discernible” (Žižek, 2020:03). According to Antonio Gramsci’s: “the crisis is precisely in that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear” (Gramsci, 1930-2011: 275-276). As been analysed here, world hegemonic power is being pushed towards another type of ‘powerful state centred capitalist system’: one similar to contemporary systems in China and Russia with liquidized democratic features.

Moreover, the Nordic and/or Scandinavian models have been proposed as another possibility to overcome the contemporary issues in global neoliberal capitalism. The



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Scandinavian model accepts the basic and key elements of the capitalism structure such as market economy and economic efficiency, and at the same time, it integrates with social benefits including government pensions and minimizing income distribution. The Nordic model which is currently being practiced in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland, has brought social development and human welfare to a certain level of quality and this model seems successfully addressing the current adverse situation created by COVID-19 pandemic (Beach, 2017; Kuhnle & Hort, 2004).

Nevertheless, our analysis is that the Scandinavian model is an inappropriate approach to manage the issues of global neoliberal capitalism aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As stated by Kuhnle & Hort (2004:03): "The Scandinavian historical experience cannot be copied, and the characteristics and goals of the Scandinavian welfare state may not be universal". There are arguments and evidence for this claim: First, the political history of the Scandinavian countries, the nature of distribution of resources, and the size of population are not the same as in the rest of the world. Therefore, the political economic model in those countries is not accessible to other countries. Second, the Scandinavian model, which has been positioned the periphery of liberal capitalism and political power, cannot be made the prime model. Third, this model does

not provide answers to current environmental crisis, which is one of the major factors leading to the downfall of liberal capitalism. Thus, when the 'ugly' liberal capitalism finally comes to an end, the 'beautiful' Scandinavian liberal capitalism will also collapse.

Principles of democratic governance, such as freedom of speech, information, opinion, and expression and human rights, are inseparably associated with modernism and neoliberal capitalism, even if there are some limitations. Human civilization has won these forwarded human rights from well-fought struggles over centuries but it is arguable that humans would lose this freedom in a newly developed 'state-centred capitalist system' since it would not be based on democracy. Commenting on this, Zizek (2020) has highlighted Verna Yu's comment: "If China valued free speech, there would be no coronavirus crisis. Unless Chinese citizens' freedom of speech and other basic rights are respected, such crises will only happen again" (Zizek, 2020:16).

Based on the analysis heretofore, environmental crises, climate change, and ecological issues would occur substantially faster in the newly developing 'state-centred capitalist system' referred as 'Socialist Market Economy' in China. This newly emerging system would be a new face of capitalism, worse than its old version. This phenomenon can be explained in relation to *diabetic*

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modernity concept: a diabetic patient, who craves for sweet switches to a sugar free alternative, which will only worsen the health and increase the risk for some other disease. Unless we go for a system change from neoliberal global capitalism to state-centred capitalist system or a similar form, human civilization would repeatedly confront many pandemics like COVID-19. Thus, to compromise this, we suggest the strategy of controlling diabetic syndromes in the modern society. Diabetes is not curable, but controllable with right medicine and change in lifestyle. Preventing irrational overconsumption and environmental degradation is necessary to restore the health of the diabetic society. Accordingly, the paper proposes "democratic Green Socialist system" as a new development approach in the post COVID stage.

Democratic freedom and human rights are undisputed achievements of human development; undoubtedly, the advancement of human civilization needs to be continued without a clatter. With all the symptoms of a *diabetic society* accompanied by adversely affecting eco-environmental crises, human civilization will slowly approach to its end similarly to the death of a diabetic patient with late-stage complications. The world has reached the point where it is necessary to find solutions to environmental problems. Thus, the 'green' concept is proposed to be added to this new development ideology. The other factor

that aggravates the condition is irrational over-consumption, which is intertwined with capitalism and associated competition, modernization and individualism. It must not be overlooked here that with the development process, the society moved from a 'famine' to a 'feast' but with its preference to 'maximize' than to 'optimise', it has elapsed that too much feasting is bad (Haerens, 2011). If we fail to control this trend, the worst is to be met. It is proposed here that this should be replaced with socialist economic concepts based on collectivism, and social capital, instead of wealth-based profit. Thus, 'democratic green socialism' can simply be defined as a public representative political model which is associated with state authority based, environmentally friendly cooperative political economic system.

Any capitalist model could collapse in the face of natural disasters and epidemics, but "democratic green socialism" does not naturally appear thereafter; it must be developed by collective human struggles. Since armed struggles are no longer a rational method, this can only be achieved through a change in peoples' thoughts and actions along with philosophical and normative knowledge, however, this change is neither swift nor easy.



CONCLUSION

The validity of socialism or Marxism as a contemporary development ideology has been questioned and challenged by the political and economic hegemonic power and autonomy of the capitalist supremacy along with the forces of so-called modernist cultural fantasies. Although capitalism has always been doubtful as a development ideology since its inception, it has had some kind of quality within itself to develop in different shapes by adapting to crisis situations. This paper depicts how capitalism has transformed from modernity to *diabetic modernity*, and resulted in a human civilization with incurable but controllable diabetic syndromes.

Diabetic modernity emerged in the global neoliberal capitalism: rapidly degrading global natural environment and irrational overconsumption accelerated by modernity has metaphorically caused insulin resistance causing a global diabetic society. Global neoliberalism is coming to an end with the coronavirus pandemic and what would be the results? It is obvious that capitalism would routinely restructure itself in a different form to adapt to the prevailing situation and this new development model would paralyze the human civilization by aggravating the syndromes of *diabetic modernity*. This paper proposes that diabetic syndrome of modernity could be controlled by regulating the irrational over-consumption and environmental

degradation: this would be achieved through 'Democratic Green Socialism' - a new ideology for development.

The philosophical background of both capitalist and socialist development discourses is based on Hegelian dialectical ideology and linear social progress; therefore, it must be said that all the development discourses emerged after the 14th century regardless of the difference in their names, were based on the ideology of modernity (Postmodernity is an extension of modernity; thus, we do not identify it to be a different form). Hence, based on Hegelian linear social progress, it can be stated that the future world is entering into an indescribable and unpredictable state. This, as viewed in Hegelian linear social progress, can be seen as a step backwards to history in which the 'forward journey' of human civilization will be a retrospective 'backward' movement.

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