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DISCOURSE OF NEOCOLONIALISM VS (NEO) COLONIAL DISCOURSE

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Discourse of neocolonialism is an unpopular concept, both in academic circles and in the mass consciousness. Unlike the well-established concepts of colonial and postcolonial discourses, the notion of neocolonialism itself is a keyword with a negative connotation of an outdated concept from socialist reality that looks unacceptable within the framework of modern neoliberal discourse. Accordingly, the dominant discourse today ridicules¹ the concept of neocolonialism as irrelevant and outdated. At the same time, on a practical level, the same discourse reproduces actions and relationships that can be considered neocolonial. It turns out that the discourse on neocolonialism is produced by different subjects in different ways: mockingly from the side of the liberal subject (including in the academic and political environment), critically from the side of the left forces. Thus, the concept of neocolonialism finds itself in the space of a discursive struggle for truth², but this position only indirectly affects what kind of discourse neocolonialism as a social phenomenon produces.

We suggest understanding neocolonialism as a set of exploitative practices of global imperialism, which unfold in all realms of human and social life and are aimed at maintaining the hegemony of global capitalism. At the same time, the discourse of neo-colonialism is in a dialectical relationship with neocolonial practices: on the one hand, it ensures their consolidation, reflection, and legitimation in speech and language, and on the other hand, it influences the nature of practices and generates them. Thus, the discourse of neocolonialism is at the same time an integral part of neocolonialism as a set of special social practices and a tool for their legitimation, naturalization, and rootedness.

¹ According to Theodor Adorno, the main function of public mockery is the production of consent on some point no matter to which extent the fact is true [1]. In this case, ridiculing the concept of neocolonialism could be understood as creating consent regarding its outdatedness regardless of what objective indicators show.

² In the Foucaultian sense, in the struggle for power [2].

Why is it important to talk about the discourse of neocolonialism today? Popular in recent decades Postcolonial Studies have focused a significant portion of their attention on the problem of colonial discourse. Due to their open political nature³, Postcolonial Studies view colonial discourse as a discourse that translates values and legitimizes the practices of colonialism (exploitation, inequality, discrimination, etc.), and sees the need for its deconstruction and decolonization as the task of the researcher. At the same time, it seems that they consider colonial discourse and colonial practices in isolation from each other, thereby recognizing the end of colonial practices, but maintenance of their footprints in discourse. At the ideological level, the close connection of postcolonial studies with national liberation movements on decolonization does not allow postcolonial theorists to admit that formal decolonization is not the result of the activities of national liberation movements, but a scenario favourable to global imperialism [3, p. 633-635]. Postcolonial scholars agree with the elimination of colonial relations and seem to see the decolonization of discourse as the next step towards liberation. Here they are based on Derrida's ideas on deconstruction: that the power hierarchy cannot be immediately reduced to horizontal; first, it must be turned over, changing the dominant and subordinate subjects in places [4, p. 30].

However, discourse does not exist separately from social practices: social practices are part of any discourse. This means that it is impossible to decolonize discourse without decolonizing social practices, and vice versa. The neocolonial approach, therefore, has stronger liberation potential since it is based on the idea that neither social practices nor discourse have cleared themselves of colonialism, the latter has only taken a new form. Discourse of neocolonialism arises in the context of the emergence of global capitalism as a special form of global social order and imperialism as a way of its localization. Globalization, made possible by technological development, creates an environment in which the discourse of neocolonialism becomes an effective instrument for maintaining the stability of this context.

What is the difference between (neo)colonial discourse and the discourse of (neo)colonialism? Colonial discourse reflects, translates, legitimizes, naturalizes, and constructs values, norms, practices, identities, relations of colonialism in the language. Colonial discourse is a special kind of discourse in which colonialism is formalized not only as a text but also as a discursive and social practice. Colonial discourse (in postcolonial theory) is the language of the colonialists, which, thanks to its hegemony, is also shared by the colonized.

³ Postcolonial studies, although unfolding within the academic field, recognize their activist nature, aimed at combating holdovers of colonialism [5].

In turn, the discourse of (neo)colonialism is a discourse born by the practices of colonialism and aimed at their maintenance, naturalization, and legitimation. It is important to emphasize the difference in their agency: *colonial discourse* is only a characteristic of any discourse (political, economic, cultural discourse could be of a colonial character), and the *discourse of (neo)colonialism* is both a result and a practice, something that penetrates social relations and constructs them according to the principles (neo)colonialism.

Thus, we choose exactly the discourse of neocolonialism as the subject of our research for several reasons:

– Firstly, because we believe that colonial relations did not end in the process of decolonization, but took a new, less visible form of neocolonial relations. In this sense, we view the discourse of neocolonialism as an alternative to the discourse of colonialism or postcolonial discourse.

– Secondly, because we consider the discourse in a socially constructivist vein, that is, as a phenomenon that has the power to produce social practices, and not just describe them. In this sense, we view the discourse of neocolonialism as an alternative to (neo)colonial discourse.

Thus, analyzing the discourse of neocolonialism, we emphasize its historical rootedness in traditional colonial practices and, at the same time, its new form, which it received in the era of neoliberal hegemony. And we also point out its dual nature, since, following Foucault, Bourdieu, Van Dijk, Fairclough, and others, we see discourse not as a textual character of social reality, but as a producing phenomenon simultaneously capable of changing under the influence of social practices and itself influencing them.

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