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AASoci > Vol.2 No.2, June 2012

OPEN ACCESS

Strategic Dimensions of Neoliberal Globalization: The Exporting of Labor Force and Unequal Exchange

PDF (Size: 233KB) PP. 127-134 DOI: 10.4236/aasoci.2012.22017

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ABSTRACT

In addition to environmental degradation and financial speculation, neoliberal globalization has created a complex strategy of capital internationalization led by large multinational corporations that is driving labor costs down to extreme levels. This strategy is based, on the one hand, on the establishment of global commodity chains based on outsourcing schemes and intra-firm trade, which operate in peripheral nations and in the form of enclaves; on the other, it employs international labor migration as a means to lower labor costs in central countries. Both mechanisms comprise a new rung in the international division of labor: the export of labor. This process has led to new forms of unequal exchange that are much more predatory than those involved in the exchange of raw materials for industrial products. This has led to a reintegration of a subordinate periphery to the center, increasing asymmetries between countries and pushing social inequality to unprecedented levels. The purpose of this paper is to empirically and conceptually analyze these fundamental aspects of contemporary global architecture.

KEYWORDS

Labor Export; Unequal Exchange; Uneven Development; Neoliberal Globalization; Crisis

Cite this paper

Wise, R. & Covarrubias, H. (2012). Strategic Dimensions of Neoliberal Globalization: The Exporting of Labor Force and Unequal Exchange. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 2, 127-134. doi: 10.4236/aasoci.2012.22017.

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