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VIVEK CHIBBER

Professor of Sociology at New York University

on

COERCION, CONSENT AND RESIGNATION – HOW CAPITALISM SURVIVES

14TH OCTOBER, 2022,

7:30-8:30 PM IST/ 10:00-11:00 AM EDT

Meeting ID: [870 2473 8754](#)

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Youtube Live: Department of English, Jamia
Millia Islamia

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Bio-note of Prof. Vivek Chibber

Prof. Vivek Aslam Chibber is an American academic, social theorist, editor, and professor of sociology at New York University, who has published widely on development, social theory, and politics. Prof. Chibber is the author of three books, *The Class Matrix: Social Theory after the Cultural Turn* (Harvard, 2022), *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (Verso, 2013) and *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India* (Princeton, 2003). In 2017, Prof. Chibber launched *Catalyst: A Journal of Theory and Strategy*, with Prof. Robert Brenner, published by Jacobin magazine.

Prof. Chibber was born in India in 1965, and moved to the United States in 1980, where he has lived since. He completed a B. A. in Political Science in 1987 at Northwestern University. In 1999, he finished his PhD in sociology at the University of Wisconsin, where his dissertation was supervised by Erik Olin Wright. Prof. Chibber began as an assistant professor at New York University in 1999, where he is now a full professor.

Prof. Chibber's first book, *Locked in Place*, attempted to answer why some countries were able to build "developmental states" in the decades after World War II while others were not. He argued that the literature on developmental state had unduly ignored the constraints that class power imposed on state-building, particularly the power and influence of domestic capitalists. Prof. Chibber showed that the main reason Indian industrial policy only met with middling success was that domestic capital blocked attempts to build an effective planning apparatus. Whereas in South Korea, the state managed to build an alliance with domestic business houses around industrial planning. Prof. Chibber's book was widely acclaimed and won several awards, including the 2005 Barrington Moore Book Award, and the honorable mention for the American Sociological Association's Distinguished Publication Prize.

Soon after *Locked in Place*, Prof. Chibber's agenda took a turn when, in 2006, he published "On the Decline of Class Analysis in South Asian Studies" in *Critical Asian Studies*.

This article examined the sociological conditions for the decline of class analysis and its displacement by postcolonial theory in the South Asian context. While Prof. Chibber located the demise of class in the social conditions of the 1980s and 1990s, his engagement with postcolonial theory in his second book, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*, set a new standard. In the Preface to the book, Prof. Chibber explains that once he examined the conditions that gave rise to postcolonial theory, he felt that he also had to examine its core arguments.

Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital was focused on one particular strand of theorizing, namely the Subaltern Studies collective. Prof. Chibber took Subaltern Studies as a representative of the key sociological and historical arguments in postcolonial studies. He argued in the book that postcolonial theory gives new life to Orientalist notions of the Global South, by presenting a highly exoticized and essentialized understanding of it—as fundamentally different from the West, incapable of being understood by Western categories, its people untouched by reason and rationality, etc. Prof. Chibber bases his claims on an examination of the Subalternists' historical sociology as well as their theoretical arguments. He embeds his critique in a defense of the radical Enlightenment tradition as represented by Marx.

In the spring of 2017, Prof. Chibber and Prof. Brenner launched as well as assumed the editorial duties for the journal *Catalyst: A Journal of Theory and Strategy*. Prof. Chibber has served in editorial roles with various publications and journals, including *Socialist Register*, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *Historical Materialism*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *Politics & Society*, *British Journal of Sociology*, and *Sociological Theory*.