

BANDUNG AT 70 TO BUILD THE WORLD ANEW IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Editor: Darwis Khudori



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BANDUNG 2025

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This book is published under the label of Bandung Spirit Book Series. It is a part of actions organised by the Bandung Spirit Community of Scholars and Activists of Social and Solidarity Movements. This community was initiated in 2005 when for the first time Civil Society Organisations (non-state actors, academic institutions and non-governmental organisations) coincidentally commemorated the 50th anniversary of the 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference in diverse countries (Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, ...).

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Bandung Spirit Community is not a legal formal official organisation. It is a community of scholars and activists of social and solidarity movements taking the Bandung Principles, the Bandung Spirit and the Bandung Dream as references of their movements. The community organises Bandung Spirit Conference Series and Bandung Spirit Online Conversation Series as well as produces Bandung Spirit Bulletin. Commemorative conferences of the Bandung Conference are organised every five years in Indonesia (2005, 2010, 2015, 2022, 2025) while smaller conferences are organised by Bandung Spirit Community in divers countries, including The Rise of Asia Conferences held in France every year since 2017.

Moreover, the Bandung Spirit Community is committed to go beyond NATO (No Action Talking Only), not only producing discourses, but also making actions. One of its actions is the establishment AFRASI (African-Asian and International Studies Institute) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, as a centre of research, education and training for the African youth in dealing with the challenges of globalisation, especially the rise of Asia.

This book is produced in a co-operative way with a publisher in charge of book production and several co-publishers that participate in financing the

production by buying in advance a number of copies of the printed book. In this way, the production cost and the sale price of the book are affordable for the developing world and the co-publishers may help spreading the book to their respective networks. Moreover, in the spirit of knowledge sharing for all, the book is to be made available for an online free reading. Those who wish to have a printed copy of the book may order it directly to the publisher. This is one of the alternatives for the developing world to get access to knowledge in an affordable way.

So many people have generously contributed to this publication. It is not possible to acknowledge all of them. So I excuse myself and select only a few for their special contributions.

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Thank you all for your kind attention.

Darwis Khudori

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INTRODUCTION

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BANDUNG AT 70: Challenges, Opportunities and Projects to Build the World Anew

Darwis Khudori

“We do not seek to defend the world we know: we seek to build a new, a better world! We seek to build a world sane and secure. We seek to build a world in which all may live in peace. We seek to build a world of justice and prosperity for all men. We seek to build a world in which humanity can achieve its full stature.”

(Sukarno, *To Build the World Anew*, speech at the UN General Assembly, September 30, 1960, available at <https://bandungspirit.org/IMG/pdf/soekarno-to-build-the-world-anew-un-general-assembly-1960.pdf>)

The Bandung Conference and the Bandung Era entered History. Yet, the Bandung Principles, Spirit, and Dream have continued to live in the minds of different peoples, nations, states and institutions worldwide. The Bandung Principles were well formulated and established at the end of the Bandung Conference in 1955, known as the “Ten Bandung Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” They are:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations.
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small.
4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.

5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself, singly or collectively, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations.
6. a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve any particular interests of the big powers.
b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries.
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.
8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties own choice, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations.
9. Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation.
10. Respect for justice and international obligations.

The Bandung Spirit has never been officially formulated and is open to interpretation. One possibility is translating it into five ideals centred around:

1. *Peace* (peaceful co-existence among diverse political and economic systems, cultures, religions, human beings, animals, vegetation, and nature).
2. *Independence* (freedom, self-determination, national, people's and state's sovereignty liberated from the hegemony of superpowers and of any kind of domination, or invasion, or interference by others).
3. *Equality* (among races, nations, ethnic groups, gender, religions).
4. *Solidarity* (towards the colonised, oppressed, dominated, poor, weak, disadvantaged, especially the victims of injustice, through cooperation among peoples, nations, and states).
5. *Emancipation* (development based on the interests of peoples and sustainable perspective locally and globally).

As for the Bandung Dream, it has never been officially formulated either. Inspired by the Bandung Principles and Spirit, it is possible to formulate the Bandung Dream as *“A Global and Sustainable Prosperity based on Peace, Justice, Cooperation, Solidarity, and Diversity.”*

Seventy years after the Bandung Conference, how far has the Bandung Dream been concretised? What are the assessments and the perspectives of the Bandung Legacy for the Global Future? What are the challenges and the opportunities to make the dream come true?

Western Galaxy and Bandung Constellation

The multipolarity seems to appear to replace the unipolarity led by the USA in the global geopolitics. However, the bipolarity seems to persist between the Developed and Developing Countries, the West and the Rest, the Global North and the Global South, the Global Elite and the Global Majority, which divides the world into two opposing forces. Do they really oppose each other? Is there any other narrative to explain that the bipolarity of the global forces is not about the opposition but about the dominant and the alternative, and that the goal of the alternative is not to fight against the dominant but to find a way “delinked” from the dominant system.

The dominating force in global geopolitics is like a galaxy: huge, consisting of stars, suns, planets, satellites, meteors, comets, dust, gas ... turning around a mysterious core (black-hole?) at its orbit and expanding continuously, following a law of gravitation. In case of the global geopolitical dominating force, its law may be called “capitalism”, its motivation “material profit”, its doctrine “accumulation by dispossession” and its core the “West”. That is why this dominating force may be called “Western Galaxy”. It is more symbolic and historical rather than geographical although it has some degrees of geography, the Western Europe being the cradle of capitalism. It does not matter whether its member is not situated geographically in Western Europe like Canada, USA, Australia or Japan. Like a galaxy, Western Galaxy has its history. Samir Amin proposed to present the history of capitalism into three periods: Gestation (around 11th–18th centuries: transition from Tributary System to Capitalism, from Chinese, Arabo-Persian, Ottoman Empire to European Mercantilism, European conquest of America, Europe–Africa–America slave trade, slavery in America, genocide of indigenous people of America); Maturity (around 18th–19th centuries: British Industrial Revolution, French Revolution, European conquest of Africa, Asia, Australia and Oceania, genocide of indigenous people of Australia); and Decline (around 19th century up to the present: Monopoly Capitalism, WWI, 1929 Crisis, Nazism, Fascism, WWII, Cold War, Fall of East Block, Globalised–Generalised–Financialised Globalisation known as Neo-Liberal Globalisation, 2008 Crisis...) (Samir Amin, diverse books and articles, such as Eurocentrism, Global History, Trajectory of Historical Capitalism, etc.). It is this system that produced Western European conquest of the world, Genocide of indigenous peoples especially in America and Australia, Transatlantic Europe–Africa–America Slave Trade and Slavery in America, Colonialism of Africa, Asia, Australia

and Latin America, WWI, Great Depression of the 1930s, Nazism, Fascism, WWII, Holocaust, NATO, Wall Street, Bretton Woods, World Bank, IMF, Apartheid, American War in Vietnam, Washington Consensus, American War in Iraq, Davos, Sub-prime-generated Crisis, Israeli genocide in Gaza

During the colonial period, Western Galaxy used five “Golden Rules of Colonialism” for its development:

1. Territorial conquest, occupation and control;
2. Imposing cultural, social, political and economic models to the colonised people;
3. Exploitation of the territory and its people for the benefit of the motherland;
4. Racial discrimination for the benefit of the colonisers;
5. Replacing the local people by the colonisers.

With the end of the colonial period (roughly the 19th century for Latin America, the 1940s and 1950s for Asia and the 1960s and 1970s for Africa), those “Golden Rules of Colonialism” were supposed to come to an end, and their practice was considered illegal according to international law. In reality, some of them still function here and there to the present day, such as hundreds of military bases in foreign countries (the first rule); a particular version of democracy, human rights and good governance as tools of coercion and sanction (the second rule); the plundering of natural resources for the benefit of industrialised countries to the detriment especially but not only of Africa (the third rule); the apartheid practice especially but not only in Palestine (the fourth rule) and the ethnic cleansing especially but not only in Palestine (the fifth rule).

After the colonial period, the “Western Galaxy” has continued to dominate the world by using other “Golden Rules of Domination” in five fields:

1. Sciences and technology (spatial conquest, biotechnology, nanotechnology, digital technology, medical technology ...);
2. Information, communication, and media (AFP, Reuters, CNN, BBC, Fox News, CNBC, Bloomberg, Google, Amazone, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft ...);
3. Financial system and institutions (World Bank, IMF, Brettonwood, Washington Consensus ...);
4. Mass destructive weapon and armament technology (nuclear weapon, chemical weapon, jet fighters ...);

5. Control over access to natural resources (British Petroleum, Shell, Exxon Mobile, Chevron, Total, Eramet ...).

At present, the Western Galaxy is still dominant in this matter but not absolutely anymore. An alternative force has been emerging and developing outside the control of Western Galaxy.

Unlike the Western Galaxy based on a system (capitalism), this alternative force is based on a diversity of system, either in terms of politics, economy, culture, belief, etc. This alternative force resemble more a constellation rather than a galaxy: a group of stars that forms an imaginary profile in the sky (such as Andromeda/the Chained Maiden, Apus/The Bird of Paradise, etc.). While the existence of a galaxy is based on a system, that of a constellation is on an imagination. Moreover, a star alone cannot make a constellation. Only together with others, a star can contribute to the formation of a constellation. These characteristics seem to correspond to the emerging forces: a group of countries representing a diversity of political and economic systems, yet sharing at certain level a common history, that is being dominated by Western Galaxy and/or suffering from its behaviour. This alternative force may be called “Bandung”, which has multiple layers of meanings. It was a conference that took place in Bandung, Indonesia, on April 18–24, 1955, gathering 29 newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. It was the first time in history, the biggest international conference outside the UN, representing 2/3 of mankind, organised outside the Western world, outside the two blocs of superpowers. It was a crystallisation of five-century struggle for liberation from colonialism and imperialism, the birthday of the Non-Aligned Movement, the entering of the Third World into the international politic. It gave birth to a common conscience of humanity called “Bandung Spirit” as was presented above. Like a big bang generating stars, planets, meteors, the Bandung Conference provoked multiple worldwide manifestations: conferences, cultural festivals, social and solidarity movements, associations/organisations/institutions, business fora, research institutes, study centres, academic periodicals, news magazines ... referring to the Bandung Conference as a founding principles, including Belgrade NAM Conference, OAU (Organisation of African Unity) then AU (African Union), UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), G77, South Centre, ASEAN, TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development), FOCAC (Forum on China–Africa Cooperation) and recently SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) becoming BRICS+ with

more members. All of these make what may be called “Bandung Constellation”. Its contours are moving, but its core is stable: “Bandung Spirit” and its richness inexhaustible: “Imagination”. Its force is not neither economic nor military, but “moral”, as it was declared by its founders in Bandung. Remember, the American war in Vietnam and the Apartheid in South Africa were ended, not because of economic or military forces, but thanks to “global moral forces”.

Challenges and Opportunities

The “Golden Rules of Colonialism” and the “Golden Rules of Domination” applied by the “Western Galaxy” remain the challenges to be addressed. And the “Bandung Constellation” seems to appear in the horizon of global future, not as an opposing force to the Western Galaxy, but as an alternative force leading towards the realisation of Bandung Dream: *a Global and Sustainable Prosperity based on Peace, Justice, Cooperation, Solidarity and Diversity*.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the opportunity has seemingly appeared: The Rise of Asia. In terms of economy, in the 1960s, Asia was the poorest continent in the world, marginal except for its large population. By 2016, its share of world GDP rose from less than one-tenth to three-tenths, while its income per capita surpassed that of developing countries and converged towards the world average income level. Growth in GDP and GDP per capita in Asia was much higher than in the world economy, industrialized countries, and the developing world, Africa and Latin America. Over this period, Asia’s share of world industrial production jumped from a tiny 4 per cent to more than 40 per cent. Its share of world merchandise trade rose from one-twelfth to one-third. Long-term macroeconomic forecasts of GDP at market exchange rates, by the Economist Intelligence Unit, suggest that the top ten economies in the world in 2050, in descending order, would be China, United States, India, Indonesia, Japan, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Britain, and France (Deepak Nayyar, *Resurgent Asia*, 2018).

Not only is Asia rising in terms of economy, but it is also rising in the other five aforementioned fields controlled so far by the Western Galaxy. Asian countries have achieved considerable progress in *sciences and technology* (outer space, nanotechnology, biotechnology, digital technology, renewable energy, artificial intelligence, etc.); in *information, communication, media*

(digital media, alternative media, social media, etc.); in *financial system and institutions* (BRICS bank, local currencies in international trade instead of US dollars, digital payment, etc.); in *mass destructive weapon* (the number of nuclear warheads of China, India, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia together has been higher than that of France, UK, USA and Israel combined) in addition to the most recent armament technology invented by China, Iran, North Korea, Russia such as hypersonic missiles and aircraft fighters superior to those of the West; and in the *control over access to natural resources* (China alone has access to natural resources in Africa, Asia, Latin America). In this way, the monopolistic control of the Western Galaxy over the world has been undermined. In terms of economy, the GDP of BRICS has surpassed that of G7. Regarding geopolitics, the united forces of the Western Galaxy expose friction. The interests of the EU and the USA are diverging. The Western Galaxy is not united anymore, and its hegemony over the world seems to come to an end. The unipolarism following the bipolarism during the Cold War is seemingly giving place to multipolarism.

The question is, what impact does it have on the world? Or, to be more positive-progressive-prospective, what “desirable impacts” should it have on the world?

Project: To Build the World Anew

One way to answer the question may be to look back at the Bandung Conference, which represented the common and shared dreams of Asian and African peoples, as formulated formally in the Final Communiqué of the Bandung Conference and informally in the expression “*Bandung Spirit*”.

The most outstanding spokesperson for Bandung was President Sukarno of Indonesia. He dedicated the last fifteen years of his life to Bandung Spirit, from its inauguration under his leadership in 1955 until the end of his life in 1970. His speeches consistently reflected the dreams, ideas, vision and spirit of Bandung. One of them is “*To Build the World Anew*”, pronounced at the UN General Assembly on September 30, 1960, the text adopted by UNESCO in 2023 as Memory of the World.

The speech reflected the international context at that time. It was the era of what Sukarno called “*the building of nations and the breaking of empires*”. Imperialism was dying but not yet dead, which was very dangerous according to him: “*as dangerous as the wounded tiger in a tropical jungle*”. Asian countries have re-conquered progressively their political

independence from Western control but were still suffering from the impacts of colonialism, WWII and the attempts of Western imperialism to maintain its control over them by provoking or manipulating national instability, proxy wars, separatist rebels, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, hunger, deceases African countries started gaining political independence but were still largely under colonial occupation. Reciprocal provocations of the two superpowers heated the Cold War. They were ready to use their nuclear weapons and drag the world into WWII. The Four Great Powers (USA, USSR, UK and France) were supposed to meet in Paris in May 1960 but failed. In this context, the world's leaders came together at the UN General Assembly in New York in September 1960. Acting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Nations, the leaders of Ghana (Nkrumah), India (Nehru), Indonesia (Sukarno), United Arab Republic (Nasser) and Yugoslavia (Tito) decided to sponsor a resolution urging the US and the USSR to resume the contacts broken off in May. Sukarno was chosen as a spokesman for this group to deliver their message.

The fundamental message from Sukarno was that *“We do not seek to defend the world we know: we seek to build a new, a better world! We seek to build a world sane and secure. We seek to build a world in which all may live in peace. We seek to build a world of justice and prosperity for all men. We seek to build a world in which humanity can achieve its full stature.”*

He proposed key issues to be settled, including UN Reform, Colonialism, Imperialism, Decolonisation, War, Peace, Security, and Disarmament Those issues have not been fully settled to the present day. On UN reform, for example, he stated that the UN is a product of the Western State System.

Let us face the fact that this Organization, in its present methods and by its present form, is a product of the Western State system. Pardon me, but I cannot regard that system with reverence. I cannot even regard it with very much affection, although I do respect it greatly.

Imperialism and colonialism were offspring of that Western State system, and in common with the vast majority of this Organization, I hate imperialism, I detest colonialism, and I fear the consequences of their last bitter struggle for life. Twice within my own lifetime the Western State system has torn itself to shreds, and once almost destroyed the world, in bitter conflict.

Can you wonder that so many of us look at this Organization, which is also a product of the Western State system, with a question in our eyes? Please, do not misunderstand me. We respect and admire that system. We have been inspired by the words of Lincoln and of Lenin, by the deeds of Washington and by the deeds of Garibaldi. Even, perhaps, we look with envy upon some of the physical achievements of the West. But we are determined that our nations, and the world as a whole, shall not be the plaything of one small corner of the world.

Nevertheless, he put great hope to the UN as the supreme international organisation to settle world problems.

In all seriousness I tell you: we of the newly independent nations intend to fight for the United Nations. We intend to struggle for its success and to make it effective. It can be made effective, and it will be made effective, but only in so far as all its Members recognize the inevitabilities of history. It will be effective only in so far as this body follows the course of history and does not attempt to dam or divert or delay that course.

[...]

We are determined that the fate of the world, which is our world, will not be decided above our heads or over our bodies. It will be decided with our participation and co-operation.

In addition, he spoke about the need to turn towards each other between Asia and Africa, which may be seen as the initiation of “South-South Cooperation” and the formation of a “Global South”.

Yes, we have learned much from Europe and America. We have studied your history and the lives of your great men. We have followed your example we have even tried to surpass you. We speak your languages and we read your books. We have been inspired by Lincoln and by Lenin, by Cromwell, by Garibaldi; and, indeed, we have still much to learn from you in many fields. Today, though, the fields in which we have much to learn from you are those of technique and science, not those of ideas or of action dictated by ideology.

In Asia and Africa today, still living, still thinking, still acting, are those who have led their nations to independence, those who have evolved great liberating economic theories, those who have overthrown tyranny, those who have united their nations, and those who have defeated disruption of their nations.

Thus, and very properly, we of Asia and Africa are turning towards each other for guidance and inspiration, and we are looking inwardly towards the experience and the accumulated wisdom of our own people.

Do you not think that Asia and Africa perhaps – perhaps – have a message and a method for the whole world?

There is a striking resemblance in terms of geopolitical context between the moment of Sukarno's speech and today. The threat of nuclear war marks both. The principal belligerents are also the same: the West (USA + NATO + Israel) on one side and Russia (successor of USSR) on the other side. However, the constellations around the respective belligerent have changed considerably, especially on the Russian side. While the Western constellation stays the same (USA + NATO + Israel), that of Russia continues to grow with China, Iran and North Korea on stage and BRICS and SCO at the backdrop, not to mention the high number of NAM and African countries in favour of Russia. So, like in the 1960s, an open global war will not likely happen, not because the warrior West loves peace, but because it is not sure that it will win, neither materially nor morally. By a simple calculation, the match will be unequal in terms of material and technology, hardware and software. The military technology and TIC developed by China, Russia, Iran, North Korea and India, for example, will resist if not defeat that of the US, UK, France and other countries of the West. In the field of weapons of mass destruction, the comparative number of nuclear warheads between the nuclear power countries of the West (US, UK, France, Israel) and Russian constellation (China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, Russia) is in favour of the latter: around 6663 against 5849 (2023 *Estimated Global Nuclear Inventories*, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat> checked on 05/07/2023). The imbalance is evident in the number of mobilisable people between the two protagonists. By a simple glance at the demographic statistic (in terms of number and age) between the two belligerents, the number of mobilisable people in China alone will be more than enough to overtake that of the whole West, in addition to BRICS, SCO, NAM, other countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Without speaking of the mentality, morality, and spirit of those peoples to be engaged in a patriotic war: ageing, demoralised, spoiled, fragile, fearful of death in the West; young, morally forceful, enthusiastic, energetic, resistant, full of sense of duty, struggle and sacrifice

in the Bandung Constellation. As for raw materials needed for war, most of them belong to the countries of the Bandung Constellation.

Intellectual Duty in the Turbulence of Global Changes

We are in the turbulence of global changes in which the wars in Ukraine and in Palestine are the most spectacular manifestations. And we do not know where are these changes going, whether they go to the best or to the worst of the world. This raises question to us scholars, activists as well as simple human beings: what should we do?

There are many ways to identify the why and the how of these changes. We may identify the changes following what Kishore Mahbubani called “The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East”. Several internationally well known academic works converged to that direction, including the giant reference of World System Theory Immanuel Wallerstein who wrote “That Asia has risen in the world economy since at least 1960, and especially since 2000, is a proposition that is widely accepted”. Other names strengthen the statement, such as Frank B. Tipton (*The Rise of Asia: Economics, Society, and Politics in Contemporary Asia*, 1998), Terutomo Ozawa (*The rise of Asia: The ‘flying-geese’ theory of tandem growth and regional agglomeration*, 2009), Parag Khanna (*The future is Asian: Commerce, Conflict, and Culture in the 21st Century*, 2019) and Deepak Nayyar in his two complementary books: *Asian Transformation: An Inquiry into the Development of Nations* and *Resurgent Asia: Diversity in Development* (2019).

Some authors indicated the direction of changes. Kishore Mahbubani, for example, is very confident to write that “the rise of Asia will be good for the world”. Deepak Nayyar concluded that it is possible to rise together in diversity, and not necessarily following the single way of capitalism. Asia were marked by differences between countries in geographical size, embedded histories, colonial legacies, nationalist movements, natural resource endowments, population size, income levels, and political systems. The politics, too, ranged widely from socialism through State capitalism to capitalism, from authoritarian regimes to political democracies, and from one-party states to multi-party systems. There were different paths to development, because there were no unique solutions, or magic wands. Hence, there were choices to be made, which were shaped by a complex mix of economic, social and political factors in the national

context, where history mattered. Yet, despite such diversity, there are discernible patterns, pointing to substantive analytical lessons that emerge from the Asian development experience.

Beyond the economy, Parag Khanna saw Asia becoming more integrated and moving closer towards a “system”. The Asian system does not, and will not, have rules as formalized as those of Europe. There is no supranational Asian parliament, central bank, or military – no “Asian Union”. Instead, the Asian approach to integration involves building complementarities and deferring dangerous issues. Fundamentally, Asians seek not conquest but respect. A sufficient degree of respect for one another’s interests is enough. The Asian system has never been an Asian bloc. To the contrary, for most of history, there has been stability across the many Asian sub-regions and fluidity rather than hierarchy. There will be therefore no Chinese unipolarity – neither globally nor even in Asia. Asians are much more comfortable with the idea of global multipolarity than are Americans, for whom recent history (and most scholarship) has focused on unipolar orders – especially their own. But the more multipolar the world becomes, the more the global future resembles Asia’s past. The biggest geopolitical phenomena of the past three decades have come in rapid succession: the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the consolidation of the European Union, the rise of China, the US shale energy revolution, and now the emergence of an Asian system.

On the other hand, a Bangladeshi economist Rehman Sobhan warned that *“This transformation in the world economic order will not be painless either for the East or for the West. Indeed, the transition has the potential for causing much grief to the world as no established order is likely to cede its hegemony without challenge. The significant point of departure during this phase of transition lies in the fact that the receding economic power of the West (also more broadly classified as the North), dominated by the US, remains and is likely to remain in the immediate future the dominant military power. [...] This erosion of the economic power of the West while retaining military dominance with the US and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, does not bode well for an easy transition for the global order. [...] How far the hitherto dominant West will go to preserve their hegemony over their economic order remains critical in determining whether the Asian century will evolve peacefully or through a process of turmoil.”*

So, what should we do as scholar and activist of social and solidarity movements?

We may define our own duty in four points:

1. To form united forces of intellectuals, scholars, activists of social and solidarity movement for a shared global future based on the Bandung Spirit Ideals of *Peace, Independence, Equality, Solidarity and Emancipation*.
2. To accompany The Rise of Asia and Other NEFO (New Emerging Forces) countries in *Progressing Globally towards a Sustainable Prosperity in Peace, Justice, Cooperation Diversity and Solidarity*, so that the Rise of Asia and Other NEFO will benefit not only Asia and NEFO countries but also the rest of the world, and not to repeat the historical path of the Rise of the West characterised by the genocide of indigenous peoples in America, Australia and other parts of the world, the slavery, the colonialism and the world wars.
3. Not to let anyone left behind, in line with the Bandung Spirit Ideal of Solidarity, translated into the empowerment of the victims of global injustice (including Africa in general, certain countries like Cuba and Palestine).
4. To go beyond NATO (No Action Talking Only), meaning translating our thought into actions. It is in this respect that we founded AFRASI (African-Asian and International Studies) Institute in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, as a training centre for the youth of Africa and of other parts of the world in the perspective of Bandung Spirit Ideals.

So, 70 years after Bandung, what are the possibilities to build the world anew? Change the world order? Global rebalancing? Global restructuring? In what way? With industrialisation? Infrastructure? Digitalisation? Development and extension of AI? Renewable energy? Green cities? Sustainable consumption? Global connectivity? Interregional cooperation with AES, ASEAN, AU, BRICS, CEEC, CELAC, EAC, NAM, SAARC, SCO, SADC ...? How about the living conditions of peoples, of grass-root communities, of indigenous, ethnic and religious minorities, especially children and women? How about informalities: informal sectors, informal trade, informal business, informal housing, and informal towns? What role do they play in this global dynamics?

It is to give the elements of answer to those questions that this book was prepared.

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HISTORICAL REFLECTION

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The 1955 Bandung Asia–Africa Conference and Post-colonial Collective Resistance

Baskara T. Wardaya

Introduction

Post-war political independence did not automatically negate the epistemic, cultural and psychological legacies of empire. As Edward Said demonstrated, “orientalism” structured Western knowledge and representation of the non-Western world in ways that underwrote political domination (Said, 1978). Frantz Fanon stressed that the psychological inheritance of colonialism—internalized inferiority and fractured subjectivity—required active, often violent, processes of decolonization beyond formal sovereignty (Fanon, 1961). Gayatri Spivak has reminded scholars that even after independence, the subaltern may remain unable to “speak” in forums shaped by colonial epistemic norms (Spivak, 1988).

The Bandung Conference (18–24 April 1955)—held in the city of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia—therefore matters not only as a diplomatic convening but as a performative, discursive intervention. By assembling 29 (twenty-nine) Asian and African delegations and issuing a widely publicized Final Communiqué (also called *Dasasila Bandung* or the Ten Principles of Bandung), the conference staged a collective claim to international parity and dignity. It combined rhetoric, symbolic spectacle and normative formulation to produce a new language of international politics for the formerly colonized majority.

Rights, Dignity and Voice

Bandung registered explicitly as a challenge to both formal colonialism and the more insidious continuities of epistemic and cultural domination. In a straightforward language, the Conference's Final Communiqué enunciated a set of principles aimed at protecting sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference and equality among nations (Asian-African Conference, 1955). It declared:

Free from mistrust and fear, and with confidence and goodwill towards each other, nations should practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors and develop friendly cooperation on the basis of the following principles:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations, large and small.
4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.
5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
6. (a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve any particular interests of the big powers;
(b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries.
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.
8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
9. Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation.
10. Respect for justice and international obligations.¹

¹ Darwis Khudori, 2020. "Bandung conference 1955 and Bandung commemorative conferences 2005 and 2015: excerpts from the declarations of heads of state and governments. Darwis Khudori. *Bandung Legacy And Global Future: New Insights and*

Clearly, these “Ten Principles” provided normative language for states that had hitherto been marginal in international diplomacy.

Bandung’s rhetoric was powerful and publicly performative. Indonesian President Sukarno’s opening words—delivered to the assembled delegations and later widely distributed—explicitly framed the Conference as a struggle not only for territorial independence but for “dignity” and voice. In his opening address, Sukarno declared that the Conference was “a new departure in the history of the world that leaders of Asian and African peoples can meet together in their own countries to discuss and deliberate upon matters of common concern.” He further declared that the meeting sought “a new Asia and Africa”—an appeal to the creation of a shared, morally and politically assertive subjectivity.² Such language directly addressed the psychic dimensions of domination that Fanon identified: political independence had to be accompanied by a reclamation of self-worth and public voice (Fanon, 1961).

Meanwhile, leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru articulated a path between Cold War blocs. In a widely circulated address, Nehru insisted that India “belong[s] to neither” of the great power blocs, and that Asian and African states must protect their identity by not subordinating themselves to bloc politics (Nehru, 1955). Zhou Enlai’s speech underscored the search for common ground across ideological differences: “We have come here to seek unity and not to quarrel If we seek common ground in doing away with the sufferings and calamities under colonialism, it will be very easy for us to have mutual understanding and respect.”³ Together, these statements created a discursive field in which equality, non-alignment and anti-colonial solidarity became public norms.

From Principles to Movements

Bandung’s Final Communiqué and the public visibility it generated provided conceptual scaffolding for later institutional forms. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), formally constituted in Belgrade in 1961, drew directly on

Emerging Forces, AAKAR BOOKS, pp.291–8, 2018, ISBN 978-93-5002-549-9. hal-02659800.

² <https://bandungspirit.org/spip.php?rubrique57>. Assessed 3/10/2025.

³ <https://worldipn.net/documents/texts/docs/19550419.S2E.html>. Assessed 3/10/2025.

Bandung's principles of sovereignty, non-interference and peaceful coexistence (Asian-African Conference 1955; NAM history). Moreover, Bandung's catalytic effect appeared not only in state diplomacy but in the proliferation of Afro-Asian forums — Cairo (Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conferences, 1957), Havana (Tricontinental Conference, 1966) and other gatherings that invoked Bandung's normative repertoire (Institute of Pacific Relations 1955; UNESCO 2015). Although perhaps indirectly, the establishment of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) in 2009 and its membership extension later (consisting of Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Republic) could be said to be inspired by Bandung.

Scholars have traced how Bandung's rhetoric and performative politics shaped subsequent legal and normative conversations about anti-colonial justice and development (Eslava, *et al.*, 2017). In the immediate term, the conference also fostered concrete cooperative projects: technical assistance exchanges, cultural programs and multilateral contacts that re-embedded formerly colonized states in networks of mutual support outside Western tutelage (Selected Documents, 1955).

Reclaiming Representation

A central insight from postcolonial theory helps explain Bandung's effect beyond institutional outputs: it altered the terms of representation. Edward Said's notion of the "Orient" describes how the West has constructed knowledge about the East—through literature, travel writing, political discourse—that both reflects and reinforces Western dominance. Even after formal political dependencies are ended, these discursive frameworks persist in structuring international relations, cultural prestige, and assumptions of civilizational superiority. Thus, the psychological legacy of colonialism is not simply individual, but embedded in global power structures and in how "the West" sees "the non-West" (Said, 1978/2003).

Fanon emphasized that colonialism is not only a political or economic structure but also deeply psychological. Colonized peoples may internalize the inferiority imposed upon them, leading to a struggle of self-assertion, identity reclamation, and resistance. Even after independence, the mental and emotional work of decolonization remains (Fanon, 1961). Though Fanon's major works are not always directly about Bandung, his theory

helps explain why political independence alone does not always dismantle colonial legacies.

Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" draws attention to the difficulty that formerly subjugated groups face in speaking (or being heard) in forums defined by colonial or Western norms of knowledge, representation, and legitimacy. Even when such groups speak, their voices may be filtered, mediated, or silenced by structures of power—including by other elites, or by Western discourses. Thus, the Bandung Conference can be seen as a strategy to open a space for subaltern voices and collective assertion (Spivak, 1988/2010).

Meanwhile, archival testimony confirms that contemporaries—delegates and publics—often perceived Bandung as more than symbolic. Indonesian diplomatic records and participant memoirs (e.g. Abdulgani, 1981) stress the emotional force of witnessing a majority of the world's peoples assembled in parity. Bandung's spectacle and texts forced a different set of representations into circulation: images of proud processions through Bandung's streets, mass attendance at public sessions, and the melodic chorus of delegations speaking in their own accents and idioms circulated widely in global media and archives (Reybrouck, 2024).

Limits and Tensions

Bandung's achievements were significant, but also partial. *First*, its heterogeneity—delegations ranged from nationalist to communist to monarchical regimes—meant that consensus required a degree of rhetorical moderation. The Final Communiqué's language, while principled, avoided detailed prescriptions on economic redistribution or reparations; more radical economic and anti-imperialist demands were thus muted in order to secure unanimity (Asian-African Conference, 1955). Archival drafts (see *Selected Documents*) reveal that certain proposals (on economic structures and reparations) were debated but not included in final text.

Second, formal independence did not immediately eradicate economic dependency or structural inequalities. Many postcolonial states remained enmeshed in trade, financial and cultural relations that reproduced

asymmetries.⁴ The psychological legacies Fanon described could not be undone by a single conference.

Third, post-Bandung institutions sometimes failed to sustain the conference's original aspiration for durable collective agency. NAM's cohesion waxed and waned through the Cold War, and intra-group cleavages (regional, ideological, economic) complicated solidarities. Historians have documented both the creative afterlives of Bandung and the ways in which its spirit was co-opted or dissipated over time (Eslava, *et al.*, 2017; Wood, 2010).

Final Notes

The 1955 Bandung Conference combined rhetoric, performative diplomacy and normative production to reframe the politics of decolonization. Drawing on Said, Fanon and Spivak, we can see Bandung as a crucial intervention that addressed not only territorial sovereignty but also representation, dignity, and the psycho-cultural residues of the colonial practices. Its tangible legacies—the Ten Principles, the institutional emergence of NAM, subsequent Afro-Asian forums and perhaps BRICS—are matched by its discursive accomplishments: the rejection of unequal relations in international politics.

Bandung's limits prompt a sober conclusion: decolonization is an ongoing process that requires sustained institutional innovation, economic justice, and cultural transformation. Yet Bandung remains a critical historical example of how formerly colonized peoples can, collectively, rearticulate international norms and reclaim their narrative. As debates over decolonization, reparations and epistemic justice continue, Bandung's archive and discursive heritage provide resources for further research and reference for renewed South–South solidarities.

⁴ Lumumba-Kasongo, T. "Rethinking the Bandung conference in an Era of 'unipolar liberal globalization' and movements toward a 'multipolar politics'". *Bandung J of Global South* 2, 9 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-014-0012-4>. Assessed 3/10/2025.

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Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana and the Bandung Conference: Non-Alignment, Positive Neutralism and Strategic Diplomacy in the Cold War

Pietro Fasola¹

Introduction

This article investigates how and why the 1955 Bandung Conference shaped Kwame Nkrumah's foreign policy and Ghana's relations with the United States between 1957 and 1966. It treats Bandung not merely as a diplomatic gathering of twenty-nine Asian and African states but as a formative moment in postcolonial international politics. The principles articulated there (nonalignment, solidarity among newly independent states, and cooperation for development) provided Nkrumah with both a vocabulary and a policy repertoire. Although Ghana (then the Gold Coast) attended the Conference only as an observer, Nkrumah drew deeply on Bandung's spirit to elaborate *positive neutralism*: not passive neutrality, but a functional nonalignment designed to defend sovereignty, harness competition among superpowers, and project pan-African leadership.

The article pursues two objectives: first, it reconstructs how Bandung's principles mentioned above were taken up by Nkrumah and put into practice in his dealings with the United States, from aid negotiations and the

¹ In memory of Professor Marco Paolo Tucci, whose example of research, perseverance, and generosity continues to inspire.

Volta River Project to calibrated diplomatic signaling in moments of crisis; second, it explains why Bandung echoed in Accra: it offered a way for a small postcolonial country to secure Western finance without formal alignment, while deliberately keeping open a Soviet option, a tendency that became more pronounced after the mid-1960s.

The focus on Ghana – United States relations is intentional, for Nkrumah anchored Ghana’s development strategy, most notably the *Volta River Project*, in Western finance, technology, and markets. Since Washington and its partners acted as gatekeepers of credit and investment, they occupied a pivotal place in Accra’s strategic plans. Yet Nkrumah refused formal alignment with the United States, preserving bargaining leverage and, particularly after the mid-1960s, cultivating a Soviet option. Ghana thus offers a revealing case of nonalignment in practice, rather than as mere rhetoric.

Empirically, the study triangulates primary sources: the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series; presidential correspondence (Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson); internal Convention People’s Party documents; Nkrumah’s own writings² and William Mahoney’s memories.³ These are complemented by renown literature, including William Scott Thompson, 1969;⁴ Matteo Landricina, 2018;⁵ Abou Dappah, 2021.⁶

The topic is that Ghana under Nkrumah was not marginal to the Cold War but was a strategic actor attempting to carve out autonomy in a bipolar system. The analysis proceeds in three branches: Bandung’s imprint on Nkrumah’s political thought and the design of positive neutralism; Ghana–U.S. relations under Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, with attention to

² *I Speak of Freedom* (1961); *Africa Must Unite* (1963); *Neo-Colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965).

³ Mahoney was the U.S. ambassador in Accra from 1962 to 1965.

⁴ Thomson, W.S. (1969). *Ghana’s Foreign Policy, 1957–1966. Diplomacy Ideology, and the New State*. Princeton Legacy Library.

⁵ Landricina M. (2016). *Nkrumah and the West. “The Ghana experiment” in British, American, German and Ghanaian Archives*. LIT Verlag.

⁶ Dappah, A. (2021). *La politica estera del Ghana sotto Kwame Nkrumah (1957–1966). Un’analisi delle basi per comprendere l’impegno del Ghana nell’arena internazionale*. Edizioni Sapienza.

cooperation, mistrust, and the politics of financing; and a critical assessment of *positive neutralism*: its achievements, contradictions, and enduring relevance as an early laboratory of *Global South* statecraft.

Bandung and Nkrumah's political ideas

The Bandung Conference of 1955 brought together leaders of newly independent Asian and African countries.⁷ Gold Coast, still under British rule, sent a small delegation of three people led by Kojo Botsio,⁸ Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice, that joined mainly as an observer.⁹ Kwame Nkrumah (*Osagyefo*),¹⁰ Prime Minister of the Gold Coast since 1952, did not attend the Conference in order not to create tensions with London during a delicate stage for the Gold Coast,¹¹ but he was deeply influenced by three Bandung principles: no alignment with the superpowers, solidarity among new states and cooperation for development.¹²

For Nkrumah these were not abstract slogans. He used them to shape Ghana's foreign policy and to turn Cold War rivalries into resources for

⁷ Asian-African Conference Bulletin No.4, April 19, 1955. Issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia.

⁸ Alongside Minister Botsio, a loyal supporter of Nkrumah, were Imoru Egala, Ghana's second Foreign Minister, and the Ghanaian writer Michael Dei-Annang.

⁹ Asian-African Conference Bulletin No.4, p.5, April 19, 1955.

¹⁰ Osagyefo was the honorific commonly used for Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana. In Akan it means "*the Redeemer*" or "*the Savior*", highlighting his role as leader of the independence struggle and as the nation's founding father.

¹¹ At that time, the Gold Coast was undergoing a delicate transition toward self-government, a process that would culminate in full independence in 1957. For this reason, Nkrumah's personal presence at an anti-colonial conference carried particular political weight, as it could have been interpreted both domestically and internationally as a signal of the colony's accelerating break from British rule. Ref: Bourret, F.M. (1960). *Ghana – The road to independence: 1919–1957*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, pp.157-202, https://ia802906.us.archive.org/6/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.124098/2015.124098.Ghana-The-Road-To-Independence_text.pdf

¹² Gerits, F. (2016). *Bandung as the call for a better development project: US, British, French and Gold Coast perceptions of the Afro-Asian Conference (1955)*. *Cold War History*, 16:3, pp.255–72.

development,¹³ for example the *Volta River Project* (VRP), which will be examined in greater detail later.

After independence on March 6, 1957, Nkrumah¹⁴ called this *positive neutralism*: no passive neutrality, but an active way of using the East-West conflict to strengthen Ghana's sovereignty in the political, economic and diplomatic fields.¹⁵¹⁶ His famous phrase that summed up this concept was: "*we face neither East nor West, we face forward*".¹⁷

The Ghanaian leader used this strategy to present Ghana, the first independent country in Sub-Saharan Africa, as a reference point for African nations moving towards independence. Nkrumah presented Ghana as an alternative to the alignment with either the Eastern or Western bloc in Africa.¹⁸¹⁹

¹³ *Memorandum of Conversation, Accra, March 04, 1957*. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1955–1957, vol.XVIII, doc.129. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v18/d129>.

¹⁴ He served as Ghana's Prime Minister from March 6, 1957, when the nation gained independence, until June 30, 1960. With the introduction of a new constitution on July 1, 1960, Ghana became a republic, and Nkrumah assumed office as the country's first President.

¹⁵ Anabtawi, S.N. (1965). *Neutralists and Neutralism*. *The Journal of Politics*, 27(2), 351–61. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2128077>.

¹⁶ *Letter from president Kennedy to president Nkrumah*, Washington, December 14, 1961. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.242. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d242>.

¹⁷ Nkrumah, K. (1960, April 7). *Speech in Accra*. In Oxford University Press, *Oxford Essential Quotations* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

¹⁸ Nkrumah connected the idea of non-alignment to his vision of a politically united Africa, a project that, although never realized, remained an important ideological reference point for Pan-Africanism.

¹⁹ Dodoo, V. (2012). *Kwame Nkrumah's Mission and Vision for Africa and the World*. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.4, no.10, pp.78–92. <http://www.ipan african.org/docs/vol4no10/4.10KwameNkrumah.pdf>.

Ghana's relations with the United States under Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson in the context of the Cold War's bipolar world and Ghana's policy of positive neutralism

Under Dwight D. Eisenhower (1957–61)

Ghana's independence was welcomed with interest in Washington. Vice-President Richard Nixon even attended the Independence Ceremony in Accra.²⁰ In the weeks leading up to the event, Washington tried to influence the guest list, without success, to exclude the delegation from Communist China.²¹ The U.S. quickly opened an embassy in Accra led by ambassador Donald Lamm²² and launched the first cooperation programs.²³ But mistrust soon appeared.

Nkrumah supported Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba during the Congo crisis, which represents an example of the failure of decolonization; moreover Ghana's Prime Minister allowed Soviet Union to open an embassy in Accra in 1959²⁴ and he delivered strong anti-colonial and anti-imperialism speeches at the United Nations,²⁵ as happened during the General

²⁰ *Memorandum of a Conversation, Accra, March, 4 1957, op.cit.*

²¹ *Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Counselor of the British Embassy (de la Mare) and the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (McConaughy), Department of State, Washington, February 6, 1957.* Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1955–1957, vol.XVIII, doc.124. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v18/d124>.

²² *A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Ghana,* Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/countries/ghana#:~:text=Diplomatic%20relations%20and%20the%20American%20Embassy%20n%20Ghana%20were%20established,Chargé%20d'Affaires%20ad%20interim>.

²³ These were: *Programme of Technical Cooperation* (June 3, 1957), *Guaranty of Private Investments* (September 30, 1958) and *Relief Supplies and Packages: Duty-Free Entry and Exemption from Internal Taxation* (April, 1959). Ref.: TIAS 3838 (1957), 4121(1958) and 4203 (1959). In *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements, Ghana*.

²⁴ Opare, N.O. (2019). *Uneasy Comrades: Postcolonial Statecraft, Race, and Citizenship, Ghana-Soviet Relations, 1957–1966.* In *Journal of West African History*; 5 (2): 85–111.

²⁵ *Memorandum of Conversation, New York, September 22, 1960.* Foreign Relations of United States, Africa, 1958–1960, vol.XIV, doc.301. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v14/d301>.

Assembly session on September 23, 1960.²⁶ All this raised suspicions in Washington and delayed U.S. approval of the VRP. For Nkrumah, however, that project was essential for Ghana's industrialization: a hydroelectric dam, a huge artificial lake, energy primarily for industrial purposes, and infrastructures for the entire country. He personally insisted on VRP when meeting with Nixon in March 1957²⁷ and Eisenhower in July 1958.²⁸ While Komla Gbedemah, Ghanaian Finance Minister repeated the same message directly to president Eisenhower at the White House in October 1957. His presence there had a symbolic weight: he had been invited after experiencing a humiliating episode of racial discrimination during an official trip to the U.S.²⁹

At this point, it is appropriate to ask ourselves what the VRP was truly about. It was not just a dam, but the centerpiece of Ghana's modernization strategy.³⁰ Planned since the 1940s, the project combined multiple goals as just mentioned above. It was meant to drive Ghana's industrialization and secure economic independence by diversifying beyond the cocoa monoculture on which it depended.³¹ This project engaged Nkrumah's administration throughout his entire time in power, and the struggle to obtain Western funding was the main reason behind his oscillation between the two global blocs of the Cold War.³²

²⁶ *General Committee, 127th meeting, Thursday, 22 September 1960*, New York: General Assembly, 15th session. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/794093?v=pdf>.

²⁷ *Memorandum of a Conversation, Accra, March, 4 1957, op.cit.*

²⁸ *Memorandum of Conversation, July 23, 1958*. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1958–1960, vol.XIV, doc.294. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus/1958-60v14/d294>.

²⁹ *Telegram From the Embassy in Ghana to the Department of State, Accra, October 10, 1957*. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1955–1957, vol.XVIII, doc.294. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v18/d131>.

³⁰ Miescher, S.F. (2022). *The Volta River Project and the promise of modernization*. In *A Dam for Africa: Akosombo Stories from Ghana* (pp.31–57). Indiana University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/i.ctv2q06gzt.7>.

³¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Economic Developments in Africa 1956–1957*, New York, 1958, pp.10–11. https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/PDFs/WESS/1957_1956wes_africa.pdf.

³² Thomson, W.S. (1969). *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957–1966. Diplomacy Ideology, and the New State*. Princeton Legacy Library, pp.162–5.

The Bandung Conference had already given Nkrumah the political legitimacy to pursue an autonomous foreign policy, reinforcing his vision of an independent and non-aligned Ghana. In 1958, Accra even hosted the *All Africa People's Conference*,³³ confirming Ghana's Role as a reference point for many countries that were fighting for independence.³⁴ But from Washington's perspective, this activism looked more and more like a "double game".³⁵ On one side, Ghana had historical and cultural ties with the West and seemed destined to remain close to the U.S., at least until mid-1960. On the other side, Nkrumah deliberately opened the doors to the Soviet Union establishing embassies, building trade and buying four soviet aircraft in 1960 to send Ghanaian troops to Congo.³⁶ This balancing act, which Nkrumah called *positive neutralism*, was exactly what made Ghana such a fascinating, but also challenging partner for the Eisenhower Administration. And it was on this ambiguous foundation that the relation with Kennedy would later develop.

Under John F. Kennedy (1961–63)

With Kennedy, the atmosphere changed significantly. Unlike Eisenhower, the new president showed a real and personal interest in Africa.³⁷ He saw newly independent states not just as pawns in the Cold War, but as possible

³³ Houser, M.G. *A Report on the All African People's Conference Held in Accra, Ghana, December 8–13, 1958*. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/Accra%20Conference%2C%201959-%20Houser%20report.pdf>.

³⁴ Thomson, W.S. (1969), p.109.

³⁵ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Assistant Secretary of State for American Affairs (Satterthwaite) and the Ghanaian Representative at the United Nations, New York, September 24, 1960. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1958–1960, vol.XIV, doc.302. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v14/d302>.

³⁶ Starting from April 1960, a rapid series of visits by Ghanaian ministers and diplomats to Moscow took place, culminating in Nkrumah's own trip to the Eastern bloc in the summer of 1961. His tour included the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany, and China. Ref.: Thomson, W.S. (1969), pp.165–77.

³⁷ Garland, G.L. (2022). *Kennedy, Nixon and the competition for Mr. Africa, 1952–1960*. American Foreign Service Association. <https://afsa.org/kennedy-nixon-and-competition-mr-africa-1952-1960>.

partners, and Ghana was at the center of this vision.³⁸ The most visible symbol of this new approach was the *Peace Corps*.³⁹ Starting in July 1961, hundreds of young American volunteers were sent to Ghana to work in schools, villages and farms.⁴⁰ Their presence created curiosity, but also mixed feelings sometimes welcomed with gratitude, sometimes with suspicion as if they might be informal emissaries of U.S. influence. Alongside the *Peace Corps*, USAID⁴¹ launched programs in education, healthcare and infrastructures. Scientific cooperation also expanded, for example the 1962 *Program of Scientific Cooperation in Medicine*, which connected American research centers with Ghanaian doctors and hospitals.⁴² But the key turning point came with the VRP. For Kennedy, it was the test case of a new partnership with Africa. In February 1962, despite the resistance in Congress,⁴³ Kennedy authorized U.S. financing.⁴⁴ Washington even took on the role of guarantor to bring in other funders: the *World Bank*, the *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*,⁴⁵

³⁸ Dickson, D.A. (1993). *U.S. Foreign Policy toward Southern and Central Africa: The Kennedy and Johnson Years*. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 23(2), pp.301–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27532280>.

³⁹ Lowther, K. and Payne C.L. (1978). *Keeping Kennedy's Promise. The Peace Corps: Unmet Hope of the New Frontier*, cap.1 e 8. Routledge.

⁴⁰ *Peace Corps Program*. Agreement effected by exchange of notes. Signed at Accra 19 July 1961. Available on *WorldLII* (cfr. *United Nations Treaty Series* n.493, 1961). <http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/treaties/UNTSer/1961/493.pdf>.

⁴¹ It is the acronym of *United States Agency for International Development*. Ref.: USAID, *History of USAID in Ghana*, 2010. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacq430.pdf.

⁴² *Health: Program of Scientific Cooperation in the Field of Bio-Medicine*. Agreement signed at Accra 3 January 1962. *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements* (doc.n.4932), 13, 1, 1962, 47–49. <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/l1/ltreaties/ltreaties-13-1/ltreaties-13-1.pdf>.

⁴³ Rakove, R.B. (2012). “Our Most Difficult Political Battle”: The Question of Aid. In *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World*, pp.174–212. Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁴ Letter from president Kennedy to president Nkrumah, Washington, December 14, 1961. *Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963*, vol.XXI, doc.242. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d242>.

⁴⁵ *Guarantee Agreement (Volta Project) between Ghana and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, February 08, 1962*. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/820291468032166554/pdf/Loan-0310-Ghana-Volta-Project-Guarantee-Agreement.pdf>.

the *Export-Import Bank*, the British government and major private companies like Kaiser and Reynolds. It was a huge diplomatic success for Nkrumah. John Kennedy insisted on the financing of the VRP for two main reasons. First, the fear of repeating what many called the “Aswan mistake”: when the West had refused to fund Egypt’s dam causing Nasser to turn to Moscow.⁴⁶ This time, the U.S. did not want to push Nkrumah fully to the Soviet side.⁴⁷ Second, the words of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, after Queen Elizabeth II’s visit to Ghana in 1961.⁴⁸ MacMillan told Washington bluntly: “*I have risked my Queen, you must risk your money*”.⁴⁹

And yet, relations with Washington remained contradictory. Leonid Brezhnev’s visit to Accra in February 1961,⁵⁰ Nkrumah’s own trip to Moscow and Eastern Europe later that year⁵¹ and the nuclear cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union⁵² were all red flags for the Americans. At the same

⁴⁶ Walton, S. (1981). *Aswan Revisited: U.S.-Egypt Nile Project Studies High Dam’s Effects*. BioScience, 31(1), 9–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1308168>.

⁴⁷ *Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between President Kennedy and the Acting Under Secretary of State (Ball)*, September 21, 1961. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.232. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d232>.

⁴⁸ Kettler, S. (2020). How Queen Elizabeth II’s Controversial Trip to Ghana Changed the Future of the Commonwealth. Biography. <https://www.biography.com/royalty/queen-elizabeth-ii-ghana-1961-trip>.

⁴⁹ Muehlenbeck, P.E. (2012). *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy’s Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*, p.88. Oxford University Press.

⁵⁰ *Memorandum From the President’s Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Rostow) to President Kennedy*, Washington, September 13, 1961. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.230. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d230>.

⁵¹ *Memorandum From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Hilsman) to Secretary of State Rusk*, Washington, September 14, 1961. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.231. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d231>.

⁵² It was signed in exchange for Moscow buying large quantities of Ghanaian cocoa over five years to counter the collapse in world cocoa prices. Ref.: Kulkova, O.S. and Sanusi, A.H. (2016). *Russia-Ghana Relations in the past and in the present: at time-proven partnership*. International Relations, 16, 2, pp.296–8, <https://journals.rudn.ru/international-relations/article/view/14278/13447> (visitato il 26 marzo 2025).

time, Nkrumah kept denouncing neo-colonialism in speeches that did not sit well in Washington.⁵³

By 1962, Nkrumah had proved that he was unafraid to turn to Moscow when it suited Ghana's interests. But at the same time, he had obtained U.S. financing for the VRP, the symbol of his development agenda. In this sense, Bandung became the common ground for the dialogue between Kennedy and Nkrumah. For Washington, the project showed that non-alignment could coexist with cooperation with the West. For Accra, it showed that Bandung was not just rhetoric, but could be turned into concrete results.

Personal diplomacy also played a role. Kennedy and Nkrumah met at the White House in March 1961⁵⁴ and developed a relationship of mutual respect. Kennedy often kept calm even when provoked, this was tested many times: Nkrumah accused the *Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA) of plotting against him after the assassination attempt in Kulungugu in 1962;⁵⁵ later investigations confirmed that the CIA had indeed recruited Nkrumah's former Finance Minister, K. Gbedemah, with the purpose to remove the *Osagyefo*.⁵⁶ Gbedemah failed, but suspicions grew. Even after committing millions of dollars to the VRP, Kennedy had to keep alert as tensions mounted. In early 1963, Nkrumah expelled two American officials, without solid evidence,⁵⁷ it was a clear sign that the Ghana – U.S. relationship was

⁵³ *Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Ghana, Washington, February 7, 1963.* Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.250. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d250>.

⁵⁴ “Nkrumah confers at White House; backs UN effort; Ghanaian urges arms use in Congo Crisis if needed – Gizenga restates claim Nkrumah Talks with President”, *New York Times*, March 9, 1961. <https://www.nytimes.com/1961/03/09/archives/nkrumah-confers-at-white-house-backs-un-effort-ghanaian-urges-arms.html>.

⁵⁵ *National Intelligence Estimate*, Washington, October 17, 1962. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.246. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d246>.

⁵⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, *The Truth about Komla Gbedemah*, p.6, December 1964. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP75-00001R000300210022-8.pdf>.

⁵⁷ The medical officer in West Africa Carl C. Nydell Jr. and the cultural affairs officer William B. Davis. The accusation against them was that they had contacts with Yaw Manu, a subversive element, with whom, however, they had merely shared the flight to Accra. Ref.: William P. Mahoney Oral History Interview – JFK 1, 05/14/1975; 89. *Carl Nydell*

built on both trust and distrust, progress and setbacks, friendship and rivalry, all at once.

Under Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–66)

With Lyndon Johnson, the scenario changed once again. The Vietnam War absorbed almost all of Washington's energy, and domestic issues⁵⁸ took center stage.⁵⁹ Africa, in this context, simply slid down the list of priorities. Inside the U.S. administration, the motto became: “*keep Africa off the agenda*”.⁶⁰

For Ghana, however, these were years of mounting difficulty. Politically, Nkrumah was moving towards an increasingly authoritarian direction.⁶¹ The *Preventive Detention Act* of 1958⁶² had already given him broad powers, and in 1964 Nkrumah declared Ghana a one-party state.⁶³ Economically, the picture was not brighter. Cocoa prices collapsed on the world market,⁶⁵ and the enormous costs of the VPR drained public finances.

being on a plane with Ghanaian dissidents who were arrested, pp.89–90.
[https://www.jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/JFKOH/Mahoney,%20William%20P/JFKOH-WPM-01/JF KOH-WPM-01-TR.pdf](https://www.jfklibrary.org/sites/default/files/archives/JFKOH/Mahoney,%20William%20P/JFKOH-WPM-01/JF%20KOH-WPM-01-TR.pdf).

⁵⁸ From civil rights to social reforms.

⁵⁹ Lyndon B. Johnson. “*Great Society Speech*”, May 22, 1964. From Teaching American History. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/great-society-speech-2/>.

⁶⁰ F. Salvatore, “Gli Stati Uniti e il continente africano negli anni Sessanta. Dal terzomondismo di John F. Kennedy al “keeping Africa off the agenda” di Lyndon B. Johnson (1961–1968)”, [Academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu).

⁶¹ Bennett, G. (1964). *African Socialism*. International Journal, 20(1), 97–101. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40199388>.

⁶² “Preventive Detention Act”, *Journal of the International Commission of Jurists*, III, 2, s.d., 82–9.

⁶³ Nkrumah justified the authoritarian stance as indispensable for ensuring internal stability, which he regarded as a decisive factor in making a country attractive in the eyes of foreign investors, but in the end it only served to heighten the suspicions and distrust of the Western bloc.

⁶⁴ *Nkrumah continuing his drive for a one-party Socialist State*, January 20, 1964. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/20/archives/nkrumah-continuing-his-drive-for-a-oneparty-socialist-state.html>.

⁶⁵ Information Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Johnson) to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Mann), Washington,

Even with foreign aid, Ghana had to cover half of the costs of the dam and the hydroelectric plant, nearly \$100,000,000, an extraordinary burden for a young nation.⁶⁷

American assistance, which had peaked under Kennedy, fell sharply. Apart from the VRP, already too advanced to stop, most programs were scaled back or suspended.⁶⁸ Only the symbolic presence of the *Peace Corps* remained,⁶⁹ a shadow of the ambitious partnership of a few years earlier. Johnson was unwilling to commit large sums of money to a country he saw as ideologically hostile, politically unstable and economically fragile;⁷⁰ he hoped to isolate Nkrumah.⁷¹

Relations reached a breaking point in 1965 with the publication of Nkrumah's *Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism*. The book directly

March 12, 1965. Foreign Relations of the United States, International Development and Economic Defense Policy, 1964–1968, vol.IX, doc.258. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v09/d258>.

⁶⁶ Vigneri, M. e Kolavalli, S. (2017). *Growth through pricing policy: The case of cocoa in Ghana. Background paper to the UNCTAD-FAO. Commodities and Development Report 2017. Commodity markets, economic growth and development*, p.2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e21586ad-7a13-44e8-8ba4-e446f0cb6f98/content>.

⁶⁷ Perritt, R. (1988). *Cooperative Agreement on Settlement and Resource System Analysis. An analysis of the Volta River Basin and Development in Ghana as Administered by the Volta River Authority*, p.38. Clarke University e Institute for Development Anthropology. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnabq164.pdf.

⁶⁸ For example the *Food for Peace Program* ended. It provided food aid contingent upon the implementation of agricultural reforms by the recipients. Johnson's goal was to offer support in exchange for concrete commitments toward food self-sufficiency. Ref.: Deaton, B.J. (1980). "Public Law 480: The Critical Choices", *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 62, 5, pp.988–92, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1240298>.

⁶⁹ Smith, M.B. (1961–1963): "Supplementary Memorandum to Final Report" and "Second Supplementary Memorandum to Final Report," 1965. The John F. Kennedy Library.

⁷⁰ *Memorandum of Conversation*, Washington, March 11, 1965. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, vol.XXIV, doc.251. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d251>.

⁷¹ Memorandum from Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), Washington, May 27, 1965. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, vol.XXIV, doc.253. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d253>.

accused the CIA of plotting against Ghana and denounced Western interference in Africa.⁷² In Washington, this was read as a hostile act. Not surprisingly, Johnson and Nkrumah never met in person between 1963 and 1966.⁷³

To be fair, Johnson's position was not easy. He faced a real dilemma: on one hand total disengagement risked to leave the field open to Soviet influence, especially with the VRP in progress, on the other hand, continuing to invest in Ghana looked risky too, aid was expensive, results were limited and Nkrumah's rhetoric grew sharper by the day.⁷⁴ By 1965, as the inauguration of the Akosombo Dam approached, a new line of thinking gained ground within the Johnson administration:⁷⁵ perhaps the only way to stabilize relations with Ghana was to remove Nkrumah definitively.⁷⁶ Since independence in 1957, the VRP had been the glue holding Accra and Washington together. As it neared completion, the glue weakened, and the idea of a regime change began to circulate seriously.⁷⁷

On February 24, 1966, this scenario materialized, while Nkrumah was in Vietnam on a peace mission,⁷⁸ the Ghanaian army staged a coup.⁷⁹ This timing was not accidental, the operation had been postponed several times,

⁷² Nkrumah, K. (1965). *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. <https://www.marxists.org/ebooks/nkrumah/nkrumah-neocolonialism.pdf>.

⁷³ They only met in 1961, when Johnson of the Vice-President during Kenned's Administration. Ref.: Thomson, W.S. (1969). *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957–1966. Diplomacy Ideology, and the New State*, Princeton, Princeton Legacy Library, pp.164–6.

⁷⁴ Landricina M. (2016). *Nkrumah and the West. "The Ghana experiment" in British, American, German and Ghanaian Archives*. LIT Verlag, pp.125–210.

⁷⁵ *Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Ghana, Washington, April 26, 1963*. Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Africa, 1961–1963, vol.XXI, doc.251. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v21/d251>.

⁷⁶ Oltmans, W. (2001). Who are the No.1 War Criminals, p.37. DBNL.

⁷⁷ Thomson, W. S. (1969), *op.cit*.

⁷⁸ Mazrui, A.A. (1973). *Nkrumah, Obote and Vietnam*. Transition, Vol.43, pp.36339. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2935146>.

⁷⁹ Memorandum for the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Helms), Washington, February 25, 1966. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1964–1968, vol.XXIV, doc.257. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d257>.

waiting for him to be out of the country.⁸⁰ Behind the scenes, many saw the shadow of the CIA.⁸¹ Exchanges between Robert Komer of the *National Security Council* and McGeorge Bundy, Johnson's *National Security Advisor*, suggest at least indirect involvement.⁸² Some sources even claim the CIA considered a more direct intervention, with paramilitary units on the ground, before rejecting the option to avoid damaging U.S. credibility abroad.⁸³

Under Johnson, Bandung did not disappear from Nkrumah's vocabulary, but it changed meaning. Words that in the Kennedy years had opened dialogue such as neutralism, Afro-Asian solidarity and emancipation, then in Washington were perceived as hostile concepts. Instead of creating space for maneuver, Bandung became a reason for isolation. Ghana was mistrusted by the U.S., yet also seen as unreliable by Moscow. From Nkrumah, Bandung remained a banner, a symbol to legitimize his pan-African vision. But it was no longer an effective instrument of diplomacy.

A final assessment on the strengths and limits of Ghana experience

First, for Nkrumah, Bandung was never just a diplomatic event happening far away in Asia, it became a toolbox, a framework and above all a source of legitimacy. Positive neutralism, the idea of using Cold War rivalries to defend sovereignty and promote development, was a direct product of Bandung.

⁸⁰ *Telegram from the Embassy in Togo to the Department of State*, Lome, September 30, 1965. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1964–1968, vol.XXIV, doc.255. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d255>.

⁸¹ ElMaazi, M. (2024). *Top Secret Document exposes UK Role in Ghana Coup*. Declassified UK. <https://www.declassifieduk.org/top-secret-document-exposes-uk-role-in-ghana-coup/>.

⁸² *Memorandum from the President's Acting Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Komer) to President Johnson, Washington, March 12, 1966*. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1964–1968, vol.XXIV, doc.260. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d260>.

⁸³ Harvey, W.B. (1966). *Post-Nkrumah Ghana: The Legal Profile of a Coup*, pp.1096–7. Indian University School of Law. https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/?utm_source=www.repository.law.indiana.edu%2Ffacpub%2F1187&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

Second, the Ghanaian case shows us the potential and the limits of this approach. On one hand, Nkrumah managed to place a newly independent African state at the center of global diplomacy,⁸⁴ securing recognition, attracting resources from both blocs and projecting Ghana as leader of Pan-Africanism and non-alignment in the continent.⁸⁵ For a small country like Ghana, that was a remarkable achievement. On the other hand, the contradictions were evident. Ghana's economy depended almost entirely on cocoa exports, which made it extremely vulnerable to price fluctuations.⁸⁶ At the same time, courting both Washington and Moscow generated suspicion on both sides: American feared Nkrumah was leaving toward the Soviet Union, while the Soviets doubted his reliability.⁸⁷ Domestically, his increasing authoritarianism weakened his legitimacy⁸⁸ and the heavy cost of VRP combined with the cocoa crisis created enormous pressures. The VRP itself was a symbol of this paradox. It embodied Nkrumah's dream of industrialization and self-reliance, it attracted massive international attention, bringing together American, British, multilateral and private funds.⁸⁹ But it also tied Ghana into a web of financial dependence and created long-term economic strain. In other words, it was both the symbol of Ghana's autonomy and the proof of its fragility.

⁸⁴ Thomson, W.S. (1969), *op.cit.*

⁸⁵ Dappah, A. (2021). *La politica estera del Ghana sotto Kwame Nkrumah (1957–1966). Un'analisi delle basi per comprendere l'impegno del Ghana nell'arena internazionale.* Edizioni Sapienza.

⁸⁶ 6 Nkrumah K.; African Section Library of Congress, Ghana's Policy at Home and Abroad, p.6; Text of Speech given in the Ghana Parliament, 29 agosto 1957.

⁸⁷ Thomson, W.S. (1969), pp.162–4.

⁸⁸ Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Harriman) to President Johnson, Washington, April 3, 1964. Foreign Relations of the United States, Africa, 1964–1968, vol.XXIV, doc.249. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d249>.

⁸⁹ On the U.S. side, Edgar Kaiser, businessman and contractor, played a significant role, acting almost like a “private diplomat” in promoting the project and channeling American investments. Such entrepreneurial intermediation had no counterpart on the Soviet side, where the initiative remained strictly state-led. Ref.: Boakye, O. (2017). *Prophets of development: An investigation into Kaiser Industries' economic relationship with Ghana, 1957–1965.* Journal of African Political Economy and Development, vol.2, pp.96–118. <https://afec-japed.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/5.%20Vol.2-2017-Boakye-Prophets%20of%20development%20.pdf>.

Finally, the Ghanaian story shows us something broader about the Cold War: Africa was not simply a passive arena where the superpowers competed. Leaders like Nkrumah tried to turn the Cold War into an opportunity, to negotiate, to balance and to carve out space for their own agendas. In this sense, Ghana was not marginal. It was a laboratory for testing new forms of diplomacy in a world dominated by the Great Powers.⁹⁰

Conclusion

This research highlights how and why the Bandung Conference shaped Nkrumah's statecraft, ideologically and in practice. Over the decade examined, Ghana's foreign policy was both ambitious and fragile. It was ambitious in seeking to translate Bandung into policy: to make nonalignment an active strategy, to leverage Cold War rivalries, and to place Ghana at the forefront of Pan-Africanism and, later, the Non-Aligned Movement. It was fragile because the economic base was narrow, the political order increasingly repressive, and international confidence persistently eroded by mutual suspicions. Nkrumah's overthrow in February 1966 was therefore not merely the fall of a leader; it marked the collapse of an experiment, the attempt to use Bandung as a framework for small states to assert autonomy in a bipolar world. The Ghanaian experiment echoes and stretches into the present time. Today's debates about the Global South: debt, technological dependence, and the search for autonomy in a multipolar order, echo the dilemmas Nkrumah faced in the 1960s. Bandung gave him a language and a vision; it helped lift Ghana onto the world stage and imagine Africa united, sovereign, and independent. But the contradictions of *positive neutralism*, economic, political, and diplomatic, ultimately undermined its sustainability.

⁹⁰ Under Nkrumah, Ghana actively experimented with diplomacy: it hosted the All-African Peoples' Conference (Accra, 1958); spearheaded the Ghana-Guinea-Mali union (1961) as a proto-federation; helped found the OAU (1963) and floated an African High Command; convened the "Accra Assembly—World Without the Bomb" (1962) to push an Afro-Asian disarmament agenda; supported liberation movements through the Bureau of African Affairs; balanced between East and West—recognizing the PRC early while remaining in the Commonwealth; and pursued leader-to-leader diplomacy, notably Nkrumah's attempted mediation in Vietnam (1965–66).

Bandung Spirit Leads to Emergence of Global South

Pramod Kumar Mishra

Introduction

The term ‘Global South’ has gained momentum in international politics, and it has helped to identify several nations taking common positions on global issues. These countries usually emphasize that their interests are not properly reflected in the multilateral system. Jorge Heine, a former Chilean diplomat, highlights that countries in the Global South are “increasingly asserting themselves on the global scene”.

According to Brandt Line, a line drawn across a world map by the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, provides one way to divide the wealthy, industrialized north from the south. Most analyses of the Global South identify its first use in the late 1960s, by political activist Carl Oglesby. However, it is only in recent years that ‘Global South’ as a term has been commonly used.¹

One way of identifying these countries is to look at the membership of the G77, a group of developing countries established in the 1960s to articulate and promote their collective interests at the United Nations. The group now numbers 134 states from Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, and refers to itself as the “global south”. The Non-Aligned Movement also numbers 120 countries. Another indicator is the list of the 125 countries that attended the first virtual Voice of the Global South summit in India in January 2023.

0.1 Why is the Term Growing in prominence?

The effects of international responses to climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, and challenges of food and energy security have exposed divisions within and frustrations with the existing multilateral system.

One of the arguments put forward by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi for initiating the Voice of the Global South summits in 2023 was his assertion that "most of the global challenges have not been created by the Global South. But they affect us more."²

Many countries that fall under the 'Global South' have gradually felt that their views have not been heard in international agreements or multinational forums. Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno L.P. Marsudi made this point in her speech at the UN General Assembly session in September 2023: "The global architecture of today benefits only the selected few."

There is also growing recognition that the global balance of power is shifting. Some scholars talk of a new era of great power competition between the United States, China and Russia.³

0.2 Who Leads the Global South?

The Global South is not a formal bloc. But some countries are taking a more prominent role than others. India is one of the leading proponents of the Global South. India's Prime Minister initiated and hosted two Voice of Global South summits in 2023, bringing together several countries to "share their perspectives and priorities, on a common platform".

The Economist magazine says that China has launched a "concerted campaign to present itself as a natural leader for the Global South. However, C Raja Mohan Advisory Board, suggests that both China and India are competing for the leadership."⁴

0.3 Gradual Development of Global South

Seventy years on, the Global South, following the Bandung Spirit of "solidarity, friendship and cooperation", has forged an independent path of collective progress—from throwing off colonial rule to pursuing shared development and reshaping the international order.

The Bandung Spirit inspired independence movements worldwide. In 1960, 17 African nations threw off colonial rule, marking the “Year of Africa”. The United Nations also passed the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Both India and China have consistently supported the Global South.

0.4 From Global Periphery to Growth Engine

In the 1980s, the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, chaired by former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, released the report, **North-South: A Programme for Survival**. Using per capita gross domestic product (GDP) as a key metric, the report divided the world roughly into two halves on a map: the rich North above the line and the poor South below it.

The “Brandt Line” exposed the Global South’s economic marginalization and worldwide development disparities. For generations, developing nations were confined to providing cheap labor and raw materials while Western powers controlled resource distribution and rule-making.

The Bandung Conference opened a new era of South-South economic cooperation. Its resolution on economic cooperation called for economic collaboration among Asian and African nations and a fairer global economic system.

In 1962, representatives from developing countries met in Cairo and demanded trade justice. In 1964, the Group of 77 was formed before the convening of the first UN Conference on Trade and Development. The Group of 77, a coalition of developing countries, held its first ministerial meeting in 1967 when it established key concepts like “the least developed countries” and formalized South-South cooperation principles.

This momentum persists today, with regional groups like the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States fostering solidarity, while BRICS expansion and the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area signal stronger Global South integration.

A champion of the Bandung Spirit, China has always upheld the Global South’s development rights. Initiatives like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS-founded New Development Bank have unlocked new financing for emerging economies. Today, the Global South

makes up over 40 percent of global GDP and drives 80 percent of world economic growth. They have transformed from the world economy's former periphery into its most dynamic growth engine.⁷

0.5 From Western Dominance to Global Governance

The Bandung Spirit brought the Global South together and openly questioned the dominance of the West in global affairs. The expanded BRICS mechanism has emerged as a pivotal platform for Southern solidarity. The Third South Summit of the G77+China called for a more inclusive and equitable economic and financial system. Furthering the trend, the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation saw China and 53 African countries unite in advancing global fairness and justice. Together, they signaled a shift toward global governance with the participation of the Global South.

Guided by the Bandung Spirit, China has consistently stood with developing countries in providing development aid, promoting regional integration and deepening South-South cooperation. As a natural member of the Global South, China has provided development assistance to over 160 countries and partnered with more than 150 nations under the Belt and Road Initiative. It has also established the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund.

China's vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, along with the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative, aligns with the Global South's pursuit of peace, development and justice. Rooted in the Bandung Spirit, these ideas value win-win cooperation over hegemonism and reflect the collective aspirations of developing nations.⁸

0.6 Positive Outcome of Global South

A positive outcome for the Global South involves increased economic growth, stronger international influence, and a more equitable global order. This includes advancements in areas like sustainable development, technological innovation, and South-South cooperation, leading to improved living standards and reduced inequalities.⁹

Achieving sustainable economic development is a prevalent challenge faced by mineral-rich countries in the Global South. Besides, they also highlight

on the role of mineral resource rents, government regulatory quality, technological advancement, local downstream processing, supply chain efficiency, and environmental sustainability in fostering regional development in a panel of 10 rich mineral resource-endowed countries of the Global South. Conversely, a lack of technological innovation decreases regional economic growth, though it has a positive effect in the short run. Both local downstream processing and environmental sustainability have a positive impact on fostering regional growth. Supply chain efficiency decreases regional growth in the short run, but has a positive effect in the long run.

Although the term “Global South” has been increasingly invoked by heads of State as a call for enhanced multilateralism and institutional reform, its academic conceptualization remains underdeveloped.¹⁰ Therefore, one has to investigate as to how and where scientific knowledge about the Global South is produced. The most frequent research topics on the role of Global South include globalization, Covid-19, climate change, gender issues, neoliberalism, decolonization and sustainability. There is also an increasing demand for more scientific collaboration to improve visibility of knowledge produced in the Global South institutions.

0.7 In Retrospect

The Global South is no longer a passive actor—In 2025, developing nations across Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific are actively shaping global politics, economics, and security, moving from the periphery to the center of international influence.

Dark Side of Global South

Lumping countries such as these into a single category—and then defining this category as inherently different from a global north—is a barrier to understanding a complex world. Comfort Ero, President of the International Crisis Group non-governmental organisation, agrees. She highlights that it offers a “compelling but misleading simplicity” (as can its counterpart, ‘the West’). Stewart Patrick and Alexandra Huggins of the US-based think tank Carnegie Endowment point out the term includes both small states, such as Benin and Fiji, and major powers. Four of the 10 largest economies in 2023 are in the Global South, according to IMF data (in purchasing power parity terms): China, India, Indonesia and Brazil.⁵ However, Audrey Wilson,

managing editor at Foreign Policy magazine, says that while many analysts question its legitimacy, “what is certain is that the global south will remain a central figure in diplomacy and summitry in 2024.”¹⁰

0.8 Role of India in Global South

India’s economic cooperation with the Global South is pivotal in promoting regional development and shared prosperity. By engaging in trade partnerships, investment initiatives, and technology transfers, India aims to bolster economic resilience and growth among its southern partners.¹¹

India’s economic cooperation with the Global South is pivotal in promoting regional development and shared prosperity. By engaging in trade partnerships, investment initiatives, and technology transfers, India aims to bolster economic resilience and growth among its southern partners. This cooperation includes infrastructure development, agricultural advancements, and industrial collaboration, thereby enhancing economic interconnectedness and creating new opportunities for commerce and development. On the political front, India’s partnerships with countries in the Global South are instrumental in creating a united front on various global issues. By advocating for the interests of developing nations in international forums, India strengthens political solidarity and fosters a collaborative approach to global governance. Geopolitically, India’s strategic alliances and diplomatic engagements help balance regional power dynamics and ensure a stable, multipolar world order.¹² These alliances are critical for addressing shared security concerns and fostering regional stability.

India’s active participation in multilateral organizations such as the BRICS, G20, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) underscores its commitment to global cooperation. Through these platforms, India champions the cause of the Global South, promoting policies that address inequality, promote sustainable development, and ensure fair representation in global decision-making processes. These engagements enable collective problem-solving and foster a spirit of cooperation among diverse nations. Cultural and educational exchanges play a significant role in strengthening India’s ties with the Global South. Through initiatives like scholarships, cultural festivals, and academic collaborations, India promotes mutual understanding and cultural appreciation. Such exchanges not only enrich bilateral relations but also build a foundation of goodwill and shared

heritage, fostering long-term partnerships and people-to-people-connections.

India's developmental cooperation with the Global South focuses on capacity building, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing. By implementing projects in healthcare, education, and infrastructure, India contributes to the socio-economic development of partner countries. Initiatives such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program exemplify India's commitment to leveraging its own developmental experiences to support the progress of fellow developing nations.

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From Bandung 1955 to Today: Collaborative Action for Women's Empowerment in Indonesia

Ella L. Wargadinata

Introduction

The 1955 Asia-Africa Conference (AAC) in Bandung was a milestone in global history. New independent nations declared their commitment to equality, solidarity, and justice in the face of colonial domination. The philosophical values articulated human dignity, solidarity, justice, cooperation, and peace are the foundation of human development. The AAC articulated a “Bandung spirit”, a shared vision among newly Independent nations (Hongoh, 2016). The vision was clear that independence would be meaningful only if every citizen could participate fully in the nation's progress.

The AAC has had a significant impact on Indonesia's development. Since the mid-20th century, Indonesia has made remarkable gains in human development. Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI) reached 75.02 in 2024, up from about 74.39 in 2023, continuing a trend of annual improvements in life expectancy, education, and standard of living (BPS, 2024a). The general health condition also gives a bright performance: maternal mortality has dropped significantly over the past decades. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) decreased from approximately 450 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to about 89 per 100,000 live births in 2022 (WHO, 2023). However, despite such progress, Indonesia still faces significant gaps: the MMR remains high relative to many Southeast Asian

countries, and HDI, though improving, is not yet at the highest levels (Syairaji, *et al.*, 2024).

While the conference did not explicitly place gender equality at its center, the emphasis on freedom and equality provided a normative foundation for evaluating the role of women in nation-building, particularly for Indonesia, which hosted and championed the event. Seventy years after the Bandung Conference, Indonesian women still face latent barriers in the public domain despite notable progress in expanding opportunities.

The Contemporary Landscape of Indonesian Women

Indonesian women achieved significant progress in general development indicators such as education, health, and economic position compared to the 1955 condition. However, compared to the rapid advancement of men and broad human development dynamics, women's position remains vulnerable. The important indicator for assessing women's progress in Indonesia is the Gender Development Index (GDI). Gender Inequality Index (GII) is 0.421 in 2024, showing persistent inequality in reproductive health, empowerment, and labor force participation. (BPS, 2024a). There is a gender gap in labor force participation, where women's rate is 54.5 percent compared to 84.2 percent for men (UNDP, 2022). Female labor force participation has stagnated at 53.3% for decades, significantly lower than male participation at 81.9% and below the regional average of Southeast Asia, 56.6% (AUSAID, 2024).

Women now constitute the majority of tertiary students: approximately 56% of undergraduate students are female, versus 44% male (BPS, 2024b). Female university students outnumber their male counterparts, reflecting how barriers to entry in higher education have been reduced (World Bank, 2023). Even though women have achieved higher educational levels, this has not translated into equal opportunities in leadership or policymaking positions. In School Leadership: Despite making up over half of teachers, women hold only 31% of primary-level principalships (religious schools) and 43% at secular schools, dropping to just 19–22% at upper secondary level (Yarrow & Afkar, 2020). Women comprised about 34–35% of all academic staff. However, female representation sharply declined at higher ranks; 37% in entry-level academic posts, dropping to 23% as associate professor, and only ~12% as full professors. Of the 82 public universities in Indonesia, only

10.98% of rectors were women. All women rectors are professors, compared to 13,41% of men with a doctorate. (Pratama, *et al.*, 2024).

Indonesia has adopted gender-related policies, such as the 30% quota for women in political parties' candidate lists (Law No.12/2003, revised in Law No.7/2017 on Elections) and the National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. However, these policies often remain symbolic rather than substantive. Political parties place women in unelectable positions on ballots, the quota does not translate into real parliamentary seats (UNAIR, 2025). Today, women occupy about 22 percent of parliamentary seats. The figures are even lower at the local level, averaging 14–16 percent across provincial legislatures (BPS, 2022), though women voters are slightly higher than men. Though women's representation rose from just 9% in 1999 to about 17.3% in 2014, then up to 20–21% in recent elections, still below the mandated 30% quota for candidate nominations as constituted on affirmative action (DPR, 2024). Political parties are legally required to nominate at least 30% women candidates, but women often end up in low-ranking or symbolic positions within party hierarchies. Women often are brought in just to fulfill the quota, and then given lower positions instead of leadership positions where they could drive gender-responsive policies (Notosusanto, 2024). The significant barriers to women's participation in politics are: 1) The Public Opinion Survey in 2023 found that 42.5% felt women's political representation remains stagnant, and 23.7%, women are deemed capable but still not considered competent, while 10% judged women incompetent for leadership (Pancawati, 2025); 2) Economic inequality is a significant obstacle: Even though 74% of Indonesians favor women's representation, rich-poor divides reduce solidarity and reinforce traditional expectations of gender roles (Afifah, 2024). The structural (supply) and attitudinal (demand) barriers affect women's electoral success, highlighting that patriarchal norms limit both candidate recruitment and voter support, despite majority support for quotas (Aspinall, *et al.*, 2021).

Despite the increasing number of women civil service in Indonesia's bureaucracy workforce to be almost equal to the number of men civil service, representation of women civil service in high leadership position only 17.42 percent (Krissetyanti, 2018). Public sector promotion systems in Indonesia prioritize seniority and bureaucratic networking over merit. Women, who may take career breaks for childbirth or face double burdens at home, struggle to compete equally in this structure. As a result, women bureaucrats are underrepresented in top management and decision-making

roles. Indonesian childcare support policies remain limited; maternity leave is three months by law (National regulation on Manpower number 13/2003), and paternity leave is just two days. The lack of supportive policies reinforces the perception that women cannot fully commit to leadership roles, further entrenching inequality in career advancement.

Women's health remains a crucial challenge for gender equality. Indonesia's maternal mortality ratio is still high at 189 deaths per 100,000 live births (UNFPA, 2022), which reflects inadequate maternal care and access to health services. Women's health conditions connect directly to child development outcomes, particularly stunting. Although stunting rates among children under five have declined from 27.7 percent in 2019 to 19.8 percent in 2024 (BKKBN, 2024), the number is still above global standards.

These indicators show that empowering women must address maternal health, nutrition, and child care support. These figures reveal that while Indonesian women's development has improved significantly since the 1955 Asia Africa Conference, Women's achievements remain vulnerable when contrasted with men's progress and the broader aspirations of equality set out in Bandung. The dominant patriarchal social and cultural norms in Indonesia are a significant obstacle to achieving gender equality. This culture relegates women to domestic roles, while their participation in public spaces, such as politics and the formal workplace, is often viewed as inadequate. Stereotypes depicting women as less competent in leadership hinder their recruitment and promotion in public and private sectors.

Collaborative actions for Gender Equity

Collaborative governance refers to arrangements where government agencies directly engage with non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process aimed at consensus and shared responsibility. It emphasizes inclusiveness, trust-building, and joint problem-solving across institutional boundaries (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Gender inequality represents a substantial and persistent public problem. Public policies may have a significant impact on gender equality and attaining equal access to opportunities, resources, and rights for women, men, and other gender identities (Parejo & Radulović, 2023). The state remains the backbone of women's development policy through regulations, budget allocation, and affirmative programs such as gender mainstreaming and women's political quotas. However, state initiatives often face

implementation gaps, particularly when policies encounter local cultural or religious resistance. Public policy requires collaboration to secure legitimacy (Bila, *et al.*, 2024).

Religion and culture in Indonesia played a dual role in shaping women's development, as barriers by reinforcing patriarchal norms, prescribing rigid gender roles, and legitimizing unequal power relations. At the same time, specific religious interpretations discourage women from the public domain. These constraints have contributed to the persistent underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions. Male dominance in social, political, and economic structures often hinders women's participation in decision-making, including formulating public policies that affect women's lives. As a result, many policies fail to consider women's needs, reinforcing inequalities.

On the other hand, religion and culture also function as catalysts for empowerment. Major religious organizations such as *Aisyiyah* (Muhammadiyah) and *Muslimat NU* (Nahdlatul Ulama) have long promoted women's education, health awareness, and community leadership, demonstrating how faith-based initiatives can advance gender equality. Similarly, when reinterpreted inclusively, cultural values of solidarity and collective responsibility can strengthen women's participation in local governance and social development. Religion and culture should not be seen as monolithic obstacles but as contested arenas where competing interpretations exist. When harnessed progressively, they can provide moral legitimacy and social trust to expand women's opportunities, but when interpreted conservatively, they risk reinforcing exclusion. Recognizing this dual function is essential for designing collaborative governance strategies that work with, rather than against, Indonesia's cultural and religious realities.

A substantial public policy approach to women's development in Indonesia must go beyond symbolic commitments such as quotas or gender mainstreaming checklists and instead dismantle structural barriers that hinder women's advancement. The integration of gender perspectives into every stage of policymaking, recruitment, promotion, budgeting, and evaluation, while also addressing work-life balance through extended parental leave, childcare facilities, and flexible working arrangements. In politics, reforming party candidate selection and campaign financing mechanisms is crucial to ensure women have fair access to winnable seats

rather than tokenistic representation. In the bureaucracy and academia, transparent merit-based promotion systems, leadership training, and mentoring for women can strengthen the career pipeline. Such measures represent substantive interventions that transform the opportunities available to women and the institutional culture that has historically marginalized them.

Indonesia's diverse socio-cultural landscape makes collaborative governance desirable and necessary for advancing gender equality. Indonesian local religious leaders, cultural institutions, and grassroots organizations often hold more legitimacy in daily life than government actors. In the Indonesian context, this approach is highly relevant because women's empowerment is a technical matter of policy design and a cultural and social issue that requires the active involvement of communities, religious organizations, NGOs, and the private sector. By adopting collaborative governance, the state acknowledges that sustainable solutions to gender inequality can only emerge when diverse actors co-create policies, pool resources, and commit to shared outcomes. The engagement of informal institutions creates both challenges and opportunities.

Conclusion

Seventy years after the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung championed solidarity, equality, and dignity, the reality of Indonesian women's development remains marked by both progress and persistent inequality. Education levels have improved and women's participation in the workforce and politics has increased, yet their presence in top leadership positions, policy-making roles, and academia continues to lag behind men. This gap cannot be explained solely by individual choices but reflects the deeper influence of structural, cultural, and religious dynamics. Religion and culture in Indonesia function with dual characteristics—at times constraining women's mobility through conservative interpretations and patriarchal norms, yet at other times acting as powerful catalysts for empowerment, as seen in progressive faith-based initiatives and matrilineal traditions. Because of this ambivalence, solutions cannot rest on government action alone. Instead, women's empowerment requires collaborative action that integrates the state, religious organizations, cultural authorities, civil society, private sector, academia, and media into a hybrid governance model. Only by weaving together formal policies with informal legitimacy can Indonesia

transform its development trajectory and truly fulfill the Bandung spirit, ensuring that equality and dignity become lived realities for Indonesian women

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Algerian Revolutionary Ideals and the Bandung Spirit

Mourad Aty

1. Introduction

The Algerian revolution which culminated in the nation's independence from French colonial rule in 1962, was not only a long protracted struggle for national sovereignty but also a pivotal moment in the broader global liberation struggle. The revolutionary ideals that fueled Algeria's fight for freedom became foundational teachings for decolonization thought, advocating for anti-colonialism, self-determination and solidarity among third world nations. Most of the aforementioned ideals can be traced back to the 1955 Asian-African Bandung Conference which emphasized the importance of a free world that would collectively challenge colonial and neo-colonial powers. Algeria's revolutionary teachings for instance, called for the establishment of an economically independent and politically unified Global South, free from foreign exploitation and internal divisions. This legacy influenced both its ideological orientation and its diplomatic behavior. Support for liberation movements is not incidental but rather a core component of its self-identity as a nation. These revolutionary ideals were tightly related to the Asian-African Conference. Reference to Bandung was among the very first diplomatic actions of the National Liberation Front (FLN) which were stated in the Soummam Platform.¹ The Bandung spirit

¹ The Soummam Platform is a key political and structural document adopted by the FLN. It was established during the revolution at the Soummam Congress on August 20, 1956, in the Soummam Valley, hence the name.

and all what it stood for, strongly resonated with Algerian nationalists, who later modeled parts of their diplomacy after its principles. The long standing ideals still echo today as a shared legacy that merits being championed and further built upon.

2. Algerian War of Independence and the Bandung Conference

The outbreak of the Algerian war of independence on November 1, 1954, led by the FLN, marked a decisive rupture and the beginning of a bloody struggle. The revolution arose from a combination of deep-rooted frustrations stemming from colonial rule, economic inequality, political marginalization of the local population, and a long history of massacres such as the 1844–45 “enfumades”² and the May 8, 1945 atrocities. During the French colonial rule, Algerians faced institutionalized discrimination through the ‘Code de l’Indigénat’.³ They were deprived of full citizenship rights, and were largely shut out of genuine political involvement.

Six months after the outbreak of the Algerian revolutionary war, twenty-nine emerging states were convened by the governments of Burma, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), India, and Indonesia, gathered from April 18 to 24, 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia, with the aim of addressing their economic development and consolidating their hard-won sovereignty. Bandung marked a shift away from the dominance of imperial powers, particularly the United States which had resisted movements for self-determination (Massad, 2024).

The conference played a pivotal role in the internationalization the Algerian struggle for independence. The Algerian nationalist cause was represented by key figures such as Hocine Ait Ahmed and M'hamed Yazid from the FLN, while Chadli Mekki, a member of the Algerian National Movement (MNA), was also present. The representation issue is problematic in Algeria. *El Moudjahid* article which appeared on September 4, 1988 announcing the death of Chadli Mekki, referred to him as a convert to the FLN confirming

² ‘Enfumades’ were a military tactic used against Algerians based on smoke inhalation or suffocation.

³ Code de l’Indigénat was a set of legal measures implemented by French colonial authorities in their colonies to control and discriminate against the indigenous populations.

that he had represented it in Bandung. In response to that, Mohamed Mamchaoui, former MNA official, explained that Mekki represented the MNA. He argued that the FLN after having learned of the conference was taking place in Bandung, it dispatched Aït Ahmed to represent it. However, this did not prevent Nehru from reading the message sent by Messali Hadj and delivered by Mekki himself (Mamchaoui, 1988).

In the 2013 *El Moudjahid Memory Forum*, Abdelmadjid Chikhi, general director of the National Archives Center, argued that the issue which arose at the Bandung Conference was the presence of two Algerian delegations: one representing the FLN, headed by Aït Ahmed and M'hamed Yazid, and another representing the MNA, led by Chadli Mekki. He explained that at the initial stage of the War of Independence, the FLN had newly been formed. Given its recent emergence and lack of prior diplomatic engagement with the movement, the organizers of the conference stated that in the absence of formal relations, they would recognize solely the MNA as the legitimate representative of Algeria. According to Chikhi, it was at that moment that the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser requested to be entrusted with resolving the matter and appealed to his fellow leaders to allow him to mediate the issue with the Algerians. Chikhi argued that Nasser subsequently held discussions with both delegations where Mekki ultimately decided to withdraw and renounce participation alongside the MNA delegation. The latter acknowledged the fact that the revolution was advancing from one victory to another, therefore, it is illogical for the FLN not to be represented at the conference (Cited in Soraya, 2013).

In his account of the event, Hocine Ait Ahmed says about the Maghreb delegation, "Salah Benyoucef and I arrived in Cairo more than a week ahead of Allal El Fassi of the Istiqlal party, who was accompanied by Abdelmadjid Bendjelloun, the party's representative at the Maghreb office, and M'hamed Yazid." (Cited in Bouaricha, 2015). Regarding the matter of the Algerian representation, archival sources such as the conference's recorded footage and video material, show clearly the Algerian delegation represented by Hocine Aït Ahmed and M'hamed Yazid. The footage shows both of them inside the main hall before, during and after the sessions. More than that, the checked material shows M'hamed Yazid present at the airport upon the arrival of the Egyptian President Nasser. The available footage clearly shows the Maghreb delegation in the presence of Ait Ahmed, Yazid and the Tunisian militant Salah Benyoucef among others.

3. Bandung Conference and the Dynamics of Its Aftermath

Algeria was addressed in the final communiqué of the Asian-African Conference under the sections of “Cultural Co-operation” and “Problems of Dependent Peoples”. The document condemns colonialism “in all its manifestations” as an “evil” and an impediment to human rights, peace, and progress. More specifically, in the section on dependent peoples (part D.2), the communiqué declares support for “the rights of the people of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to self-determination and independence.” It also urges the French government to bring about a peaceful settlement of the issue (i.e. the colonial relationship with Algeria, as well as Morocco and Tunisia) “without delay”. Thus the document recognizes Algerians as a dependent/colonized people whose right to self-determination should be affirmed. It aligns the Bandung Conference’s moral and political stance with Algeria’s struggle against colonial rule, and calls upon France as the colonial power to immediately negotiate and find a peaceful solution.

Algeria was also addressed in Section B: Cultural Cooperation. The document acknowledges that colonial powers have historically denied dependent peoples’ basic rights in education and culture, which hampered personal development and prevented cultural exchange. It highlights that such suppression of national cultures had been particularly evident in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, where the right to study one’s own language and culture had been suppressed. The conference condemned these practices as violations of fundamental human rights and impediments to cultural advancement and international cooperation. This acknowledgment underscores the shared experiences of colonized nations and the collective commitment to cultural cooperation and the preservation of national identities.

The inclusion of Algeria in the final communiqué of the 1955 Bandung Conference holds substantial historical and political significance within the broader context of decolonization. By explicitly affirming the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and independence, alongside Morocco and Tunisia, the conference positioned Algeria’s anti-colonial struggle as an integral part of a wider Afro-Asian resistance to imperial domination. The communiqué’s call for a peaceful resolution and its condemnation of colonialism as a violation of human rights provided crucial moral and diplomatic legitimacy to Algeria’s nationalist movement at a formative stage of its war of independence which had begun in 1954.

Furthermore, the collective stance of the newly independent Asian and African states signaled the emergence of a unified post-colonial political consciousness, challenging Western hegemony and asserting the agency of the Global South in international affairs. As such, the Bandung Conference not only symbolized intercontinental solidarity but also contributed to reshaping the discourse on colonialism in international forums.

One year after Bandung, the conference resonated in the Soummam Platform. The document stressed the historical merit of the conference along with the UN 10th session in destroying the legal fiction of “French Algeria” (Soummam Platform, 1956, p.23). It referred to Bandung governments as an essential tool to completely counter the slander spread by the French government, its diplomacy, and its mainstream press. In the third section of the document titled: Means of Action and Propaganda, the fourth element which dealt with the search for alliances reads “We must systematically ensure the preservation of the independence of the Algerian Revolution. It is essential to nullify the slander propagated by the French government, its diplomatic corps, and its major press outlets, which seek to portray us as lacking roots within the captive Algerian nation.” The first strategy was to “Encourage the governments of the Bandung Conference, in addition to their intervention at the United Nations, to exert diplomatic and, if necessary, direct economic pressure on France.” (Soummam Platform, 1956, p.24).

Following the conference, global backing for Algerian independence grew, with several Bandung nations and UN member states collaborating to have the Algerian issue placed on the agenda of the UN General Assembly’s tenth session. On July 29, 1955, delegates from Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, and Yemen sent a letter to the UN Secretary General where they affirmed the principle of self-determination and the general need to safeguard human rights. They discussed deteriorating situation in Algeria, warning that it posed a threat to peace and could lead to international tensions (Johnson, 2015). The signatories called on the United Nations to “bring about a situation conducive to negotiations between France and the true representatives of the Algerian people.” (Cited in Johnson, 2015, p.163).

During six meetings in the General Assembly, delegates debated Algeria. The General Committee’s recommendation not to include it as an agenda

item was narrowly defeated on September 30, 1955 by 28 votes to 27 with 5 abstentions (Johnson, 2015:161). Before Bandung, unlike Algeria, the Tunisian and Moroccan struggles were already addressed in the Bogor Conference's joint communique (Joint Communiqué, Section 13). Hocine Ait Ahmed explained that saying, "Nehru only agreed to make a concession on the Palestinian issue in exchange for silence on Algeria." (Cited in Bouaricha, 2015).

4. Post-Independence Revolutionary Identity, Foreign Policy Orientation and Alignment with Bandung Principles

Algeria constructed a post-colonial identity that was deeply rooted in its revolutionary war. The experience of the armed struggle did not only shape national consciousness but also became central to the state's legitimacy and ideological foundation. Under its early revolutionary leaders, Algeria adopted a state-led socialist model aimed at economic self-sufficiency and social transformation. Key sectors were nationalized, and policies focused on agrarian and industrial reforms. This complex process of nation-building was closely tied to a broader vision of resisting imperialism and constructing a new social order grounded in anti-colonial values.

Algeria's post-independence revolutionary identity and foreign policy were closely shaped by key political figures who translated the ideals of the liberation struggle into state policy. Ahmed Ben Bella, the country's first president, was instrumental in establishing Algeria's image as a leader of anti-colonialism and solidarity among newly independent nations. He cultivated strong ties with socialist countries, notably the Soviet Union and Cuba, and turned Algiers into a diplomatic center for liberation movements from across the Global South. With Houari Boumédiène, Algeria's involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement increased support for independence movements abroad, and promoted global economic reform through advocacy for a new international economic order. Both Ben Bella and Boumédiène were central to shaping Algeria's early post-colonial identity portraying it as a revolutionary state committed to Third World unity and systemic transformation on the global stage.

Intellectually, Frantz Fanon as a radical theorist, rejected the assimilationist tendencies of colonial elites and advocated for the construction of a new sociopolitical order rooted in cultural renewal and human dignity. His analysis extended beyond formal decolonization to include sharp critiques

of neocolonialism and the failures of post-independence leadership, particularly the complicity of national bourgeois classes. As a result, Fanon's thought became a critical resource for a wide range of liberation struggles, influencing revolutionary movements from Africa and Latin America to the Middle East and the Caribbean.

Algeria capitalized on its revolutionary legacy to cultivate a wide range of international partnerships based on shared commitments to anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. By presenting itself as a key player in the global fight against colonial domination and racial injustice, Algeria gained the support of newly independent nations across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as allies within the socialist camp. It became a center for revolutionary activity by hosting liberation groups and providing them with political, material, and diplomatic assistance. By harboring around twenty exiled revolutionary organizations, Algeria became the "Mecca of Revolution".⁴

Bandung was tightly related to Algeria's leading role in the post-colonial world. Jansen (1965) stated Asian and African nations aimed to hold the Second Asian-African Conference in Algiers in 1965, as a continuation of the 1955 Bandung meeting. However, what he called a 'Second Bandung' was called off owing to a confluence of multifaceted internal and external factors.

During the early 1970s, Algeria emerged as a central force in the global campaign for a new international economic order, using its leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations to push for structural reforms in the global economy. At the Fourth Non-Aligned Summit held in Algiers in 1973, President Houari Boumédiène called for a revision of international law to reflect the growing influence of newly independent and developing nations, insisting on their right to exercise full sovereignty over natural resources without external interference (Kesseiri, 2021).

⁴ The phrase "Mecca of Revolution" was popularized by Amílcar Cabral, leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). It draws on the religious symbolism of Mecca as a place of pilgrimage, except, in this case, Algiers became a political pilgrimage site for revolutionaries from across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and even the U.S. cabral said, "Muslims make the pilgrimage to Mecca, the Christians to the Vatican and the national liberation movements to Algiers!" https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/12/pilgrimage-algeria-mecca-african-liberation/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

4. Conclusion

Algeria's post-independence foreign policy illustrates a profound and consistent embodiment of the Bandung Spirit. It is deeply rooted in the revolutionary ideals which were forged during its struggle against French colonialism. The principles of self-determination, anti-imperialism, and solidarity with oppressed peoples that defined Algeria's war of liberation were seamlessly extended into its international engagements. As a leading member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Algeria actively sought to balance relations between the Western and Eastern blocs while maintaining its political and economic autonomy. It cultivated strong ties with newly independent states, reinforcing Afro-Asian solidarity by hosting key NAM gatherings and participating in United Nations forums to advocate for a new international economic order. Algeria's nationalization of its resources served as a powerful symbol of economic decolonization and sovereignty, aligning with broader Third World demands for structural reforms in the global economy. Algeria emerged as a vocal advocate within OPEC and the United Nations for equitable economic relations. Through these efforts, it gained increasing recognition as a leading voice of the Global South and a central actor in shaping a more just international order.

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CHALLENGES: DECOLONISATION

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The Social Base of Anti-Colonialism: Yesterday and Today

Bruno Drweski

The social structure of colonial societies was based on the fact that civil servants from the Metropolis held power and that they led a class of administrators in their service and allowed the development of traditional clans linked to the economic interests of the Metropolis, what was called the comprador bourgeoisie. Faced with these groups directly linked to colonialism, all other social groups existing in the colonies had more or less an interest in emancipating themselves from a foreign power that controlled them, exploited them and prevented them from developing freely. This situation made possible to gather around the anti-colonialist movements all social groups ranging from the national bourgeoisie whose development depended on the local market to the urban and rural sub-proletariat, including the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the working class. It is also this situation which explains why Marxist analysis played a key role in the formulation of national liberation programs, including within most nationalist or religious political organizations, and why the general tendency was to create anti-colonialist fronts representing the different political or ideological sensitivities ready to mobilize against the colonial powers.

It was this situation that led to the convening of the Congress of the Peoples of the Orient in Baku in 1920, the precursor to the Bandung Conference. It also explains the Communist International's support for anti-colonial insurrections, particularly the Abd el Krim uprising in the Moroccan Rif, but also the original alliance between the Chinese nationalists of the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, the creation of the Vietminh League, the formulation of the Nasakom project by the Indonesian leader

Sukarno, and most national liberation projects such as the various political parties supporting an Arab socialist project, the Mossadegh government in Iran, the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, or the creation of the ANC in South Africa. Until the victory of each national liberation struggle was achieved, and despite colonial intrigues aimed at dividing populations along ethnic, tribal or religious lines, it can be seen that the general tendency was to bring together the existing social classes, oppressed or marginalized by the colonialists, into united fronts aiming at the total independence of their country.

It should also be noted that, although almost everywhere the communist or Marxist component was present in the anti-colonial struggles, and even when it was the communist parties that played a central role in national liberation, as in China, Vietnam or Korea, everywhere we witnessed a policy of class alliance between the classes of salaried workers and the classes of owners and small owners of the means of production. This was to give strength to the movements and then to the States that had acquired their independence, and which was to constitute the basis on which the Bandung Conference could be convened, which led to the creation of the Movement of Non-Aligned States and all sorts of international groupings such as the Group of 77 at the UN and regional associations such as the Union for African Unity.

But, even if we witnessed counter-trends, such as the break between the Kuomintang and the Chinese communists at the end of the 1920s, the enmities which developed between the Arab communist movements and that of the Muslim Brotherhood, not to mention the break between Muslims and Hindus in India, overall, we can see that it was the general trend towards unity which was affirmed as long as the colonial countries had not obtained their independence.

The Reasons for the Breakdown in the National Liberation Dynamic

Once political independence was achieved, the focus of political decisions tended to shift towards economic development. And there, as development policies led to the creation of a national economy, a national industry, and national enterprises, contradictions between supporters of a more or less extensive socialization of the means of production and exchange, and supporters of the development of a more or less national capitalism grew. This led to the emergence of new leaders who broke with autonomous

developmental policies, lured by promises of foreign investments from wealthy capitalist and formerly colonizing countries. This phenomenon was symbolized by the emergence of heads of state from state and military structures who were initially committed to the idea of independence and sovereignty but who broke completely with these policies to advocate what Third World leaders would call “neo-colonialism”. Among these figures who symbolized this break, we should mention not the conservative leaders who were from the beginning loyal to Western colonial powers such as the Arab monarchies, the leaders of “Françafrique”, or supporters of the United States, but those who were originally supporters or at least fellow travelers of the various forms of “united fronts” or “socialism”, Soeharto, Moussa Traoré, Sadate, Compaore, etc. And then also later, the whole mass of formerly communist leaders in Eastern Europe who became supporters of neoliberal globalization.

All these changes, sometimes abrupt and even brutal, cannot be explained solely by the ambivalent and authoritarian nature of this or that leader, the opportunism of upstarts, or even the corruption of some of them. Given the massive nature of this phenomenon, we cannot neglect to analyze the evolution of social forces within countries liberated from colonialism in the Third World or traditionally located on the margins of the large capitalist market, such as the countries of the Eastern European “Second World”. Alongside persistent cultural phenomena stemming from both archaic social traditions that had survived under the shelter of colonialism, and the continued cultural hegemony of imperialist countries across the planet, it can be seen that the political independence acquired in the 1950s and 1960s made it possible to create new economic structures while also enabling the development of local national bourgeoisies that were able to benefit from the protection of the state that had been formed with their assistance. This progression was observable both in the framework of legal economic policies and the realities that had allowed the development of a parallel economy, an open door to the generalization of corruption. Little by little, a part of the national bourgeoisies that had benefited from independence began to find restrictive the “socializing” rules adopted as a compromise at the time of independence between the patriotic bourgeois forces and the working classes having no means of social advancement and dependent both on their own labor force and social measures from a protectionist state. Protecting both the national market against competition

from imperialist powers and the popular classes against the growing affirmation of new privileged groups nourished by state policies.

This phenomenon of weakening development policies in favor of the broad masses began in certain leading countries of anti-colonialism, Indonesia or Mali in the 1960s, Egypt in the 1970s, post-Sankara Burkina Faso, etc., to spread to other ex-colonial countries before extending to the socialist countries of Europe in growth crisis and where new bourgeoisies were able to take power, thus generalizing to the entire planet the trend towards the restoration of the absolute power of the former colonial or neo-colonial powers of Western Europe, North America and Japan.

The Social Basis of Neocolonial Regression Policies

Colonialism and imperialism have always operated according to the center/periphery model, which operates both geographically, between and within countries, and socially, between a “central” class and “peripheral” classes. This “game” continued after the socialist countries’ break with capitalism and the subsequent wave of decolonization. Countries, nations, and social stratas began to consider strengthening their positions, no longer by relying on their country’s working masses to nibble away at development opportunities at the expense of the local comprador bourgeoisies and their colonial masters, but by negotiating a new division of roles, positions, and economic benefits with the still-dominant world powers and their elites. This required a break with previous socialist tendencies and, thus, with their country’s policies of generalized development in favor of all populations. And it is this tendency that has been able to triumph in stages, but in particular from the end of the 1970s when the profits from the nationalization of natural resources in the countries of the South could be placed in tax havens protected by the Western powers or could allow the purchase of luxury goods or weapons corresponding to the interests of these old national bourgeoisies tempted by class collaboration on a global scale aimed at integrating themselves into the networks of the globalized big bourgeoisie.

This policy became widespread after the self-dissolution of the socialist camp by local bourgeoisies, which created a global dynamic in favor of neoliberal capitalism from the 1990s until recently. When it became clear that no bourgeoisie from a country peripheral to the North Atlantic center would be accepted into the club of the “happy few” governing the planet.

Even if sometimes a few individuals could access privileged globalized status, the initial core of the Western bourgeoisies, and in particular the Anglo-Saxon or Judeo-Anglo-Saxon ones, remains a “glass ceiling” inaccessible to upstarts from other countries. This explains the emerging trends in Third World countries, often renamed the “Global South” today, and in Russia, aimed at disconnecting themselves from the financial, monetary and security networks that have dominated the planet since the end of the Soviet Union, and of which structures such as BRICS, SCO, the Group of 77, etc. have become the symbol.

The Renaissance of Non-Alignment and New Social Structures

The emergence of new poles of power has already enabled the creation of a de facto multipolar world in place of the unipolar order imposed in the 1990s. This happened in part because the bourgeoisies that came to power in the wake of decolonization were able to assert themselves after discovering that the doors to the salons of the globalist bourgeoisie would remain closed to them and that they would have to settle for a seat in the lobby at most. But it is generally these classes that are setting the pace in countries reconnecting with their sovereignist traditions: Russia, Brazil, India, Iran, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, South Africa, not to mention smaller countries that are more easily clienteled. The working classes, which had played a major role in the national liberation struggles, are today at best granted the role of accompanying these processes, at worst the role of observers. This also explains, for example, the ambiguity visible today in the policies of countries like Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, not to mention Egypt or India, in the conflict that the genocidal entity based in Tel Aviv but organically supported by Washington is waging against the Palestinian people, the global symbol of all the humiliations and aggressions of the existing unequal world.

The same is true in all other conflicts where countries or emerging powers are always hesitant to engage with a consistency and tenacity comparable to what was done during wars of national liberation, not only by the peoples concerned but also by the anti-imperialist powers that supported them. And this is largely due to the much more limited class base of the powers in the emerging powers and the much more marginal role of the broad masses in these political systems. There are therefore “contradictions within the people” that have evolved at the expense of the working classes in each of these countries, because the dividing line between antagonistic

contradictions and contradictions within the people has become more blurred.

In this context, there are two powers that exhibit characteristics that merit further study: China and Iran. In China, even though the country's social structure and the founding principles of political power are based on an alliance of the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie, the influence of the bourgeoisie seems more pronounced than in the years following the liberation of 1949. At the same time, the ownership structure of the economy and the ideological education of the population leave more room for influences from the working classes.

In Iran, while the system's legitimizing ideology may seem far removed from a class analysis, its regime remains the fruit of a popular revolution that promoted an ideology justifying special concern for the poorest and revolutionary and cooperative structures that ensure that the Iranian economy is not, unlike in Russia, Brazil, or India, typically capitalist. In all the cases mentioned above, both in countries proclaiming their commitment to progressive social or socialist policies and in those that are capitalist, the aggressiveness shown by the imperialist camp pushes them towards a national mobilization and an economic emancipation that can only strengthen the position of the working classes within them in the long term.

It is too early to know what the fate of post-colonial countries will be, but we believe we can affirm that the question of class, of class relations, is reappearing today in broad daylight, even if in a largely unprecedented form. The opportunism that characterizes much of the behavior of the ruling « patriotic bourgeois » elites in the countries of the South and the East should no longer be able to impose itself as before, and therefore new social relations will not fail to impose themselves if these countries want to continue to emerge on the international scene as poles of autonomous development.

Convergence and Conversion: NAM and Asia after 70 Years

T.P. Wilkinson

The Non-Aligned Movement was a product of the October Revolution, but a deformed product. The revolution in Russia demonstrated the possibility of a peasant economy with a minimal industrial proletariat to overthrow an underdeveloped (in terms of industrialisation) state and erect a new state committed not only to industrial development but social reform. Contemporaries among the emergent anti-colonialism movements were clearly inspired by the success in Russia, despite the massive force directed at the end of the Great War (at least until 1922 for the USA) to restore a regime that would continue to exploit the country for the benefit of Western capital.

The question of alignment was in fact created by the massive propaganda campaign launched by the US, specifically Bernard Baruch, Walter Lippman and then the quasi-American Winston Churchill, to obscure the real origins of the Second World War as well as repudiate the Yalta and Cairo agreements, which were intended to end the West's war against the Soviet Union (and provide an alternative to reparations). The so-called Cold War forced mainly national bourgeois movements to reach some kind of compromise with their former oppressors in return for assurance that de-colonialisation would not lead to class war. In Eastern Europe and the former European colonies (US colonies—the Philippine and Puerto Rican commonwealths—were excluded from the general concept of UN-guided de-colonialisation). This was consistent with long-standing US policy of Manifest Destiny and its 20th century objective to de-colonize European

possessions in order to absorb them into American empire. Alignment and hence non-alignment comprised a dichotomy not unlike the one Rome imposed on Christendom when Orthodoxy was pronounced to be schismatic.

The climax of this process was the Bandung Conference, seventy years ago.

Nehru's India and Sukarno's Indonesia became the driving forces within the NAM, if only by virtue of the size of the respective countries. In the course of the seven decades since Bandung, the only European member, Yugoslavia, was violently extinguished. Thus, Non-Alignment became a largely Asian phenomenon with some African states, like Algeria and Egypt (until the overthrow of Nasser) contributing to the movement's force. From the Western perspective, the NAM became a competitive annoyance at its privileged institutions like the United Nations.

The debate about the legacy of Bandung arises naturally from the emergence of the so-called BRICS format. The fact that BRICS is composed of countries that were never historically non-aligned actually gives the comparison at least the appearance of anachronism. Behind this curious analogy lie the fiction of the Cold War (a political warfare concept) and the contradiction between national bourgeois revolution and popular liberation struggle. The compulsion of Euro-American imperialists to suppress bourgeois nationalism forced a merger with popular liberation struggles that would otherwise have been untenable. The end of the so-called Cold War in 1989, but already started in 1974, offered the frustrated national bourgeoisie the opportunity to omit popular liberation entirely and skip directly into financial (hedge-fund) capitalism, where nationalist ideology was an embarrassing obstacle.

Some have theorized that the end of the Soviet Union (1991) meant the end of socialism/communism. Thus, the "one world" was not simply the end of forced military competition but the elimination of any competing socio-economic order. Here the confusion does not stop. According to the Western storyline (narrative), communism/socialism failed. Those in the former "socialist" countries also claimed that their system failed. The consequences of this surrender were either to insist that the rudiments of that system be preserved under a state that was intrinsically hostile to such values or that the national integrity (purely political) independence of countries be respected despite their lack of economic and social viability.

The counter-argument and accompanying counter-insurgency expressed the ideological position that the Revolution(s) had failed on their own account and deserved to be erased along with those who had fought and defended them.

Therefore, the challenge of transcending the original sin of “non-alignment” is to recognize the deception at the base of “alignment” itself. The transition from the counter-insurgency era in which Western empires merged with their corporate sponsors and merged “upstream” into the Anglo-American financial oligarchy has meant that the original deception had to be modified to accommodate the new situation arising from the defeat and dissolution of the USSR. If one re-reads Mackinder’s infamous 1904 essay, *The Geographical Pivot*, it is easy to recognize the convergence of old Europe with the Round Table vision of the Anglo-American Commonwealth (the rebranded Empire). Russia was to be dismembered—a feat partially achieved by the dissolution of the USSR in violation of its own constitution by brigands subordinated to Western capital. Mackinder expressed very clearly that Russia was there for the taking were Britain able to destroy its political cohesion, freeing virtually endless natural resources for even greater exploitation than under the Romanov dynasty.

The constant rant about a new “Cold War” again depicts the targets of Western empire as the aggressors who have to be warded off like Genghis Khan or Attila, today personified as Vladimir Putin. Ukraine, an entity whose existence derives from the destruction of Austria-Hungary and the weakness of revolutionary Russia, is elevated to martyrdom. Thus shaping the “non-aligned” discourse again in favour of the old myth of the “Iron Curtain”, to be torn away by all freedom loving potentates and republics. At the same time, that other target of the *Anti-Comintern Pact* (aka Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis, which according to Dr Ribbentrop included Britain and the US as silent partners), China is caricatured as a new better-dressed and modernized “yellow peril”. Despite the fact that Russia and China have never exported their culture, while the West since the Latin ascendancy has converted the world to theirs, too few rulers or members of ruling elites in the post-1945 states are ready to accept the real non-alignment policies of those countries.

What kind of blindness does it take to see that the reigning prime minister of the Zionist entity in Palestine has declared before the UN General Assembly that his goal is to block the restoration of New Silk Roads or the BRI?

A careful look at the map of today's unending Western aggression shows that this follows the fault line where the old Silk Roads connected East and Central Asia with the European isthmus. The militarization, hostility and open war waged from the Baltic to the Gulf of Aden ought to be easily understood as the convergence of financial and military power from Greenwich, England to Greenwich, New York. Atlantic alignment confronts Rest of World.

The proper and accurate description of the 20th century of world war begins by recognizing that it was one continuous war against socialism or communism (as Lenin described it, "soviet power plus electrification of the entire country"). Therefore, we can describe the past century in three convenient phases: anti-communism (in Lenin's sense of the term), counter-insurgency (the covert opposition to the hypocritical UN Charter principles of self-determination and self-government) and with the demise of the Soviet Union, the counter-terrorism era. As George Orwell rightly recognized, Engsoc (his name for what the Milner Group and Fabians had imposed upon the British working class), reverses all the terms of public speech into their opposite. The US and its vassals waged war against anti-imperialists by calling them insurgents to be neutralized. Then in 1989 with the disappearance of "communism" in its Soviet form, the opposition to full-scale privatization of the world was called "terrorism". However, the Western states that had fought to preserve empire from 1945 onward were also privatized. No longer in need of "official cover" the international financial oligarchy and its industrial partners declared that the "state had withered away". There was no irony intended. Although for a century socialists were mocked for claiming that socialism would render the State redundant, it was capitalism that obliterated the very democratic institutions it ostensibly required to flourish.

Dismantling the State was necessary to deny the population the platform for political and economic control. Whereas the socialist saw the State as a means of taming Capital, Capital saw it as a means of controlling the population. All the empires of the European isthmus initially conquered by means of private, chartered companies, like the VOC and British East India Company. When the cost of maintaining these private empires became too high and resistance by the populations too great, then the State took over. That job done by 1989, the assets could then be returned to the shareholders—the owners of those private predecessors. One might call the period from 1884 until 1989 one giant sale and lease-back transaction, to

use a common term in high finance. As long as the Soviet Union supplied an alternative organizing principle this fiction had to be maintained.

In order to avoid the problems that led to the nationalization of the chartered companies, new means had to be found. The arms industry had long since become a white elephant. Western militaries were incapable of fielding the manpower or the military skills to defeat main battle formations anywhere. Counter-insurgency had prevented most countries from developing any kind of defensible sovereignty. However, it had not resolved the population shortage that has been the principle disadvantage of the West. (The US war against Korea proved that very early.) Instead, the privatization of government (ostensibly to resolve the 1980s debt crises) left agitated peoples with no strong, organized and accountable defence.

Yet, Korea and Vietnam had been tough lessons for the West. So the most successful element of those wars—the covert terrorism known in Vietnam as the Phoenix Program—was globalized. There were no nationalist threats to defeat. Instead, peoples and weak states were to be terrorized by deniable private armies, dressed in synthetic ideologies like “radical Islam”. These terrorist operations had two benefits. One, they were directly profitable means of stealing resources using deniable brigands. Two, they could be used to create a new general paranoia, the fear of terrorism, especially consummated in the US campaign officially designated (even in military decorations) as the Global War on Terror. This is the era we entered in 2001 with the spectacular demolition of the New York World Trade Center by covert operators of Western governments, amplified by the entirely Western corporate media, to this day.

So now we are not asked whether we align with the West or the East, but whether we are willing to align with the masters of terrorism in order to protect ourselves from their barbarism. While it was reluctantly admitted that someone could be a communist or a socialist and still bear traces of humanity worthy of international protection, no one can claim to defend terrorism. Hence, the world no longer has the choice of “non-alignment”. There is only the moral imperative for all to be aligned in “counter-terrorism”. This is the precursor to the emergent neo-feudal world desired by the descendants of those who lost their absolute privileges to the bourgeoisie and working class in the wake of the 1789 French Revolution.

In fact, we can thank English historiography for the depiction of the republican spirit as “terrorist”. The so-called Reign of Terror was the brief

period when the revolution fought desperately to avoid strangulation by the French feudal lords and their English sympathisers. In fact, even then the “white terror” that followed killed thousands more than died at the hands of revolutionaries. That terror is never mentioned, except perhaps with the euphemism “restoration”. Just as today, the numbers of imperial forces who died defending empires are dwarfed by the millions slaughtered in the process.

If we review the 20th century through this lens and pay careful attention to the consistency and convergence that has produced our current financial terrorism regime on a global scale, then we can also see that the violent conversion which began in Latin Christianity survives today as the preferred means of alignment. As attributed to Ignatius Loyola and US invaders alike—kill them all, let god sort them out.

Non-alignment in the future ought to be considered a serious approach to foreign relations. However, it should be quite clear what “alignment” really means when constructing alternatives.

AI in Indonesia: Emancipation or Digital Colonialism? Reclaiming the Spirit of Bandung in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Etin Indrayani

I. Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has positioned Artificial Intelligence as a pivotal force in global digital transformation. Indonesia, as Southeast Asia's largest digital economy, actively integrates AI across strategic sectors through its National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2020–2045, focusing on healthcare, bureaucratic reform, education, research, and food security (Kominfo, 2021). Initial implementations include NLP-based public service chatbots, adaptive educational technology (edtech) platforms, and agricultural innovations.

However, significant structural challenges persist. Digital infrastructure disparities remain substantial, with approximately 64% of Indonesians having internet access, and pronounced urban-rural divides persist (World Bank, 2021). More critically, dependence on foreign cloud platforms, algorithms, and AI frameworks poses a threat to digital sovereignty. Kwet (2019) identifies this dynamic as digital colonialism—a new form of imperialism where Global South nations provide data and markets without receiving equitable technological returns. This pattern extends beyond Indonesia throughout the Global South (Salami, 2024; Correa Lucero, & Martens, 2025).

This article argues that contemporary debates surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) in Indonesia cannot be divorced from a larger, more profound narrative battle: the tension between technological emancipation and digital colonialism. It posits that the deployment of AI is not a neutral, technical process but is deeply embedded in geopolitical and economic power dynamics. Thus, the central research questions this article confronts is: Does the presence of AI in Indonesia ultimately serve as an empowering tool of emancipation for its people, fostering local innovation and self-determination, or does it inadvertently reinforce the pervasive, marginalizing structures of digital colonialism by creating new dependencies on foreign technology, data, and capital?

The study deliberately revives the enduring spirit of the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in order to navigate this crucial conundrum. It uses the conference's guiding ideals of social justice, international solidarity, and national sovereignty as a moral and tactical compass. This article aims to go beyond simple criticism by re-contextualizing this historic spirit for the digital age. In order to create an autonomous, inclusive, and equitable Indonesian AI ecosystem—one that supports the country's own developmental goals and safeguards its citizens' interests abroad—it seeks to provide insightful viewpoints and workable solutions.

II. Literature Review

Digital Colonialism as Contemporary Hegemony

Digital colonialism exemplifies contemporary imperialism via technological avenues, utilizing data extraction and platform monopolization to amplify imperial authority (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). It works through three connected channels, which is different from traditional territorial colonialism. These are the strategic control of digital infrastructure (like AWS and Google Cloud), the exploitation of user data in developing countries, and the creation of systemic technological dependency that makes local capacity less important (Kwet, 2019).

Not only does this control affect the economy, but it also has more subtle cultural and political effects. Technology is gradually integrating the values and epistemologies of the Global North into our own culture, resulting in a hegemony that undermines the diversity of local cultures (Fuchs, 2021). The rise of advanced digital colonialism makes this problem worse. In a digitally fragmented world, artificial intelligence may make spatial injustices worse

(Baresi, 2025). Furthermore, the progress of generative AI poses a threat of emergent technodigital colonialism, endangering the digital sovereignty of developing nations (Cambraia & Pyrrho, 2025). These patterns of exploitation signify a perpetuation of the colonial power matrix, now manifesting in the digital domain (Muldoon & Wu, 2023), with significant ramifications for the future of development in the Global South (Salami, 2024). Digital colonialism is not just an economic issue; it is a powerful tool that makes a new kind of imperialism possible in the digital age.

AI Ethics and Sovereignty in the Global South Context

AI ethics issues—such as data justice, algorithmic bias, and accountability—impact geopolitics in the Global South in various ways. Generative AI can maintain spatial inequalities and promote technodigital colonialism (Baresi, 2025; Cambraia & Pyrrho, 2025). Technological sovereignty is a major answer that says countries should be able to control how technology grows in a way that fits with their own values (Lee, 2010). This aligns with the tenets of indigenous data sovereignty (Rana, 2025) and the establishment of credibility in post-colonial contexts (Ndiaye, 2025). Human-centric governance frameworks offer feasible avenues for the implementation of ethical and sovereignty principles (Samuel, *et al.*, 2023).

Bandung Spirit's Digital Age Relevance

The 1955 Asian African Conference gave rise to the Bandung Spirit. It emphasized decolonization, self-sufficiency, and equitable international collaboration (Ampiah, 2007). In contemporary digital governance, these principles function as essential counteractions to AI-induced digital hegemony through three fundamental pillars: digital sovereignty (augmenting local technological capability), Global South solidarity (jointly formulating inclusive AI standards), and technological justice (ensuring equitable distribution of benefits). The frameworks of digital colonialism, AI ethics, and the Bandung Spirit work well together to help us understand how Indonesia's AI is changing and how we should make technology in the future.

III. AI at Indonesia's Crossroads

Emancipatory Potential for Inclusive Development

The National AI Strategy of Indonesia recognizes the power of AI to change things. Healthcare applications increase access to quality services in remote areas (Wibowo, *et al.*, 2025), and AI-based e-recruitment improves bureaucratic efficiency and public value by making processes clear (Altino, *et al.*, 2025). Educational AI facilitates personalized learning; however, it necessitates vigilance against algorithmic bias and foreign curricular dominance that could undermine local knowledge systems (Aizawa, 2023; Maimela & Mbonde, 2025). Public trust is a key factor for success, and levels of trust in the government have a big effect on how many people use AI-based services (Mulyawan, 2024). This is in line with Trustworthiness as a key requirement for AI sustainability in developing contexts (Ndiaye, 2025). Consequently, AI achieves its liberatory potential solely through inclusive, contextually relevant methodologies founded on social trust, while critically confronting the perils of digital colonialism (Baresi, 2025; Cambraia & Pyrrho, 2025).

Digital Colonialism: Realities and Structural Vulnerabilities

Indonesia has four vulnerabilities to digital colonialism that are linked to each other. First, the exploitation of data creates unfair cycles in which valuable health, behavioral, and biodiversity data are taken without fair payment. Mature models are then sold at high prices, which makes people more dependent on them and hurts data justice (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). This proves particularly critical in digital health, where sensitive patient data faces commodification without equivalent public health benefits (Imalingat & Mjwana, 2024).

Second, algorithmic bias and cultural hegemony pose significant threats to digital inclusion. Globally trained North models contain cultural-linguistic biases that are irrelevant to Indonesian contexts. English NLP-based public service chatbots risk marginalizing unrepresented local communities (Joseph, *et al.*, 2025), while generative AI reproduces imperial narratives and futures, eroding local epistemologies (Lakshmi S., 2025).

Third, technological dependency creates digital development paradoxes. Foreign cloud platform dominance, with a 92% market share (UNCTAD, 2022), hinders national capacity development (Kusumasari & Yahya, 2025),

coinciding with domestic infrastructure gaps. Specifically, 70.64% of disadvantaged villages lack strong internet signals, which widens regional digital divides and erodes technological sovereignty.

Fourth, knowledge monopoly and unequal technology transfer exacerbate innovation gaps. Global patent controls restrict local developer access, with only 12% of Indonesian AI startups capable of independent model development (Center for Digital Society, 2022), resulting in “digital silence” where knowledge platforms suppress perspectives from the Global South (Joseph, *et al.*, 2025).

Infrastructure disparity data (Table 1) empirically demonstrates how digital development paradoxes manifest spatially. The stark contrast between disadvantaged regions (29.87% coverage) and non-disadvantaged areas (82.37%) creates fragile foundations for the implementation of sovereign AI, while highlighting issues of foreign cloud dependency.

Table 1. Internet Signal Coverage Disparities in Indonesia (2024)

Area Status	Villages with Strong Signal	Villages with Weak/No Signal	Coverage Percentage
Disadvantaged	1,768	2,274	29.87%
Non-Disadvantaged	64,673	13,841	82.37%
National	66,441	16,115	78.78%

Source: Ministry of Communication and Digital, 2024.

These structural vulnerabilities collectively threaten Indonesia’s digital transformation, potentially deepening its foreign technological dependence and hindering digital sovereignty, a prerequisite for emancipation.

IV. Reclaiming the Future through the Bandung Spirit as Indonesia’s AI Governance Compass

Confronting the complexities of digital colonialism requires bold, sovereign governance frameworks that steer AI toward inclusive emancipation. The

Bandung Spirit reemerges as a relevant strategic compass through three mutually reinforcing agendas.

Digital sovereignty strengthening combines protective policies with strategic investments—enhancing data protection implementation, developing national cloud infrastructure, and investing heavily in basic and applied AI research. Prioritizing digital infrastructure development in disadvantaged regions (where 70.64% villages lack strong signals) is crucial, while “Buy Domestic Products” policies stimulate self-reliant technology ecosystems. This approach aligns with developments in the Global South, which explore local philosophies such as Ubuntu for contextual AI governance (Yilma, 2025).

Global South solidarity building facilitates equitable AI governance through collaboration between ASEAN and the Global South, leading to the development of inclusive standards, ethics, and regulations. Such cooperation enhances collective bargaining power against corporate dominance while revitalizing the Bandung spirit of solidarity.

The improvement of this framework is achieved by ensuring technological justice, which prioritizes an inclusive and multicultural approach. AI development in Indonesia needs to adopt participatory design principles that involve various stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, to ensure AI is free from bias and relevant to the needs of the archipelago. Critical digital and AI literacy education needs to be expanded. At the same time, the participatory design approach and public auditing of algorithms are operational manifestations of human-centric governance principles that are essential for ensuring the accountability of AI systems (Samuel, *et al.*, 2023).

Through the integration of these three mutually reinforcing pillars, Indonesia will not only build digital resilience against digital colonialism but also foster a more inclusive digital landscape. Still, it can also position itself as a pioneer in developing a sovereign, inclusive, and equitable AI governance model.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

AI’s promise of freedom requires strategic, visionary policies. Without these, it could make people more dependent and become a tool for digital colonialism. Reinvigorating the Bandung Spirit through technological

sovereignty, solidarity in the Global South, and justice is a crucial basis for governance.

Some of the most important suggestions are to make sovereignty policies stronger by creating clear roadmaps for reducing dependency with the right fiscal incentives and regulatory frameworks; to change education by adding AI ethics, data sovereignty, and critical technology thinking to higher education and vocational training; and to focus on collaborative, participatory, and locally relevant research to make sure AI solves Indonesia's specific problems. With these steps, Indonesia can go from being a passive user of technology to an active shaper of its own technological future, which is what the Bandung Spirit is all about in the AI age.

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The Bandung Spirit in the 21th Century: The Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS and the Strive for Multipolarity

Jan Niklas Huhn

From its creation in the 1960s onwards the Non-Aligned Movement styled itself as the representative of the Global South, Developing Nations, the former colonised. The movement articulated demands for a more democratic and multipolar world. With the influence of the movement having declined since the height of its clout in the 1960s and 1970s, what modern organisation can continue the tradition that was started in Bandung in 1955? Many ascribe this role to the BRICS, as it is an organisation that is led by non-Western nations that is viewed as promoting multipolarity. Hence the question arises to what extent does BRICS today fulfil the vision and principles of the NAM from the 1960s and 1970s in constructing a multipolar world order independent of Western dominance. By analysing the final declaration of various summit meetings of the NAM and BRICS I hope to demonstrate that the BRICS' discourse on multipolarity echoes the rhetoric of the NAM but differs substantially in its vision and strategy. While the NAM called for a revolutionary transformation of the global order the BRICS are seeking to manage incremental reform.

In the shadow of the Great Power rivalry of the Cold War, twenty-nine African and Asian world leaders met in Bandung in 1955. The leaders of countries from Japan to Liberia articulated a shared vision of the global order that rejected the Cold War's apparent bipolarity. The participants of the Bandung Conference called not only for an end to colonialism in all its manifestations and a plan to deliver development to all nations, but also for

respect and true sovereignty. The ideas that were articulated in Bandung would be institutionalised with the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961.

During the first meeting of the NAM, heads of state from Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia, among others, outlined the five principles that would guide the movement henceforth: mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality among states, and peaceful coexistence.¹ These foundational principles would inform the demands of the movement that would go much further than mere political neutrality and formal decolonisation. Many of the attending delegates represented nations that had only recently emerged from struggles against their former colonial masters. They understood that a formal end to the colonial relationship would not instantaneously erase their dependencies and the structures that were created to support this unequal system of global exploitation. Thus, non-alignment did not only represent neutrality but also stood for economic independence, sovereignty and dignity.

This spirit of independence was further developed in subsequent summits. In Cairo in 1964, it was declared that “[i]mperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism constitute a basic source of international tension and conflict because they endanger world peace and security”² and reiterated their call for the final abolition of all forms of colonialism. At that point the movement positioned itself as a collective moral authority that demanded agency in international relations. It is important to note that the call here goes beyond advocating for improvements in the situation of the NAM member states but concerns the whole world, showing that the non-aligned understanding of sovereignty did not mean isolationism.

Lusaka, 1970, delivered arguably one of the strongest moral condemnations of colonialism and the bipolar world order. This moral condemnation was within the document often directly linked to security concerns. Apartheid was not only described as a “blot on the conscience of mankind” but also

¹ Non-Aligned Movement. 1961. Founding Document of the Non-Aligned Movement (The Belgrade Declaration). First Conference of Heads of State or Government, Belgrade, 1–6 September.

² Non-Aligned Movement. 1964. Declaration of the Second Summit. Cairo Summit, 5–10 October.

as something that “poses a serious threat to international peace and security”.³ Colonialism and neo-colonialism were denounced as perpetuating the evils of the past and undermining the future. While economic demands were also featured prominently, these demands had moral demands interwoven with them. The NAM members declared that economic emancipation would not only result in social progress for the whole world but also contribute to world peace. Consequently, the ideological and moral demands constituted a strong foundation on which other demands were built.

The demand for a fairer global order was further institutionalised through the call for the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the Algiers Declaration of 1973 and later advocated for on the floor of the UN. This new economic order should meet the requirements “of genuine democracy”, further connecting the economic demands with a call for a fairer global world order. Not acting upon economic inequality on a global scale would condemn the majority of humanity to “insecurity and domination by the most powerful”.⁴ To counter this, new institutions were envisioned, which would not be affected by the discriminatory policies of the existing international financial institutions.

The NAM vision of the 1960s and 1970s was grounded in the solidarity among nations that had only recently gained their independence and found themselves in an international system that was built on hierarchical relationships and dependencies. The world imagined did not only have less economic inequality but offered dignity to all and collective progress. The NAM member states, in this new order, would be seen as equals in shaping global governance and institutions. A vision that might seem very much of its time, but its echoes can be heard in the rhetoric of the BRICS.

The BRICS began in the early 2000s as BRIC, a framework to understand the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China. In 2009, the leaders of the aforementioned nations met for their first summit, and, the organisation

³ Non-Aligned Movement. 1970. *Lusaka Declaration on Peace, Independence, Development, Co-operation and Democratisation of International Relations*. Third Conference of Heads of State or Government, Lusaka, 8–10 September.

⁴ Non-Aligned Movement. 1973. *Algiers Declaration*. Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government, Algiers, 5–9 September.

adopted the name BRICS the next year with the inclusion of South Africa. The first summit was therefore held in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Unlike the NAM, which positioned itself explicitly against a global bipolar system that did not afford developing nations any agency, BRICS aimed to work within the existing system. In 2009 in Yekaterinburg, the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India and China called for both stability and reform. The joint statement acknowledged the important role of the G20 and the implementation of the World Trade Organisation's development plan.⁵ Nevertheless, the spectre of the more radical demands of the 1960s and 1970s can be seen in the support for a "more democratic and just multipolar world order". This was, however, not coupled with a condemnation of what stands in the way of achieving such a world order. In general, the only direct condemnation in the document is targeted towards "terrorism in all its forms". Even so, multipolarity became a recurring theme, as the concept continues to be discussed at subsequent summits.

The first meeting that included South Africa, in Sanya in 2011, only referenced multipolarity insofar as the leaders noted the advance of multipolarity while not directly calling for its active pursuit. Instead, the leaders called for a strengthening of global economic governance based on international law and the promotion of democracy within international relations. The focus was on enhancing existing institutions like the G20 and reforming others, like the UNSC, to increase democratic participation on a global scale. The strongest demands were directed towards the IMF, where the leaders called for the implementation of the reform targets that were decided at previous G20 summits. This came together with a more general call for further international financial oversight.⁶ This highlights the initial approach of the BRICS countries towards the various international orders—financial, security, or otherwise. Rather than imagining a radically different future, the grouping supported incremental reform of the existing global systems through already established institutions.

In 2024, a by now much enlarged BRICS met in Kazan, and the final declaration, titled "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global

⁵ BRICS. 2009. Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries Leaders. Yekaterinburg Summit, 16 June.

⁶ BRICS. 2011. Sanya Declaration. Sanya Summit, 14 April.

Development and Security”, discussed multipolarity. Again, the emergence of a multipolar world was noted as a matter of fact. It is only mentioned that a multipolar world “can” pave the way for a fairer world and that it “can” expand the economic opportunities for developing countries.⁷ At this stage, we find a position that is based on observation and analysis rather than a moral demand. Furthermore, just like in previous statements, the role of existing international institutions was praised, and stability was central to the remarks on the state of the international system.

While the BRICS have always promoted existing global institutions, in contrast to NAM, they have also constructed new institutions outside existing international organisations. Two of the most celebrated of these institutions, which aim to reduce dependence on Western-dominated systems without fully undermining the existing financial system, are the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA). The NDB was established in 2015 and aims to provide loans without the conditions that similar loans from the IMF or World Bank would entail. The CRA is a framework that aims to provide protection against liquidity pressures. While these frameworks offer an option outside the Western-based financial institutions, one has to consider the power distribution within them. While the summit declarations have continually called for a more democratic approach within international relations, the voting rights and shares are allocated according to financial contribution, with the NDB allowing new members but still including undemocratic tendencies that mirror the Bretton Woods system. For one, the voting power in the NDB is based on the shares of the member country; at the same time, the Fortaleza Agreement that initiated the foundation of the Bank in 2014 also states that the founding members’ voting share shall not drop below fifty-five per cent and that no new individual member shall have more than seven per cent voting power.⁸

All this combined, this shows the BRICS as a grouping that tries to reshape the global institutions in a way that represents the world. This should be achieved through somewhat incremental change by combining the

⁷ BRICS. 2024. Kazan Declaration of the XVI BRICS Summit “Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security”. Kazan Summit, 22–24 October.

⁸ BRICS. 2014. Agreement on the New Development Bank. Fortaleza Summit, 15 July.

fortification of existing international institutions with the creation of new complementary ones. Within these two new institutions, one can see that they have a different approach to the disbursement of loans but arguably reproduce the democratic deficit of Western-led institutions.

At its core, the NAM was a post-colonial radical movement made up of members who saw themselves as lacking agency on the global level and therefore having little stake in the existing global order. The BRICS, on the other hand, were formed by some of the largest economies in the world, which, while underrepresented in global governance, were—especially considering the Chinese and Russian seats at the UNSC—already central to it.

Ideology was central to the NAM: calling out racism and neo-colonialism, and making grand statements about the direction of humanity were key elements of the movement's discourse. Multilateralism was seen as the moral way to organise international relations. The BRICS, by contrast, approach multipolarity as a phenomenon to be responded to. While it might bring new opportunities, it is not something the members of the BRICS will actively seek through struggle. This represents a reactive pragmatism at the core of BRICS, informed by a shared understanding that the current system serves neither its members nor the world as a whole. Hence, the organisation promotes existing institutions, supports inclusive multilateralism, and rejects unilateral coercive measures but also shies away from any action that could endanger global stability fundamentally.

The NAM's call for economic independence was always coupled with the call for dignity, rooted in the understanding that sovereignty would only be possible once developing nations were free from dependency. Thus, the demand for a NIEO was not only economic but also reflected the political and moral aspirations of NAM member states. Conceived during a period of global financial instability, the BRICS declarations focus on stability and multilateral cooperation through established channels. The establishment of the NDB and CRA represents a departure from the path the NAM originally envisioned. While the NAM sought a NIEO through the UN that would constitute global transformation, the NDB and CRA offer little more than an alternative to increasingly unworkable Western-led institutions. In this sense, the BRICS are shielding smaller countries from the fallout of decaying institutions on which they still depend, by providing an alternative that does not undermine the existing system.

Ultimately, while both the BRICS and the NAM of the 1960s and 1970s criticised an unequal international order, they differ fundamentally in their approaches, analyses, and recommendations. Both groupings, however, were shaped by the historical circumstances of their conception. Describing the leaders who met in Bandung and Belgrade as freedom fighters would be accurate: they led nations that had only recently achieved formal independence and were now confronted with a global system designed not for equality but for dominance and dependence. In the eyes of the NAM, change was not only possible but also the morally right course of action. Conversely, the BRICS began to institutionalise at a time when the breakdown of the global financial system threatened global economic stability. The group was composed of some of the world's largest economies—deeply integrated into global governance, even if underrepresented in influence. While recognising that the existing order was neither fair nor sustainable, the grouping embarked on a path towards stability and reform.

In their statements, multipolarity is perceived as the natural evolution from the unipolar world order that emerged after the end of the Cold War. Multipolarity is not something to be fought for but rather a process to be managed—neither accelerated nor resisted. So, is the spirit of Bandung still alive in the BRICS? While there are similarities in the issues discussed, the revolutionary spirit of the NAM in the 1960s and 1970s has not been reincarnated in the BRICS. At the same time, the more pragmatic approach of the BRICS might yet prove to be a more effective vehicle for change.

OPPORTUNITIES: THE RISE OF ASIA AND BRICS

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Cultural Cooperation between Africa and Asia for a Rehumanisation of the World

David Mokam

Introduction

The world is undergoing a speedy dehumanisation, mainly caused by capitalism which has a principal focus: the search of profit by all means. Something has to be done in order to, at least, slow down the speed of dehumanisation, if it cannot be stopped. That has been the concern for many decades now. In the 19th century, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and other authors proposed some solutions to terminate capitalism. The dictatorship of the proletariat did not succeed. In the meantime capitalism continued its expansion worldwide causing more damages to people. The globalisation of the economy, backed by the West and its neoliberal culture, has accelerated the dehumanisation of the world still in search of a solution. The cultural track has been explored. In Bandung, in 1955, African and Asian countries found a common ground in the cooperation between Africa and Asia (Tirtoprodjo, 1955:9). Assessing that cooperation sixty years after the conference, Darwis Khudori (2014:43) noted that it was still timid and needed to be boosted. Cultural cooperation seems to be a track which is not really explored. The objective of this paper is to show how Africa and Asia can rehumanise the world through culture. The observation of Africa-Asia cultural relations through out history shows that they are not sufficiently developed. If well developed, these relations, strongly rooted in solidarity and spirituality, can help to combat the rampant dehumanisation the world is facing. This paper presents capitalism and its expansion in the world, then studies the dehumanisation of the world by this system before showing

how cultural cooperation between Africa and Asia can contribute to the rehumanisation of our planet.

From capitalism to neoliberalism

There is no unanimity amongst the authors as to capitalism in so far as its definition is concerned. The situation is the same as to the origin of capitalism.

Jürgen Kocka (2016:2-6) presents how the term capitalism progressively got into some European languages like French, English and German. It started with the adjective and noun capitalist which, in the 17th century, in the German language, stood for the “capital-rich man who has cash monies and great wealth and can live from his interest and rents”. Capital was understood, first, as the money either invested or lent, and then as assets like money, monetary values commodities, commercial paper and manufacturing plant that could yield profit. Capitalists were also all those who were engaged in the acquisition of wealth and sought for surplus of their labour that they could invest anew in production and labour. In 1922, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* dedicated an entry to capitalism, defined as “a system in which the means of production were owned by private proprietors” who employed managers and workers for production. In its evolution, the definition of capitalism was broadened according to different realities that arose. A synthesis is given by Olivia Guy-Evans as follows: “Capitalism is an economic system where private individuals and businesses own the means of production such as factories, capital, and resources.” Capitalism, has main features: private property; profit motive, price mechanism, wage labor, competitive markets, circulation of commodities, consumers sovereignty, freedom of enterprise (Geetanjali, 2021:168–9). These features are the results of the evolution of capitalism which has reached the stage of global neoliberalism.

There is controversy as to when and where capitalism was born. According to William H. Sewell Jr. (2019:171), Jeffrey D. Sachs (1999:91), and Yves-David Hugot (2013:76), capitalism was born in Europe, notably in England in the 19th century. According to Luiz Carlos Bresser-pereira (2023), the birth of capitalism took place between the 17th and the 18th centuries. Samir Amin, quoted by Darwis Khudori (2018:2) situates this birth far back in the past when he talks of the gestation of capitalism that started in the year 1000. Some authors, who belong to the primitivist school of ancient economics,

even go beyond that date and put forward the idea that, capitalism started in the antiquity and existed independently in India, in China, in Greece where they found some characteristics of this economic system like the search of profit, the commerce of money (Tirthankar, 2014:167; Bresson, 2014:45–6; Kocka, 2016:25–6). Despite the controversies, one thing is known: as from the 16th century, capitalism got into a particular phase of its development under the leadership of the Dutch. It was the birth of modern capitalism that had to expand worldwide wearing the colours of the West. It was then associated with imperialism and a political system called democracy. In the neoliberal capitalism, governments had to de-regulate the economy by releasing the private business from the shackles of taxes and trade union rules so that there should be a new era of growing investments that will drive rapid economic growth. During all the phases of capitalism development, emphasis has always been laid on the ways and means to favour the search and the maximisation of profit. It is in this process that the world has been dehumanised.

Capitalism and dehumanisation

Capitalism, as an economic system, presents positive aspects and negative ones. Considering the latter, one of the major negative aspects is the dehumanisation of the world since its neoliberal version is practised the world over, by will or by force (Harvey, 2007:23). Dehumanisation is linked to the aim of capitalism which is never-ending accumulation of capital via the exploitation of labour following the leading principle of this system formulated by Max Weber (1930:18): the making of money is an end in itself and not the means for satisfaction of material needs. In this paper, dehumanisation refers to the definition given by the Sociology Institute (2022) as the process whereby “workers lose their human qualities and connections due to the exploitative structures of capitalist production”. Capitalism denies full humanness to workers through their exploitation and alienation.

In order to get maximum profit, capitalists use several methods that contribute to maximise efficiency. All these methods can be summarized in what has been called scientific management which considers the working-class as mere inputs whose output must be measured the same way as machines. Human beings are mere tools of production, they are objects. This commodification is at the heart of dehumanisation. That is why, for good productivity, they undergo the division of labour that dehumanise

them. So work is divided into highly specialized tasks and each worker is assigned a repetitive task. As a consequence, the worker cannot take pride in any craftsmanship since he has not participated in the entire process of fabricating a product from start to finish. He can therefore have no understanding of his contribution to the final product (Sociology Institute, 2022). Anyway, the capitalist does not need worker's satisfaction in his job so long as he has made enough profit. For the sake of profit, the capitalists put the workers under the system of low wages. This system has the same finality of enhancing profit which is also obtained through the surplus-value, the zero-hours contract and the theft of break hours (Balaji, 2020:34–5).

The theory of surplus value was developed by Karl Marx and is about the difference between the value produced by workers and the wages they receive. Part of the labour of workers is unpaid and it gives profit to capitalist. With the surplus value, capitalists grow wealthier. They do not pity the workers. That is why, to better impoverish the workers, the capitalists came to impose them zero-hours contracts. In this type of contract, if the worker comes to his working place and there is no work available for him, even if it is the whole day, he will receive no payment for such hours. This is part of alienation.

Karl Marx theory of alienation has been well presented in Hung Man Dao's PhD thesis (2021:23–4). This theory, developed in his book *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, suggests that capitalism and dehumanisation of workers are inseparable. His argument is that capitalism alienates workers in four dimensions: alienation from the product of labour; alienation from the labour process; alienation from others, and alienation from themselves, that is, from their own humanity. In the first two dimensions of alienation, workers can only behave to fulfil their animalistic needs of survival. In the hire dimension, capitalism creates competition among workers. They struggle for jobs and wages. As a consequence, there is no solidarity between them and that creates a sense of isolation. The last dimension of alienation considers work as a source of frustration that makes workers to lose touch with their individuality and humanity. Capitalists do not care that much of workers whose conditions are terrible either in their job sites or in their residences. In the book *The Morning Call*, it is revealed that, an Amazon warehouse refused to open garage doors in order to let the air circulate in a hot environment with a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, just because the management was afraid of theft. Instead, the management stationed ambulances outside to treat workers who may suffer from

dehydration. Such a situation is also exemplified in the novel, *The Flivver King A Story of Ford-America* that tracks the rise of Henry Ford automobile industry in Detroit. As Ford's empire grows, he loses his humanity since he was always obsessed of making greater profit and maintaining his wealth. Ford went so far as to let police and some of his security agents shoot 50 protesters, killing four of them. This attitude can be compared with the attitude of the billionaire American President who wants to chase Palestinians from Gaza in order to transform the strip into a Middle East Riviera for his touristic business. The *Jungle* depicts the same situation concluding that the price of the development of capitalism was profound misery (Schmeltzer, 1993:18). This dehumanisation is found everywhere capitalism is present and since it is the world economic system, liberalism has become a world culture. Dehumanisation needs a cultural fight.

Rehumanisation of the world through Africa-Asia cultural cooperation

The ravages of capitalism have been so immense that anybody having common sense and who is not a capitalist would only think of fighting it. Karl Marx suggested that the system would disappear through the dictatorship of the proletariat. That solution was brutal. There is a soft way of getting rid of capitalism and its dehumanisation. That is possible through cultural cooperation between African and Asian countries whose cultures have many humane aspects.

There are many cultures in Asia but some ones have been largely disseminated so that they constitute common ground culture. You have, for instance, Buddhism that originated from India before expanding to most of Asian countries, and Confucianism that originated in China. Buddhism is based on some spiritual aspirations, notably the mastery of self, compassion, solidarity between human beings and reincarnation (Deremble, 2025). Confucianism is concerned with living together, politics and ethics. It promotes harmonious world. Political authority rests on propriety (li), which is underpinned by humaneness (Wai-Kay Yu, 2015).

There are also many cultures in Africa, but they have some common features that are found, for example, in the value placed on family, the cohesion of which is the foundation of the community. Members of the family co-exist and they know that they must help one another. This mental disposition creates collective responsibility in the family and contributes to the welfare of the society. African cultures also share in common the

sacredness of human life which is directly related to God who is the creator of that life. In African cultures, humanity has no boundary (Awoniyi, 2015:6). All these features of cultures in Asia and Africa are the elements needed to rehumanise the world. The Bandung conference of 1955, which was quite visionary, foresaw it and prescribed it in its Final Communiqué: “The Asian-African Conference was convinced that among the most powerful means of promoting understanding among nations is the development of cultural co-operation. Asia and Africa have been the cradle of great religions and civilisations which have enriched other cultures and civilisations while themselves being enriched in the process. Thus, the cultures of Asia and Africa are based on spiritual and universal foundations. Unfortunately contacts among Asian and African countries were interrupted during the past centuries. The peoples of Asia and Africa are now animated by a keen and sincere desire to renew their old cultural contacts and develop new ones in the context of the modern world. All participating Governments at the Conference reiterated their determination to work for closer cultural co-operation.” (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia, 2017).

The Bandung Conference indicated the path to achieve this goal. Cultural cooperation could be undertaken through bilateral arrangements or by each country taking action on its own. Was it more rhetoric than realistic as some authors suggest?

The existing literature (Mulinda Kwabete, 2015; Rubiolo, 2016; Oghenemaro Emovwodo, 2019), I could lay hands on, indicates that, as from 1955, cultural exchanges began between Asia and Africa when China signed a cultural agreement with Egypt. They developed progressively with China taking the lead in the initiatives. These exchanges comprise sporting, dancing activities, university training, and gastronomy with the existence of Chinese restaurants in major cities of African countries. After China came countries of Southeast Asia. African countries also send cultural delegations for performance in China and some Asian countries. An assessment of these cultural exchanges shows an imbalance in favour of Asia. The orientation of this cultural cooperation cannot let the two continents tackle the big challenge of rehumanisation of the world. This is more so as they do not dig deep into the traditions in order to use common humane values for that sake.

Conclusion

Africa and Asia have many cultural assets they can use to rehumanise the world that has been for long devastated by capitalism. The Bandung conference of 1955 paved the way by defining the way cultural cooperation should be undertaken. There have been many initiatives taken in that direction but they are insufficient. Moreover, priority is given to economic cooperation. Leaders of Asian countries seem to give priority to East-West approach to world culture. In the two continents leaders seem not to have rehumanisation of the world in their agendas. They seem to have forgotten the “Bandung Spirit” that must be urgently rekindled.

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From Third Worldism to Futurism after the 1955 Bandung Conference: The Contribution of African Cultural and Creative Industries to the Reconstruction of the World Based on Asian Industrial Models

Alain Cyr Pangop Kameni

Introduction

Since the Bandung Conference of 1955, the world has experienced multifaceted crises, revealing a meteoric rise of Asian countries economically, notably with the all-out industrialization of the former colonies of the East. Facing the West, the large groups formed as poles of resistance in the context of globalization have ranged from Third Worldism to Futurism. Complex and evolving structures of competition have developed in increasingly diversified and segmented markets. Africa is also entering this movement by highlighting its cultural specificities in international relations. Hence the following question: how does the development of cultural and creative industries in Asia after the Bandung Conference inspire Africa in its effort to contribute to the reconstruction of the world? Starting from the understanding of the concept of decolonization, as well as the global cultural flows identified in Arjun Appadurai (2011; 1990), this communication mobilizes culturalist sociology to evaluate the contribution of African cultural and creative industries to the reconstruction of the current world. After a brief reminder of Third Worldism after Bandung 1955, we will show how the development of cultural and creative industries in Asia is modeled and offers Afro-futurist perspectives in Africa.

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I. Third-Worldism after Bandung 1955 or the emergence of a new political bloc

The emergence of the Third World on the international scene represented a major phenomenon of the 20th century, because it led to the affirmation of a policy of non-alignment, committing itself not to participate in the conflicts between the American and Soviet blocs.¹ From 1955, while the process of decolonization was underway, the new states, under the aegis of nationalist leaders, undertook projects of modernization and nation building in societal frameworks that were sometimes several thousand-year-old. This was particularly the case in India, China, Indonesia, Egypt, Ghana, etc.

However, they faced many challenges, both political and economic. Aspects of Third Worldism after Bandung are evident in the challenge to the world order, unity, and cooperation. Indeed, Third Worldism challenged a world order marked by past colonialism and the bipolarity of the Cold War, seeking to impose a new, more humanist order. Concrete initiatives were launched to strengthen cooperation between Third World countries, such as

¹ From India's independence in 1947 and Mao Zedong's seizure of power in China in 1949 to the Bandung Conference in 1955, the Third World emerged on the international scene. In the 1950s, five newly independent Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Myanmar, and Indonesia) took the initiative to unite colonized countries to form a common front against colonization. Following the independence movements, a group of countries was born that belonged neither to the Western bloc nor to the Soviet bloc and shared certain characteristics, including underdevelopment and significant population growth: this is the "Third World". On April 17, 1955, an Afro-Asian conference opened in Bandung, Indonesia, which, for the first time, allowed the countries of the South to assert themselves on the international stage. This conference formalized opposition to colonialism and imperialism, advocating for the rapid end of the subjugation of peoples and the establishment of freedom and independence. The Bandung Conference gave birth to the "Third World", recognized in the movement for independence on the international stage. The Belgrade Conference of 1961 formalized this movement by creating the "Non-Aligned Movement", which aimed to create a "Third World force" as an alternative to the existing bipolarity. After Bandung in 1955, Third Worldism took shape through the emergence of a new global political bloc, the official birth of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, and determined action against colonialism and imperialism, aimed at asserting the independence of the newly liberated nations from the two great powers of the Cold War.

bilateral agreements or joint industrial projects, in order to gradually free their economies from Western influence.

II. The contrasting legacy of Third Worldism in Africa and Asia through the cultural and creative industries

If the countries emerging from decolonization wanted to assert themselves independently of the Eastern and Western blocs at the Bandung Conference of April 1955, it was because their objective was also access to development, which was achieved unevenly. While the import substitution model was developing in Latin America, a second one was making a comeback in Asia. Thus, in the 1960s, Taiwan and South Korea followed the path already taken by Japan before the Second World War. In this model, development begins with the production and export of technologically simple products that can be sold at low prices thanks to the use of inexpensive labor.

Priority to industrialization and restriction of imports, these were therefore the two components of the first development policies, called “import substitution policies”. This involved significant recourse to the State, the only one capable of establishing protectionist policies and forcing banks, operating more or less under public aegis, to lend at attractive rates to finance this industrialization, even at the cost of high inflation. In this model, there is therefore a very strong link between local private capital and the state. South Korea and Taiwan, for example, have long prohibited foreign equity investments in local firms and, a fortiori, foreign direct investment. The trick of Taiwan and South Korea was not to be satisfied with an international division of labor reserving for them the least remunerative industrial activities, because they were located at the bottom of the range. It is no coincidence that these two countries set ambitious training targets, under the leadership of governments capable of imposing order and discipline, so that firms could make high profits and reinvest them. Always supported by the state, the companies of the two countries “moved up the chains”: after clothing, weaving, then fashion design, then automatic looms, then production computers, etc. This recovery strategy required an increasingly skilled and productive workforce.

More than half a century later, and despite comparable and very similar socio-economic characteristics at the outset, the result has been the meteoric rise of Asian nations (China, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore,

etc.), contrasting with the comparatively very modest growth in Africa. Africa was generally a little concerned. This was particularly due to the influence of the former colonizing powers. They were indeed unhappy with such strategies, which resulted in depriving them of then substantial export outlets. The proclaimed principles of Pan-Africanism and Non-alignment have not succeeded in actually constituting a strong alternative to the worsening economic and financial dependence of the African continent, and in lifting the majority of Africans out of poverty or destitution.

In contrast, cultural and creative industries in Asia are dynamic, driven by factors such as economic growth, the emergence of an affluent class, and the adoption of new technologies like virtual reality and Artificial Intelligence, which are transforming the sector. Countries like China have become major players on the global stage, while countries like Vietnam and Thailand are seeking to become important hubs in the field. The market is expanding rapidly, particularly in sectors such as video games, contemporary art, and live performance, but must adapt to technological changes and generational expectations.

The emergence of an affluent class, particularly in China, has fueled interest in art and culture, leading to growth in contemporary art markets and cultural consumption. Government policies, such as those implemented in China between 2005 and 2008, facilitate the growth of these industries, legitimizing and promoting domestic creation. The Chinese contemporary art market became a global leader in 2021, stimulating demand for national art and culture. Technological advances are opening new opportunities in video games and immersive experiences, and are transforming cultural heritage management. Indonesia has become the leading video game market in Southeast Asia, with significant revenues and strong growth in the sector. Vietnam aspires to become a major hub for cultural and creative industries in Asia, with an emphasis on heritage preservation and the promotion of cultural identity. Thailand, for its part, has established itself as a dynamic hub in Southeast Asia, thanks to its legal and strategic support for creative businesses in fields such as film.

The great technical and technological progress, as well as tourism from the Asian continent, have broken the monopoly of large Western groups, to the great admiration of Africans. Cultural and creative industries are important vehicles for intercultural dialogue, as demonstrated by Africa's efforts to build trade and cultural ties with Asian countries. The development of

cultural and creative industries requires a breakthrough in skills training and entrepreneurial approaches, integrating specializations in new technologies and design. Economic agreements open up opportunities for international collaborations and co-creation projects between Asian countries and Africa. The transformation of Asians has thus fascinated Africans, who increasingly take them as a model of transformational leadership. This is why Africa-Asia cooperation intensified at the end of the 20th century. When we know that Western societies are structurally and inevitably imperialist, we can understand why Africans speak of a “guillotine cooperation” of colonial agreements, which should be replaced by “development cooperation”. Asia has quickly learned that it is impossible to sink into arrogance in a constantly changing world. Such cooperation between Asia and Africa lays the foundation for peaceful coexistence in the 21st century. While the West-Africa cooperation model evolves from confusion to reconquest, via illusion, disenchantment, and rejection, the Africa-Asia cooperation model moves from mutual fears to mutual trust, via hope and vigilance. This is why Sino-African cooperation is gaining more respect. Translated Chinese literature is gaining increasing recognition. A state like China has been able to harness the power of humanization in Europe. With the advantage of its demographic boom, Asia has oriented its populations toward work and action. Dynasties of legends and powers shape minds. Aside from the Republic of South Africa, which is approaching the emerging world, all of Africa aspires to emerge.

III. Africa in the midst of a cultural renaissance: challenges, opportunities and Afro-futuristic perspectives of the creative industries

With the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African renaissance, the fundamental issues of the humanities, particularly literacies (philosophical questioning, literary writing, public speaking), local industries based on technologies such as the book industry or video games for example, are articulated with the cultural environment, inspired by Asian industrial models. Cinema in indigenous languages, for example, participates in a decolonial strategy, insofar as films were in Mandarin in the success of Chinese martial arts cinema, which seduced African audiences in the 1980s and 1990s.

Challenges and obstacles are not lacking in this current Africa where we observe the lack of investments, limited infrastructure (production spaces,

cinema and concert halls, the low number of publishing houses and the low capacity for training administrators, managers, technicians, digital experts, weak regulations on intellectual property rights, etc.), the poor gender balance, the lack of financing and support for entrepreneurs, limited partnerships and collaboration, the insufficient technological and digital park.

The current struggle over the restitution of property looted during colonization shows that African cultural heritage was already disseminated and influencing other cultures. But, many African governments have not ratified the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, adopted in 2006 to preserve and promote African cultural heritage. The lack of infrastructure, particularly digital infrastructure, hinders the dissemination and monetization of cultural content. Women's participation in these industries remains low, limiting their growth potential. In music, African artists derive much less value from their creations than their Western counterparts. For example, on Spotify, while the average payment for 1,000 streams in the United States is between \$5 and \$10, it is less than \$0.50 in African countries.

What's new in Africa is growing public recognition. Cultural events like races, festivals, and trade shows have become international gatherings. New visibility and economic opportunities are emerging. With fashion, film, visual arts, cultural sites, media, design, video games, music, books, and even sports, the creative industries are changing the African narrative. Beyond growing economic opportunities, this is arguably their greatest strength. Africans are speaking for themselves, describing their reality, whether in literary works or serialized fiction on television.

From cinema to fashion, music and visual arts, Africa is asserting its identity and changing the global narrative on the continent. In their way of living, thinking and loving, Africa and Asia share values that have already allowed the Eastern continent to develop: respect for living memory, hospitality, modesty, eating together, ancestry, celebrations, and pride in intergenerational transmission. When it comes to recruiting 100 people for entrepreneurship, there is no longer a need to perceive 100 mouths to feed, to complain about it. As Asian thinking dictates in its economic model, 200 arms must be perceived for industrial production. This already makes a difference, even if each of the 100 people recruited will have to be content with only one child for their entire life to create wealth. As in Africa, several Asian countries are multicultural, with populations of several ethnicities. It is

now a question of attracting attention, educating about procreation, parental responsibility and generational poverty.

The future of African cultural industries looks promising, driven by a hyper-connected youth, a growing consumer market, and strong local creativity, but it is hampered by a lack of investment and infrastructure. Key sectors such as music, audiovisual, and fashion are booming thanks to technology, with initiatives such as Nollywood and music streaming demonstrating the economic potential of these industries. The success of Nollywood in Nigeria and the rapid growth of music streaming demonstrate the potential for monetizing cultural content on the continent.² To realize this potential, it is crucial to increase financing, develop digital infrastructure, foster partnerships (such as the African Free Trade Area), and recognize the sector as a driver of economic and social development.

Africa is reinventing its cultural future by addressing the challenges of the creative industries, the hard power of Africa's soft power. Strengths and potential can be found between youth and connectivity, creativity and innovation, the engine of development, and successful examples. A young population and the widespread use of ICT are creating a vast market and hyper-connected consumers. Africa also boasts a pool of creative talent capable of generating original content in diverse fields such as music, film, and fashion. Born with the internet, mobile devices, and platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Snapchat, where they can create and promote their own content, young Africans do not view the world in the same way as previous generations.³

² Today, the Nigerian entertainment market has become the fastest-growing cultural industry after Nollywood was included in Nigeria's GDP measurement in 2016. Each year, 150 million viewers watch more than 2,500 films produced in Nigeria, far surpassing Hollywood. The organization predicts an annual growth of 16.5% in the sector thanks to increasing connectivity and a surge in subscribers. According to the Nigerian Entertainment Conference, the Nigerian entertainment and media market is expected to reach a revenue of \$14.82 billion by 2025, up from \$4 billion in revenue recorded in 2013. Furthermore, the number of production companies in Kenya, South Africa, Morocco, etc., has never been higher. African streaming services are also booming.

³ According to UNESCO (2021), the creative sector could create 20 million jobs and generate \$20 billion in revenue annually in Africa.

Cultural and creative industries are thus a lever for economic growth, job creation, and the fight against poverty, with significant global growth potential by 2030, according to G20 Insights. By doubling its population by 2050, Africa is seeing the arrival of a more educated, consumer-oriented middle class, and, above all, an innovative youth population, with those under 15 making up 40% of its population.

The biggest digital revolution in the last twenty years in Africa has resulted in exponential growth in the mobile phone market. According to the Global Association of Mobile Operators and Manufacturers (GSMA), smartphone adoption is expected to increase from 51% to 87% between 2022 and 2030, with mobile data traffic quadrupling in sub-Saharan Africa. These changes are taking place across all sectors, with remote banking, cryptocurrencies, payments, and, of course, the arrival of artificial intelligence accelerating these phenomena. The culture of entrepreneurship, already present in Africa, is being considerably encouraged through the growing phenomenon of startups. From the textile economy to tourism, these are value chains that must be created while democratizing access to this industry.

Conclusion

Until the early 20th century, Asia was considered a labor pool for colonial powers. Most of the world's emerging economies are located in Asia, more than half a century after the 1955 Bandung Conference. Whether Singapore, China, India, Malaysia, Vietnam, or the Philippines, none of these countries became emerging without appropriating their cultural values. Africa, hitherto culturally dependent on the West, would benefit from following Asia's example, as it has managed to forge distinct identities in the cultural and creative industries that brand their commercial successes based on the geo-dialectal traditions of their ancestors and global networking. Cultural and creative industries are simply lacking investment and dedicated economic policies in many African countries. In future strategies, governments and international partners must invest in the cultural and creative industries to develop infrastructure, training, and financing. The creation of incubators and accelerators is essential to support cultural entrepreneurs and foster the emergence of new talent. The African Free Trade Area and collaborations with partners are already strengthening the reach and impact of African. The adoption of digital technologies is crucial

for developing and disseminating cultural content, opening up new opportunities for African creators.

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The Role of BRICS in Shaping the Paradigm of a New Era of International Relations

Gracjan Cimek

Introductio

The world is undergoing qualitative changes of historic significance, encompassing political, socio-economic, and social dimensions. The pursuit of a more just, equitable, and representative multipolar world order, opening up new prospects for the development of countries and mutually beneficial international cooperation, is accompanied by geopolitical confrontations, challenges, and threats to security and stability. The global economy, especially international commodity and financial markets, is experiencing serious shocks. The international system is therefore in a state of imbalance. It is no longer held together by the will of the Western powers that control economic, cultural, and political processes. Therefore is a growing need for development of a new paradigm for the international system.

In international relations, a paradigm refers to an accepted model or pattern of behavior among international actors, including guiding principles, recognized institutions, accepted methods, desired outcomes, and recognition of a specific structure that allows for necessary hierarchies. It therefore defines what is common to all members of the international community, forming the basis for shaping the international system at a given time.

After liberating themselves from colonialism after World War II and achieving formal sovereignty, the countries of the “Third World” unsuccessfully

promoted the New Economic Order in the 1970s in an attempt to resist growing neocolonialism. An attempt to formulate a new paradigm was made in the 1960s by the president of Indonesia Sukarno, who proposed at the first time the word “emerging” in global geopolitics. According to him, the world was polarised between NEFOS (New Emerging Forces) and OLDEFOS (Old Established Forces). In his words “New Emerging Forces are gigantic forces consisting of progressive nations and groups willing to build a New World full of justice and friendship among the nations, a New World full of peace and well-beings, a New World without imperialism, colonialism and exploitation”¹ Resistance proved futile, and with the victory in the Cold War, neoliberal globalization further increased the possibilities for US domination. In the 21st century, this division needs to be reconstructed, which is reflected in the proposal of two types of actors: the “old era” and the “new era” of international relations.

The “Old Era” as a generator of multiple crises

From a “long-term” perspective, the “Old Era” is a period in which Western powers dominated during the hegemonic cycles of the last 500 years, culminating in American hegemony. Its result is the emergence of a “global multi-crisis”:² raw materials, food, energy, transport, health, and the environment. At the BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro in 2025, Brazilian President Lula Da Silva pointed out that the world is in a deep structural crisis; international law had become a dead letter, as had the peaceful resolution of disputes. In addition to an unprecedented number of conflicts since World War II, progress is threatened by neglect of the climate system, trade wars, attacks on the global healthcare system, intellectual property laws restricting access to medicines, and finally, the fear of a nuclear catastrophe.

Neocolonialism means that foreign capital is used to exploit nations, which is why emancipation emphasizes economic independence and

¹ D. Khudori, *Bandung Conference and its Constellation: An Introduction*, In: *Bandung legacy and Global Future. New Insights and Emerging Forces*, Darwis Khudori (eds), AAKAR Book 2018, p.4–5.

² See: M.T. Lawrence, S. Homer-Dixon, J. Janzwood, O. Rockstöm, O. Renn, and J.F. Donges, “Global Polycrisis: The Causal Mechanisms of Crisis Entanglement.” *Global Sustainability* 7 (e6) 2024, p.1–16.

diversification of the economy. The essence of neocolonialism is the “reverse Marshall Plan” implemented for decades by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, under which emerging and developing economies essentially finance the centers of Western capitalism. International aid flows have declined, while the debt costs of the poorest countries have skyrocketed. The neoliberal model only exacerbates inequalities. For example, 3,000 billionaires have earned a combined \$6.5 trillion since 2015. “The world has changed. We don’t need an emperor; we are sovereign nations”³—these words from the Brazilian leader can be considered the essence of the “New Era” paradigm.

Towards a “New Era”

The paradigm of the “new era” of international relations has its roots in the Chinese narrative of internal development and, later, international relations. Having achieved unprecedented social development and global superpower status, China decided to build a new international order and an alternative center of “mutual learning globalization” based on a “new type of international relations”—mutual benefits, meaning the negation of hegemony, domination, and neocolonialism, which defined 500 years of Western power domination. It breaks with the Western model based on expansion, confrontation, and colonization in favor of a new type of oceanic civilization based on harmonious coexistence and sustainable development.⁴ Based on its original philosophy of Confucianism, as well as the achievements of Chinese Marxism, China has developed a “vision of a shared future for mankind” that influences the shape of BRICS’ philosophy of international relations.⁵

The concept of a “partnership for a new era” has gained particular importance in the context of Russian-Chinese relations after 2019. This

³ *Lula tells Trump world does not want ‘emperor’ after US threatens BRICS tariff*, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/brics-nations-resist-anti-american-label-after-trump-tariff-threat-2025-07-07/>, access 10.09.2025.

⁴ W. Yiwei, *Inicjatywa „Jeden pas i jedna droga”. Co rozwój Chin oznacza dla świata*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2016, s.218–9.

⁵ See: *A Global Community of Shared Future: China’s Proposals and Actions. The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China*, September 2023, http://edinburgh.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202309/t20230927_11151484.htm.

phrase was officially used for the first time during Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow in June 2019. A joint statement establishing a "global, comprehensive strategic partnership for a new era" highlighted the need to build a new world order without Western domination.⁶ During the BRICS summit in Kazan, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh pointed to the need to build a new era based on deep connectivity and integration, smart technologies, and innovation.⁷

It is worth noting that the narrative of a "new era" was promoted by the 55th World Economic Forum in 2025, which was held under the slogan "Cooperation for a Smart Era" and highlight that „with the geopolitical and geoeconomic landscapes undergoing a paradigm shift, the meeting explored how to unlock the benefit of new technologies responsibly, strengthen social and economic resilience, safeguard the planet, and advance regional and global security”.⁸ However the comprehensive use of artificial intelligence to change forms of work and social surveillance essentially expresses the particular interests of the transnational corporate class hidden in the narrative of "progress, inclusiveness, and opportunities exploited by leaders", and is therefore a rebranding of the principles of the "Old Era". Similarly, at the G-7 summit in Italy, Larry Fink, CEO of Black Rock, the largest investment fund, justified the subordination of the public sphere to the profits of private institutions under the guise of the "Global Infrastructure Partnership" agenda.

Contrary, the paradigm of the "New Era" assumes that the international system should serve all people on Earth, based on the natural aspiration of nations to live in peace and harmony; the possibility of free access to the latest scientific achievements and innovative developments while preserving one's own culture and unique spiritual identity; relationships based on the win-win principle; recognition of the state as the expression of the common

⁶ See: Xi Jinping & W. Putin, *Joint Statement on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for the New Era*, 5.06.2019. <https://www.bilaterals.org/?joint-statement-of-the-people-s&lang=en>.

⁷ See: *Vietnam proposes five areas of connectivity at BRICS Summit in Russia*. Thursday, 24/10/2024 <https://english.vov.vn/en/politics/diplomacy/vietnam-proposes-five-areas-of-connectivity-at-brics-summit-in-russia-post1130758.vov>.

⁸ Annual Meeting 2025: Collaboration for the Intelligent Age, <https://www.weforum.org/pre ss/2025/01/annual-meeting-2025-collaboration-for-the-intelligent-age/>, access 26.09.25.

good; acceptance that the UN Charter and negotiations are the basis for resolving disputes in accordance with international law.

The pressing economic and social problems include: eradicating hunger and poverty, stopping corruption and money laundering, alleviating the credit burden and manipulation of interest rates, ending the predatory exploitation of natural resources, especially in the Global South, ending the dominance of the US dollar in global trade and investment, creating new jobs and reducing unemployment, and the widespread use of modern technologies and innovations to stimulate economic development.⁹ In this situation, block thinking,¹⁰ zero-sum relationships, ideas of uniqueness and exceptionalism become the antithesis of the international activity necessary for human progress and overcoming these problems. Therefore, a paradigm is needed that will allow for the establishment of effective anti-crisis barriers, ensure economic regeneration, equalize developmental, income, technological, and other disparities between the Global South and the Global North, reform the old economic and financial system, and introduce a new system and effective methodology and coordination for its management. It therefore stands in contrast to the “old era” paradigm.

Comparison of the “old era” and “new era” paradigms in international relations

PARADIGM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	OLD ERA	NEW ERA
BASIC ASSUMPTION	EXCLUSIVISM	INCLUSIVISM
IDEAS ON INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JUNGLE VERSUS GARDENS • THE WEST VERSUS THE REST • VALUE-BASED ORDER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIALOGUE BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS AND MUTUAL LEARNING • NO ENEMY FIGURE • ORDER BASED ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF SUBJECTIVITY
ECONOMY	GLOBAL CAPITALISM IN THE INTERESTS OF PRIVATE CORPORATIONS WITHOUT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	ADAPTING THE ECONOMY TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATED BY SOVEREIGN NATIONAL STATES

⁹ S. Szafarz, *Ewolucja BRICS w Nowej Erze*, <https://przeklad-socialistyczny.pl/opinie/sprawy-miedzynarodowe/2352-szafarz>, access 21.07.2025.

¹⁰ Cf. Z. Leoni & S. Tzinieris, *The Return of Geopolitical Blocs*, „Survival” 66(2),2024, p.37–54.

SECURITY	CLOSED. BASED ON BLOCK'S MENTALITY	OPEN. INDIVISIBLE
POLITICAL SYSTEM	LIBERAL DEMOCRACY LEGITIMIZING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES	LOCALLY CONTEXTUALIZED, BUT FOCUSED ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
SCIENCE	SCIENTISM, POSITIVISM, METHODOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALISM, MECHANICISM, EUROCENTRISM	ORGANICITY, HOLISM, CRITICAL REALISM, SYNTHESIS OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MANY CULTURES

Source: own work

Behind the geopolitical rivalry between these models lies a structural difference between state-society complexes. In the West, speculative finance is the dominant faction of capital that runs the state; others are subordinate to it. In the bloc of contenders (Eurasian Union, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization), the state, although subordinate to the local oligarchy, still directs social development, and finance serves industry and infrastructure.¹¹

BRICS as an association of countries for a “new era”

The evolution of the articulation of BRICS values has been dialectical over time, changing from summit to summit. It is a combination of different national values that may complement each other but do not necessarily overlap completely. This distinguishes the BRICS final documents from the established list of G7 values, with their classic liberal triad of “freedom, democracy, and human rights”, alongside the rule of law and a competitive economy. It was in 2022–24 that a significant consolidation of BRICS value priorities took place within the semantically established framework of the BRICS spirit: mutual respect, mutual understanding, sovereign equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness, consensus, as well as closer cooperation and democracy. The BRICS philosophy also includes, among other things: mutual consideration of interests, democratization, i.e., empowerment in international relations, respect for the sovereignty of nations and their right to determine their own development trajectories, in accordance with the African proverb: “If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.” During the BRICS summit in

¹¹ See: K. van der Pijl, *The Eurasian Union and the BRICS under attack, Paper for the conference: Regional Perspectives for China and its Neighbours*, Confucius Institute, Leiden University, 5–6 January 2017.

Johannesburg, Chinese leader Xi Jinping also mentioned a norm taken from the philosophy of ubuntu: “I am because we are”, which comes from the African dialect Nguni Bantu and means humanism (humanity), in which the individual and the community form a complementary unity.¹² The concept of Ubuntu was formally recognized in South Africa’s 2011 foreign policy white paper, meaning “respect for all countries, peoples, and cultures”, making human security a national security priority.¹³ This contrasts with the so-called value-based order, which in practice means imposing a single axiological model on everyone. This homogenization includes the dominance of the English language, a uniform political and economic system, common media and cultural patterns, and even technical standards. An example of this is the dominance of English during European Parliament debates, even though none of the European Union member states recognizes English as its official language.

Therefore another important aim of „New Era” would be decolonization of consciousness; the Western matrix of thinking is still maintained, partly through the waging of cognitive warfare.¹⁴ Reducing the influence of Hollywood and other media controlled by hedge funds would allow for the restoration of the authentic meaning of “diversity”, which refers to the richness of coexisting and complementary civilizations, rather than the “diversity” of a fluid reality according to postmodernist recipes promoted by media controlled by hedge funds.¹⁵

An important moment in the development of BRICS axiology is the idea of fair globalization, which means the development of new institutions. Their goal is to reject the methods used by the IMF and the World Bank, which,

¹² *The BRICS Way Jointly Building a Better World*, „News from China. China-Inida Review”, July–September 2023, p.9. <http://in.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xfw/zgxw/202309/P020230926733898082523.pdf>.

¹³ See: T. Mandrup and Karen Smith, “South Africa’s ‘Diplomacy of Ubuntu’: An African Approach to Coexistence?” In Cedric de Coning, T. Mandrup and L. Odgaard (ed.), *The BRICS and Coexistence: An Alternative Vision of World Order*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Abingdon 2015, p.150–1.

¹⁴ See: *Colonization of the Mind – The Means, Roots, and Global Perils of U.S. Cognitive Warfare*, Xinhua Institute, September, 2025.

¹⁵ F. Lama, *Dlaczego Zachód nie może wygrać. Od Bretton Woods do świata wielobiegunowego*, Wydawnictwo Wektory Józef Białek, Wrocław 2025, p.247–8.

'unique' or "chosen" nation. A practical reflection of this principle can be seen in the relations between the BRICS countries in recent decades, where none of these countries plays the role of a superior leader. The "new era" paradigm thus creates conditions for activity in line with the civilizational heritage of sovereign states, their own views on the best solutions on which they should focus their efforts, enabling beneficial cooperation between sovereign states. The "new era" paradigm should therefore be made the central conceptual node justifying the dynamics of the emergence of a multipolar world and the institutional order that underpins it.

Digital Sovereignty and Artificial Intelligence in the Rise of Asia: Towards a Decolonised Global Order?

Mohammad Rezza Fahlevvi

1. Introduction

Asia has undeniably become a central hub of digital activity and innovation on the global stage. This digital ascendancy, driven by artificial intelligence (AI), offers the region a unique opportunity to reshape its role in the global order. Historically, the global technological landscape has been dominated by Western powers, creating inherent power imbalances. The rise of Asia challenges this established digital hierarchy, forcing a re-examination of questions related to equity, freedom, and justice in the digital age (Castells, 2010; Couldry & Mejias, 2019). In this context, the principles of justice, solidarity, and equality, famously championed by newly independent nations at the 1955 Bandung Conference, provide a critical yardstick for governing digital media and AI in our new era (Abraham, 2020). Abraham argues that in Asia, digital sovereignty is less an abstract concept and more a tangible practice involving the control of data, AI technology, and digital diplomacy. The Bandung Spirit's call for self-reliance and mutual respect offers a vital lens through which to assess whether Asia's development represents a genuine movement to decolonize global power structures, releasing countervailing forces in world politics.

However, there is a concurrent risk that Asian nations might simply step into the role of new burden-bearers within an updated World System, perpetuating old dependencies in new, digital forms. This paper, therefore, engages in two interrelated discussions. First, it investigates the inward

trends in the digital sovereignty programs of key Asian nations, asking whether these initiatives are mere imitations of foreign models or novel approaches that can foster more equitable international relations. Second, it explores how the values of the Bandung Spirit can inform the development of fair and just AI governance principles.

The paper focuses specifically on China, India, Indonesia, and the ASEAN regional bloc as critical cases, analyzing what their distinct approaches to AI and digital sovereignty mean for regional power dynamics and the ongoing transition of global governance norms. By drawing on decolonial theory, this study argues that Asia's digital transformation must be consciously coupled with decolonial praxis to avoid reproducing technological dependencies and instead forge a more equitable global digital order.

2. Theoretical Framework: Decolonizing Digital Sovereignty

2.1 Digital Colonialism and Its Discontents

Digital colonialism describes a contemporary form of domination where global power asymmetries are perpetuated through technology. It is not merely about economic exploitation but also involves the imposition of cultural biases, epistemological frameworks, and governance models through digital infrastructures and platforms (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). This phenomenon manifests in several ways: the control of global data flows by a handful of Western corporations, the encoding of Western cultural norms into algorithms that then shape global social and economic interactions, and the establishment of international standards that reflect the priorities of the Global North.

This creates a self-reinforcing cycle. As (Mohamed, *et al.*, 2020) note, AI systems trained on data from the Global North often perform poorly or perpetuate biases when applied in other contexts, further marginalizing already disadvantaged communities. Refers to this as “algorithmic colonization”, a fundamental shift in the “river of modernity” that sidelines local perspectives and priorities (Abdalla, 2020). The result is that instead of bridging global inequalities, digital technologies can exacerbate them, creating new forms of dependency and control.

2.2 The Bandung Spirit in the Digital Age

The Bandung Conference of 1955 was a landmark event where newly independent Asian and African nations asserted their sovereignty and committed to principles of mutual respect, non-interference, equality, and cooperation. The “Bandung Spirit” represented a rejection of colonial and neo-colonial domination and a pursuit of a “positive-sum” international relations model.

In the digital age, these principles remain profoundly relevant. They can be translated into three core dimensions for AI governance:

- **Data Justice:** This calls for fair and equitable treatment in how data is collected, used, and shared. It demands that data subjects, including geographically and culturally remote communities, have rights over their information and that data practices do not reinforce existing social inequities (Taylor, 2022).
- **Technological Solidarity:** This principle emphasizes mutual aid and cooperation within the Global South. It involves sharing knowledge, building joint infrastructure, facilitating technology transfer, and developing capacity to reduce collective dependence on Northern technology providers.
- **Epistemic Equality:** This demands the de-centering of Western knowledge systems in the creation of AI. It advocates for the inclusion of diverse cultural perspectives, languages, and ethical frameworks in the design, development, and standard-setting processes for AI technologies.

2.3 Conceptualizing Digital Sovereignty

Digital sovereignty is a multi-faceted concept that varies according to national context. For this analysis, we define it across three key dimensions (Floridi, 2020):

1. **Technological Sovereignty:** The capacity of a state or entity to control its core digital infrastructure (e.g., cloud services, 5G networks) and to foster indigenous technological innovation.
2. **Data Sovereignty:** The authority to govern data within a jurisdiction, including laws on data localization, privacy, and cross-border data

flows, ensuring that national interests and citizens' rights are protected.

3. Algorithmic Sovereignty (Algo-Sovereignty): The ability to shape and regulate AI systems so that they align with a society's specific values, norms, and legal principles, rather than being dictated by external corporate or governmental standards.

3. Methodology

This research employs a qualitative comparative case study design to analyze digital sovereignty initiatives in Asia. The primary methodological approach is thematic analysis, drawing on policy documents, academic literature, and international reports.

3.1 Data Collection and Sources

Data was collected from a variety of sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis:

- 1) National policy documents, such as China's "New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan" and India's "Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023".
- 2) International reports from organizations like the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNESCO on AI governance and readiness.
- 3) Academic literature on digital sovereignty, AI ethics, and decolonial theory.
- 4) Supplementary materials, including technical standards and corporate AI principles.

3.2 Case Selection

Four cases were selected to represent a spectrum of digital sovereignty models in Asia:

1. China: Exemplifying a state-led, comprehensive sovereignty model with strong control over technology, data, and algorithms.

2. India: Representing a democratic digital sovereignty model that seeks to balance state control with citizen empowerment and digital public goods.
3. Indonesia: Illustrating the challenges and strategies of an emerging economy navigating digital openness and sovereign control.
4. ASEAN: Showcasing a unique regional governance model based on cooperation and consensus (musyawarah mufakat).

3.3 Analytical Approach

The analysis applies a thematic framework informed by decolonial theory and the principles of the Bandung Spirit. It examines how each case navigates the tensions between sovereignty and solidarity, and the extent to which their AI governance frameworks challenge or reinforce existing global power structures.

4. Asia's Digital Sovereignty Landscape: Comparative Analysis

4.1 China's State-Led Sovereignty Model

China presents a robust, state-centric model of digital sovereignty. Its approach is characterized by top-down planning, as seen in its (Cyberspace Administration of China, 2017) and stringent regulations like the (Cybersecurity Law of the People's Republic of China, 2017) and (Data Security Law of the People's Republic of China, 2021). These laws enforce data localization for critical sectors and assert state control over data flows. Technologically, China promotes self-reliance through national champions like Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent, and by developing indigenous systems like the BeiDou navigation network and the Harmony OS operating system. Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China exports its digital infrastructure and standards, creating an alternative to Western technological ecosystems. From a Bandung perspective, this model offers a form of South-South technological cooperation but raises concerns about the potential for creating new dependencies and the use of technology for domestic surveillance.

4.2 India's Democratic Digital Sovereignty

India's approach blends sovereign control with a focus on democratic values and digital public goods. The India Stack—a set of APIs enabling digital identity (Aadhaar), payments (UPI), and data sharing—is a prime example. It aims to empower citizens and foster innovation while keeping data and digital architecture within national control. The recent (Government of India, 2023) seeks to balance individual privacy with national security and economic growth. India's "AI for All" strategy emphasizes social justice and inclusivity. It also actively exports its digital public goods model to other developing countries, reflecting the Bandung principle of technological solidarity. However, challenges persist, including the digital divide and concerns about the potential for state overreach and exclusion in a highly digitized governance system.

4.3 Indonesia's Emerging Sovereignty Framework

As Southeast Asia's largest economy, Indonesia's journey toward digital sovereignty highlights the tensions faced by emerging economies. Its "Making Indonesia 4.0" initiative and laws such as Government Regulation No.71 of 2019 on Electronic Systems and Transactions mandate data localization for crucial sectors, asserting control over citizen data against foreign jurisdiction. Indonesia walks a delicate line, seeking to attract foreign investment in technology while protecting its national digital space. It actively leverages its historical legacy as the host of the Bandung Conference to position itself as a "bridge nation" in international forums like the G20, advocating for the interests of the Global South in digital trade and governance discussions, thereby operationalizing the Bandung Spirit in contemporary digital diplomacy.

4.4 ASEAN's Cooperative Governance Model

The ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 represents a distinctive regional approach to digital sovereignty. It prioritizes "cooperative sovereignty", focusing on building regional capacity, facilitating cross-border data flows with adequate safeguards, and narrowing the internal digital divide among member states. Governance follows the "ASEAN Way", which relies on consultation (musyawarah) and consensus (mufakat) rather than supranational enforcement. This model embodies the Bandung principles of solidarity and mutual respect, explicitly considering the needs of its less

developed members. However, the vast developmental disparities within ASEAN and the consensus-based model can sometimes slow down the pace of regional integration and regulatory harmonization.

5. Discussion: Between Decolonization and Recolonization

5.1 Dual Dynamics of Asia's Digital Rise

Asia's pursuit of digital sovereignty exhibits a dual dynamic. On one hand, it presents a powerful challenge to Western digital hegemony. This is achieved through indigenous innovation (e.g., China's tech stack, India's UPI), South-South cooperation (e.g., technology transfer via BRI, sharing of digital public goods), and the creation of alternative AI governance frameworks. On the other hand, there is a risk of "digital recolonization", where Asian powers might replicate extractive patterns. This could involve the exploitation of data from less powerful neighbors within the region, the creation of new technological dependencies, or the implementation of governance models that prioritize state control over citizen participation and minority rights. The central challenge is to navigate this rise in a way that genuinely decolonizes global digital relations rather than merely shifting the center of power.

5.2 Operationalizing Bandung Principles in AI Governance

To counter these risks, the Bandung principles must be actively operationalized in AI governance:

- **Data Justice:** AI systems must be designed to rectify, not reinforce, underlying social injustices. This requires communal data governance models that give marginalized communities a voice in how their data is collected and used. Initiatives like community data banks in India and Indonesia, which embed consent mechanisms into data-sharing practices, are promising examples.
- **Technological Solidarity:** This can be fostered through structured South-South cooperation. This includes establishing technology transfer funds, promoting open-source technology collaborations, and implementing procurement policies that prioritize solutions from the Global South. Capacity-building projects, such as those jointly funded by Japan and India for ASEAN members, are concrete steps in this direction.

- **Epistemic Equality:** International standard-setting bodies for AI must actively include voices from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. AI ethics frameworks cannot be monopolized by Western philosophical traditions. Developing culturally diverse training datasets and evaluation benchmarks is crucial to ensuring AI systems work fairly and effectively for all of humanity.

5.3 Toward a Decolonized AI Governance Framework

Based on this discussion, we propose an integrated framework for decolonized AI governance:

- **Normative Foundation:**
 - Root AI governance in the principles of justice, solidarity, and epistemic equality.
 - Acknowledge that technology is not neutral but embedded within social and power relations.
 - Balance national sovereignty with a sense of responsibility toward the global digital commons.
- **Institutional Mechanisms:**
 - Establish regional AI governance bodies with inclusive participation from governments, industry, academia, and civil society.
 - Create South-South technology cooperation funds to finance joint research and development.
 - Implement multistakeholder oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Technical Architecture:**
 - Build sovereign data infrastructure (e.g., national cloud systems) with interoperability standards that enable regional cooperation without ceding control.
 - Develop and deploy privacy-enhancing technologies like federated learning, which allows for AI model training without centralizing sensitive data.
 - Curate culturally and linguistically diverse datasets to mitigate bias and build AI that serves diverse populations.

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

Asia's assertive move towards digital sovereignty is a defining feature of the contemporary global technology landscape. The region is challenging the long-standing technological dictatorship of Western powers and attempting to carve out its own future. However, this paper contends that the mere possession of technological power is insufficient; the mode of its acquisition and application is paramount. Without a conscious decolonial praxis, Asia's digital rise risks perpetuating the very colonial patterns it seeks to overcome.

The Bandung Spirit, adapted for the digital age, provides a vital normative compass. By championing data justice, technological solidarity, and epistemic equality, Asian nations can guide their digital transformation toward a more equitable outcome. This requires a shift in the understanding of sovereignty—from a concept of pure control to one of responsibility, both to their own citizens and to the global community.

Several policy implications emerge from this analysis:

1. **Strengthen Regional Platforms:** Asian nations should leverage regional organizations like ASEAN to collectively address high-tech production bottlenecks, develop shared standards, and enhance bargaining power on the global stage.
2. **Promote Participatory Governance:** Claims of democratic sovereignty must be bolstered by ensuring meaningful citizen and civil society participation in the design and oversight of digitalization processes and AI systems.
3. **Invest in Capacity Building:** Significant investment is needed in indigenous R&D, digital literacy, and local AI talent pools to build genuine and sustainable technological self-reliance across the region, particularly in less developed areas.

Future research should critically examine the gap between rhetorical commitments to digital sovereignty and on-the-ground practices. Comparative studies with other regions, particularly Africa, would deepen our understanding of decolonization struggles in the Global South. Furthermore, developing robust metrics to measure progress toward decolonized digital governance remains a crucial scholarly and practical task.

Seventy years on, the legacy of the Bandung Conference presents a set of enduring challenges. Asia's current upsurge is distinctively digital. It possesses the potential not only to shape its own future but also to help decolonize the entire global digital system, creating a future that is more just, solidaristic, and equal for all.

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BRICS Plus: Inheritance and Innovation of the Bandung Spirit

Xiaochen Hou

1. Introduction: The Bandung Spirit and the Historical Context of BRICS Plus

The international community stands at a historic crossroads. The Western-centric liberal international order is exhibiting profound fatigue, while a more diverse and heterogeneous multipolar world order is gestating amidst significant growing pains. Within this grand structural transformation, the “Global South”, long perceived as an object in international relations, is resurging as an indispensable force for change. Its revival has transitioned from a theoretical possibility to a geopolitical and economic inevitability. Against this backdrop, the BRICS cooperation mechanism and its “BRICS Plus” model have evolved beyond mere economic cooperation forums, emerging as key actors in reshaping the architecture of global governance. Understanding the intellectual origins and strategic logic of this emerging force necessitates a return to the foundational moment of modern Global South solidarity—the 1955 Bandung Conference. Placing “BRICS Plus” within the historical lineage of the Bandung Spirit is essential not only for tracing its intellectual pedigree but also for deciphering the new code of autonomy and development sought by the Global South in the 21st century.

The principles championed by the Bandung Conference—sovereign equality, anti-colonialism and anti-hegemonism, and South-South cooperation—provided a “Third Way” for newly independent states seeking to transcend Cold War bipolarity. Its spiritual legacy constitutes the

cornerstone of the Global South's collective identity. However, with the end of the Cold War and the waves of globalization, the older forms of the Non-Aligned Movement faced efficacy bottlenecks, and the Bandung Spirit was, for a long time, regarded more as a nostalgic historical symbol than an active guiding principle. Consequently, a core research question arises: How does the "BRICS Plus" mechanism, while inheriting the core principles of the Bandung Spirit, address contemporary challenges to achieve profound institutional innovation and conceptual renewal?

Addressing this question is crucial not only for evaluating the BRICS mechanism itself but also for shaping our understanding of the future landscape of the global order. This study argues that "BRICS Plus" is not a simple replica of the Bandung Spirit; rather, it represents its strategic evolution and operational revitalization under new historical conditions, marking a critical leap in the Global South's long journey from being rule-takers to becoming co-authors of the rules.

2. The Bandung Spirit: The Intellectual Legacy of the Global South

The convening of the Bandung Conference stemmed from profound changes in the post-World War II international landscape. As the colonial system disintegrated at an accelerating pace, a large number of newly emergent nation-states in Asia and Africa ascended to the global stage. However, upon gaining independence, they found themselves caught in the interstices of the Cold War confrontation, facing the severe risk of being drawn into US-Soviet bloc politics and losing their hard-won sovereign independence. It was against this backdrop that, initiated by Indonesia, India, Burma, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), and Pakistan, representatives from 29 Asian and African countries gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955 for what was termed "the first intercontinental conference of coloured peoples in the history of mankind".¹ Its core objective was to break through the Iron Curtain of the Cold War and explore a "Third Path" for

¹ Joseph Hongoh, "The Asian-African Conference (Bandung) and Pan-Africanism: the challenge of reconciling continental solidarity with national sovereignty", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.70, No.4, 2016, p.374.

emerging nations—one that transcended ideological disputes and sought autonomy and development.²

The Bandung Conference achieved landmark accomplishments. Its most direct political outcome was catalyzing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), institutionalizing “non-alignment” as a collective foreign policy strategy. In terms of ideology, the conference culminated in the adoption of the Final Communiqué of the Asian-African Conference, which systematically distilled the Ten Principles of Bandung (Dasasila Bandung). These principles form the core of the Bandung Spirit and remain relevant today:

Sovereign Equality and Non-Interference in Internal Affairs: This is the cornerstone of the Bandung Spirit. The principles emphasize “respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations” and “abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country”. This was a direct response to the practices of colonialism and hegemonism, providing emerging states with the legal and moral basis for defending their political independence. Premier Zhou Enlai’s advocacy of the “Seek Common Ground While Reserving Differences” principle during the conference was a masterful application of this spirit, successfully resolving disagreements and preserving unity.

The Spirit of Anti-Colonialism and Anti-Hegemonism in the Struggle for National Liberation: The conference unequivocally “opposed colonialism in all its manifestations” and supported peoples still struggling for national independence. This was not only a reckoning with historical injustice but also a sustained vigilance against any form of external power imposition and hegemonic behavior, reflecting the fundamental aspiration of emerging nations for the democratization of international relations.

The Founding Ethos of Solidarity, Cooperation, and Mutual Benefit in South-South Cooperation: Participating nations recognized that political independence alone was insufficient to address deep-rooted economic inequalities. Consequently, the principles explicitly advocated the “promotion of mutual interests and cooperation”, calling for collaboration in

² Heloise Weber and Poppy Winanti, “The ‘Bandung spirit’ and solidarist internationalism”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.70, No.4, 2016, p.391. Nila Ayu Utami, “Revisiting the Bandung Conference: berbeda sejak dalam pikiran”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol.17, No.1, 2016, p.140.

economic and cultural development. This South-South cooperation, based on equality and mutual benefit, aimed to transform the unidirectional dependency on developed Northern nations and achieve shared prosperity.

The Bandung Spirit instilled in the Global South its initial political consciousness and a shared sense of identity, constituting a profound intellectual legacy. It announced the arrival of the Global South as an independent force on the world stage and laid the normative foundation for subsequent South-South cooperation. Although it faced historical limitations in terms of institutionalization and specific mechanisms for economic collaboration, its core tenets—sovereign equality, anti-colonialism/anti-hegemonism, and solidarity/cooperation—have served as a guiding beacon, illuminating the fundamental direction for all subsequent Global South cooperation mechanisms, including the BRICS coalition.

3. Inheritance: The Institutionalization of Bandung Principles in the BRICS Mechanism

The rise of the BRICS cooperation mechanism nearly seven decades later is not a historical coincidence but a conscious inheritance and institutional response to the Bandung Spirit in the new era. It successfully elevated the idealistic principles articulated at the Bandung Conference from the level of political declaration to an operable and sustainable system of governance and practical paradigms, thereby infusing the collective autonomy of the Global South with substantial institutional content.

First, regarding the institutionalization of “sovereign equality” and “non-interference in internal affairs”, the BRICS mechanism has achieved a leap from concept to practice. The core of the Bandung Spirit lies in defending the sovereign dignity of newly independent states and opposing any form of external coercion. The BRICS mechanism deeply embedded this principle into the DNA of its institutional design. The most representative example is the New Development Bank’s (NDB) equal shareholding principle—each founding member holds a 20% stake and enjoys equal voting rights. This design is a direct innovation against the governance model of post-WWII Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where “shareholding and voting rights are determined

by capital contribution” (de facto dominated by Western nations).³ It ensures that within a Global South multilateral financial institution, sovereign rights are equal regardless of economic size, fundamentally preventing any single country from monopolizing decision-making power, thus transforming “sovereign equality” from diplomatic rhetoric into concrete governance rules. Furthermore, the NDB’s implementation of the “country systems” approach in project appraisal—prioritizing the use of the borrower country’s own environmental and social safeguard standards and legal regulatory frameworks rather than imposing an external set of “best practices”—is a pragmatic interpretation of the “non-interference” principle. It acknowledges the diversity of development paths and respects member states’ autonomy in development planning, thereby contrasting sharply with the practice of Western-dominated development agencies often attaching political conditionalities.

Second, regarding the founding ethos of “solidarity, cooperation, and mutual benefit” in South-South cooperation, the BRICS mechanism has propelled a paradigm upgrade from “political solidarity” to “developmental integration”. Economic cooperation during the Bandung era focused more on trade reciprocity and the exchange of primary products, whereas BRICS cooperation delves into the integration of industrial and supply chains, aiming to build a more resilient and internally circulating “development partnership circle”. This cooperation transcends the traditional vertical division of labor between resource exporters and manufactured goods importers, shifting towards horizontal production capacity collaboration and complementary advantages. For instance, among Chinese manufacturing capabilities, Indian IT services, Russian natural resources, Brazilian agriculture and mining, and South Africa’s financial hub status, the BRICS mechanism, through establishing energy partnerships, promoting science and technology innovation initiatives, and building digital economy frameworks, strives to weave their respective comparative advantages into an interdependent cooperative network. This industrial cooperation, through jointly building infrastructure, collaborative R&D, and jointly exploring new markets, creates a new paradigm of “mutual benefit and win-win

³ Mzukisi Qobo and Mills Soko, “The rise of emerging powers in the global development finance architecture: The case of the BRICS and the New Development Bank”, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.22, No.3, 2015, p.277.

cooperation”, collectively enhancing their positions in the global value chain and achieving genuine common development. This represents a deepening and sublimation of the Bandung spirit of solidarity and cooperation.

Finally, regarding the stance of “collective anti-colonialism and anti-hegemonism”, the BRICS mechanism has achieved a strategic transformation from “political resistance” to “reform from within the establishment”. The “anti-colonialism and anti-hegemonism” of the Bandung Conference was manifested in the direct political negation of colonial rule and support for national liberation movements. Today, this spirit has largely transformed into a demand for reforming the Western-dominated, unjust global governance system. BRICS nations do not seek to overthrow the existing system as revolutionaries but act as collective advocates, striving to promote its evolution towards greater democracy and inclusivity from within. This is most concentrated in their longstanding joint initiative for United Nations Security Council reform. In their successive summit declarations, BRICS countries have consistently emphasized the need for greater representation and voice for Global South countries, including BRICS members themselves, within the UNSC—the core institution of the international collective security system—to correct its historically imbalanced geographical representation. Furthermore, in global economic governance, they jointly call for reforming the World Bank’s lending charters and the IMF’s quota and governance structures to reflect 21st-century economic realities. In emerging areas like climate change and digital governance, BRICS countries also seek to coordinate positions and speak with a unified voice to prevent the monopolization of rule-making by developed countries.⁴ This effort to secure institutional power through collective action is the most precise and effective contemporary practice of the “anti-hegemonism” spirit, aiming directly at establishing a more equitable and just multipolar international order.

Through its institutional architecture, economic practices, and global governance agenda, the BRICS mechanism has systematically institutionalized the three pillars of the Bandung Spirit—sovereign equality,

⁴ Michael Dunford, Weidong Liu and Christophe Pompeani, “Area Development and Policy, the Greater BRICS and a new world order?”, *Area Development and Policy*, Vol.7, No.4, 2022, p.365.

mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and collective opposition to hegemonism. This is no longer an inheritance merely at the level of rhetoric; rather, by establishing new institutions, new models of cooperation, and new reform alliances, it has endowed the Bandung Spirit with vigorous vitality under new historical conditions, carving out a viable path for the solidarity and self-strengthening of the Global South.

4. Innovation: The New Practice of BRICS Plus in the Global South

The “BRICS Plus” model represents a forward-looking strategic innovation, building upon the institutional inheritance of the Bandung Spirit. Through a series of groundbreaking practices, it has elevated cooperation within the Global South from a form of regional inter-state coordination to a new paradigm of global governance that is trans-civilizational and possesses systemic importance. This innovation is primarily manifested in three interconnected dimensions: cooperative architecture, development governance, and civilizational substance, marking the entry of the Global South’s autonomy construction into a new historical stage.

Firstly, in terms of cooperative architecture, BRICS Plus has achieved a revolutionary breakthrough from a “core bloc” to an “open ecosystem”. Traditional regional organizations or alliances often possess strict geographical boundaries and accession criteria. In contrast, the BRICS Plus model has created a flexible and inclusive concentric circle system. At its core is the historic expansion from 2024 to 2025, which incorporated regional powers such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, and Indonesia as full members. This move is far from a simple quantitative increase; it is a structural reorganization of profound strategic significance: it integrates the world’s most crucial energy producers (the Middle East), controllers of key maritime chokepoints (the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz), Africa’s growth engines, and Southeast Asia’s emerging economies, forming a “Greater BRICS Ecosystem” spanning all Southern continents and covering the lifelines of energy, markets, and logistics. More importantly, the establishment of the BRICS Plus Dialogue Partner mechanism provides a platform for flexible participation by countries not yet ready or willing to become full members (e.g., Malaysia, Thailand, Senegal). This tiered architecture of “Full Members – Partner Countries – Dialogue Countries” breaks away from the traditional “all-or-nothing” membership logic, allowing states to embed themselves within the cooperative network to varying depths based on their own interests and geopolitical

considerations. This significantly enhances the mechanism's adaptability and appeal, transforming it into a truly representative, vibrant, and open system for the Global South.

Secondly, regarding the paradigm of development governance, BRICS Plus has catalyzed a qualitative shift from "project-based cooperation" to "system-building".

Early South-South cooperation often focused on specific aid projects or trade agreements. BRICS Plus, however, is committed to establishing autonomous rule-making and standard-setting systems in critical areas, aiming to fundamentally reduce systemic dependency on Western-dominated frameworks. In the financial sphere, the New Development Bank (NDB) not only provides infrastructure loans but also actively participates in constructing the Global South's own green finance standards through large-scale issuances of green bonds, thereby challenging the narrow environmental criteria defined by OECD nations. Simultaneously, the BRICS collective exploration of a multilateral central bank digital currency bridge project represents a significant techno-institutional innovation attempting to circumvent the US dollar-dominated SWIFT settlement system, offering a depoliticized alternative for future cross-border transactions. In terms of economic collaboration, the BRICS Plus model advocates for "chain-type development synergy", which involves the systematic and seamless linkage of member states' resources, production capacities, and markets through strategic planning. For instance, Brazil's critical mineral resources like rare earths, China's advanced manufacturing and infrastructure capabilities, the Middle East's capital and energy, and the vast consumer markets of Southeast Asia and Africa are being consciously integrated into a more regionalized and diversified supply chain network. This cooperation transcends simple complementary trade, aiming to co-shape an embryonic form of "internal circulation within the Global South" that is more resilient and less susceptible to fluctuations in external single markets.

Finally, in the dimension of civilizational substance, BRICS Plus has accomplished an expansion from "political-economic cooperation" to "multi-civilizational mutual learning". While the Bandung Spirit emphasized solidarity, its discursive framework was primarily built upon a political consensus of anti-colonialism and anti-hegemonism. BRICS Plus profoundly recognizes that the genuine rejuvenation of the Global South entails not only political self-reliance and economic self-strengthening but

also cultural self-awareness and confidence. Consequently, it has proactively elevated civilizational dialogue and people-to-people exchanges to a strategic level. This is embodied in the institutionalized operation of multilateral platforms such as the BRICS University League, BRICS Film Festival, and BRICS Games. These platforms aim to foster direct exchanges among youth, scholars, artists, and citizens, jointly unearthing and narrating the knowledge systems and historical contributions of the Global South that have been obscured by dominant Western narratives. This endeavor seeks to cultivate a shared “Global South civic consciousness” and dismantle the ingrained civilizational hierarchy perpetuated under Western discursive hegemony. The cultural multilateralism of “appreciating the beauty in each other’s civilizations”, which it champions, represents a creative transformation of the Bandung ideal of “harmonious coexistence” into the cultural realm, laying a solid social and public opinion foundation for constructing a truly multipolar, pluralistic world order, rather than one dominated by singular values.

Through this triple innovation—architectural openness, systemic governance, and civilizational diversity—the BRICS Plus model has achieved a transcendence and sublimation of the Bandung Spirit. It is no longer merely a critic of an unjust system but has become a dynamic builder of alternative solutions. By forging a more inclusive cooperative ecosystem, a more autonomous development paradigm, and a more vibrant model for inter-civilizational dialogue, BRICS Plus is scripting a new practical playbook for the Global South, signifying a shift for Southern nations from being passive reactors to proactive agenda-setters in the pursuit of international order transformation.

5. Conclusion: Rebirth through Reconstruction

The evolution of the BRICS mechanism is, in essence, a grand practice of creatively transforming and innovatively developing the Bandung Spirit. It is not a simple replication of or nostalgic tribute to the 1955 historical legacy, but rather a profound “reconstruction” undertaken within the complex geopolitical and economic landscape of the 21st century. By institutionalizing the abstract principle of sovereign equality into governance structures (e.g., the NDB’s equal shareholding), paradigm-shifting the political consensus of South-South cooperation into deeply integrated industrial chain synergy, and strategically translating the spirit of anti-colonialism and anti-hegemonism into collective initiatives for global

governance reform, the BRICS mechanism has successfully provided the core principles of the Bandung Spirit with operable institutional vehicles and sustained capacity for action.

More crucially, the introduction of the “BRICS Plus” model marks a qualitative leap in this process of reconstruction. By building open and inclusive partnership networks, exploring autonomous and controllable development governance standards, and advocating for multi-civilizational mutual learning, it has injected new dynamism into the solidarity and cooperation of the Global South for the contemporary era. This model transcends traditional geographical limitations and singular political agendas, upgrading South-South cooperation from a defensive alliance responding to common challenges into a constructive force aimed at shaping the future international order.

Nevertheless, challenges such as internal interest fragmentation, external pressures, and institutional efficacy bottlenecks necessitate that the BRICS mechanism move beyond formal solidarity towards a more resilient and effective “pragmatic institutionalism”. Looking ahead, through flexible consensus-building mechanisms, functionalized cooperation pathways, and deeper development strategy alignment, the BRICS mechanism holds the potential to translate its collective influence from the declaratory level decisively into tangible outcomes. The practice of BRICS cooperation demonstrates that the vitality of the Bandung Spirit lies precisely in mechanisms like BRICS, which, through continuous reconstruction and innovation, constantly rejuvenate its relevance, providing an inexhaustible source of “Southern agency” for building a more just and equitable multipolar world order.

BRICS Plus and the Spirits of Bandung: Policies and Actions for Building a Just Multilateral System in 21st Century: Case Study: Is Indonesia a Pivot for BRICS–ASEAN Regional Cooperation?

Fabio Tiburzi

Introduction

Indonesia's potential membership in the BRICS Plus framework represents a significant development in global politics and economics. Strategically located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia has long pursued an independent and active foreign policy, guided by the principles of non-alignment and South-South cooperation. The historical legacy of the 1955 Bandung Conference emphasizes sovereignty, cooperation, and self-determination among emerging nations. In this context, Indonesia's engagement with BRICS Plus can be seen as a continuation of its commitment to multilateral participation and global influence.

The BRICS Plus initiative, which expands the traditional BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) to include emerging regional powers, offers opportunities for economic collaboration, financial innovation, technological development, and regional security integration. For Indonesia, the potential benefits include access to alternative development financing, technological and scientific partnerships, and enhanced diplomatic leverage in a multipolar world.

1. BRICS, BRICS Plus, and the Geopolitical Context

BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—originated as a cooperative platform for major emerging economies to enhance the influence of the Global South and advocate for a multipolar world less dependent on Western institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. Since its formalization in 2009, the group has expanded its institutional toolkit, establishing the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to provide financial alternatives to traditional Bretton Woods structures.

BRICS Plus, launched in 2017 by China, represents a strategic enlargement aimed at integrating other emerging economies, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Argentina. Today, the platform accounts for over 45% of the global population and surpasses the G7 in purchasing power parity, positioning itself as a near-global forum for economic and diplomatic coordination. Unlike the G7 and G20, which are dominated by Western economies and institutionalized frameworks, BRICS Plus is characterized by fluid membership and flexible governance, emphasizing inclusivity and South-South cooperation.

Despite its growth, the bloc faces internal contradictions: political heterogeneity, asymmetrical economic capacities—China alone generates over 70% of BRICS GDP—and bilateral tensions, notably between India and China. Nevertheless, its relevance as a laboratory for multipolar governance has increased, offering Indonesia an opportunity to shape regional integration and global policy agendas in line with its historical and strategic positioning.

2. BRICS Plus: Concept and Evolution

The concept of BRICS Plus extends beyond mere economic cooperation. Scholars highlight its potential to redefine global governance by providing emerging economies with leverage against Western-dominated institutions. In Latin America, BRICS Plus is often perceived as a mechanism for diversifying trade and investment away from traditional U.S. influence, while in Africa it represents access to infrastructure funding and technological transfer. In the Middle East, engagement with the bloc offers alternative channels for energy investment and financial partnerships, particularly in countries seeking to reduce dependence on U.S.-led financial systems.

Academic debates emphasize that BRICS Plus is not only a platform for economic collaboration but also a vehicle for soft power projection. Its flexible approach allows member states to coordinate on issues such as sustainable development, digitalization, and energy security while maintaining domestic policy autonomy. Critically, BRICS Plus's success depends on its ability to manage internal diversity, resolve disputes diplomatically, and present a credible alternative to Western-centric governance without antagonizing major powers.

3. The Spirit of Bandung: Historical Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

The 1955 Bandung Conference, hosted by Indonesia, brought together 29 Asian and African nations to assert sovereignty, equality, and non-alignment during the Cold War. It produced a set of principles—respect for sovereignty, non-interference, peaceful conflict resolution, and South-South cooperation—that became the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The Bandung Spirit established Indonesia as a leader in advocating for post-colonial states, promoting a vision of international relations based on mutual respect rather than power hierarchies.

Over the decades, this legacy has remained influential. The Bandung principles continue to guide Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly the *bebas aktif* doctrine, emphasizing independence in alignment decisions and active engagement in global affairs. In the 21st century, the Bandung Spirit provides a symbolic and normative framework for engaging in BRICS Plus, offering moral authority for Indonesia to mediate conflicts, bridge diverse political systems, and advocate for equitable global governance.

4. Indonesia in the Contemporary Context: Geopolitical and Economic Profile

Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country and Southeast Asia's largest economy, with GDP averaging around 5% annual growth over the past two decades. According to World Bank data, the country's GDP reached approximately \$1.3 trillion in 2023, with inflation around 3.5%, unemployment at 5%, and a debt-to-GDP ratio of 30%, reflecting sound macroeconomic management and resilience.

Strategically, Indonesia controls key maritime routes, including the Strait of Malacca, crucial for global trade. Its Vision Indonesia 2045 aims to elevate

the nation to advanced economy status by its centenary of independence, including the relocation of the capital from Jakarta to Nusantara. The economy is diversified, with resource wealth, manufacturing, and a growing digital sector, while challenges remain in reducing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability to climate change.

Diplomatically, Indonesia maintains balanced relations with major powers: China (trade and infrastructure), the U.S. (security and technology), Japan (investment and development), and Gulf states (capital flows). Its democratic consolidation since the fall of Soeharto in 1998 has strengthened political stability, though corruption and political fragmentation persist. Indonesia's combination of demographic weight, economic strength, strategic location, and diplomatic credibility positions it as a pivotal actor in both regional and global governance.

5. Finance and Currency: Local Payments and BRICS Institutions

Finance represents a tangible arena where Indonesia could benefit from BRICS Plus membership. Access to the NDB would allow financing of infrastructure, renewable energy, and urban development projects aligned with national priorities, complementing rather than replacing traditional Bretton Woods institutions. Initiatives in local currency settlements and dedollarization could mitigate exposure to U.S. monetary fluctuations, strengthen regional trade integration, and position Indonesia as a financial bridge between ASEAN and BRICS economies.

The CRA, a \$100 billion liquidity mechanism, provides additional resilience against external shocks. Collaborative investment opportunities with BRICS partners in sectors such as renewable energy, digital infrastructure, battery technology, and Islamic finance could accelerate economic diversification. Examples include potential expansion of the Jakarta–Bandung high-speed railway, solar and wind energy projects, and digital payment platforms leveraging regional financial integration.

While promising, limitations exist: the NDB's scale is modest compared to the World Bank, dedollarization remains gradual, and CRA mechanisms are largely untested. Strategically, Indonesia's engagement with BRICS Plus enhances financial autonomy, facilitates access to capital and technology, and reinforces its role as a regional economic hub.

6. Scientific, Technological, and Educational Cooperation

Indonesia's potential membership in BRICS Plus opens substantial opportunities in science, technology, and education, which could significantly enhance its human capital and industrial base. Joint research initiatives with China and India, for instance, could accelerate progress in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, renewable energy, and space technology. Collaborative laboratories, shared innovation hubs, and co-funded research projects would enable Indonesia to benefit from advanced knowledge and technological expertise, while simultaneously contributing its own natural resources and human capital.

In energy, Indonesia could partner with Brazil and South Africa to develop sustainable biofuels and improve resource management practices. The country's vast nickel reserves, essential for electric battery production, present an opportunity for industrial collaboration with BRICS partners, supporting joint ventures in battery technology and electric mobility. These projects could position Indonesia as a regional hub for green technology and sustainable manufacturing.

Educationally, BRICS Plus membership could expand academic exchanges, joint PhD programs, and faculty collaborations. Indonesian universities could host international students from BRICS countries, particularly in fields such as renewable energy engineering, digital technologies, and industrial design. Conversely, Indonesian students could benefit from training and research placements abroad, fostering a knowledge network that spans continents. Over time, such exchanges could strengthen regional integration and cultivate a generation of scientists, engineers, and policymakers attuned to global multipolar cooperation.

Furthermore, technology transfer and industrial partnerships would enhance Indonesia's manufacturing autonomy in critical sectors like cybersecurity, AI-driven logistics, and renewable energy infrastructure. Collaborations in fintech could also advance the country's digital payment ecosystem, potentially integrating with BRICS-led platforms for local currency settlements, thus reinforcing financial as well as technological resilience. By strategically leveraging BRICS Plus networks, Indonesia can accelerate its economic diversification and strengthen its global competitiveness without over-reliance on any single partner.

7. Regional Security and Indonesia's Strategic Role

Indonesia occupies a central role in Indo-Pacific security due to its geographic position and control over critical maritime routes such as the Strait of Malacca and the Lombok Strait. Membership in BRICS Plus could enhance maritime security cooperation through intelligence sharing, joint naval exercises, and coordinated efforts to safeguard sea lanes vital for global energy and trade flows. Advanced technology transfers from Russia and China could support modernization of naval and air capabilities, while strategic partnerships with India and Brazil could improve defense planning, surveillance, and humanitarian response capabilities.

In addition, Indonesia's leadership within ASEAN allows it to serve as a bridge between BRICS Plus and regional institutions. By facilitating dialogue on security and defense issues, Jakarta could mediate tensions between major powers, preventing regional conflicts from escalating. Bilateral relations with China, India, the United States, and Japan would remain essential, as Indonesia balances engagement with BRICS partners while maintaining constructive ties with traditional security allies.

Practical examples of cooperation include coordinated anti-piracy patrols in the Malacca Strait, joint disaster response exercises in the Indonesian archipelago, and collaborative cybersecurity frameworks with BRICS partners to protect critical infrastructure. Indonesia's strategic involvement could also extend to joint research in defense technology, including unmanned systems, early-warning networks, and space-based surveillance, areas where collaboration could yield both civilian and military benefits.

By combining multilateral engagement with its bilateral diplomacy, Indonesia could consolidate its role as a stabilizing force in Southeast Asia. BRICS Plus membership would thus not only provide strategic advantages but also reinforce Indonesia's capacity to shape regional norms, mitigate maritime risks, and promote security in a multipolar Indo-Pacific environment.

8. Risks and Limitations: Political Divergences, Great Power Rivalries, and Governance

While Indonesia's engagement with BRICS Plus presents numerous opportunities, it also involves significant risks. The group's internal heterogeneity—ranging from democratic states such as India and Brazil to

authoritarian regimes like China and Russia—complicates consensus-building. Divergent political systems, economic models, and historical trajectories can hinder decision-making and create tensions in the formulation of collective policies.

A particular concern is the longstanding rivalry between China and India, which manifests in border disputes, trade competition, and divergent visions for regional connectivity. Indonesia must carefully navigate these dynamics, avoiding overt alignment with either power while leveraging its mediator role. Failure to balance these relationships could reduce Jakarta's influence within BRICS Plus and create external diplomatic friction.

Institutional weaknesses represent another limitation. BRICS Plus lacks a robust governance framework: there is no common currency, no fiscal authority, and limited accountability mechanisms. This thin institutional structure could impede the bloc's ability to implement projects effectively, leaving Indonesia exposed to the risks of unfulfilled commitments. To mitigate this, Jakarta could advocate for transparency measures, monitoring frameworks, and greater inclusion of civil society in BRICS initiatives, ensuring that participation translates into tangible domestic benefits.

External perception is also critical. Western partners, including the United States, Japan, and the European Union, may interpret closer ties with BRICS Plus as a pivot away from traditional alliances, potentially complicating trade, investment, and security cooperation. Domestically, public support may wane if membership is perceived as elitist or if tangible development outcomes are limited. Clear communication and demonstration of benefits—such as new investments, technological partnerships, and infrastructure projects—will be essential for sustaining legitimacy.

Finally, Indonesia must contend with China's dominant position within BRICS Plus. To avoid marginalization, Jakarta should cultivate alliances with other members, particularly India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia, emphasizing shared interests in regional stability, energy security, and sustainable development. By carefully managing both internal and external risks, Indonesia can harness BRICS Plus to reinforce its strategic autonomy, project leadership, and contribute to a more equitable multipolar world order.

9. Policy Recommendations: Pathways for Jakarta, BRICS Plus, and Europe

Indonesia's prospective accession to BRICS Plus requires a strategic approach, balancing ambition with pragmatism. Jakarta should anchor its membership within a broader foreign policy framework, emphasizing its *bebas aktif* doctrine. This positions Indonesia not merely as a participant, but as a mediator capable of bridging political, economic, and cultural divides within the bloc. Leveraging its historical credibility from the Bandung Conference, Indonesia can advocate inclusive decision-making, emphasizing consensus while respecting BRICS members' diverse political systems.

To maximize benefits, Indonesia should promote concrete projects with measurable outcomes, such as infrastructure linking ASEAN and BRICS economies, technology transfer in renewable energy and battery production, digital payment platforms using local currencies, and joint research in AI, biotechnology, and space technology. Leading working groups or pilot programs in these areas can translate symbolic membership into tangible domestic and regional benefits.

Simultaneously, Jakarta should prioritize institutional strengthening within BRICS Plus. Advocating clearer monitoring mechanisms, reporting standards, and project evaluation frameworks would enhance accountability and mitigate risks of flexible governance. Including civil society stakeholders and think tanks could improve transparency and provide Indonesia with a platform to shape norms and policies.

For BRICS Plus, the challenge is consolidating institutional capacity while maintaining flexibility. Indonesia can foster cross-regional collaboration through joint research centers, funding for green energy, and infrastructure projects linking Southeast Asia to South America and Africa. Prioritizing tangible deliverables over rhetoric will bolster the bloc's credibility.

European actors, especially Italy, should view BRICS Plus as an opportunity for constructive engagement. Sectoral cooperation in renewable energy, digital innovation, and sustainable infrastructure can yield mutual benefits while keeping Europe connected to emerging economic and technological centers. Italy's long-standing ties with Indonesia—through trade, cultural exchange, and academic partnerships—offer a natural entry point for

collaboration. By engaging pragmatically, Europe can participate in multipolar governance initiatives without compromising strategic interests.

BRICS Plus should not be framed solely as an alternative to Western-led institutions or as anti-Western; it represents a laboratory for experimentation, negotiation, and equitable representation. Indonesia's success depends less on rigid policy blueprints than on its ability to mediate, build coalitions, and convert symbolic leadership into concrete outcomes. Aligning domestic development priorities with regional and global initiatives, Indonesia can reinforce its role as a bridge between the Global South and the wider international system, shaping inclusive and pragmatic multipolar cooperation.

10. Conclusions

Indonesia's prospective accession to BRICS Plus reflects a convergence of historical legacy, strategic ambition, and regional responsibility. As the largest Southeast Asian economy and host of the 1955 Bandung Conference, Jakarta possesses both structural weight and normative credibility to influence the bloc's future trajectory. The opportunities are substantial: access to financial resources, technological collaboration, strengthened regional security, and an enhanced voice in global governance. By participating actively, Indonesia can shape initiatives that promote sustainability, regional integration, and inclusive economic development, translating symbolic leadership into tangible outcomes.

Yet, the risks remain significant. Internal divergences within BRICS Plus, great power competition, institutional weaknesses, and external perceptions require careful management. Indonesia's challenge is to navigate these complexities while maintaining its autonomous foreign policy, leveraging diplomatic agility to mediate tensions between major powers and bridge gaps among member states with divergent political and economic systems.

The Bandung Spirit offers guidance in this endeavor. Its principles of sovereignty, non-alignment, peaceful dispute resolution, and South-South cooperation provide both a moral compass and a practical framework for navigating the multipolar world. By embodying this legacy, Indonesia can strengthen its role as a bridge-builder—not only within BRICS Plus, but also between ASEAN, the Global South, and broader multilateral platforms. This positioning enhances Indonesia's legitimacy, ensuring that its participation benefits domestic development and regional stability.

Looking beyond immediate gains, Indonesia's engagement in BRICS Plus has the potential to reshape global governance. It can serve as a model for other emerging economies seeking equitable participation, fostering mechanisms that prioritize collaboration, technological transfer, and financial resilience over unilateral dominance. In doing so, Indonesia contributes to a vision where the Global South is not merely reactive to decisions by established powers, but an active shaper of norms, policies, and multilateral institutions.

Finally, the implications extend to Europe and the wider international system. Constructive engagement with Indonesia and BRICS Plus allows mutually beneficial cooperation in renewable energy, digital innovation, infrastructure, and regional security. Far from a zero-sum scenario, multipolar governance presents opportunities for dialogue, innovation, and inclusive development.

In sum, Indonesia's potential membership in BRICS Plus exemplifies the fusion of historical identity and forward-looking strategy. If Jakarta succeeds in leveraging its demographic, economic, and diplomatic strengths, while embodying the Bandung principles, it could redefine the role of the Global South in shaping a fairer, more inclusive, and multipolar world order. Indonesia's experience offers a blueprint for balancing national interests with regional and global responsibilities, demonstrating how emerging economies can exercise leadership that is principled, pragmatic, and transformative.

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**PERSPECTIVES:
FOUNDATION AND RECONSTRUCTION**

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Envisioning Metadiplomacy in a Divided World: Sukarno's *To Build the World Anew* Revisited

Darmansjah Djumala

1. Introduction

Amid today's escalating geopolitical rivalries, climate crises, and weakening trust in multilateralism, the search for a moral compass in global politics is increasingly urgent. Diplomacy is often reduced to bargaining over interests and power, yet history records moments when leaders offered a different vision—one rooted in ethics rather than expediency.

Such a moment came on 30 September 1960, when President Sukarno of Indonesia addressed the United Nations General Assembly with his speech *To Build the World Anew*. There, he presented Pancasila, the five principles of the Indonesian state—belief in God, nationalism, internationalism, democracy, and social justice (ANRI, MOWID ID 15032 F1-B1-137)—not only as a national philosophy but as universal guidelines for peaceful coexistence and global cooperation.

This vision was grounded in earlier initiatives, particularly the 1955 Bandung Conference, which articulated the Ten Principles of peaceful coexistence—recognized by UNESCO in 2015 as part of the Memory of the World heritage (UNESCO, 2015). Together, the Bandung Spirit and Pancasila helped inspire the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) launched in 1961. In this sense, *To Build the World Anew* crystallized the ethical aspirations of newly independent states seeking justice and equality in world affairs. More than six decades later, Sukarno's call retains striking relevance. UNESCO's 2023 inscription of his UN speech into the Memory of the World registry

underscores its enduring normative value. Yet it also invites reflection: what does it mean to “build the world anew” in an era of multipolar rivalry, digital disruption, and ecological collapse?

This paper argues that Sukarno’s framework anticipates the idea of metadiplomacy—diplomacy informed by universal moral values and ethical commitments. Far from being postcolonial idealism, his speech remains a living source of political thought, offering insights into how diplomacy might be rehumanized in the twenty-first century.

2. Conceptualizing Metadiplomacy

The term metadiplomacy is not widely established in International Relations (IR), yet it can be understood through analogy with “metapolitics”—political action that concerns the values, narratives, and philosophical underpinnings of politics itself. By extension, metadiplomacy refers to a form of diplomacy that operates beyond the negotiation of immediate interests, engaging instead with the moral and normative foundations of international conduct.

Metadiplomacy seeks to answer a question often neglected by traditional diplomacy: What ought diplomacy be for? It is distinct from *realpolitik*, which prioritizes material power and strategic advantage (Morgenthau, 1948), and from soft power, which emphasizes attraction rather than coercion (Nye, 2004). While these concepts are instrumental—focused on how to achieve ends—metadiplomacy is foundational, asking what ends are worth pursuing.

In his 1960 UN address, Sukarno declared: “The world has been built anew once before. That was when colonialism and imperialism were destroyed by the flame of freedom.” (Sukarno, 1960, p.2). Sukarno invokes the decolonization wave as a previous moral turning point, suggesting the international order can and should be rebuilt on justice rather than domination. He challenged prevailing realist assumptions that global order must be shaped by the rivalry of great powers:

“Do we have to live forever under the shadow of the atom bomb? Must we forever tremble at the threat of war? I say: No! We can build the world anew.” (Sukarno, 1960, p.5)

Metadiplomacy can be placed in conversation with constructivism, which holds that international realities are socially constructed through ideas, norms, and identities (Wendt, 1999). Yet it goes further by prioritizing moral

universals over merely acknowledging that norms matter. It is a prescriptive approach, insisting on deliberate cultivation of ideas grounded in human dignity, justice, and solidarity. Sukarno’s articulation of Pancasila at the UN—as principles that could eliminate the causes of war and enable lasting peace—frames diplomacy as a universal moral enterprise.

Contemporary IR’s focus on “norm entrepreneurship” often targets promoting specific norms within existing frameworks. Metadiplomacy broadens ambition: it seeks to reshape frameworks themselves so diplomacy is inherently value-centered—urgent amid today’s multipolarity where transactional bargaining erodes trust. It is not about replacing diplomatic tools but reorienting their purpose—embedding moral philosophy into international relations architecture—as Sukarno envisioned.

Traditional Diplomacy vs. Metadiplomacy

Aspect	Traditional Diplomacy	Metadiplomacy
Core Logic	National interest	Shared values & ethics
Actors	States, diplomats	States + civil society, youth, NGOs
Approach	Realpolitik, bargaining	Norm-building, persuasion
Style	Closed-door, elite-driven	Inclusive, participatory
Instruments	Treaties, alliances, sanctions	Dialogues, ethical frameworks, multi-stakeholder forums
Time Horizon	Short–medium term	Long-term transformation
Normative Basis	Sovereignty, law	Justice, dignity, solidarity
View of Global South	Marginal, norm-takers	Central, norm-setters
Power Relations	Balance of power	Challenging asymmetry through values
Examples	Cold War treaties, trade deals	Bandung (1955), NAM, Global Pancasila Summit
Goal	Preserve order, protect sovereignty	Transform order toward justice & peace

3. Historical Context: Bandung, NAM, and the 1960 UN Speech

The 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung marked a watershed in postcolonial politics. Leaders from 29 newly independent states articulated a vision for a world order independent of Cold War bipolarity (Kahin, 1956; Prashad, 2007). The “Bandung Spirit” emphasized anti-colonial solidarity,

sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence, and economic cooperation, reflecting a normative claim that global relations should be governed by justice, not domination. Sukarno framed Bandung as an assertion of existence by formerly colonized peoples—a foundation later expressed in his 1960 UN address.

Bandung's principles served as a basis for the formation of NAM in 1961, where the basic norms—the freedom to articulate values outside superpower blocs—became central (Willetts, 1978). Sukarno envisioned NAM as a platform for alternative visions of world order grounded in solidarity and justice—the moral ground of metadiplomacy. Sukarno's 1960 UN speech diagnosed global instability as moral decay caused by “power politics, greed, hatred, and fear” (Sukarno, 1960, p.3), proposing Pancasila as a universal values and norms rising above ideology and power.

This speech connects historical milestones: Bandung awakened the spirit of solidarity; the Non-Aligned Movement institutionalized it; Sukarno's speech at the UN elevated it to a moral vision that established a global normative foundation.

4. The Sukarno's Speech and Its Realization in Contemporary Metadiplomacy

Sukarno called for a world built on justice, peace, and dignity—free from fear and domination. Yet, even as multilateralism and global norms have expanded, deep power imbalances and transactional diplomacy remain. Too often, diplomacy is reduced to a “cash and carry” deal instead of a shared ethical commitment. Metadiplomacy demands a higher standard: diplomats guided by values rooted in Pancasila, the Bandung Spirit, and the Non-Aligned Movement, to give real shape to Sukarno's vision.

For Sukarno, the shared moral voice of the Global South was key. He saw newly independent states not as followers, but as architects of a new international order. This spirit is still relevant today, especially in debates on multipolarity and democratizing global governance (Hurrell, 2006). The recognition of his 1960 UN speech as a UNESCO Memory of the World in 2023 affirms its lasting significance, yet many gaps remain: the uneven progress of the SDGs, intensifying geopolitical rivalries, and persistent reliance on coercion over moral persuasion.

There are sparks of hope in ASEAN's emphasis on inclusivity and the African Union's solidarity agenda (Agenda 2063). But the institutionalization of Sukarno's ethical framework is still incomplete. Metadiplomacy offers a way to transform these ideals into concrete strategies for global governance.

The trajectory from the Bandung Conference of 1955, through Sukarno's 1960 UN speech, to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 shows a consistent vision: to create an alternative moral compass for world politics. That vision was not only aspirational but also anticipatory—laying the groundwork for today's search for new power constellations. In this light, BRICS can be read as a contemporary realization of Sukarno's ideals: a coalition of states from the Global South seeking to rebalance global governance, challenge hegemonic structures, and institutionalize justice, dignity, and solidarity as the basis for international cooperation.

5. Assessing the Fulfillment of Sukarno's Vision and Metadiplomacy Today

President Sukarno's vision in "To Build the World Anew" was a clarion call for reconstituting the moral foundations of international politics on equality, mutual respect, and cooperation for the common good. His aspiration was bold and comprehensive, challenging the world to replace power politics with ethical diplomacy. Yet, despite decades of normative advances—human rights, international law, and multilateral institutions—the core drivers of global politics remain shaped by strategic competition, zero-sum paradigms, and established power asymmetries. The rivalry between great powers, especially the contemporary US-China tensions, echoes the Cold War dynamics that Sukarno hoped the world could overcome.

International institutions, most notably the United Nations and its Security Council, are founded upon the principles of equality and cooperation. In practice, however, the concentration of authority and the persistent use of veto powers have hindered the realization of genuinely egalitarian governance. Nevertheless, instances of incremental progress suggest that Sukarno's vision was not purely aspirational, but also found concrete programs and activities of South-South Cooperation, which can be seen as a direct continuation of the Bandung Spirit and the Non-Aligned Movement's agenda to foster solidarity, capacity-building, and mutual development among countries of the Global South

- Southern Solidarity: Expansion of South-South cooperation reflects growing agency among developing countries, with platforms like BRICS and G77 advocating for more equitable economic and political systems (Acharya, 2016).
- Peaceful Norms: International legal mechanisms such as the International Court of Justice and UNCLOS support peaceful dispute resolution, though great power selective adherence challenges universality.
- Ethical Diplomacy in Practice: Agreements like the Paris Climate Accord illustrate diplomatic collaboration through shared ethical responsibility for the planet's future. Humanitarian ceasefires reveal moments of diplomacy over coercion.

Despite progress, significant gaps remain unfilled:

- Nuclear disarmament efforts are stalled by mistrust and power calculations.
- Economic inequality persists, both within and among nations.
- Refugee crises expose limits of international solidarity.
- Selective geopolitical use of human rights underscores the fragility of norms.

In this context, metadiplomacy offers a way forward by reinscribing the moral imperatives Sukarno championed. It calls for reorienting diplomacy from power balancing to building a balance of values through shared ethical commitment. Addressing these challenges requires moving beyond policy rhetoric toward embedding justice, equity, and solidarity at the heart of diplomatic practice, closing the gap between visionary aspirations and geopolitical realities.

6. BRICS and Its Philosophical Linkages to Bandung, NAM, and Pancasila

The BRICS coalition is often characterized materially—based on economic size and geopolitical influence—but its philosophical root connects deeply with the legacies of Bandung Spirit, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and Sukarno's Pancasila. From the Bandung Spirit, BRICS inherits commitments to sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence, and mutual economic benefit. Bandung's rejection of hegemonic dominance and advocacy for solidarity

among formerly colonized countries resonate with BRICS' calls for reforming global economic governance and promoting multipolarity, countering Western institutional hegemony.

NAM's ethos of normative autonomy manifests in BRICS' attempts to chart independent economic and diplomatic policies, unconstrained by conditions imposed by Bretton Woods institutions. The New Development Bank exemplifies this ambition, striving to finance development projects on the South's terms.

Importantly, the moral-ethical core of Pancasila—emphasizing belief in God, just and civilized humanity, and social justice—aligns with BRICS' rhetoric promoting inclusive, people-focused development. Nevertheless, rhetoric must be matched by action to realize these values fully. Still, BRICS faces challenges similar to NAM's historical trajectory—initial moral aspirations risk succumbing to geopolitical realism and rivalry. To avoid becoming merely a power bloc counterbalancing the G7, BRICS must embrace metadiplomacy, infusing its economic cooperation with ethical benchmarks and norm leadership.

Metadiplomacy within BRICS would entail:

- Reframing development as a moral project embedding environmental sustainability and equitable practices.
- Reviving normative solidarity by codifying ethical standards for interstate cooperation—effectively operationalizing “Bandung 2.0”.
- Prioritizing intercultural dialogue and unity in diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), fostering a diplomatic culture respectful of difference yet united by shared humanity.
- Transforming economic might into ethical capital by setting socially just financing criteria, and encouraging others to follow not because of pressure, but because they see the approach as fair and credible

BRICS' embrace of these dimensions would align it with Sukarno's vision for a diplomatic order led by moral responsibility and equity, redefining international influence beyond mere material power.

7. Toward a Metadiplomatic Paradigm for the Global South

The unprecedented challenges and complex interdependencies of the 21st century demand a renewed vision for diplomacy—metadiplomacy—oriented by collective ethical purposes grounded in justice, dignity, and solidarity. Philosophically, metadiplomacy challenges dominant paradigms of international relations rooted in material power, competitiveness, and rational choice. Drawing on theories of justice, ethics, and cosmopolitanism, it reframes diplomacy as a project of shared moral creation aiming to realize peace, equality, and sustainable development.

This vision resonates with the re-emergence of normative pluralism in IR—the acceptance that diverse civilizations and cultures contribute rich ethical terms shaping global governance. It sees Pancasila’s principle of Unity in Diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) as a way to encourage countries to work together without trying to make everyone the same or letting differences cause conflict. The Global South plays a key role in this approach, drawing on its own historical experiences of colonialism and exclusion to assert its voice and perspective. Through the normative heritage of Bandung, NAM, and Pancasila, the South offers a credible alternative to Northern hegemonies by advocating diplomacy as a force for justice and dignity.

Metadiplomacy asserts the South’s shift from rule-takers to active rule-makers, shaping global norms and institutions that implant equity, inclusivity, and long-term responsibility.

This entails:

- Fostering intercultural ethical dialogue, recognizing multiple traditions as sources of normative innovation.
- Building solidarity-based diplomacy prioritizing empathy and shared responsibility over transactional reciprocity.
- Emphasizing intergenerational justice, addressing climate change and sustainability as moral imperatives.
- Promoting consensus-building mechanisms that value deliberation over coercion.

Realizing this potential requires global forums like the proposed Global Pancasila Summit to serve as incubators of new norms and diplomatic cultures. Such gatherings could translate the South’s normative heritage into operational frameworks shaping the 21st-century international order. Ultimately, metadiplomacy humanizes international relations, shifting

diplomacy from an arena of power contention into a realm of cooperative ethical governance capable of addressing global challenges through shared commitments to justice and dignity.

Conclusion

Sukarno's 1960 vision remains a beacon amid intensifying geopolitical rivalry, ecological crises, and economic inequality. Diplomacy risks reduction to a zero-sum calculus, yet metadiplomacy provides a normative pathway transcending power politics by rooting foreign policy in universal moral and ethical principles. Indonesia's historical leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement and enduring Bandung Spirit position it uniquely as a bridge builder capable of fostering inclusive, values-centered dialogue between the Global North and South.

The proposed Global Pancasila Summit could institutionalize this bridging role, integrating historical legitimacy with contemporary necessity to build a more just, peaceful, and sustainable global order. By embracing metadiplomacy, global actors can fulfill Sukarno's urgent call: to build the world anew so that the blessings of prosperity and peace flow equitably to all nations without discrimination or domination.***

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Good Life, Good Society, and Evolutionary Flourishing: Swaraj, Jiefang, and Ubuntu and a New Vishwaneeda of Planetary Liberative Thinking and Transformative Practice

Ananta Kumar Giri

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. [..]

Man has created a system of civilization which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilize and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it.

Sri Aurobindo, "Evolutionary Crisis", *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo* 21: 1089.

More than any human value, the practice of a certain degree of non-violence has been at the core of human evolution and economic progress since the Industrial Revolution.

Bharat Rao (2021), *Human Evolution, Economic Progress and Evolutionary Failure*, p.3.

The most important value of status in Cuan [an alternative community the author has studied] is environmentalism and anti-consumption.

Daniel Miller (2024), *The Good Enough Life*, p.18.

Introduction and Invitation:

Bandung 70 plus conference is an invitation for dedicating ourselves to liberative thinking and practice at the world scale which touches self, local, regional, national, transnational and planetary in interlinked layered ways. Our engagement with aspired for and emerging liberative thinking and practice can contribute to the discourse and practice of good life and good society to be realized at the planetary level.

Good Life, Good Society and Evolutionary Flourishing

The *Good Life* has been a concern of humanity since time immemorial. In the Greek tradition it is related to the vision and practice of *Eudaimonia*. The Good Life has been nurtured in many different cultures, religions, and philosophies of the world. In Indic traditions, *Purusartha* (ends and excellences of life), consisting of *Dharma* (right conduct), *Artha* (wealth and meaning), *Kama* (desire), and *Moksha* (salvation), presents us visions of the Good Life. In South America, we find this in *bon vivre* and in Bhutan in the discourse of the Gross National Happiness. In modern European traditions, especially that of Kant, there is also the challenge of the priority of right over good, which thinkers such as John Rawls, Jurgen Habermas, and Amartya Sen, in their unique and related creative and critical ways, have worked with and have challenged us to work, walk and meditate with. These point to the structural, systemic, institutional, and social dimensions of a good life, realizing manifold links between a good life and enabling social institutions and public policies. This calls for linking visions and practices of good life with good society. Both a good life and a good society need to confront the challenges of evolutionary breaks, leaps, and creativity, as existing visions and organizations of life, self, society, and social institutions can be imprisoned within the status quo without the courage and creativity for evolutionary breaks as well as evolutionary leaps and critical co-creation.

Our concern with the good life needs to address the challenges of right and good, but we need not be imprisoned in a dualism between the right and the good. At the same time, we need to bring three other engagements here—Rites, Nature and God, understood in open ways (Divine and open Transcendence; Nature both external and inner Nature). Rite in the Confucian traditions refers to rituals of living and co-existence which is a part of the universal aspect of rituals of life, culture, and society. The rite is not just a site of the habitus of unreflective reproduction or repetition; it is a

site of meditative and critical thinking.¹ Rituals in the Vedic and Vedantic traditions also have this dimension and challenge of meditative self-realization and co-realizations. Discussion of Rights in the Kantian traditions of Rawls, Habermas, and Amartya Sen need to engage with rites and ways of life and living which also point to the limits of traditions of social contract. As Durkheim had challenged us a long time ago to realize that all contracts have a non-contractarian dimension, Amartya Sen recently tells us that the fundamental limits of traditions of the social contract is that it does not realize the need for unconditional support for each other that needs to accompany any vision and practice of social contract (Sen, 2020). Sen draws this from his journey with Buddhism, but we can find resonance of this in many religious and philosophical traditions of the world, including in the philosophical streams nurtured by Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. Our journey with good, rights, and rites need not forget God, Goddesses, and varieties of small and big Transcendence in our lives. For this, in our present-day Euro-American dominated worlds and world of European modernity (cf. Uberoi, 2004), a special conscious cultivation is needed as most of us may still be imprisoned in “an Enlightenment Black Box”—cut off from Nature on the one hand and Divine on the other, as Fred Dallmayr (1998) challenges us to realize. Our journey with Good Lives needs to now make Enlightenment Bridges with Nature and

¹ According to Youngmin Kim (2018), the Confucian subject is an agent of meta-knowing and is not a mere reproduction of existing modes of knowing and conventions (see also Bartosch, 2017). As Kim writes:

Meta-knowing provides an important change in the agency involved in the process of knowing [...] Confucius' concern with meta-knowing shows that performance of rituals is understood as actions undertaken by agents who are fully self-conscious of what they are doing. Seen in this way, Confucius' notion of *zhi* [translated usually as knowledge and wisdom] is neither merely a matter of external world, nor of mere cognitive access to it. Instead, the notion turns out to be part of the self-cultivation project.

Instead, meta-knowing facilitates the attainment of higher forms of self-consciousness. The self-consciousness prompts one to raise and answer ethical questions, and sustains self-control until it arrives at the ultimate goal of closing the gap between “ought” and “is”. In fact, meta-knowing and virtue are mutually constitutive in Confucius' vision. For knowledge to be genuine knowledge, it has to come with a certain cultivation of mind.

In the *Analects*, [meta-knowing] infuses the subject with new depths. Confucius constructs the subject not as one who is passively shaped by the power of supernatural being but as an active agent whose subjectivity is continuously shaped through his or her engagements with multiple and complex spaces that meta-consciousness creates. (Kim, 2018:35)

the Divine. Nurturing a good life therefore needs simultaneous engagement with Good, Rights, Rites, Divine/Transcendence, and Nature.

Our multi-dimensional engagement with the Good Life takes in multiple planes and spheres of life—soul, self, society, culture, states and the world (cf. Schrag, 1999).² We need to cultivate our *sadhana* (strivings) and struggles of good life in all these spheres not only in the levels of self or society. The vision and practice of *Good Society* as cultivated by Robert Bellah and his co-authors following their earlier work on American society, *Habits of the Heart*, point in this direction (Bellah, *et al.*, 1985; 1991). For Bellah, *et al.*, a good society needs institutions that help us be attentive to each other rather be prisoners of distraction. Similarly, the visionary critique of Jeffrey Sachs (*The Price of Civilization*, 2013) challenges us to realize that American society today suffers from economic and social illusions and is prone to distraction rather than practice attentiveness to each other in economy, society, and polity. Bellah *et al* and Sachs, in their creative and critical ways, challenge us to link our vision and practice of the good life with the challenge of building good societies and economies which also include critiques and transformations of existing structures of political economy, linking them to a moral economy, moral sociology, and spiritual ecology (Piketty, 2014; Giri, 2024a; Giri, 2024b).

This calls for transformation in our existing modes of thinking and social organization and transcivilizational dialogues on the meanings of life and the good life. One important clue here is suggested by Charles Taylor that any discourse of life that does not acknowledge death and prepare itself to die has the danger of a violent cult of life. Taylor, even from 1994, starting with his *Catholic modernity*, possibly learned this with his admirable journey with

² Regarding the soul sphere, we can engage with what Sri Aurobindo (1970:609) writes below:

But, behind all this practical or rational enforcement of the human ethical instinct, there is a feeling that there is something deeper: all these standards are either too narrow and rigid or complex and confused, uncertain, subject to alteration by a vital change or evolution; yet it is felt there is a deeper abiding truth and something within us that can have the intuition of that truth, --in other words, that the real sanction is inward, spiritual and psychic. The traditional account of this inner witness is conscience, a power of conscience in us half mental, half intuitive; but this is something superficial, constructed, unreliable: there is certainly within us, though less easily active, more masked by surface elements, a deeper spiritual sense, the soul's discernment, an inborn light within our nature.

Buddha (Taylor, 2014; 1996). Similarly, Stanley Cavell and Veena Das in reflecting on the Wittgensteinian discourse of the form of life ask us what constitutes life and the danger of a cult of form such as nation-state-centered rationality and anthropocentrism at the expense of life (cf. Das, 2007). These questions bring us toward multiple pathways of learning across philosophical, religious, and spiritual traditions as already suggested. Here we can also bring Indic visions of Purusartha (ends and goals of life for human beings) consisting of *Dharma* (right conduct), *Artha* (wealth and meaning), *Kama* (desire), and *Moksha* (salvation) to our vision and practice of good life and good society. Today we need a new collective *purusartha* of self, society, and the worlds where we strive to bring these ends together in a spirit of multi-valued logic and ways of autonomy and interpenetration rather than the dualistic logic of either or (cf. Mohanty, 2002). Bandung 70+ can help us cultivating visions and practices of a new collective and collaborative *purusartha*. We need a relational and integral *Purusartha* where our *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha* are related to each other rather than isolated from each other. Given our crises of economy, polity, society, and governance which need more trust in these and in ourselves, we need to bring *dharma* and *artha* together, *dharma* and *kama* together, and *dharma* and *moksha* together. In this aspired for and striven for weaving, we need to build on our many philosophical and spiritual traditions such as Islam, Buddhism, Christian, indigenous religious, and other secular and spiritual traditions.

Our *sadhana* and struggles with the good life and good society as it is nourished by our trans-civilizational dialogues also meet with the trigonometry and *Sangam* (confluence) of ethics, aesthetics, and responsibility. We need to cultivate this trigonometry and three-folding confluence in our visions, discourses, and practices of good life and good society. We need to attend to challenges of global responsibility today in our engagement with the good life and good society especially focusing on global justice, dialogues across borders of religions and cultures, corporate social and spiritual responsibility, and responsibility in the face of climate change (Giri, 2023). This calls for *planetary realizations*—realizing that we belong to and are children of our Mother Earth and that we live with this planet with other species as well as rocks and other forms of existence.

Our visions and practices of good life and good society do not reproduce the logic of status. It is part of evolutionary flourishing. It calls for breaking

outdated and outmoded institutions and modes of thinking as well as creating new modes of thinking and institutions.

Swaraj, Jiefang, and Ubuntu and the Vishwaneeda of Planetary Liberative Thinking

Good life and good society is part of what Gandhi calls Swaraj or self-rule. But self-rule here is not bound to bounded self or self-sovereignty but involves shared sovereignties (Giri, 2013). This involves swaraj as self-rule and mutual blossoming. It also involves Jiefang or freedom as it is connoted in Chinese especially during the Chinese revolution (Mohanty, 1997). It is also related to realizing Ubuntu—our creative and dynamic mutually implicated existence. Our aspired for and emerging planetary liberative thinking calls for a new swaraj of ideas linking it to a planetary swaraj and Sarvodaya of ideas. Swaraj of ideas refer to our efforts to realize the significance of ideas in our own soils and souls in open ways and not in closed xenophobic ways (see Bhattacharya, 1928; Uberoi, 1968). Swaraj of ideas also involve Saharaj or mutually implicated blossoming of ideas. It also involves Sarvodaya of ideas where building upon Gandhi's vision and pathways of Sarvodaya—awakening and development of all—we also cultivate visions and pathways of Sarvodaya of ideas. Here liberative ideas build upon liberative ideas from all traditions and epistemologies. While going beyond Eurocentric closed universalism and entrenched colonialism, Sarvodaya of ideas, especially liberative ideas builds upon all traditions and pathways of liberative thinking—east and west, north and south (cf. de Sousa Santos, 1914; Giri, 2021; & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Rig Veda aspires for a way of being of in and with the world where the world becomes a nest—yatra vishwam bhavati eka needam. Drawing inspiration from this Rabindra Nath Tagore built Viswabharati as a place of world learning. Tagore established centre for study of China—one of the first efforts in Chinese studies, as he himself visited China in 1924 and other parts of Asia and the world such as Japan, Indonesia, Soviet Russia, Argentina at different stages of his life. The last lines of Gitanjali, his Nobel Prize winning book of poems invite us to aspire for a world.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held is high.

[..] Where the world is not broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls.

This viswaneeda modality of thinking and being has inspired many seekers and activists from India and around the world such as Swami Vivekananda, Pandita Ramabai, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Jitendra Nath Mohanty (Mohanty, 2002), Chitta Ranjan Das and others. Chitta Ranjan Das took part in India's freedom struggle and went to jail as part of the Quit India movement in 1942. Das worked with the spirit of Gandhi and came to study in Tagore's Viswabharati. During this Das offered himself to learning world philosophies and literature and wrote a thesis on Spinoza (Das, 2009). After his studies at Viswabharati Das came to study at University of Copenhagen in Denmark and got to learn liberative pathways of education and human development as in the folk high school movement of Denmark (cf. Das, 2008). One of the books of Das in Odia is called *Viswaku Gabakha*—window into the world (Das, 1994). Das also founded an alternative school in the rural hinterland of Anugul, Odisha named Jeevana Vidyalaya (School of Life) in 1954 and took part in the integral school movement of Odisha where many communities in Odisha have built around six hundred plus schools. Das's life and works is an inviting viswhaneeda of planetary liberative thinking (Das, 2020; Giri, 2025). Bandung 70 plus is an invitation for us to cultivate Bandung viswneedam of planetary liberative thinking. Taking inspiration from Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi and Chitta Ranjan Das, among others, Vishwaneedam Center for Asian Blossoming (pl see <https://vishwaneedam.org/>) has been striving to be a field and circle of rooted transcultural planetary co-learning since May 2020. It has been organizing online dialogues on contemporary important issues as well as perennial social, philosophical, and spiritual concerns as part of its weekly Sunday dialogues as well as many lectures engaging with the works of many creative thinkers from around the world such as JN Mohanty, Fred Dallmayr, Andre Beteille, Margaret Chatterjee, Felix Wilfred and others. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the deep thinker and intellectual activist of our times, presented Vishwaneedam Third Foundation Day Lecture on October 3, 2025 on the theme of “The Historical Moment of Epistemologies of South”.

Summing Up and Moving Ahead

Bandung 70+ is an invitation for us to pursue multi-dimensional visions and practices of liberation—self, social, epistemic, and planetary—going beyond many conventional boundaries and absolutism. In this essay, I link this to the goals and pathways of realizing good life, good society, and

evolutionary flourishing. I also link this to new movements of ideas and transformative practice drawing upon Swaraj, Jiefang and Ubuntu visions and practices. I also cultivate pathways of Sarvodaya of ideas which we can call as Bandung Sarodaya of planetary liberative thinking which helps us move from varieties of existing domination towards non-domination as steps of liberative immanence and transcendence. The original Bandung Conference in 1970 was an important movement against colonial violence and the present Bandung 70 Plus continues this struggle and contributes to cultivating a new civilization of non-violence, friendship and Ahimsa.

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Gandhi and Swaraj: The Idea of Deterritorialised Freedom

Dhananjay Rai

Modern democracies have developed the concept of freedom in relation to territoriality. In the slew of writings, ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’ are used interchangeably. However, despite the semantic differences, freedom is made contingent on territory. This paper draws attention to Gandhi’s concept of freedom, which is rooted in his idea of swaraj. The paper advances the argument that Gandhi’s concept of freedom, based on swaraj, is contingent upon the notion of marginality. This will be elaborated further through engagement with ‘capital’, ‘law’, and ‘governmentalisation’. This paper discusses the aforementioned argument in the context of defining Gandhi’s concept of democracy as moral-empirical, which differs from the juridical-empirical approach.

Debates on Freedom

Freedom is debated widely in academia and the public sphere. It is one of the most significant values in contemporary democracy. The freedom is debated widely.

Immanuel Kant advocates for practical freedom, which is guided by reason and rationality, and is contingent upon transcendental freedom, which is based on an uncaused cause. In other words, both freedoms are intertwined, and the latter is itself independent because any external factor does not cause it. The action is within one’s control and not caused by external factors (Kosch, 2006). By definition per se, practical freedom is “...

the capacity to act in accordance with ends distinct from those dictated by one's immediate sensible impulses" (Maclear, 2020, p.41). Transcendental freedom is "... the power to (i) initiate a causal series from oneself (ii) without being determined to do so by any temporally structured causal ground" (McClear, 2020, p.44).

Benjamin Constant values modern liberty over ancient liberty. Ancient liberty discusses and decides on war and peace, forms alliances with foreign governments, votes on new laws, pronounces judgments, and emphasises the role of magistrates. In modern liberty, the choice of opinion, property, mobility, association and having influence on government becomes important (Constant, 1988). In libertarian tradition, Isaiah Berlin defends negative liberty (freedom from) (non-interference of the state) over positive liberty (freedom to) (welfare state as interference) (Berlin, 2002, pp.166–217). Gerald MacCallum rejects this dyadic relation based on the distinction between 'freedom from' and 'freedom to'. He proposes freedom as a triadic relation. "Whenever the freedom of some agent or agents is in question, it is always freedom from some constraint or restriction on, interference with, or barrier to doing, not doing, becoming, or not becoming something? Such freedom is thus always *of* something (an agent or agents), *from* something, *to* do, not do, become, or not become something; it is a triadic relation. Taking the format 'x is (is not) free from y to do (not do, become, not become) z', x ranges over agents, y ranges over such 'preventing conditions' as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and z ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance" (MacCallum, 1967, p.314). Quintin Skinner defines a third concept of liberty as non-domination. Unlike Berlin's notion of liberty as non-interference, Skinner defines liberty as non-domination (Skinner, 2001). G.A. Cohen expands the notion of freedom to include all. He points towards the existence of individual freedom but collective unfreedom: "*each is free only on condition that the others do not exercise their similarly conditional freedom*" (Cohen, 1983, p.11).

This debate is crucial for understanding the significance of freedom in the functioning of modern democracies. Two issues have emerged from the aforesaid debates. The first is recognition of freedom in a wider context. The journey of freedom includes individuals but does not end with individuals. The freedom of the individual is contingent on the freedom of all, and the freedom of all is contingent on the freedom of the individual. In most cases, freedom is deliberated or advocated amidst the territory in which familiarity

is already established through the idea of belongingness. Secondly, how to understand the functioning of freedom? In the discourses, freedom is defined as non-domination and non-interference, and these two values are contingent upon territoriality. In other words, by and large, freedom is defined by familiarity with values. This familiarity of values can be easily identified with the notion of territoriality. In most cases, freedom is deliberated or advocated amidst the territory in which familiarity is already established through the idea of belongingness.

In the many traditions of freedom, the idea of belonging becomes the central category of freedom. The most remarkable and identifiable marker of belonging is territoriality. Generally, freedom becomes contingent upon territoriality. Theorisation or thinkers of freedom knowingly or unknowingly confirm the relationship between belongingness, territoriality and freedom. The Faultline is missing the idea of freedom for those who do not fit the criterion of belongingness cum territoriality. Despite the abstract and universal concept of freedom, it becomes contingent on belongingness and territoriality, often disregarding unfamiliar people or groups.

Three crucial aspects of territoriality are essential for understanding the notion of freedom and its functioning.

Capital and Freedom

The relation between freedom and capital has to be explored to understand the actual functioning of freedom. Capital, as social relations, impacts individuals, society, and the state. Capital establishes relations with the state to facilitate the free movement of capital across borders. In capitalism, freedom is often construed as the mobility of capital and the freedom of the market. The idea of freedom is reduced to the idea of the consumer and its association with the market. At the beginning, freedom means the freedom to mix hands with resources to convert into ownership. There is a provision of unlimited ownership in the capital discourse. It also proposes that freedom of capital can be ensured either by imperialism or through a slew of treaties or the establishment of supra-organisations. In this entire discourse, the idea of people is missing. There is freedom of capital, but there is no freedom of people for mobility.

Capitalism envisages freedom of capital and freedom of people as two distinct categories. In the case of freedom of capital, there is an attempt to de-constrain the territory for the flow of capital. In the case of human

freedom, there are two developments. Firstly, freedom of capital is prioritised over freedom of people in a definite sense. Freedom of capital is a commodious relation based on exchange value. The second important component is the question of mobility. The mobility of capital is granted, but the mobility of people is severely restricted. People, as skilled individuals, are reduced to the plan of capital, which encourages the mobility of capital, but people as beings are not allowed the same mobility.

In this entire process, a distinct notion of territoriality emerges. Capital seeks freedom from territoriality, but does not allow people to think about territoriality. Capital becomes the universal category, and people are reduced to a local category. The freedom of people becomes a local issue, rather than a global one. The capital becomes a global issue. The issue is with the territoriality; people are further judged against the freedom of capital. The freedom of people is only after the freedom of capital. Territoriality plays a greater role in this regard. On the one hand, it defines the freedom of people at the territorial level, and within the territory, freedom is reduced to the freedom of capital.

Freedom and Law

Freedom and law are crucial components to understand modern democracies. Freedom is reduced to territoriality. Freedom is defined by the territorial law. There are two types of developments in this regard. Freedom is subsumed under the suzerainty of law. Freedom is granted or exempted by way of law. There can be a state of exception in which freedom can be suspended. The freedom is not only restricted to territoriality but also becomes the subject of the state of exception. In the case of Carl Schmitt, the state of exception is an exception. In the case of Giorgio Agamben, the state of exception is a permanent feature of contemporary (Schmitt, 2005; Agamben, 1998). In Schmitt, sovereignty, not freedom, is the cause of exception. "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (Schmitt, 2005, p.5). For Agamben, "the state of exception is neither external nor internal to the juridical order, and the problem of defining it concerns precisely a threshold, or a zone of indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other" (Agamben, 2005, p.23).

Freedom and Governmentality

Michel Foucault defines governmentality in three definite senses.

1. “The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.
2. The tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government
3. The process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becomes ‘governmentalized’” (Foucault, 1991, pp.102–3)

Linking freedom to territoriality raises questions about hegemony (in case of Antonio Gramsci), ideological apparatuses (Althusser), and governmentalization. Can we define the freedom to defy the arrival of hegemony, in which consent is sought from people for their own precariousness? This is a pertinent question. The logic of territoriality is extended by hegemony and ideological separatism in the form of questioning the concept of ‘free’ before freedom. It is important to think freely before freedom. Territory not only excludes others from freedom but also internally remains vulnerable due to permanent suspicions of a state of exception. The idea of hegemony informs freedom, yet the concept of free and ideological apparatuses undermines the belief that freedom can exist without freedom. In this, freedom becomes highly compromised. The conversion of individuals into subjects compromises the notion of freedom.

M.K. Gandhi, Freedom and Swaraj

M.K. Gandhi (1869–1948) offers a unique concept of freedom through the idea of *swaraj*. The literal meaning of *swaraj* is *swa* (self) and *raj* (rule), that is, self-rule. Gandhi offers the deterritorialized notion of freedom because he focuses on *swaraj*. *Swaraj* is the central concept in Gandhi (Rai, 2023, 2024 and 2025).

Gandhi also defines *swaraj* as the arrival of freedom. The *swaraj* definition is not only self-rule but a complex structure of self and other. The discourse on *swaraj* in Gandhi hinges on marginality or the marginalisation of certain sections of society. The real question is, what is the criterion of defining

freedom or swaraj in Gandhi? Gandhi offers deliberation in this regard. Gandhi develops the idea of swaraj. Gandhi's political philosophy is based on the concept of swaraj. Swaraj is a broader category. It is a form of political independence, but it encompasses a broader area. Along with political independence, Gandhi proposes to redefine human relations. Swaraj is an interdependent political community. The interdependent political community is based on the non-dichotomy of self and other. Gandhi's swaraj is based on the self, which is both internally and externally independent. In both conditions, he offers a significant space for the self's internal and external independence. Self is important because it engages with others. The other constitutes the self. The road to self goes by 'other'. For every self, the other is a very important signpost.

There cannot be erasure of 'other' in the existence and formation of 'self'. In fact, other important players remain for internal and external freedom of self. Gandhi develops the uniqueness of the method of the self and the other. His swaraj is the recognition and protection of others by oneself. In this way, the self not only recognises the other but also becomes a non-encroacher for others.

Who is the other in Gandhi's swaraj? The other is the marginal sections. Swaraj cannot be developed in the absence of acknowledging the precariousness of marginalised groups. Gandhi draws attention to issues of class, caste, untouchability, gender, and tribal identity. There is a critical evaluation of Gandhi's own take on marginality. There may be an initial variance with the more mature age. It can be stated that there was a growth in his concept of marginality.

The concept of marginality defines the notion of self and other, or the model of swaraj. The erasure of the other for the self is violence. The recognition of the other and its precariousness is enriching the notion of the self.

Herein, the notion of freedom becomes important. In Swaraj, freedom is taking cognisance of the other by the self. In other words, freedom is not a procedural mechanism or a technical definition. Freedom is an interdependent life, recognising the immense creative potential of human beings.

Gandhi defines freedom in a comprehensive way, linked to the marginalised section, and de-territorial in the sense of unrestricted belonging. Freedom is defined as social freedom. There cannot be a delinking of individual

freedom from social freedom. “I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being” (Gandhi, 1939, p.144). Individual freedom is essential to achieve social freedom. It is not possible otherwise. “If this [individual liberty] goes, then surely all is lost, for, if the individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom” (Gandhi, 1942a, p.27).

His notion of freedom is comprehensive, but the other is attached to the self. “Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or, say, the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives” (Gandhi, 1942b, p.249). In this debate, the notion of free becomes significant. The idea of freedom is the most important value. “We must be content to die if we cannot live as free men and women” (Gandhi, 1922, p.5). “Freedom is never dear at any price. It is the breath of life. What would a man not pay for living?” (Gandhi, 1938, p.368).

In Gandhi, freedom is relational. He links the freedom of the country with the freedom of the most marginalised. “It gives me both pain and surprise when I find people feeling anxious about their future under a freed India. For me an India which does not guarantee freedom to the lowliest of those born, not merely within an artificial boundary but within its natural boundary, is not free India” (Gandhi, 1929, p.421). Commenting on the future of India, Gandhi emphasises the belonging of the poorest to the country. “I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, or the curse of the intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men” (Gandhi, 1931a, p.255).

This understanding of freedom causes the deterritorialisation of belongingness. “Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army

imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate the distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams I shall be satisfied with nothing else” (Gandhi, 1931a, p.255). The freedom is nothing if it is not based on the notion of equality for all. “If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts on-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth, or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom” (Gandhi, 1931b, p.278). This also negates the notion of slavery. “Men aspiring to be free can hardly think of enslaving others. If they try to do so, they will only be binding their own chains of slavery tighter” (Gandhi, 1947, p.106).

National independence is qua equal independence. The freedom cannot be defined and defended if the other is not free. “National independence is not a fiction. It is as necessary as individual independence. But neither, if it is based on non-violence, may ever be a menace to the equal independence of the nation or the individual as the case may be” (Gandhi, 1930, p.37). Therefore, freedom is absolute. There cannot be freedom even for those who colonise others. “When I am gone India will be free and, not only India, but the whole world will be free. I do not believe that the Americans or English are free. They will not be free so long as they have the power to hold the coloured nations in subjection. I know my purpose and I know what freedom is. English teachers taught me its meaning, and I must interpret that freedom according to what I see and have experienced” (Gandhi, 1942c). He defined the freedom of India as the freedom of all exploited races. “Freedom of India will demonstrate to all the exploited races of the earth that their freedom is very near and that in no case will they, henceforth, be exploited” (Gandhi, 1942d).

Conclusion

Gandhi offers the notion of swaraj, which proposes freedom, where the idea of marginality becomes particularly important through the concept of deterritorialization. The deterritorialisation are a universal belonging. The freedom is universal belongingness while recognising others as an important component for parity vis-à-vis the self.

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***Buen Vivir*: Indigenous Political Thought and the Imagination of New Worlds in the Anthropocene**

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1. Introduction

The concept of the Anthropocene spread following the publication in 2000 of an article in the International Geosphere Biosphere Program newsletter, signed by chemist Paul Crutzen and limnologist Eugene Stoermer. The Anthropocene is now in the process of being ratified as a new geological epoch in the history of the Earth, which requires stratigraphic evidence of human influence on natural systems and their transformation into a dominant physical force, impacting and deteriorating ecosystems and the climate (Kaltmeier, Sandoval, Pádua, Zarrilli, 2024). Although the Anthropocene is characterized in the humanities by the generalization of the concept of “crisis”—encompassing ecological, economic, and political dimensions—this era is equally marked by ontological openness and the emergence of worlds that transcend modern logic, which operates according to the distinction between humans and non-humans, nature and culture, and is based on a linear conception of time and the perception of difference in hierarchical terms (Blaser, 2022).

In general, these “disobedient collectives”, which challenge the standards followed by modern ontology, can be characterized as relational ontologies, with heterarchical world performances, where humans and non-humans do not exist prior to relationships and co-constitute the world, relating to each other voluntarily and politically (De la Cadena, 2018). Such collectives,

including indigenous worlds, offer alternative visions of life that transcend the traditional concept of development as a global and unifying proposal.

In this context, *Buen Vivir* emerges as a philosophy of life, grounded in political thought, capable of rekindling hope for a less catastrophic future for humanity. Often seen as utopian by non-indigenous people, this way of thinking—and also of acting—is not heroic, salvationist, or disconnected from reality, but rather an objective belief based on concrete life experience, past history, and the worldview of indigenous peoples, in direct dialogue with their political thinking and intellectual work. We therefore start from the assumption that listening attentively to indigenous thoughts and ways of life enables us to imagine non-hegemonic horizons in modernity and to develop forward-looking thinking that explores potential worlds and constructs alternative prognoses to catastrophe (Domanska, 2024).

This paper seeks to explore the concepts of *Buen Vivir* mobilized by indigenous intellectuals from Abya Yala, aiming to understand how the political vocabulary of these intellectuals mobilizes an analytical grammar distinct from that of modernity, which reflects a relational ontological perspective. To this end, the paper establishes an interface with the extension project “Caminhos de Abya Yala — Intelectuais Indígenas do Continente Americano” linked to the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ).

2. *Buen Vivir*: indigenous perspectives and imagining new worlds

According to Ailton Krenak, an indigenous activist and intellectual, *Buen Vivir* is an expression that comes from the Quechua and Aymara peoples, “which refers to a way of being on Earth, a way of being in the world (...) it has to do with the worldview constituted by the lives of people and all other beings who share the air with us, who drink water with us, and who walk on this earth together with us” (Krenak, 2020, p.6). Suzane Costa and Rafael Xucuru-Kariri, in the presentation of the work *Cartas para o Bem Viver*, define *Buen Vivir* as “a beautiful life”. According to them, “it is the definition of living fully, in the Quechua language, which involves being in harmony with nature and strengthening community relations” (Costa, Xucuru-Kariri, 2020, p.11).

The concept of *Buen Vivir* has accompanied the ways of life and resistance of indigenous peoples over the centuries. This complex cosmological perception is articulated as a way of life, of existence, and of relating to the

earth, to others, and to other living and non-human organisms. This worldview has persisted despite systematic attempts at destruction by colonialism and, later, by global capitalism, conveyed by the policies of nation states. In the name of “progress”, these hegemonic logics have sought and continue to seek to usurp the rich forms of existence based on *Buen Vivir*. The unbridled pursuit of supposed “development” has proved devastating in practice, as it fails to respect life in its multiple dimensions: human life, the life of the earth, and the life of all the organisms that constitute it. *Buen Vivir*, therefore, emerges not only as a philosophy, but as a project of ontological and political resistance in the face of the predatory logics that characterize Western modernity.

In indigenous cosmological perceptions, the notion of soul transcends human exclusivity, inhabiting all beings. For this reason, nature—forests, rivers, mountains, and the earth—is entirely permeated by these spiritual presences. This perspective prevents nature from being reduced to a commodity, as advocated by Western capitalist thinking, whose foundations were already evident in the first century of European invasion in Abya Yala. Based on a logic of understanding the world where the separation between nature and culture does not exist, indigenous thinking does not give human beings a “*privileged view of the objects that make up reality*”, as occurs in the modern mentality. In contrast, “*nature and culture are part of the same ontological degree that places indigenous people in a subjective relationship with their surrounding environment*” (Felippe, 2014, p.29).

In his book *O Bem Viver – Uma oportunidade para imaginar outros mundos* (2016), Alberto Acosta conceives of *Buen Vivir* not as a futuristic utopia, nor as a milder version of capitalism or a proposal for 21st-century socialism. Instead, he presents it as an opportunity to conceive the existence of other possible worlds, in which overcoming extractivism and capitalism is a reality. In these worlds, “*reciprocity and solidarity become axiological guidelines to guide this new civilizing process, resonating in the establishment of harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature*” (Silva, 2020, p.279–80). Acosta’s perspective, therefore, positions *Buen Vivir* as a project of radical transformation that goes beyond hegemonic structures and proposes a reorganization of life based on ethical and community principles.

3. “Caminhos de Abya Yala”: *Buen Vivir* as interpreted by indigenous intellectuals

The extension project “Caminhos de Abya Yala” is part of a collaborative network between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers from various institutions—including the State University of Rio de Janeiro, the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), the State University of Bahia (UNEB), the College of Anthropologists of Chile, and Alberto Hurtado University (UAH)—and undergraduate and graduate students in history at UERJ.

Launched in 2023, the main objective of the project is to analyze how the indigenous movement has gained influence in the public sphere by questioning the politics of nation states and promoting critical reflections on the consecration of Eurocentric narratives and modern categories of historicity as indisputable truths, which suppress and/or contain forms of worlding that exceed the characteristics of modernity. In this sense, by encouraging indigenous intellectuals to share their visions and expectations for their peoples, the project is based on the perspective that the crisis raised by the Anthropocene makes it possible to shed light on alliances capable of refracting the colonialist course of a single world and promoting the pluriverse, that is, “[...] *the negotiated coming together of heterogeneous worlds (and their practices) as they strive for what makes each of them be what they are, which is also not without others.*” (Blaser, De la Cadena, 2018, p.4)

The semi-structured Oral History interviews, conducted using digital methods, are at the heart of the project. This approach allows participants, even those in remote areas, to express their reflections, life stories, and knowledge in depth. With the informed consent of the participants, the interviews are recorded on video and audio, resulting in the creation of an audiovisual archive. This collection is then made available to the general public in podcast and video formats.¹ For research purposes, the interviews are transcribed for analysis, and the information obtained forms the basis for the production of academic articles and teaching materials on the

¹ The interviews are available on the project’s social media channels. YouTube: <https://youtube.com/@CaminhosdeAbyaYalaUERJ?si=djINE1H44u51iUu->. Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/0mDQXdzP66lfqMKlkBrA1n?si=968886e9f19674f8a>. Website: <https://www.descolonizandoconhecimentouerj.com/in%C3%ADcio/caminhos-de-abya-yala>.

teaching of indigenous history. In this way, the project reaches a wide audience and contributes as a valuable pedagogical tool for primary and higher education.²

“Caminhos de Abya Yala” is structured into thematic seasons, each dedicated to exploring a specific area of research. The first season, launched in 2023, focused on the Anthropocene and the importance of indigenous practices—such as *Buen Vivir*—for the construction of possible futures. The second season, which focused on the debate about indigenous identities and ancestry, was released in 2024. Finally, the third season, scheduled for release in 2025/2026, will focus on reflections on indigenous historicities and temporalities. This paper will focus on analyzing the discourse and political vocabulary used by two interviewees from the first season—Rafael Xucuru-Kariri and Maryta de Humahuaca.

Table 1 - List of interviewees from the first season of the project (2023)

Interviewee	Indigenous people	Occupation	Country of origin
Ellen Lima Wassu	Wassu Cocal	Writer and Researcher	Brasil
Flor Canche	Maya	Researcher	Mexico
Kahû Pataxó	Pataxó	Political leader	Brasil
Maryta de Humahuaca	Humahuacos	Singer	Argentina
Natalia Caniguan Velarde	Mapuche	Anthropologist	Chile
Rafael Xucuru-Kariri	Xucuru-Kariri	Political scientist	Brasil
Sindri Tatiana González Ipuana	Wayuu	Craftswoman	Colombia
Ytanajé Cardoso	Munduruku	Writer and Teacher	Brasil

Source: own elaboration

² In 2024, the project released its first book, based on transcripts of interviews from the first season. The book, published in Portuguese and Spanish, can be accessed via the following links: <https://zenodo.org/records/13905062> and <https://zenodo.org/records/14019742>.

not for sale

Buen Vivir is a central concept in indigenous intellectual production, as highlighted by the interviewees. Maryta de Humahuaca points out that *Sumak Kawsay*, as it is known in the Quechua language, is based on principles of native communities, such as reciprocity, collectivity, and ancestry. For her, it transcends Western binaries of body/mind, nature/culture, and reason/feeling. In her words, “*Sumak Kawsay is a possibility to reach beyond what the mind’s perception and intellect allow us to see*” (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.195). In turn, Rafael Xucuru-Kariri complements this view, emphasizing that *Buen Vivir* is not limited to overcoming dualities, but also implies the need to establish political relationships with non-human beings, partner species, and landscapes, which have agency and political representation: “*Hence also the idea of the need to actively listen to these partner species, the rivers, forests, mountains, and seas, which carry past and present history, as well as the construction of a future. These entities carry history, our common history, which is also that of our ancestors*” (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.284)

Both interviewees link *Buen Vivir* to criticism of the linear conception of time. While Maryta believes that *Buen Vivir* is forged by ancestral intellectuality (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.187), Rafael corroborates this perspective by arguing that indigenous bodies, imbued with ancestry, are capable of connecting the temporal dimensions of the past, present, and future. According to him, “*In recent years, we have become accustomed to a division of time into beginning, middle, and end [...] But in indigenous villages, this conception is reorganized beyond the linear division of time with which we are accustomed to thinking about human life. If the future depends on what happens in the present, the latter also coexists with the past, for we live on a land inhabited by beings and entities that have been here for a long time, connecting past and present.*” (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.283–4)

From this perspective, both Maryta and Rafael emphasize that *Buen Vivir* is far from being a utopia or a myth. It represents a refined political thought and a perception of the world inherent to indigenous peoples, deeply marked by attention to the aesthetic properties of the sensible world and the political interactions between distinct historical worlds (Stengers, 2005). Rafael, in particular, argues that white people—or modern ontology—face difficulties in understanding the world in a relational way. The inability to live

in it, to be traversed by it, to be connected to it as a mutually constitutive part reflects a logic of externality. Therefore, considering *Buen Vivir* as something without concrete experiences or foundations is, according to him, to give in to colonialism, which imprisons us in its claim to total domination, denying the possibility of another performance of the world that overrides the precepts of modernity:

[...] in fact, when white people look at us and see this situation, they call it utopian. But what we actually have, as I said, are community relationships that don't work, that don't follow this logic. I'm not talking about 500 years. I'm talking about thousands of years, I'm talking about community relations, I'm talking about kinship, I'm talking about my grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather of my great-great-grandmother, I'm talking about my rites, I'm talking about my relationship with the land itself, which runs through me for different reasons. Because that is where my religion is, that is where my spirit is, that is where my Enchanted Ones are, who protect me; because that is where the agricultural production is that allows me to have money in the capitalist economy, because that is also where my mental and physical health is, being able to be in contact with things that, the way the city is treating relationships between people, is difficult. I don't want to sell my land or produce to become cheap labor on the outskirts. So, it's only utopian when you look at it from the outside. When you look at it from the inside, it's totally reasonable. (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.67–8)

Certainly, none of the interviewees are naive enough to be unaware that capitalism has reached dimensions that profoundly mark the lives of the general population, including indigenous populations, who are situated both within and outside modernity, with the boundaries between these entities being quite complex (De la Cadena, 2024). As Maryta reports, “[...] many people are fighting for work, for life, to make it to the end of the month, to make ends meet. I think consumerism has left a chip in our mentality, so we say ‘I need this to live and to be happy,’ and that’s not it.” (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.186). Rafael, in turn, illustrates how capitalism itself assimilates and distorts concepts of resistance. He cites the example of a life insurance policy called *Buen Vivir*, explaining that “This is an example of how capitalism easily adapts and converts everything into its pleasure of selling, exchanging, and buying other concepts. And so today you have almost an attempt to soften *Buen Vivir*, as a matter of a natural balance between humans and the surrounding environment.” (Seixlack, et al., 2024, p.38).

However, Rafael believes that, although there is a gap between the harmful effects of capitalism on the population and *Buen Vivir*, the solution to this gap lies in politics. He points out that indigenous peoples have exercised politics with mastery—and not with utopia—and it is in this daily political action that the key to overcoming this gap lies:

So, taking these perspectives from these people to think about these situations of economic inequality, I think it's a principle that we're discussing, and the gap between this beautiful discourse that I'm talking about and how it will be in practice is a political issue. Collective, daily politics, with discussion, wherever you want, on your social media, in conversation, at lunch, at family dinner, at Sunday meetings, in your university department, with your coworkers That's how we build, and I think we're doing that. (Seixlack, *et al.*, 2024, p.59)

As a final consideration, this paper reinforces that, in the face of the multidimensional crisis of the Anthropocene, indigenous political thought offers a fundamental response, which underscores the importance of imagination in overcoming catastrophic discourse and inertia, opening paths for the construction of other possible futures. The great affirmation of indigenous politics lies in the ability to use storytelling as a form of inventiveness and creation. This perspective is not based on excessive utopias, but on concrete foundations: on the perceptions and performances of the world experienced in the daily lives of these peoples, even under the pressure and domineering and silencing pretensions of modernity.

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Ubuntu and the African Philosophy of Movement

Diana Sfetlana Stoica

In his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel expressed his views on Africa and the movement, as a complex philosophical concept. He remarked that Africa had no movement to exhibit. More generations of African philosophers, calling for the recognition of African philosophy as a legitimate, autonomous field of knowledge, criticized and used this to unpack the errors of a colonial bias that denied the continent's capacity for movement, development, and even systematic thought. They, like Cheick Anta Diop, have perorated the cause of movements that have not 'succeeded', or did not achieve the realisation of all their objectives. All movements, they insisted, have however proclaimed their own continuity through fluidity, naturalistic and emotional images in African arts and a genuine African philosophy, that had to be re-proposed in world knowledge production systems. Leopold Senghor revealed how the image of the African philosophy was subsumed to Eurocentric biases when observing that "Emotion was Negro and reason was Greek" (Mbembe, 2021, p.8). While African philosophy cognizance was on the agenda of African scholars, taking inspiration from Ancient Egypt's philosophy, the concept of movement is defined through the lens of matter and essence, as the progressive transformation of matter into purer forms, so the transgression from potentiality to action (Diop, 1991, p.358). The actualisation of forms, says Diop (1991, p.341), or essences in Aristotelian or Platonic senses, would be an undefined "final cause" for the manifestation of the divinity, and lastly the ideals. African thinkers have developed frameworks rooted in local languages, cosmologies, and experiences, to reaffirm not only the African Philosophy as having distinct

identity, but also the African Philosophy of movement, deeply rooted in the mobile tradition of the African Self.

Translating movement in development, or advancement, or pure action to comprehend the reality with own tools (ontologies) and methods (epistemologies), act and adapt accordingly to it, meant to decompose the concept of movement. One decomposition to think of was suggested by Mbembe (2021, p.73) and the elements of it are the effraction, the erasure and the rewriting of the Self. Qualitative analysis on conceptual elements of movement, located effraction in the problematic of space and colonialism. In the meantime, erasure and rewriting reflected the colonial historicity and the relevance of treating movement as not only a mere representation of transition, transfer, displacement, but as advancement and change occasioned by migration, education and cultural transfer, multiculturalism, knowledge production and the pragmatist philosophies of access. Thinkers such as Placide Tempels, Kwasi Wiredu, Paulin Hountondji, and V.Y. Mudimbe interrogated whether philosophy on the continent could be reduced to ethnographic description or whether it should be considered in its critical, conceptual form. This debate transcended academy's borders, to embrace a wider African and pan-African narrative more and more concerned with pursuing its own ideals and definitions of good, and own ways to see and act for development, in an ongoing process of decolonization of thinking.

In African narratives, in the pursuit of progressive liberation from mental colonisation, the movement is primarily connected to identity and its various layers and transformations. Therefore, the African Philosophy of Movement must respond to issues like migration, questioning concepts of identity, home, nation, and becoming, as well as relationality (Dubois & Mbembe, 2017; Mbembe, 2021) and the decolonization of epistemologies. To encompass this, African Philosophy introduces the concept of Ubuntu, often expressed through the phrase "*I am because you are*", but also "*cognatus sum ergo sum*", translated as "*I am related, so I am*" (Bujo, 1998). Within the framework of Ubuntu, the less explored area—the philosophy of movement—is highlighted. Why? Because "*I am because you are*" suggests a movement from the Self to the Other, representing an ongoing exchange in which identity is co-created. Both the Self and the Other, in postmodern contexts, are shaped by histories of displacement; home becomes a dynamic relation, and thus, identity remains a continuous negotiation. Movement also shapes identity, with particular emphasis on orientation and

coordination—fundamental concepts in Ubuntu, which focuses particularly on direction and interdependence. Consequently, the African philosophy of movement advocates for a fluid ontology where being is inseparable from relational becoming.

To think Ubuntu through movement is to shift focus from fixed definitions, allow African Philosophy to have original inputs in a worldwide glossary of philosophy, sustained by the fact that movement in African experiences is not accidental to existence—it is constitutive of it. Migration, displacement, becoming, and exchange form the rhythms of African life. Even the existence would be a rhythm in itself, suggested by African intellectuals' cognizance of the decolonization, described as the movement from non-being to being, a complex process of liberation of being, knowing and acting (Ndlovu Gatsheni, 2013). This movement was always collective, being a consequence of a resistance movement (ex: Algeria, Guinea) or a social and cultural movement (Negritude, BlackLivesMatter, Rastafarism, Garveysm) that contributed to the circulation of energies that connected the Self with ancestors, nature, and the community.

On the other hand, to re-think movement in the logic of Ubuntu is to approach the questions of identity, politics, and international relations distinctly, valuing energy over power, focusing on proportionality over domination, and giving priority to shared directions over rigid positioning. Like in a dance, in a couple, where power is relative and translated as only energy for the needed coordination of bodies, there is no effective domination but only movement of correction and coordination, with proportional contribution from the part of the dancers. The directions are shared, meaning there must be a consensus on the spaces to cover during the dance, while positioning gets fluid and interchangeable. As Bongmba (2006) reminds us, Ubuntu is the exercise of responsibility, which would be necessary everywhere, in any individual movement, dance, in community management, politics and international relations. Therefore, Ubuntu in relation to the Philosophy of Movement is a sort of matrix, auxiliary to the enhanced understanding of the responsibility in the context of motion, whereby motion refers to humans and humanity (as the unity of bodies, minds and spirits). This motion must be ruled and articulated in ethics and jurisprudence, two manifestations of responsibility over the other, captured also, originally, in African traditions of relational ontology. Contemporary relational ontologies shaped in Ubuntu and included in a broader motion theory are reflected in reconciliation, justice, and social ethics, including the

healing, as outcomes of a long process of post-colonial repair, and the rewriting of history from the history itself.

The application of a Philosophy of Movement, and the Ubuntu (with all cultural variants on the continent) would not only be necessary in national and international contexts, but also sufficient, in some views, to manage migration-related issues, coordinate processes of advancement in relationality, on the verge of realizing world ideals of peace, wealth and better life.

First, this tandem would clarify the efficacy of a debate on globalization versus the world-ization, by shaping the home as a mobile relation, something carried, remembered, or reconstituted. In the negotiation between belonging and becoming, the identity can cross borders more or less artificial, more or less decided by a few. To overcome both such types of frontiers, the practices of movement, engaged with Ubuntu principles, should contribute to re-imagining the globe and the world in their connections and disruptions, while being able to balance them and imagine collective projects of independence.

Secondly, African epistemologies have long been shaped by encounters between oral traditions and written texts, indigenous knowledge and imported religions, local practices and global sciences. Therefore, encounters are not passive receptions, but active reinterpretations. The African Philosophy of Movement tries to question, in the view of African intellectuals who talk in this repository, although not naming it, the levels of freedom of methodologies and instruments for the reinterpretations and production of knowledge, after colonialism, or in post-colonialism. Knowledge, of all types and from all sources, was always in transit in all directions, even though Western knowledge claimed its universalism. It tried to negate the creative energies of hybridity, because it annulled a priori the assumptions of the existence of any African, Global South or other type of knowledge, if not Western. The challenge, then, was to support recognition of the existence of African (and Global South) knowledge, meanwhile assuming that the non-Western world, also, is not static and timeless, but a site of motion, invention, and transformation. Nevertheless, Ubuntu principles orient the critical resistance of African intellectuality to colonial Western assertions on the primacy of Western knowledge and philosophy, by marking its relations with ancient Egypt (Diop, 1991) and assessing freedom of reinterpretations of such knowledge, represented in the

reciprocal and two-way relation of the Self with The Other. This two-way direction is seen as ethical, and it pursues the ideals of mutual flourishing.

Thirdly, the African philosophy of movement defends the opinion that energies, and not power, should guide collective motion. Energy is often viewed as a positive, generative, life-giving force, pushing the subject for advancement; meanwhile, power is linked with the features of colonialism, and still, imperialism or authoritarianism. While in relation to regimes, the recommendations given by Ubuntu principles and the African Philosophy of movement would be limited by their essence of defending ideals of a just humanity, and to the energy of responsibility, debates on the blurred frontiers between energies of autocracy and their manifestation of negative power are still open, especially in a context of North-South and individualism - communitarianism encounters. The continuous calls for a more equitable and sustainable world order, where cooperation replaces domination, and where the advancement of each nation is understood to depend on the flourishing of others, should mean that the concept of power should be replaced with that one of energy, in the semantics of a pragmatic philosophy of development (more specific than movement), embedded in Ubuntu principles.

What would principally matter, in a logic of sovereignty, but not the free and all-time prioritisation of it, would be not uniformity, but proportional distribution of energies, the rejection of hierarchical domination, as well as the preference for balance and reciprocity. According to Ubuntu acceptations, energy replies to this requirement, as in African ontologies, energy represents vitality, creativity, and harmony. African Philosophy claims that the energy is being shared without being diminished; meanwhile, power, often not shared, is a self-annulling or annulable status. In other words, energies create, while power destroys. Thus, through an African Philosophy of Movement that capitalizes on Ubuntu, the critique of the colonial legacy of power and the affirmation of an alternative ontology where energies circulate freely, sustaining life, is of major relevance at all levels.

Some African scholars and diplomats have suggested ubuntuism as a framework for international relations. Similar principles to Ubuntu were applied in the national or community context, too. However, without a broader category of Philosophy focusing on the movement, as essence and cause for everything perceivable in contemporaneity, principles of Ubuntu

would lack the critical stance, the pragmatics and the potentialities of coming into being.

Now, reviving the essence of a just and ethical existence is the main objective of any Philosophy. The African Philosophy of Movement, in conjunction with Ubuntu, reminds us of the necessary awareness of responsibility that creates the common movements and steps forward. And these steps must overcome the burden of the colonial matrix, showing the world that if movement means responsibility for the Self and the Other at the same time, colonialism and any abuse of power at a small scale, or in international relations, are not symbols of a movement, being completely deprived of any form of responsibility. Therefore, while trying to solve conflicts and reduce the abuse of power or any form of colonialism at a global level, the assumptions and reasoning of an African Philosophy of Movement, as well as other specific Philosophies of Movement (e.g. Asian), based on Ubuntu and similar philosophies of the Global South, in their struggle for recognition, would be highly recommended.

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Can We Break Free from the Neoliberal Matrix?

From Institutional Frameworks to the Production of Subjectivities

Abdel Beggar

In these diplomatic times, upon a horizon painted in chiaroscuro, thundered by the geopolitics of the cannon for a stormy *land rush*, productivist logic comes up against a planet, desperately trying to explain to its most turbulent resident its non-negotiable limits. While the overexploitation of natural resources will barely scratch the Earth's agenda for the coming million years, it will mostly compromise the very next conditions of human survival—who is still fascinated by the growing abstraction of value, increasingly separating itself from its social substance, as if a reality in its own right.

Capitalism—understood in the sense used by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy—is a socio-economic system where private ownership of the means of production predominates, workers legally own and sell their labor power, and markets play the central role in allocating surplus. It also includes a class division and the pursuit of capital accumulation; we should add to this a labor market as the only way to access money, which itself carries an immense symbolic power (Marx, 1990). Having accompanied colonialism and imperialist wars, its expansion today enables it to exert profound influence over international institutions. Yet we observe that codes, initially designed for the economy and the firm, spread downward and are now adopted by individuals who project themselves as enterprises of the *self*.

In this article, we will present the evolution of modern capitalism, its reconfiguration of international relations and institutions; then analyze its ideological transcendence, which enables this matrix imprinting itself upon individual behavior, cultivating forms of internalized subjection.

The Making of Modern Capitalism

From a Western perspective—and without tracing back to the primitive forms of merchant capitalism—it seemed to be the British who first fired the opening shots of its modern version, destined to become universal, through a convergence of coinciding factors. Landlords pressed tenants into market competition (Brenner, 1976) and as the dispossession of the agricultural producer from the land constituted the process's ground premise, they sold their strength for wages, just like a commodity (Marx, 1990).

The liberal ideas of Locke and Hume were already taking shape, incarnating an *invisible hand* by which, through a mystical *sympathy*, the pursuit of private interest served the common good; supported by a division of labour, and free trade promoted by *easy taxes* (Smith, 1976), later reinforced by the theory of mutually beneficial comparative advantage (Ricardo, 2001).

Where unlike contemporaneously also very advance China, England's decisive advantage was the ready availability and striking proximity of its coal deposits to centers of industry and trade (Pomeranz, 2000; Wrigley, 2010) launching the industrial revolution whose ultimate end was the valorization of capital, since « interest-bearing capital is the perfect fetish » (Marx, 1989).

In addition we can note an epistemological nuance by the long-term crystallization of deep-rooted anthropological patterns which shaped individualism and property (Todd, 2011) or even, according to Weber's interpretation, the cultural inflection of Calvinist asceticism and Puritan discipline formed a moral framework that normalized disciplined labor and continual reinvestment, helping to shape the *spirit* of modern capitalism (Weber, 2002).

If the creation of the Bank of England and the constitution of a fiscal-military state enabled to draw significant advantages from its expanding colonial resources (Brewer, 1990) it consolidated definitively by securing property rights (North & Weingast, 1989) especially through the generalization of the joint-stock company and the principle of limited liability.

Capital, Crisis, and Neocolonialism: The Dialectics of Expansion

While colonization and slavery supported the rise of early capitalism, access to international markets was not achieved in the quiet intimacy of an opiated shadow theatre with sleepy gongs, but through a harsh European gunboat diplomacy forcing treaties such as Bowring, or Nanjing upon a China reluctant to open.

Over the nineteenth century it expanded internationally, driven by new industrial organization and major technologies (steam power, telegraph, etc.). Its internal contradictions already produced financial crises; in those early episodes the Bank of England functioned as lender of last resort (Panic of 1825, Railway Mania, Overend Gurney's Black Friday, the Baring crisis), confronting workers with *short-time* precarity, unemployment, and wage cuts.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw capitalism evolve toward Taylorism and Fordism: the worker evoked in Chaplin's frenetic gestures on the production line, ceased to be an autonomous artisan and was recast as an *optimizable variable*, governed by the primacy of pecuniary motive. Once social relations were masked behind the apparent objectivity of things (Marx, 1973), and this reification kept the worker at a distance from his own production (Lukács, 1971), he was then invited into the cheerful world of mass consumption—facilitated notably by the *Kulturindustrie* and its entertainment, which contributed to the liberation of thought as negation (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). The postulate of a self-regulating market, dissolving the social and ecological foundations of collective life, provoked protective counter-movements that eventually gave way to the 1929 crisis (Polanyi, 2001).

From this hedonistic market world the Soviets excluded themselves. A choice that, through autarky and planning, limited the effects of the Great Depression (Gregory & Sailors, 2003); but it did not foresee the trap of power struggles, nor the coercive hold of the repressive state apparatus—discordant with communist democratic ideals—which left profound imprints on the collective unconscious. Another category was deliberately excluded: the societies dehumanized by colonial violence, already delicately divided with a dessert knife at the Berlin Conference's great banquet, or in the intimacy of the Sykes-Picot agreements.

While Western powers imposed upon the rest of the planet participation in a second world war, or assigned them the role of extras in the Cold War drama with its intrigues, the major global decisions were still made in small committees: from the Bretton Woods Conference, where the rules of world trade were imposed; to Potsdam, where Atlanticist and Soviet spheres of influence were demarcated without consulting the nations concerned; the GATT, fixing tariffs and exchange rules; and San Francisco, which institutionalized the veto and maintained the exclusion of colonized populations from the scope of human rights (Bhagavan, 2010). Even the states that had wrested their independence were still exploited through neocolonialism, deploying subtler instruments to counteract any minimal attempt at social policy : financial destabilizations, corruption, convertibility regimes and centralized parity reducing national monetary sovereignty, military deployment, more recently lawfare as an instrument of intervention, extending to loans presented as aid but yet conditioned on privatization and market liberalization. Once a social red line was crossed, subtlety gave way to the phlegmatic « Shaken, not stirred » as with Operations PBFortune or Ajax—far from fiction—engineered to precipitate the downfall of Mossadegh in 1953 (oil nationalization) and Arbenz in 1954 (agrarian reform reclaiming multinational lands), sending a clear warning to governments across the « South » (Kinzer, 2003; Schlesinger & Kinzer, 1999).

At the heart of the 17,000-island archipelago in 1955, was held the first Afro-Asian Conference, representing more than two-thirds of the planet, under a transcivilizational perspective (Onuma, 2009) which took the form of a resonant wake-up call to humanity. It became a normative uprising against Western hegemony, advancing a renewed vision of sovereignty, non-intervention, and international solidarity (Quinton-Brown, 2024). Through the symbolic force of this *Spirit of Bandung*, irresistibly conquering imaginaries, the revolt gained greater legitimacy, as less than a year later, three African nations, through their resistance against European colonizers, recovered great share of their confiscated lands. The liberation march of an entire bloc accelerated and opened the way to the institutionalization of the non-aligned (Phillips, 2016), culminating in the discussions on economic rules at UNCTAD in 1964. Soon enough, the newly independent states realized that diplomatic progress did not close the *trade gap* and observed that their raw materials prices fell faster than aid flows increased. They observed that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) chiefly acted to undermine public services and the social fabric of these states through

fiscal austerity programs, raising interest rates, and accelerated market liberalizations (Stiglitz, 2006).

Neoliberalism All the Way Down

Beyond its baptism at the Walter Lippmann Colloquium in 1938, the conceptualization of neoliberalism took shape through its central architect, Friedrich Hayek, who praised the market as the most efficient mechanism for aggregating dispersed information, through his theory of spontaneous order (Hayek, 1945). He emphasized above all a strong decision-making role for the constitution and the judges (Scheuerman, 1997)—arguably his contrast with the German ordoliberals—thereby enabling supra-democratic rules to guarantee competition and protect market order (Hayek, 1960). Von Mises already had advanced the thesis that without market prices for production goods, no rational allocation of resources was possible. He systematically discredited the benefits attributed to collective action, reducing the individual to the only legitimate unit of analysis (Mises, 1949).

Alongside strict monetary control, and a view of the state as a constraint on freedom—relegated to executing capitalism’s needs—Friedman wished the extension of market logic to be *total*, permeating every domain of social life: health, transportation, telecommunications, energy, pensions, culture, social norms, and even education (Friedman, 1962). For the most visionary theorists, neoliberalism had already gone beyond economics, setting up a form of governmentality that reordering social life and gradually shaped subjectivities (Foucault, 2004).

After an experimental phase in Chile driven by the influential Chicago Boys, and having to overcome the oil shocks that somewhat unsettled the Fordist-Keynesian compromise (Harvey, 1989) the conservative revolution of the late 1970s was launched in the United States and the United Kingdom, with an ideology centered on financial and shareholder governance, as well as on worldwide competition among workers: it began to spread like a mass-culture song, a market slogan « There is no alternative » all along

Beyond IMF and WB, capitalism encoded itself in all international strategic structures, by normalizing liberalization (such as the OECD, IOSCO) by institutionalizing market finance over the long term (BIS, Basel Committee, Basel I, etc.) and by ranking the credit access of states (including the SEC, NRSROs, and credit rating agencies). At the turn of the 1990s, the birth of the WTO, the embedding of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS)

mechanisms in investment treaties (Gallagher, 2014), and the alignment of public policy to market signals completed the normative framework, fueling the doctrinal corpus of the « Washington Consensus » (Stiglitz, 2002).

From Macro-Structures to Micro-Subjects

Neoliberalism does not simply regulate the global economic order, it makes the merging of society and the market appears obvious, a process that carries two layers of consequences. First come those of the state, where sovereign functions are subordinated to profitability criteria or increasingly ceded to the private sector—thereby giving substance to the adage « privatization of profits, socialization of losses » made visible to the broader public during the subprime crisis.

The second level consists in shaping the human to its image, producing a subject modeled on its own anthropological conception, by draining the remaining substantial frameworks of solidarity. Fragmentation strikes social and trade-union collectives, transforming individuals into dispersed and abstract atoms, governed by metrics presented as objective (KPI, EBITDA, Click-Through Rate, etc.), privileging negotiations of personal interests sheltered from collective actions. Precarity, unemployment, inequality, depression, and all systemic problems are experienced as « personal problems » for which individualized solutions are prescribed. It promotes a disembodied self, imagining as independent from social structures and exclusive agent of its own success and failure (Markus & Adams, 2019) where its flagship discipline of contemporary psychology co-produces the *neoliberal self*, through the mass diffusion of a grammar promoted as best-sellers via coaching and self-help (Lee, 2017). Thus class consciousness is deactivated, feeding the illusion that everything depends on one's individual choices (Bauman, 2007), depoliticizing one's own precarity—which is no longer perceived as shared—and favoring self-reliance and hardening as survival tactics in an ever more selective socio-Darwinian environment (McGuigan, 2014). The so-called « Global South » does not escape the fragmentation of solidarities, reinforced by the monetization of social ties and a fabrication of indebted subjects, as much as aspiring consumers. As states are pushed to retreat, « solutions » like microcredit and self-help step in, diverting action from structural transformation, and depoliticizing poverty (Bateman & Chang, 2012).

The neoliberal subject exists as a permanent process of self-fashioning and exploiting itself until exhaustion (Han, 2017). Unlike the feudal society of visible serfdom, what emerges here is a voluntary practice of self-exploitation, reframed as self-realization—incessantly promoted by advertising and media—where he perceives himself as « free », exempt from direct coercion, even as he internalizes the social norm imperatives of performance. This voluntary servitude aligns with a hypertrophied positivity of the self and a self-hypnosis oriented toward an endless obsessive pursuit of success (Han, 2015). The neoliberal axiom of cognitive self-sufficiency imprints upon the individual's imagination the belief that he is a free self, sufficient unto himself, a thinker acting in absolute freedom—though unaware of its causes—and entirely sovereign in his actions.

Extending into the Metaphysical Realm

Because its general principles are widely accepted (individualization, the myth of the *self-made man*, and the invisible hand of the market as a natural regulator) neoliberalism « has become incorporated into the common-sense » (Harvey, 2005). Speaking in a Gramscian idiom, its hegemonic posture makes it almost imperceptible, almost absent from mainstream media discourse (McGuigan, 2014) as it becomes fully integrated into our very mode of perceiving reality. Self-management, the enterprise as a model of subjectivation, and generalized competition move beyond simple economic precepts to become social norms of individual life: neo-liberalism is the rationality of contemporary capitalism (Dardot & Laval, 2009).

Under the neoliberal matrix, which provides its global normative grammar and institutes an ontology of the « entrepreneur of the self », the individual is no longer merely inserted into the market to sell his labor power; he himself becomes a commodity. He is integrated into a regime of permanent self-government in which every facet of the individual is regarded as valorisable by others. Each person is simultaneously competitor and ally in the effort to maintain or increase his value: actors and professional athletes are archetypes, embodying valorization through performance, constant self-branding, and even charitable acts or consensual causes aimed at accumulating symbolic capital, that is no less profitable. The neoliberal self finds demotic expressions through cultural mediations, establishing the foundations of an education in accumulation (such as the democratization of brokerage, the massive promotion of gambling) which signal a shift from the asceticism of original capitalism described by Weber to a contemporary

« cool capitalism » embraced by the masses (McGuigan, 2014). The discursive dispositif consolidates, normalizes, and spreads neoliberal rationality within public action, manifesting its hegemony (Fairclough, 2001) through a language even echoed by politicians, revealing a neoliberal metaphysics that, through hierarchy, prescribes conducts, turns abstractions into obvious norms, and obstructs pedagogical deliberation (Castner & Kraus, 2023).

Neoliberalism becomes an immanent transcendence, where the market is truth and competition is elevated to an absolute organizing principle that dissolves any moral or political limit. In a rearrangement of norms, institutions, economic practices, social relations, mental schemes, behaviors, and modes of subjectivation, an affective incorporation into daily life—extending even to temporality itself—neoliberalism does not merely regulate markets: it reaches the metaphysical stage, by which it enables to form and give shape to the world.

Conclusion

In its latest neoliberal sequence, capitalism infiltrates all spheres of society. Like the myth of King Midas and his insatiable desire for accumulation, it holds the Dionysian power to transform absolutely everything it touches into a commodity—from the ocean depths to orbital stations—sparing no living being encountered along its course.

The point is not to so much to convince Midas to purify himself in the river Pactolus, but rather to break through the thick layers of the matrix by undertaking the decontamination of the collective psyche, saturated with endlessly diffused myths of a free, convinced to be a self-sufficient subject, which normalizes inequalities—especially those that appear distant. The urgency lies in scripting, such as a new Bandung for instance, an unifying *spirit* against the last colonized territories and insidious neocolonialism, so as to create momentum that could become a landmark in the common history of peoples, reunited beyond the organized fragmentation.

The challenge, certainly vertiginous, consists in recomposing a narrative around the desirability of the common, in the hope of impacting the incorrigible species we are, by disturbing the comfort of unthinking ease, and cultivating the desire for complexity. This narrative would then serve to unveil the mediations that reify existence, and would constantly recall the primacy of social ends over means by reversing the intoxication produced

by accumulation—inevitably through the legal deconstruction of institutions sustaining this temptation. An *ontology of collective power*, in which power is neither property nor the sum of intentions but an instituting relation that would uphold the durability and transmissibility of the common. Within the matrix, surfaces shift and split - a policy uplift, an interstice fit

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**TO BUILD THE WORLD ANEW
IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

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From Bandung to Beijing: Anti-“Neo-Colonialism” Visions and China’s Development Model

Shi Qing

Between 1955 and 1961, Sukarno’s speeches reveal an evolving understanding of “*economic*” issues, framing them within debates on decolonization, “*Neo-colonialism*”, and global justice. From Bandung to Belgrade, he shifted economic questions from mere remnants of colonial inequality to central mechanisms of *Neo-colonial* domination. His analysis aligns with contemporaries like Kwame Nkrumah, who emphasized the persistence of economic dependency after political independence. Echoes of these ideas appear in alternative development models advanced by China. China’s principles of common prosperity translates its domestic experiences such as poverty alleviation and capacity-building into international cooperation, which rooted in the *Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Assistance*. By connecting anti-colonial struggles with practices of international collaboration, China’s approaches illustrate how visions of economic autonomy, solidarity, and shared benefits continue to inform debates on global governance and the future of the Global South. This illustrates that modernization is not a monolithic path dependent solely on the historical models of colonialism and industrial capitalism.

Sukarno’s arguments on “*Economic*” from 1955 to 1961

From 1955 to 1961, Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia, delivered three landmark speeches that chart the evolution of his thinking on decolonization and global justice. The first was his Opening Address at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung on April 18, 1955, where he framed

economic issues in terms of the lingering inequalities of colonialism. The second was his speech before the United Nations General Assembly on September 30, 1960, which again stressed the economic status quo and the underdevelopment faced by newly independent nations. The third, his Address to the Belgrade Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement on September 1, 1961, marked a decisive shift: here Sukarno explicitly connected the economic dimension to the concept of “*Neo-colonialism*”, warning that independence without economic autonomy left nations vulnerable to new forms of domination.¹

1955 Bandung & 1960 UN: “*Economic*” as a status quo

In his 1955 Bandung speech and 1960 UN address, Sukarno invoked the term *economic* at two interconnected levels—institutional level and intellectual level. At the institutional level, he invoked the term *economic* as a central lens through which to critique global power structures, assess the position of postcolonial nations, and articulate their collective aspirations. At international level, he criticized global organizations such as the UN’s Security Council for being shaped by “the *economic*, military and power map of the world in 1945”, failing to represent the rise of socialist states and the independence of Asia and Africa (UN, 1960). At the domestic level, he stressed the limited and dispersed “*economic strength*” of Asian and African nations, which constrained their recourse to power politics, while also highlighting how the exclusion of “a nation full of *economic strength and power*”, namely People’s Republic of China, weakened international organizations (Bandung, 1955; UN, 1960). With regard to the aspirations of newborn and reborn states, he emphasized their shared “*economic problems*” and cooperative potential, underlining that these states harbored no aggressive or unrealistic “*economic goals*”, in contrast to older established powers (Bandung, 1955; UN, 1960).

At the intellectual level, Sukarno used *economic* to highlight competing ideologies, historical legacies, and the persistence of colonialism. He pointed to the coexistence of diverse “*economic doctrines*”—Marhaenism, Socialism, Capitalism, Communism—in the postcolonial world (Bandung:

¹ For the translation of these speeches, see <https://bandungspirit.org/spip.php?rubrique57>.

1955), and celebrated the thinkers and leaders of Asia and Africa who forged “liberating *economic* theories” and united their nations (UN, 1960). Drawing on Marx and Engels, he underscored the enduring appeal of “cooperation and *economic* development” as guiding visions for societies emerging from colonial rule (UN, 1960). More importantly, he warned that colonialism persisted in “modern dress” through “*economic* and intellectual domination”, a subtle yet determined force that continued to threaten newly independent nations (Bandung: 1955).

1961 Belgrade: “*Economic*” with autonomy

However, in his 1961 Belgrade speech at the founding conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, Sukarno placed new emphasis on the term *economic*. He referred much to the *economic* autonomy as central to true independence, framing it as the end of “*economic* servility” and the assertion of control over “our *economic* affairs” against entrenched “*economic* interests” and the old “*economic* map”. For Sukarno, independence was a bridge toward nations standing on their own feet, “politically and *economically*”, as part of a broader emancipation process driven by the rise of socialist states and decolonized nations in Asia and Africa. He reaffirmed the UN’s role as a stabilizing institution tasked with helping overcome poverty and “*economic* and technical backwardness”.

What is also new in Sukarno’s 1961 Belgrade speech is that the term *economic* became explicitly tied to the problem of “*Neo-colonialism*”. For him, “*Neo-colonialism*” was not merely the lingering presence of old empires but their transformation into subtler mechanisms of mainly economic domination:

On the other hand, beware of colonialism in a new cloak, the so-called “*Neo-colonialism*”. This is also an item to be dealt with on our agenda, because this is a real danger. It is common to us all that the old colonial powers, in having to leave their colonial territories, want to preserve as much as possible of their *economic*—and sometimes also their political and military—interests. This is carried out in various ways: creating strife amongst all layers of the local people; provoking the accession of one part of the old colonial territory from the rest under the pretext of “self-determination”; creating chaos through military provocation or—and this also common—by fortifying their economic interests at the last moment, using even the most unscrupulous of means.

The sudden shift in Sukarno's 1961 speech toward linking the term "economic" directly with "Neo-colonialism" reflected the realities of the early 1960s, when many newly independent states found that political sovereignty did not automatically bring genuine freedom. Old colonial powers had begun to adapt, replacing direct rule with indirect economic domination, together with military footholds, and political manipulation. To make this point concrete, Sukarno drew on four contemporary cases: Algeria, West Irian, Angola, and Bizerta (Tunisia). The three African examples showed how colonialism persisted not only through armed repression—such as France's refusal to relinquish Algeria, Portugal's brutal hold on Angola, and France's military base at Bizerta—but also through the entrenchment of economic interests and control that outlasted political decolonization. Meanwhile, West Irian represented Indonesia's own struggle against Dutch attempts to retain their colonial presence in the form of protecting economic stakes—especially the copper deposits there—and "under the pretext of 'self-determination'". Together, these cases demonstrated that the challenge facing Asia and Africa was not only the overthrow of old colonialism but also the dismantling of "Neo-colonialism", which sought to perpetuate economic servility even in the age of independence.

Transnational Echoes of anti-"Neo-colonialism"

In the other side of the world, "Neo-colonialism" and its economic control were also emphasized by another Third World leader—Francis Kwame Nkrumah. In his influential book *Neo-colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), Nkrumah defined that:

The essence of *neo-colonialism* is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. (ix)

Just as Sukarno, Nkrumah further emphasized that "neo-colonialist control is exercised through economic or Monetary means." He explained that in a Neo-colonial state may be forced to import only the imperial power's goods, its policies steered by foreign funding and officials embedded in government, and its financial system constrained through imperial control of banking and foreign exchange. Foreign investment under Neo-colonialism exploits rather than develops, widening the global gap between rich and

poor. By fragmenting colonies into weak states tied to former rulers, Neo-colonialism prevents genuine development and unity, making them vulnerable to “limited wars” that threaten global peace. Also, it thrives on aid systems that reinforce dependency, often reduced to military assistance, while blocking education, industry, and social reform. This form of imperialism, Nkrumah stressed, is “power without responsibility” for the oppressor and “exploitation without redress” for the oppressed. Ultimately, its contradictions—between promises of development and the reality of underdevelopment—render it unstable, posing dangers not only to the Third World but also to the developed powers that rely on it. (x-xx)

One of the paramount issues Kwame Nkrumah analyzed was the continued control of primary resources by former colonial powers and Western corporations. With regard to Indonesia, he noted how persistent lobbying had expanded Standard Oil’s operations in Japan, Indonesia, New Guinea, and India, (92–93) while the United States Rubber Company controlled 90,000 acres of plantations in Malaya and Indonesia alongside concessions across Latin America (229). He stressed that such economic domination was even more severe in Africa, devoting three chapters (ch. 7, 8, 9) to expose the Anglo American Corporation and the Oppenheimer empire’s grip over Southern Africa’s minerals. What happened in Zambia later was a proof of Nkrumah’s prediction. As President Kenneth Kaunda’s policy of “Zambianization” showed, political independence did not necessarily break “*Neo-colonialism*”: foreign companies retained control through majority stakes, management contracts, restricted personnel training, and the withholding of technological transfer—ensuring that the economic engines of these new states remained in external hands.

But is there another approach, the prosperity of the Third World? In January 1964, President Nkrumah received China’s first premier Zhou Enlai, where Zhou proposed the famous *Duiwai Jingji Yuanzhu Baxiang Yuanze* (Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Assistance). The first principle stated that the Chinese government always provided aid to foreign states based on equality and mutual benefit, never regarding such aid as a unilateral gift, but as mutual. The second principle emphasized that when the Chinese government provided aid to foreign states, it strictly respected the sovereignty of the recipient states, and never attached conditions or asked for privileges. Guided by these principles, China signed economic and technological cooperation agreements with 13 African countries, with the number of African nations maintaining diplomatic ties with China growing

from 12 in 1963 to 38 by 1975. The most emblematic project was the Tanzania–Zambia Railway (TAZARA), a massive undertaking across mountains, valleys, rivers, and forests, completed in 1976 with extensive Chinese financing, equipment, and technical expertise, and without interest-bearing loans or political strings. Unlike *Neo-colonial* economic practices, which perpetuated dependency, China’s aid was framed as partnership: projects were handed over to local governments, and continued support was provided through technical cooperation and training. This model underscored a radically different vision of development assistance, contrasting sharply with the exploitative control of resources and conditional aid tied to colonial powers. In 2024, TAZARA entered a new phase of revitalization. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed among three countries to rehabilitate the railway, improving its capacity and reliability.

China’s Approach to Common Prosperity

Will China become the next “New-Colonialism”? Will its global development policy, such as the “Belt and Road”, become an instrument of dominance, or will it emerge as a logical extension of its own modernization—a model true to its anti-imperialist roots and genuinely committed to partnership, capacity-building, and mutual benefit? This has been a recurring question asked in both the Global North and South over the past decades. But “New Colonialism” is not the same as “Neo-colonialism”. As Sukarno put it in 1961: *“Beware of new colonialism,’ the old colonial powers used to say. ‘If we, the old colonialism, move out, new colonialism from other countries are waiting behind the door to suffocate you in their embrace.’ What a lie! Let us not permit others to use the pretext of seemingly impending imperialism as a defence for existing colonialism and imperialism.”* The charge of “New Colonialism” often comes from former colonial empires themselves. This perspective assumes that any development model necessarily replicates colonialism and the industrial capitalism it produced. Yet such an assumption neglects the fact that, although colonial empires dominated the world by the tyranny lasting for half a millennium, human civilization stretches back far longer. Our world view and knowledge system of how to navigate industrialization, digitalization, and at present the age of AI should not be confined solely to the historical frameworks of colonialism and industrial capitalism.

China’s industrialization is far removed from colonial ideologies. Take poverty alleviation as an example: its approach to common prosperity relies

not on resource extraction abroad or “systematic colonization”, but on mobilizing domestic resources, technology, and governance to uplift its own underdeveloped regions. National programs such as the Resident Village Party Secretary system (Zhu Cun Shuji Zhidu) and the Selected Graduates Program (Xuan Diao Sheng Zhidu) channel skilled professionals, including young PhD graduates, into grassroots service, ensuring that expertise and resources reach the most remote communities. As the case of Lichang Village in Zuoquan County shows, digital innovation has been harnessed to transform livelihoods through “digital plus” democracy, environmental protection, elderly care, safety, and collective industrial projects such as black goat farming and smart plumcot plantations. These initiatives empower local communities, raise incomes, and strengthen collective welfare, while respecting human dignity and participation (Shi & Ye, 2024). Far from reproducing the patterns of “*Neo-colonial*” economic servility, China frames development as a shared project—grounded in equality, mutual benefit, and sovereignty—demonstrating a model of modernization that seeks to expand opportunity without imposing dependency.

China’s internal system of poverty alleviation provides the foundation for its external cooperation model. It extends these same principles based on the *Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Assistance*, emphasizing “consultation, co-construction, and shared benefits.” Unlike *Neo-colonial* practices denounced by Nkrumah, Chinese projects are structured to avoid dependency: loans, when present, are typically low-interest and long-term, such as the Export-Import Bank of China’s 30-year concessional loan for the China-Laos Railway—very different from the high-interest commercial lending often associated with Western firms. Similarly, accusations of “infrastructure-for-resources” or “debt trap” fail to hold. For instance, in the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project, loans are directed to a joint venture company rather than to Kyrgyzstan directly, and no resource-for-infrastructure agreement has been confirmed by officials from each side.

Moreover, China promotes collective development through industrial parks, EPC (Engineering-Procurement-Construction) contracts, and follow-up arrangements that explicitly include technology transfer and human resource training, all of which operate through market mechanisms without imposing Chinese standards. It mirrors China’s own domestic path, where development projects are not only about infrastructure but also about creating institutions, skills, and industries that sustain prosperity. In this sense, China’s overseas development represents a continuity of its internal

modernization model—aimed at partnership, not servility—distinguishing it sharply from the exploitative logic of both old colonialism and “*Neo-colonialism*”.

This approach is grounded in China’s constitutional commitment in 1954 to opposition to imperialism and colonialism, which guides both domestic policy and foreign engagement. On April 6, 1974 former president Deng Xiaoping also criticized the “*Neo-colonialism*” in his speech at the United Nations. He argued that after gaining political independence, many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America remained subject to economic domination through “*Neo-colonialism*” and imperialist control, particularly by superpowers using transnational corporations and unequal trade. He emphasized that political independence and economic independence are inseparable: without political independence, economic independence is impossible; and without economic independence, a nation’s independence is incomplete and insecure. He also celebrated that the peoples of the Third World continued to win victories in struggles against colonialism, imperialism, hegemonism, Zionism, and racism—from Indochina to the Arab world, Africa, and Latin America—and that through the African Heads of State Summit, the Non-Aligned Summit, the Arab Summit, and the Islamic Summit they expressed a strong determination to unite and resist common enemies (UN, 1974). But will China seek superpower status, or will it continue as a steadfast partner of the Third World? Deng delivered a clear and solemn promise:

China is not a superpower, nor will it ever seek to become one. If one day China were to change, to become a superpower, and if it were to dominate the world, bully, invade, and exploit others, the peoples of the world should recognize it as social imperialism, expose it, oppose it, and join with the Chinese people to overthrow it (UN, 1974).

Bandung Community's Tasks for Building the World Anew

Manoranjan Mohanty

The Bandung Spirit Initiative

Both experiences in one's life and in the study of history, have shown that many small initiatives eventually gather momentum in one form or another if they capture the spirit of history. Then they are able to reorient the civilizational process to enlarge the arena of freedom for one and all. I consider the Bandung Spirit initiative as one such historic initiative that has given many of us around the world a fresh bounty of hope for making it a new civilizational movement to reaffirm the liberation agenda of the freedom struggles all over Asia, Africa and Latin America. As a part of this global initiative we gain insights and strength from each other and acquire new confidence to address new challenges in our own regions and in the world arena, to work steadily for building a world of peace, equality, freedom, mutuality and sustainability for all beings on the planet, for all regions and groups in the world.

In this article, after a brief look at our challenging times, we focus on what the Bandung community can do to strengthen the UN and the organisations and movements of what are now called the Global South or the developing countries. WE identify certain concrete areas where we can undertake some tasks to advance the agenda of liberation, decolonization and global restructuring, keeping in mind President Sukarno's 1960 call to Build the World Anew.

The principal effort is an urging to the fellow members of the Bandung Community to unite and intervene in the realm of ideas so that our values keep shining in new light and the succeeding generations remain hopeful about our planetary future.

The Challenging times

Bandung Spirit Community is celebrating the 70th anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference at a time when the world is experiencing Israel's aggression and genocide in Gaza, the Russia-Ukraine War is causing massive devastations and the Trump Tariffs have destabilized the world economy.

As of 30 September 2025, over 66,000 people had been killed—most of them women and children and nearly two million people displaced in Gaza since 7 October 2023 following Hamas's attack. The cruelty and impunity with which Israel has continued its aggression, causing forced starvation of people, attacking fertility clinics to destroy embryos, bombing hospitals and schools and infrastructure, has stunned the world. Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank continued to expand despite UN Resolutions disallowing them. Even the moderate peace proposals suggesting a two-state solution—Palestine and Israel as sovereign states living in peace side by side—have been rejected by the current Israeli government, whose actions on an everyday basis make that possibility more and more difficult to realize. Israel's western allies such as UK, France, Canada, Australia and Spain have recognized the independent State of Palestine, joining over one hundred other states. But the adamant policy of Israel with the strong backing of US President Trump has made any chance of peace more distant.

In 1955, liberation of Palestine was the topmost item on the agenda of the Afro-Asian conference, along with the Apartheid. The Apartheid ended thanks to the pressure of worldwide public opinion that finally changed the government policies of the UK and the USA. Today public protests and peace initiatives demanding end to genocide and realization of statehood for Palestine have been withstood by the arrogance of power of military, capital and technology of the US and Israel which defy substantial sections of their own publics seeking justice for Palestine Today it is clear that the future of Palestine liberation struggle is so much intertwined with the global trends that future of Palestine will shape the future of the world.

These wars and other developments have occurred while a wave of authoritarianism, majoritarianism and racism threatens peace and harmony in most societies in the world, along with powerful countercurrents of revived patriarchy. President Trump's attacks on equity programmes, transgender rights, immigrants and many other programmes including the resurgence of white supremacist forces in the US. Similar trends are very much on the rise in many countries of Europe. That the history of most regions of the world is a history of migrations and settlements by a variety of historical processes must be recognized. Therefore, the freedom struggles in the colonies while seeking the end of alien rule and achievement of self-rule by the indigenous people, uniformly provided for multi-cultural frameworks through federal and other decentralized mechanisms in the Constitutions as independent sovereign republics. The South African proclamation of Ubuntu—I am because you are or mutual co-existence—after the end of Apartheid was a clear recognition of the mode of organization of future societies. That has been a core value of the Bandung Spirit. Today in the US and Europe and many other countries of ASAFLA majoritarian assertions in the name of religion or ethnicity has been a most disturbing trend.

Effects of climate crisis are encountered on a daily basis everywhere on the planet with increasing occurrence of floods, cloudbursts, heavy rains, cyclones, forest fires and many other disasters. During the past five years, each following year has been the hottest year in history. That the 2030 and 2050 targets set by the COP 21 in Paris were not likely to be fulfilled the way the world was using its energy resources and carrying on the devastation of nature is a wake up call. In fact, Covid-19 had shaken up the entire world, especially the developed western countries- particularly the US having suffered the severest casualties—which should have warranted reconsideration of the prevailing development path. Instead, the world elites quickly resumed their neoliberal economic strategy accompanied by fast-changing techno-military moves of balance of power.

Thus, there are three major challenges before the world in the contemporary era:

- a. new imperialism and hegemonism,
- b. rise of racism and majoritarianism in various forms, and
- c. further push for destructive, techno-capitalist development causing climate crisis, inequalities and violence on the planet.

To confront these challenges and prepare a plan of action for the next five years when we mark the momentous 75th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference in 2030, President Sukarno's 1960 call at the UN General Assembly for *Building the World Anew* inspires us to set out clear alternatives.

Bandung agenda for the UN

The year 2025 also marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

President Sukarno had said in his 1960 speech:

“We fight for the UN to make it a success and effective.”

But even these arenas are now crippled by the forces of global domination.

Sukarno celebrated the coming of the UN system, heralding a new world order governed “not by power but by agreed principles”. But the situation has developed in a different direction. Many of the UN General Assembly's momentous resolutions are routinely defied by big powers. For example, on 15 September 2025 the UNGA adopted what promised to be an extremely relevant resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and concrete steps to achieve a two sovereign independent states of Palestine and Israel. It was passed by an overwhelming majority of 142 (including India which had abstained on two earlier occasions) of the 193 member-states of the UN with 10 against including Israel and the US and 12 abstentions. Israel called it ‘one-sided’ and a ‘hollow gesture’.

Today the three core principles of the UN—*independence, equality and peace*—are threatened. Independence of nations is frequently violated militarily, politically or economically. Equality of nations has been sacrificed by various kinds of dependencies, alliance systems and hegemonic relations. And equality of cultures is countered by rise of racism and majoritarianism. All this has made peace a big casualty. Not only there are frequent occurrence of wars and violent conflicts but also by the aggressive pursuit of techno-capitalism by the leading economies in the neoliberal era which have created enormous damage to nature, and caused tensions.

Perhaps because the forces of liberation have grown in strength all over the world, there is a backlash. Authoritarianism, majoritarianism, racism and neocolonialism are trying to reassert their prominence. Indeed, there are

ruins all around and a struggle is on to build a new world as Sukarno put it, for:

A world free from want.

A world free from fear.

A world free from national oppression.

Today, Sukarno would have surely added:

A world free from plunder of nature.

What a wonderful vision of the global future the Bandung Spirit Community inherits!

Today, many developments show that Sukarno's hopes had been belied to a very large extent. The US administration of President Trump denied visa to the Palestine delegation to attend the 80th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly in September 2025 prompting a debate about relocating the UN Headquarters.

In his address on the opening day, President Trump asked: "What is the purpose of the United Nations? I have always said the (UN) has such tremendous potential, but it's not even coming close to living up to that potential It's empty words, empty words don't solve war."

President Trump has done a great deal to weaken the UN. After he came to power again in January 2025, he made the US withdraw again from the WHO, UNESCO and the Human Rights Council, alleging that these agencies were dominated by countries unfriendly to the US. He stopped funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. It is estimated that the Trump Administration has cut about 80 % of the US contribution to the UN operations, including its peace-keeping operations.

On the other hand, the organizations of the countries of the South pin a lot of hopes on the role of the United Nations. For example, the Tianjin Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) at the conclusion of its 25th summit meeting on 1 September 2025, stated: The Member States reaffirmed their commitment to equal and full observance of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. The BRICS countries too treat the UN with great hope. The Rio Summit in July 2025 was full of references to the UN. Both SCO and BRICS planned a series of events marking the 80th anniversary of the UN.

Peace and independence were conceived as results of many social, educational, economic, environmental initiatives in world scale. UN agencies such WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO have made enormous difference to the life of millions all over the world. UNEP on environment, UNFP on population, FAO on agriculture, ILO on labour, UNDP initiating the Human Development discourse, UN Women and the Human Rights Council, Conventions on Disability, Indigenous people, not to speak of the International Court of Justice and the UN Peace-Keeping operations are just some of the instances. Despite the many structural weaknesses in the UN system which require urgent reforms, its achievements must be consolidated and potential realized. Indeed, the theme, Peace, Development and Human rights was an appropriate theme of the 80th anniversary.

The New South Initiatives: BRICS, G-77, NAM, SCO, AU

As against the geographical term Global South coined in the West, the term New South affirms the decolonization perspective of the liberation struggles. The forces of the New South exist not only in the Global South, but also in the countries of the Global North where struggles against various forms of domination are on.

BRICS: BRICS was set up to actually change this unequal, unjust, undemocratic international order. Every summit of BRICS still mentions that goal. Even some initiatives of BRICS such as the New Development Bank, Trade in Local Currency and some others are meant to promote that process of change. But unfortunately, they have become instruments of Global Rebalancing i.e., replacing or expanding the seats at the high table of “global governance” with the new rising powers like China, India, Brazil and South Africa. This term was coined in the World Bank corridors to accommodate rising economies such as China and India around the high table of the G-7 which briefly had become G-8 with Russia being added. The Invitation to the rising powers to also attend G-7 meetings as Guests has institutionalized this phenomenon. The Johannesburg Summit in 2023 was a milestone, admitting six new members and formed what is called BRICS Plus. Kazan Summit in Russia in 2024 demonstrated its new strength by way of expanded programmes and new partner countries. The Rio Summit in July 2025 was emphatic in stressing the need for reforms in the trade and finance system in the face of the Trump challenges. President Trump has threatened that if BRICS or anyone even remotely talks of an

alternative global currency to the US Dollar, he will impose such tariffs and cause so much hardship to them that they would regret. BRICS, though cautious, is not likely to change its course because of this. India, which has emphasized its role as a voice of the Global South in recent years will host the 2026 Summit. Let us hope it will use this opportunity to contribute to the New South campaign for democratic transformation of the world.

G-77: G-77 formed in 1964 after the conclusion of the first UNCTAD is a living UN initiative of 134 developing countries today. Governed by the Charter of Algiers in 1967. It is indeed an initiative of the New South for Global Restructuring. With chapters in Geneva (UNCTAD Headquarters), Nairobi (UNEP), Paris (UNESCO), Rome (FAO), Vienna (UNIDO) and Washington DC where a Group of 24 countries watches the World Bank and IMF operations. The regional coverage is ensured by having rotating Chairs from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean. It is the G-77 process which popularized the concept of the South with the holding of meetings on South-South Cooperation, North-South Dialogue and South Summits and having a research and advocacy institute called the South Centre in Geneva.

Non-Aligned Movement: NAM was originally clearly a Global Restructuring initiative. Now its presence is hardly noticed even in countries such as India and Indonesia which once played a prominent role in the Non-Aligned Movement. The 19th NAM Summit in Kampala in 2024 attended by 90 of the 120 member countries including 30 Heads of State, was seen as a sign of revival of the NAM. The 20th is scheduled to take place in 2027 in Uzbekistan. Bandung forces must take concrete measures to revive NAM as leading initiative.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: SCO is another promising initiative which can serve as a catalyst for advancing the liberation agenda of the New South. Its charter has indeed all the laudable goals. But what has happened over the years is that bilateral differences between China and India, between Pakistan and India and some other cases have already limited its effectiveness. At the Tianjin Summit of 31 Aug – 01 September 25 for example, this limitation was vividly demonstrated. With Russia as a member and China and India having taken a relatively neutral position and announcing their respective peace proposals besides their close relations with Russia, the SCO position on the Ukraine War was predictable. In fact, its position highlighted the dimension of the NATO expansion as the main

cause of the war in the first place. But on Palestine, it could have taken a more active stand. Observers in the world media noted that the economic and defence ties that have grown enormously between Israel and the SCO countries including China, India and Russia may partly explain this. The people's movements in all the SCO countries should create public opinion so that their governments take a truly New South position on the liberation of Palestine.

The African Union, ALBA and others: AU with 55 member countries is playing a major peace-making and democratic role in Africa. So does the **ALBA** (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) with ten member states and three observer states. Many other organisations or forums such as IBSA (India-Brazil, South Africa) Forum, CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), SICA (Central American Integration System), FIPIC (Forum for Pacific Island Countries), L-69 (Group of Developing Countries from Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Asia and Pacific States), C-10 (Group of ten African countries who are members of African Union). SSTC (South-South Triangular Cooperation) a UN initiative observed on 12 September every year marking the anniversary of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) is another. In the global media and even in the Bandung Forum knowledge about their contribution and their experience is very limited. We have to closely follow their work and may have joint programmes and report in our newsletters and other means.

Tasks for the Bandung Community:

Global Restructuring in the Post-Covid-19, Post-Trump World

Bandung Community is a community of Democratic Globalists working in different sectors all over the world—both in the South and in the North hemispheres, committed to advancing the liberation agenda for global transformation. They can take concrete actions using their three major assets, namely,

- a. scholarship, investigation skills and communication expertise using a range of technologies, old and new;
- b. global spread in all regions of the world; and
- c. solidarity of independent intellectuals, journalists, creative artists, writers and social workers among others who can take bold stands and speak truth to power.

Their concrete tasks are mainly of three kinds:

1. monitoring performance,
2. proposing policy initiatives,
3. mobilizing global publics.

Groups may be formed around specific UN agencies and programmes, as well as the South Initiatives on some burning problem arising on the world horizon. At the same time, it is also important to take up issues that may arise in the distant future. Bandung's intellectual, scientific and creative imagination must not lose this while being preoccupied with the present challenges. Past, present and future are a process of integral dynamics.

We can think of three kinds of Groups:

Working Groups, Task Forces and Action Groups.

We need Working Groups to mainly monitor prevailing situation and experience on the ground.

Task Forces may be formed to use the available knowledge from multiple sources and propose policy initiatives. Action Groups may organize people on the ground, strengthen opinion worldwide through modern channels including signature campaigns, take demonstrative measures as to what consumer behavior or choices they support and what they reject, and why, put pressure on various policymaking bodies in national and international levels.

Covid-19 had exposed the fundamental fault lines of the industrialization and techno-capitalist development process that Western colonialism and contemporary neoliberalism had pursued worldwide. Mr. Trump and many others have waged a last ditch attempt to save capitalism, majoritarianism, racism, patriarchy and authoritarianism, denying a century's liberation legacy against these evils. Let us treat it as a historic moment of a great conjuncture—a moment of transition—a long one—from a Hegemonic epoch to a Democratic Epoch in world history. Many countries, many organizations and many individuals will be targeted by the ruling forces. But history has much evidence to inspire us as the carriers of the flame of liberation. Let us unite to BUILD THE WORLD ANEW.

From the Dream of Civilization to the Birth of a Conscious Nation: As Key Formulations of Indonesia’s Founding Political- Philosophical Vision, *Negara Paripurna*

Connie Rahakundini Bakrie

Introduction

Two recent intellectual events—the publication and launch of Connie Rahakundini Bakrie’s *Conscious Nation* (June 2025) and the continuing scholarly conversation about Sukarno’s founding formulations of Pancasila and the ideal of *Negara Paripurna*—invite a comparative examination. Connie, a scholar known for combining defense, geopolitics, and philosophical reflection, frames the contemporary Indonesian predicament as not merely a matter of policy or material capacity but of the inner orientation—collective conscience and spiritual-political self-understanding—of the nation. Sukarno’s June 1, 1945 speech, by contrast, is historically situated as the articulation of foundational state principles (later canonized as Pancasila), with its emphasis on unity, humanitarianism, deliberative democracy, social welfare, and belief in God. Later interpretive work (most notably Yudi Latif’s *Negara Paripurna*) reads Sukarno’s ideas as a long-term project for crafting a “complete” nation-state that fuses historical memory, rational policy, and moral purpose. Comparing Connie’s normative program with Sukarno/Latif reveals both continuities and tensions—and suggests practical reasons for reinvesting in a politics of consciousness.

Summarizing *Conscious Nation* (Connie Rahakundini Bakrie)

Conscious Nation emerged from Connie's personal and intellectual trajectory: prolonged exposure to geopolitics and defense studies, periods abroad (notably in Russia), and a philosophical turn resulting from field observations about governance, resource access, and civic life. The book was launched publicly in June 2025 at Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta, where Connie combined performative readings, monologue, and dialogic engagement with other public intellectuals; the launch made clear that the book is both a scholarly reflection and a popular moral appeal. Connie describes the work as a “long prayer” for Indonesia: not an academic treatise in conventional form but a hybrid text built from lived experience, strategic analysis, and spiritual-philosophical reflection. The book is bilingual and, according to coverage of the launch, is being distributed through the author's channels rather than mainstream retail outlets.

Connie's core claim is that nation-building cannot be sustained by material infrastructure, military hardware, or technological progress alone. A necessary—and neglected—dimension is collective inner orientation: the moral wisdom, spiritual depth, civic virtues, and “consciousness” of citizens and leadership. She defines a *negara berkesadaran* (a conscious nation) as a polity where public policy, resource governance, security strategy, and cultural production align with an ethic of stewardship, shared dignity, and long-horizon thinking. In Connie's framing, “consciousness” is plural: ethical (justice), epistemic (truth-seeking and civic education), ecological (stewardship of natural commons), and geopolitical (sovereignty-informed prudence). The argument is normative (what states should be) but supported by strategic vignettes and comparative reflections drawn from Connie's defense and diplomatic experience.

Key thematic anchors

1. **Spiritual-ethical stewardship:** Connie insists that resource wealth (water, minerals, land) must be governed not only for GDP growth but for human flourishing across generations. She invokes examples (including impressions from visits to Vyborg and Russian practices) to argue for commons-based, accessible resource governance as a marker of mature polities.
2. **Civic education and inner formation:** A *conscious nation* invests in cultivating civic character: critical thinking, moral imagination,

empathy, and responsibility. This is more than formal schooling; it is an ecosystem of cultural practices, rituals, narratives, and institutions that reproduce a civic ethos.

3. **Security as human-centered:** Connie's background in defense inflects her view: security must be reinterpreted beyond kinetic threats to include social cohesion, economic justice, and narrative sovereignty (who tells the national story).
4. **Leadership and vulnerability:** She calls for leaders who practice humility, moral courage, and an ability to listen. Leadership is not only strategizing but the cultivation of relational trust with citizens.

Connie's prose mixes philosophical reflection, public monologue, and strategic commentary; the text is deliberately rhetorical in places (the launch featured monologues and ritual elements). The intended audience stretches from policymakers and military/intelligence analysts to cultural producers and spiritually-minded citizens—an ambitious public-intellectual project.

Sukarno's June 1, 1945 Formulation and the *Negara Paripurna*

Sukarno's address on June 1, 1945 is widely recognized as the event in which he articulated what became the conceptual core of Pancasila—five principles intended to serve as the philosophical foundation of an independent Indonesian state: nationalism (unity), internationalism/humanitarianism, consensus-based democracy (*musyawarah/mufakat*), social welfare (social justice), and belief in one God (translated as *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*). Sukarno's speech fused political aspiration with moral-cultural claims: the state's *raison d'être* was not merely administrative order but the cultivation of a national life integrated with moral ends. Scholarship has since read this speech as both pragmatic—attempting to bridge plural social forces in late colonial Indonesia—and prophetic, positing a set of guiding principles for nation-making.

The phrase *Negara Paripurna* (often invoked in contemporary analysis and the title of Yudi Latif's influential study) gestures to a normative horizon: a fully actualized Indonesian state that reconciles historical particularity, rational institutional design, and the moral aspirations of Pancasila. Yudi Latif's book *Negara Paripurna: Historisitas, Rasionalitas, dan Aktualitas Pancasila* reads Pancasila historically and argues for its rational relevance today as a framework for a cohesive polity—one that is historically self-

aware, institutionally robust, and ethically animated. In Latif's treatment (and related scholarship), Sukarno's early formulations are resources for thinking about social solidarity, moral governance, and developmental justice—the long-run constituents of a “complete” nation.

Points of Convergence: Where Connie and Sukarno Meet

Both Connie and Sukarno locate the legitimacy of the state in moral-cultural foundations rather than mere coercive capacity. Sukarno's Pancasila explicitly layers moral principles into state design (e.g., belief in God, social justice); Connie likewise insists that a mature state must embed ethical stewardship into governance. The convergence is striking: nationhood is portrayed first as an ethical project.

Sukarno's emphasis on social justice and Connie's advocacy for security that protects human dignity are complementary. Where Sukarno framed social welfare as a fundamental principle, Connie expands the security vocabulary to include ecological access and equitable resource distribution. Both treat material prosperity as necessary but insufficient without moral integration.

Sukarno's rhetorical project sought to weld a plural society into a united political community through shared principles and narrative. Connie's call for civic education and inner formation can be read as a contemporary program for implementing that very aspiration: cultivating citizens who recognize and enact the moral commitments enshrined in Pancasila. In this sense, Connie provides a practice-oriented supplement to Sukarno's foundational rhetoric.

Points of Divergence

Sukarno's framing uses explicitly political-philosophical language rooted in a modern-decolonial project (Pancasila), with an identifiable metaphysical claim in the God-principle and an institutional ambition for deliberative politics. Connie's emphasis, while compatible with those elements, shifts toward an experiential, phenomenological account of collective life (wisdom, spiritual practice, rituals, stewardship). Sukarno's rhetoric is programmatic for constitutional politics; Connie's is programmatic for cultural and moral renovation. The implication is practical: Sukarno provided a constitutional grammar; Connie offers an implementation ethic that operates through culture.

Yudi Latif's *Negara Paripurna* tradition emphasizes the historical-rational work of institutions—law, civic bodies, state apparatus—in realizing Pancasila. Connie's stress on inner formation suggests that institutional design without cultivation of civic virtue will underperform. In short: Latif/Sukarno highlight structural design; Connie highlights anthropological transformation. These are complementary but raise practical tensions about sequencing and policy priorities.

Sukarno's speech occurred in the immediate anti-colonial context and thus carries an assertive, mobilizational tone toward sovereignty and industrial uplift. Connie, while geopolitically aware (her defense background is evident), often writes in a contemplative, pastoral register—invoking spiritual rituals and cultural practice as avenues for change. Thus, the rhetorical languages differ: revolutionary proclamation versus moral-cultural pedagogy.

Analytical Synthesis: Why “Consciousness” Matters Politically

Modern democratic governance depends on more than elections and constitutions; it depends on trust, shared norms, and civic reciprocity. When Connie calls for awakening public consciousness, she is calling for a replenishment of social capital—the relational glue that makes institutions work. Sukarno's Pancasila presupposes such glue; the *negara paripurna* project seeks to institutionalize it. The analytic point: legitimacy is both normative and cognitive—citizens must both believe in and understand the moral grammar of the polity.

Connie's case studies and reflections emphasize that material shocks (economic downturns, resource tensions, geopolitical pressure) are mediated by the civic qualities of the populace. Societies with higher civic consciousness—public-mindedness, stewardship, shared narratives—tend to coordinate better in crisis. Sukarno's social justice principle aimed at reducing social fracture; Connie's consciousness program operationalizes the social cohesion that enables resilience.

Sukarno's developmental rhetoric leaned toward nation-state building and economic modernization. Connie's project suggests a reflexive modernity: modernization that includes self-reflection about ends, not only means. This is a significant normative claim for policy: development metrics should include measures of civic health, not only GDP or infrastructure. The result

is a different set of policy priorities: ethics-informed curriculum, communal stewardship of commons, and narrative sovereignty initiatives.

Policy Implications: From Theory to Practice

Operationalizing consciousness requires systematic pedagogical reforms. This includes civic-critical curricula in schools, community-based moral education programs, and public media campaigns that cultivate empathy, civic responsibility, and historical literacy. Such programs should be evaluated for both attitudinal and behavioral change.

Connie's emphasis on accessible commons (e.g., water access seen in her Vyborg example) suggests legal and administrative reforms: participatory resource governance, community co-ownership models, and stronger anti-capture mechanisms to prevent elite monopolization of natural wealth. Linking resource access to civic ritual and narratives (e.g., public ceremonies of stewardship) could reinforce social norms.

National security policy should expand beyond kinetic frameworks to include societal cohesion metrics, narrative resilience (countering disinformation), and equitable welfare provision. Connie's defense background makes this proposal practical: a security apparatus that sees its role as protecting civic life as much as territorial borders.

Institutions should be redesigned to create spaces where civic consciousness is both respected and exercised: deliberative assemblies, citizens' juries on local resource use, and legally protected participatory budgeting. This institutional turn echoes Latif's *negara paripurna* insistence on rational institutionalization but reorients design toward moral cultivation as well.

Potential Critiques and Limits

- **Elitism and accessibility**

A common critique of "consciousness" programs is that they can become elitist moralizing projects divorced from material redistribution. Connie anticipates this by rooting consciousness in access to resources and civic inclusion; nevertheless, policy must guard against symbolic reforms that leave underlying inequalities intact.

- **Vagueness and measurement**

“Consciousness” is a broad and somewhat slippery term. Translating it into measurable policy outcomes (e.g., metrics of empathy, stewardship, civic trust) will be methodologically and politically fraught. Research designs (mixed-methods) will be required to operationalize Connie’s program reliably.

- **Political contestation and pluralism**

Sukarno’s Pancasila was intended as a broad compromise among divergent forces; yet its generality provoked contestation about interpretation. Similarly, a state project of cultivating national consciousness must respect pluralism and avoid coercive uniformity. The right balance between shared civic norms and protected pluralism will be politically delicate.

Why Wake Up the Consciousness of the People?

A Summative Argument

- **Normative integrity:** If the state’s founding ideals (Pancasila) claim moral ends for politics, then cultivating citizens capable of recognizing and enacting those ends is not optional—it is necessary for the fidelity of the constitutional order. Connie’s program operationalizes that fidelity by focusing on the inner capacities needed to live out Pancasila in daily life.
- **Practical resilience:** Civic consciousness strengthens social capital, enabling societies to coordinate in crises, resist capture, and sustain long-term development commitments. This capacity buffers the state against both internal fragmentation and external pressure.
- **Ethical stewardship of common goods:** Rapid resource extraction and short-term profit-seeking threaten environmental sustainability and social equity. A conscious citizenry is likelier to demand equitable governance of commons, bridging the gap between legal entitlement and lived access.
- **Guarding democratic substance:** Elections without civic virtue yield formal but hollow democracy. Awakening consciousness supports deliberative norms, reduces susceptibility to demagoguery, and promotes accountability beyond the electoral calendar. Sukarno’s

emphasis on deliberative mechanisms (musyawarah) and Latif's institutionalist readings provide the constitutional grammar; Connie supplies the civic pedagogy to make those mechanisms substantive.

Conclusion

Connie Rahakundini Bakrie's *Conscious Nation* represents a timely intervention in Indonesian political thought: a plea to re-center inner formation, moral stewardship, and civic education as core instruments of national development. Read alongside Sukarno's June 1, 1945 articulation of principles and the *Negara Paripurna* interpretive school, Connie's project both resonates and diverges. It resonates in its shared normative foundation—that statehood requires moral commitment—and diverges in emphasis: where Sukarno and Yudi Latif foreground institutional frameworks and constitutional principles, Connie foregrounds the anthropological and spiritual conditions of possibility for those frameworks to function.

For contemporary Indonesia, the pragmatic lesson is not to choose between institutions and inner formation, but to design policies that integrate both: institutional architectures that invite and sustain civic virtues, and civic-formation programs that are embedded in accessible material justice. Awakening the consciousness of the people, therefore, is not a sentimental luxury but a strategic necessity for building the kind of *negara paripurna* Sukarno envisaged—a state both functional and morally animated.

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Africa in the Post-Bandung Conference Era Towards an Evolving New World Order

Fulufhelo Netswera

Aifani Tahulela

1. Introduction

Africa occupies a paradoxical place in global history. Its resources, labour and ideas have been vital to modernity, yet African perspectives have been marginalised in mainstream international relations scholarship that privileges Euro-American experiences. Early dependency theorists such as Walter Rodney and Samir Amin showed how Africa's incorporation into the capitalist world-economy entailed structural exploitation through slavery, colonial extraction and unequal trade. More recent decolonial scholars argue that Africa continues to exercise agency through diplomatic initiatives like the Bandung Conference, Pan-Africanism and demands for institutional reform despite ongoing subordination (ActionAid, 2023). This chapter uses new and established evidence to examine Africa's historical sacrifices, post-colonial alignments and future contributions to global governance.

2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study employs a historical comparative methodology that integrates secondary literature, international reports and case studies. It is framed by two complementary theoretical lenses. Dependency theorists such as Walter Rodney and Samir Amin contend that colonial rule and its aftermath created a structural relationship in which African labour, minerals and agricultural products fuelled European industrialisation while African

societies remained underdeveloped; this subordination persists through debt dependency, trade imbalances and conditionalities (Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1976). By contrast, decolonial theorists like Achille Mbembe and Amitav Acharya emphasise African agency and epistemic resistance, interpreting Pan-Africanism, the Bandung Conference and contemporary campaigns for United Nations reform as challenges to Eurocentric knowledge and political hierarchies (Mbembe, 2021; Acharya, 2016).

The following sections apply these frameworks to historical legacies, contemporary alignments and future prospects.

3. Historical Legacies and Bandung's Promise

3.1 Africa After WWII and the Bandung Conference

3.1.1 The Post-War Decolonisation Wave

The aftermath of the Second World War marked a turning point for anti-colonial movements across Africa. The devastation experienced by European powers weakened their moral and material justifications for empire, creating political openings for independence struggles. Between 1945 and 1960, dozens of Asian and African territories won independence, though colonial powers continued to exploit them for raw materials and labour. Ghana's independence in 1957, led by Kwame Nkrumah, became emblematic of this wave and inspired further liberation movements across the continent. Leaders such as Patrice Lumumba and Julius Nyerere articulated visions of political and economic sovereignty, challenging Eurocentric models of governance and development.

The Bandung Conference of 1955 further amplified these aspirations by providing the first Afro-Asian diplomatic platform for newly independent states to reject Cold War polarities and assert collective sovereignty. The conference's final communiqué endorsed political self-determination and called for economic and cultural cooperation among formerly colonised states. By situating Africa within a broader Global South coalition, Bandung laid the foundations for later Pan-African forums such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU).

3.1.2 The Bandung Conference: Political and Epistemic Significance

Held in Indonesia in 1955, the Bandung Conference brought together 29 Asian and African states many of them newly independent to articulate

shared principles of sovereignty, racial equality, and peaceful cooperation. It was a watershed moment in the emergence of a non-aligned diplomatic bloc, laying the groundwork for both the Non-Aligned Movement (1961) and the Organisation of African Unity (1963). As Acharya (2016) explains, Bandung was not merely a diplomatic gathering but a symbolic challenge to the Eurocentric foundations of the international order, asserting that formerly colonised nations could and should shape global norms. It gave voice to a collective rejection of Cold War binaries and imperial hierarchies (ActionAid, 2023).

Beyond its political implications, Bandung carried profound epistemic significance. From a decolonial theoretical perspective, it marked a critical moment of epistemic decolonisation, disrupting long-standing knowledge hierarchies that privileged Western worldviews. By centring African and Asian experiences, the conference contested the presumed universality of Western values and ideologies. Scholars such as Achille Mbembe and Amitav Acharya view Bandung as an early assertion of Global South agency—not just in diplomacy, but in rethinking the structures and assumptions of international governance. These epistemological foundations would later underpin broader calls to reform global institutions like the United Nations Security Council and the Bretton Woods system.

3.2 Africa's Sacrifice of Manpower in European Wars

Africa's forced participation in the First and Second World Wars highlights the continent's coerced contribution to European military campaigns and the systemic marginalisation of African agency. During World War I, colonial powers conscripted approximately 2.35 million Africans as soldiers and porters, leading to over one million deaths from combat, disease, and forced labour (International Encyclopedia of the First World War, 2016). Units like France's Tirailleurs Sénégalais and Britain's Carrier Corps were indispensable yet received minimal recognition or postwar support.

This exploitation deepened in World War II. British colonial forces expanded from fewer than 15,000 African soldiers at the war's outset to over 500,000 by its end, with similar mobilisation across French and Belgian colonies. Africans fought and died in campaigns across East Africa, Burma, and Madagascar. Yet, after the war, veterans returned to colonial rule without political rights, economic compensation, or promised benefits. In Ghana and Nigeria, disillusionment over unmet promises, including pensions, land,

and union rights, fuelled veteran protests and popularised nationalist leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe. These injustices played a formative role in catalysing Africa's postwar independence movements.

3.3 Africa's Natural Resources and Their Deprivation

The historical and ongoing exploitation of Africa's natural resources exemplifies entrenched economic dependency and underdevelopment. Rodney (1972) argues that Europe's industrial rise was built on African labour and exports through the transatlantic slave trade, plantations, and mineral extraction, leaving Africa structurally disadvantaged. French control over Congolese copper and rubber, and British dominance in West African gold and cocoa, reveal how European growth was achieved at Africa's expense. Post-independence, this dynamic persists as many African economies remain reliant on commodity exports managed by foreign entities. Nigeria, for instance, earns over 90% of its export revenue from oil, yet nearly 83 million Nigerians about 40% of the population live in poverty. Despite decades of extraction in the Niger Delta, poverty remains higher than before the 1970s oil boom, a trend linked to poor governance and elite capture.

Niger's uranium sector offers a stark case of resource inequality. Since 1971, French company Orano has extracted 86.3% of uranium output despite owning only 63% of the operation (Reuters, 2023). Unions have accused Orano of ignoring environmental and developmental responsibilities. Scholars note this imbalance reflects France's historical strategy of securing vital resources through its former colonies. Monetary dependency compounds this issue: fourteen francophone states use the CFA franc, a currency tied to the euro and backed by the French Treasury. As reported by the Harvard International Review (2023), member states must deposit 70% of reserves abroad, limiting monetary autonomy. With eleven CFA users classified as "least developed", critics view the system as a neocolonial mechanism reinforcing French economic control. Such examples underscore how European empires amassed wealth from African resources while depriving local populations of infrastructure, education and equitable profits.

4. Post-Colonial Alignments and Resource Struggles

4.1 Africa in BRICS and Multipolar Platforms

Africa's marginalisation in global financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank where it holds under 10% of voting power and minimal executive representation (ActionAid, 2023) has prompted a pivot toward multipolar platforms, notably BRICS. South Africa joined BRICS in 2010, followed by Egypt and Ethiopia in 2024, signalling a strategy to diversify partnerships and reduce dependency on Western-dominated systems.

The BRICS-led New Development Bank (NDB) had disbursed around US\$33 billion by 2023, funding infrastructure projects in the Global South without Western conditionalities. However, critics like Taylor (2014) argue that Chinese-backed initiatives within BRICS can perpetuate neo-colonial patterns, especially when loans are tied to resource guarantees.

Angola exemplifies this dynamic. Between 2000 and 2018, it received US\$43 billion in Chinese loans Africa's highest secured against future oil revenues (ORF, 2021). While these funds built key infrastructure, they also entrenched dependence and fiscal vulnerability, particularly during oil price volatility. World Bank analyses warn that such lending, though initially beneficial, can erode long-term sovereignty. Thus, BRICS offers Africa a valuable alternative but its transformative potential depends on equitable reforms, transparency, and economic diversification.

4.2 Continuities of Resource Dependency

Formal independence has not freed African states from structural global inequalities. During the 1980s debt crises, the IMF's structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) imposed austerity, wage freezes, privatisation, and trade liberalization deeply weakening health and education systems. In Zambia, for example, over 30% of teachers were living with HIV/AIDS, with poor healthcare access due to SAP-induced cuts (Cheru, 2005).

Today, a new form of dependency has emerged through resource-backed loans, where countries like Angola and Ghana pledge oil or gas revenues for infrastructure financing. These arrangements offer short-term liquidity but heighten vulnerability to commodity price swings, fiscal instability, and governance challenges echoing the "resource curse".

Colonial legacies also persist in monetary systems. Fourteen francophone nations still use the CFA franc, tied to the euro and requiring 70% of reserves to be held by the French Treasury, limiting monetary sovereignty (Harvard IR, 2023). Similarly, anglophone countries endured IMF-imposed austerity, while lusophone states like Angola rely on Chinese loans secured by resources still facing external control (ORF, 2021). Whether through Western institutions or new partners, structural dependency remains entrenched, limiting Africa's economic sovereignty and reinforcing its peripheral status.

4.3 Africa's Trade Reorientation: West to East and Intra-African Initiatives

Over the past three decades, African states have diversified their trade partnerships, reducing dependence on Europe. Between 1990 and 2023, Europe's share of Africa's trade fell from 48% to 26.8%, while China and India's combined share rose to 23%, marking a clear "pivot East" (Afreximbank, 2024). This shift signals Africa's growing effort to access new markets and reshape its global positioning. However, scholars caution that South-South cooperation may replicate old patterns. Patrick Bond (2020) notes that infrastructure projects under initiatives like China's Belt and Road Initiative often involve resource-backed loans, raising concerns about renewed dependency under new actors.

To strengthen internal economic ties, the African Union launched the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2021. Intra-African trade reached US\$192 billion in 2023, 15% of the continent's total trade and is projected to grow by over 50% by 2030 (Afreximbank, 2024; AUDA-NEPAD, 2023). Reducing trade barriers, improving infrastructure, and aligning regulations are key to making AfCFTA a driver of industrialisation and economic sovereignty.

5. Africa's Future Role in Global Governance

5.1 Forecasting Africa in a Post-Western World Order

Africa is poised to become a global development hub, with its population projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, about 25% of the world's total and a median age under 20 (Brookings Institution, 2025). This demographic boom could make Africa home to a quarter of the global workforce, with consumer and business spending estimated at US\$16.12 trillion by mid-century.

Yet this potential hinges on structural reforms. Without investments in education, healthcare, and governance, rapid growth could worsen unemployment and inequality. Dependency theorists warn of these risks, while decolonial scholars advocate for inclusive development strategies. Initiatives like AfCFTA and the rise of digital innovations such as mobile banking and AI-powered agriculture offer avenues for job creation and value addition.

Africa's tech leap presents both promise and peril. While mobile technologies enable rapid progress, global tech dominance raises concerns over data extraction and digital sovereignty. Scholars stress the need for strong regulations and local innovation to prevent digital dependency. If governed equitably, Africa's youth and digital dynamism could drive transformative resilience and global influence.

5.2. Africa in the United Nations System

Despite being the subject of most United Nations Security Council (UNSC) interventions, Africa remains underrepresented in its decision-making. In 2018, over 70% of UNSC resolutions addressed African issues, yet the continent holds only three non-permanent seats without veto power on the 15-member Council (CSIS, 2023). The Council's structure, rooted in post-World War II geopolitics, no longer reflects today's global power dynamics.

African states have long advocated for reform. The 2005 Ezulwini Consensus calls for at least two permanent seats with veto rights and five non-permanent ones for Africa. This position was reaffirmed during the 2024 UN debate, with Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio stressing the need for fairness, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres acknowledging the outdated nature of the current framework.

Scholars argue that this underrepresentation weakens the Council's legitimacy, especially when dealing with Global South priorities like climate finance, pandemic response, and debt relief. Genuine reform is essential not just for equity, but for building a more inclusive and effective global governance system.

5.3. Peace, Climate and Normative Contributions

Contrary to long-standing portrayals of Africa as a passive recipient of aid and intervention, African states have increasingly asserted themselves as

active participants in global governance, security provision, and norm entrepreneurship. In peacekeeping, African countries have taken leading roles, with Rwanda contributing around 4,500 troops to the UN–AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), Ethiopia deploying over 8,000 personnel to South Sudan, and Nigeria spearheading the ECOMOG mission in Liberia. These efforts illustrate Africa’s evolving role from a site of intervention to a provider of regional and international security.

In the sphere of climate diplomacy, African leaders have mobilised to reshape global climate finance frameworks. The 2023 Africa Climate Summit produced the Nairobi Declaration, which called for US\$600 billion annually to support adaptation and renewable energy, alongside demands for historical accountability and a just energy transition. This represents a significant normative shift, situating climate justice within broader decolonial critiques of global environmental governance and asserting Africa’s right to development on equitable terms.

Africa has also contributed to the evolution of global norms through institutional leadership within the African Union (AU). The AU’s principle of “non-indifference”, a normative commitment to preventing atrocities, challenges the selective interventions of the broader international community. Additionally, African advocacy for universal jurisdiction in prosecuting crimes against humanity reflects a proactive stance in international law and justice. Collectively, these contributions challenge the narrative of Africa as a norm-taker, instead highlighting its growing role as a norm-shaper in reimagining a fairer, more inclusive international order.

6. Conclusion

Africa’s historical sacrifices, wars, labour and resources underscore its centrality to global modernity. Dependency theory reveals that colonial and post-colonial systems extracted African wealth while entrenching underdevelopment. Yet decolonial perspectives highlight Africa’s agency: the Bandung Conference, Pan-Africanism, BRICS engagement, AfCFTA, climate diplomacy and peacekeeping all illustrate how African actors have contested their marginalisation and sought to reshape global governance.

The core tension remains between structural dependency and decolonial agency. Africa’s pivot from Euro-American dependence to a diversified network of partners, its demographic momentum and its demands for UN

reform suggest that a just multipolar order is both possible and necessary. Realising this vision requires recognising Africa not as a peripheral participant but as a co-architect of a fairer world.

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Brazil and the New International Scenario

Beatriz Bissio

I will begin my considerations by quoting Professor and diplomat Kishore Mahbubani, globally recognised as one of Asia's leading intellectuals, a renowned member of the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, and author of several books, including *The New Asian Hemisphere*. He always reminds his audience that the world has changed dramatically in the last decades. A shift from the West to the East. And that the main reason is that China is the world's most dynamic economy today, and has been the fastest-growing economy for the past 30 years. A goal achieved by educating the Chinese population to a degree that has never been seen before.

Professor Mahbubani completed his statement by giving three examples of the shift of power:

First, by comparing the European Union (EU) and China:

In 1980 the combined economy of the EU was 10 times larger than China's economy.

In 2025, both economies have the same size.

By 2050, the European Union's economy will be half the size of China's economy. This is not a shift that occurs very often in 70 years.

He gives a second example: the United Kingdom and India.

100 years ago, 100,000 Englishmen managed to dominate 300 million Hindu Indians.

In 1990, British GDP was four times that of India's economy. In 2024, India surpassed it, and in 2050 it will be four times that of the United Kingdom. A fundamental shift.

He gives a third example: ASEAN and Germany

50 years ago, Germany's economy was three times the size of ASEAN's. This year, the two economies are the same size. By 2050, Germany's economy will be half the size of ASEAN's.

Using these three examples, the professor explains the reasons for the tensions in today's world. The institutional and financial architecture that was defined after the end of the Second World War reflected a correlation of forces that no longer exists.

The colonial powers of the past and the United States of today do not recognise this shift and, instead of understanding that the most sensible course of action would be to allocate power and quotas in line with this new reality, they cling to a power and hegemony that they can only defend at the cost of using violence in all its forms—from intimidation to military intervention.

The professor uses these three examples to explain the reasons for today's global tensions. The institutional and financial architecture defined after the Second World War reflected a balance of power that no longer exists. The former colonial powers and the United States today do not recognise this shift. Instead of allocating power and quotas in line with this new reality, they cling to a power and hegemony that can only be defended through violence in all its forms, from intimidation to military intervention.

Using this explanation as a framework, I will analyse the current situation in Latin America, with a particular focus on Brazil.

Latin America faces significant risks from a more fragmented, competitive world order—but it also has important assets (natural resources, young urban populations, geographic position, growing digital ecosystems) that can be mobilized to benefit from the transition. This means that Latin America is not a passive victim of geopolitical change. With coherent policies that combine institutional strengthening, regional integration, climate resilience, and targeted industrial upgrading, the region can turn disruption into a generational opportunity. The choices made now—about education, governance, environmental safeguards, and how external

partnerships are managed—will determine whether Latin America secures inclusive growth and strategic autonomy in the coming decade.

Brazil, in particular, as a regional heavyweight, could take advantage of this scenario. Brazil's role in BRICS, for example, has the potential to foster South American integration, but this depends on political will and regional consensus, and, of course, on Brazil's choice between acting as a regional leader or a global actor detached from its neighborhood.

I will analyse Brazil's political situation and its implications for a sovereign project for the country and the region.

Domestic Political Landscape Curbs Brazil's International Aspirations

A deeply polarized and fragmented domestic political landscape is significantly hampering Brazil's ability to develop and sustain a major international role, despite the country's inherent potential as a regional powerhouse and a key player in global debates. While President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's administration has actively sought to reposition Brazil on the world stage, internal divisions, a right-leaning Congress, and the enduring influence of “Bolsonarismo” create significant obstacles to a cohesive and assertive foreign policy.

The current domestic correlation of forces is characterized by a stark ideological divide between the centre-left government and a powerful conservative opposition. This schism manifests in nearly every aspect of foreign policy, from Brazil's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war to its leadership in South American integration and its ambitious environmental agenda.

President Lula has championed a return to Brazil's traditional foreign policy principles of multilateralism, South-South cooperation, and regional leadership. His administration has been active in international forums, seeking to mediate conflicts and advocate for the interests of the Global South. However, these efforts are often met with skepticism and outright opposition at home.

The centre-left government has several ministries in the hands of the powerful *Centrão*—a bloc of centrist and conservative parties—due to the alliance that enabled President Lula's electoral victory. But the “*Centrão*,” also dominates in Congress and holds a significant sway over the government's agenda. While not uniformly opposed to all of the president's

foreign policy initiatives, their support is often transactional and contingent on domestic political calculations, making it difficult to build a long-term, strategic consensus. This forces the government into a constant state of negotiation, often watering down its international ambitions to secure domestic legislative victories.

One of the most prominent examples of this domestic constraint is the debate surrounding Brazil's position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. While the Lula administration has sought to maintain a neutral stance and position itself as a potential peace broker, this has drawn criticism from both the left, who advocate for a more explicitly anti-imperialist stance, and the right, who argue for closer alignment with Western powers. The lack of a unified domestic front weakens Brazil's credibility and effectiveness in its diplomatic overtures.

Similarly, efforts to revitalize South American integration through MERCOSUR and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) face internal hurdles. Opposition parties often view these initiatives through an ideological lens, associating them with a leftist agenda. This domestic resistance complicates Brazil's ability to project leadership within its own region.

Even on the environmental front, where Brazil has a clear opportunity to assert global leadership, domestic politics presents significant challenges. While the Lula administration has made ambitious commitments to combat deforestation and promote sustainable development, it faces pressure from powerful agribusiness interests and their representatives in Congress who often prioritize economic expansion over environmental protection. This internal tug-of-war can undermine the consistency and credibility of Brazil's environmental diplomacy.

The enduring influence of "Bolsonarismo", the right-wing movement led by former President Jair Bolsonaro, represents a fundamental challenge to the current government's domestic and foreign policy. This movement has fostered transnational alliances with other right-wing movements, in particular with MAGA and Trump himself, creating a parallel foreign policy narrative that often directly contradicts the government's official positions.

It is undeniable that President Lula is the main protagonist of Brazil's current foreign policy. This isn't just a matter of the president's constitutional role; it's a reflection of his personal political style and historical stature. Lula

views foreign policy as a direct extension of his presidency and a key tool for achieving his domestic goals of development and social inclusion. He has a clear vision of Brazil as a major voice for the Global South, a balancer in a multi-polar world, and a champion of multilateralism.

Having served two successful terms and maintained a high international profile even while out of office, Lula possesses a level of personal recognition and a network of contacts that no other Brazilian politician can match. World leaders often see him as the embodiment of Brazil, which centralizes diplomatic efforts around his figure. Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (known as Itamaraty) is a highly professional and historically influential institution. However, under a strong-willed president like Lula, its primary function becomes the implementation and technical support of a vision that is largely conceived and driven from the Presidential Palace. However, the President's leading role in foreign policy has created resentment within some sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These sections are either aligned with the former president's political ideology or simply favour a more traditional approach to diplomacy, centered on close alignment with the United States.

The stance of the right-wing forces, which hold a majority in Congress, is also critical and even hostile to the Lula administration's foreign policy. They view the President's proximity to progressive Latin American leaders, his engagement with China and Russia through BRICS, and his critical stance on certain U.S. policies as a partisan project that abandons the Western-aligned, nationalist foreign policy of the previous administration. They actively work to sabotage it, creating significant domestic noise and questioning the legitimacy of his international actions.

The "Centrão" (Center) in spite of being an amorphous bloc of parties, is the kingmaker in Brazilian politics. Their primary focus is not ideology but pragmatism, centered on securing government resources and local patronage. They often view foreign policy as a distraction from what "really matters" at home. They will not necessarily oppose Lula's trips or speeches, but they are unlikely to spend political capital on ambitious foreign policy legislation (like ratifying complex international treaties or funding diplomatic initiatives) unless there is a clear and immediate domestic payoff. This creates a constant drag on implementing a cohesive long-term strategy.

The Financial and Economic Groups (mainly Agribusiness Sector and Financial Marquets known as Faria Lima) are deeply suspicious of the

government's environmental agenda and generally prioritize orthodox economic policies and predictable alignment with Western financial capitals. They grow wary when Lula's rhetoric sounds too critical of the U.S. dollar's dominance or when he champions alternatives like a BRICS currency. They may therefore oppose trade liberalization efforts that are central to Lula's diplomatic strategy of integrating Brazil more deeply into the global economy.

In order to understand Brazil's domestic politics and its influence on the formulation of foreign policy, it is also necessary to consider the role of the media. The relationship between the Workers' Party (PT) and President Lula's administration with Brazil's historically dominant media conglomerates (like Grupo Globo, Folha de São Paulo, and O Estado de São Paulo) has been adversarial for decades. While the open hostility of the Jair Bolsonaro years towards the press has subsided, it has been replaced by a deep-seated, structural skepticism.

Major media outlets often frame the government's actions through a lens of perpetual difficulty and impending failure. Economic challenges are magnified, legislative negotiations are portrayed as defeats, and diplomatic initiatives are frequently questioned as being ideologically motivated or fiscally irresponsible. This creates a challenging public opinion environment, making it difficult for the government to build and sustain support for its long-term projects.

Lula's active international agenda provides constant fodder for criticism. His travels are sometimes depicted as costly and detached from the immediate needs of Brazilians. His policy of "active non-alignment"—engaging with leaders from the West, China, Russia, and the Global South—is often portrayed as ambiguous, unreliable, or damaging to Brazil's relationship with traditional partners like the United States. The media naturally gives a significant platform to opposition voices in Congress. This means that critiques from the "Centrão" or the "Bolsonarista" right are amplified daily, reinforcing the narrative of a divided and struggling government.

Another key factor to consider is the growing political influence of neo-Pentecostal churches.

The explosive growth of evangelical, particularly neo-Pentecostal, Christianity is arguably the single most significant social and political transformation in Brazil over the last 40 years. This is not just a cultural shift;

it is a consolidated and highly organized political force. The “Bancada Evangélica” (Evangelical Caucus): is one of the largest and most cohesive blocs in the Brazilian Congress. Comprising deputies from various parties, it is united by a socially conservative agenda—staunch opposition to abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, and drug liberalization, coupled with a strong defense of “traditional family values”. This caucus is a key component of the conservative majority in the legislature and is almost universally aligned with the opposition to Lula’s socially progressive platform.

The crucial point is that unlike other interest groups, the neo-Pentecostal movement does not rely solely on the traditional media for its voice. Denominations like the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God own massive media conglomerates. RecordTV, for instance, is a major national television network that directly competes with Globo. This media ecosystem allows them to bypass traditional gatekeepers and communicate their political and religious message directly to millions of Brazilians, often blending news coverage with a conservative, pro-Bolsonaro, and anti-PT worldview. The caucus’s influence extends to international affairs. Their strong support for the state of Israel, based on theological interpretations, often clashes with Brazil’s traditional, more balanced diplomatic position in the Middle East. They are also highly critical of Lula’s friendly relations with progressive governments in Latin America that they deem “godless” or authoritarian. Their socially conservative agenda also puts them at odds with Brazil’s positions in international human rights forums.

Effectively, Lula’s administration is caught in a pincer movement. On one side, the traditional mass media acts as a powerful, critical watchdog, holding the government to account and often shaping a narrative of instability. On the other side, the neo-Pentecostal movement operates as a deeply ideological political and media force, fundamentally opposed to the government’s social agenda and closely allied with the far-right opposition. This dual pressure consumes an immense amount of the government’s political capital, forcing it to constantly fight defensive battles on the domestic front. It leaves little room for building the broad national consensus required for an ambitious and assertive international role. Every foreign policy move is scrutinized and attacked from multiple angles, reinforcing the central theme: for Brazil to become a major international player, it must first navigate its deeply fractured and contentious landscape at home.

In conclusion, while Brazil possesses the economic and diplomatic weight to play a more significant role on the international stage, its domestic political divisions act as a powerful brake on these ambitions. The lack of a broad-based consensus on foreign policy priorities, the transactional nature of congressional support, and the deep ideological chasm between the government and the opposition all contribute to a foreign policy that is often more reactive than proactive, and more contested than cohesive.

So, the “face” of Brazil to the world is Lula, projecting an ambitious agenda of global leadership and South-South solidarity. But behind this facade, the domestic consensus is fractured. The main political and financial forces are either indifferent or actively hostile to key parts of his agenda, driven by their own distinct and often conflicting ambitions. This forces Lula to conduct a foreign policy that is heavily reliant on his personal prestige and executive powers, but which lacks the deep, unified national backing necessary to make it truly sustainable and transformative. It explains why Brazil can appear influential in specific forums or on particular issues, but struggles to translate that into a consistent and powerful major international role.

In 2026, there will be general elections in Brazil. For now, everything indicates that President Lula will seek a new term, facing a candidate from the right who will represent the forces that support former President Bolsonaro, who is barred from running due to his conviction for attempting a coup d'état. Much of what happens on the international stage in the coming months could impact the future of Brazil's domestic and international politics and the election results.

Call to Liberation: A Declaration of Black Indigenous Sovereignty

George REDIX

Introduction: From Invisible Chains to Visible Future

Colonialism did not die; it put on new clothes. The auction block became the courthouse. The whip became the paycheck that never stretches to the end of the month. The overseer became the police officer with his knee on our neck. The plantation became the prison yard, fenced with barbed wire but rooted in the same old soil of captivity.

And yet, here we stand. For Black Indigenous Americans—the children of those stolen from Africa and those rooted in this land long before Columbus—oppression is not history, it is the present tense. We live it in the schools that deny us knowledge, in the banks that strip our wealth, in the media that distorts our image, and in the very soil from which our land was stolen.

The Bandung 70 framework calls these the five golden rules of modern domination: control of science and technology, monopoly of media, exploitation of finance, militarization of security, and dispossession from the land.

But what was meant to bury us has become the ground on which we rise. If empire built its house on five pillars of oppression, then we will build ours on five pillars of liberation.

This is more than a plan. This is a Call to Liberation—to rise in dignity, to organize in unity, and to build in sovereignty. Not tomorrow, not someday, but now.

The Five Pillars of Liberation

1. Science & Technology — From Dependency to Innovation

They told us technology was neutral, yet every wire, every algorithm, every patent stamped with another man's name has been used to keep us at the bottom. They left our schools underfunded, our children underprepared, and our future under siege.

But we are not beggars at the gates of Silicon Valley. We must build laboratories of liberation, where our children's genius is not raw material for someone else's empire but the blueprint of our survival.

AI must not predict our imprisonment; it must protect our freedom. Energy must not exploit our communities; it must empower them.

This vision is not abstract. Imagine coding schools across ten cities, run by us, for us. Imagine renewable microgrids powering our neighborhoods independent of monopolies. Imagine a generation of Black engineers designing systems not to track us, but to free us.

We have been here before. Howard University—founded when freedom was still fragile—rose from the ashes of war to become a training ground for doctors, lawyers, engineers, and artists who defied every prediction of failure. And alongside it, the improbable rise of HBCUs across the South and Midwest carved out sanctuaries of scholarship in the heart of Jim Crow. Against all odds, they produced generations of thinkers and builders who would not surrender genius to oppression.

From slave narratives written in secret to today's Black scientists at NASA and Google, we see proof: innovation is not empire's gift to us; it is our birthright.

Today, we must reclaim that spirit. With partnerships through BRICS nations, Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia, we can access global technology pipelines—but our sovereignty must remain uncompromised.

2. Media & Communication — From Erasure to Narrative Power

We know too well how they paint us. First as savages, then as slaves, now as statistics on the evening news. Our faces have been caricatured, our voices silenced, our victories erased.

But a nation without a voice is a nation without a face. We must seize the megaphone of history and speak in our own name.

Independent news networks, podcasts, film collectives, streaming platforms—these must be our modern drum circles, beating out rhythms of truth across the globe.

Our ancestors left us a map of how to do this. Slave spirituals carried coded directions to freedom. Abolitionist newspapers like *The North Star* gave power to voices once chained. Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* built global unity before the age of the internet. The Black press of the 20th century kept truth alive when mainstream outlets refused. Even hip-hop—born in the Bronx with turntables and truth—became a global megaphone of resistance.

Today, digital tools give us the chance to reclaim this tradition at scale. Imagine a Black Indigenous international broadcasting network reaching from Harlem to Houston, and stretching outward to Kingston, Lagos, São Paulo, and Johannesburg. Imagine controlling algorithms that amplify our joy instead of exploiting our pain.

We are not fighting for representation; we are writing resurrection. Narrative is not entertainment—it is nation-building.

3. Financial Systems — From Predation to Sovereignty

The first bank was the slave auction, where human beings were collateral. When chains broke, debt traps followed: sharecropping, redlining, predatory loans. Finance has always been the whip dressed in silk.

But no people were ever freed on borrowed coins. No nation was ever built on someone else's balance sheet.

We must construct cooperative banks, credit unions, and blockchain treasuries. Picture this: five million people, five dollars each month. That is \$25 million a month, \$300 million a year. A sovereign budget, powered by the people, not imposed by empire.

History gives us models. The mutual aid societies of the 19th century pooled pennies to bury the dead, educate the living, and resist exclusion. The Freedman's Bank, though sabotaged, proved the hunger for financial independence. Tulsa's Greenwood District—known as Black Wall Street—demonstrated what economic sovereignty looks like when wealth circulates within our own communities. It was destroyed by bombs and mobs, but its spirit endures.

Modern finance offers tools to revive these traditions. Blockchain treasuries ensure transparency. Cooperative banks provide fair loans. Group economics reclaims land, builds schools, seeds industries.

Money must stop being the master's whip and become the people's hammer—pounding nails into the house of our own freedom.

4. Civil Defense — From Vulnerability to Protection

For centuries, “security” has meant our insecurity. Slave patrols hunted us. Lynching terrorized us. Police raided us. FBI files stalked us.

A sovereign people cannot depend on the jailer for protection. We must build a Civil Defense Corps not to conquer, but to preserve life.

Its divisions must stand like shields:

- Health Brigades to heal the body.
- Cyber Defense Units to guard the mind.
- Food & Resource Security Corps to feed the people.
- Disaster Response Teams to protect in storms and fires.
- Civil Protection Units to defend against hate and violence.

The model exists in our history. Black veterans returning from World War I and World War II organized to protect their neighborhoods from white mobs. The Deacons for Defense in Louisiana stood armed against Klan terror in the 1960s. The Black Panthers' survival programs offered free breakfast, medical clinics, and patrols to protect neighborhoods. Maroon societies in swamps and mountains built defense networks to sustain autonomy.

This is not militarism. This is life. It is the oath we owe to one another: no child unprotected, no elder abandoned, no neighbor left behind.

5. *Natural Resources — From Dispossession to Ancestral Reclamation*

Here lies the deepest wound and the highest calling. For centuries, they told us our story on this land began with chains. But the truth runs deeper: we were here, and we were enslaved in our own land. As Dr. King reminded us, we were made strangers in the very soil that carried our names, treated as outsiders in a home our ancestors had already built.

The land holds memory. The soil remembers our sweat. The rivers remember our blood. The forests whisper our names, and the mountains stand as witnesses.

Reclaiming sovereignty means more than ownership—it means restoration. We must build land trusts, community-owned farms, renewable energy projects, and ecological sanctuaries that secure our survival and honor our roots.

Urban farming initiatives must reclaim food deserts. Land reclamation movements must return stolen acres. Environmental justice struggles must confront toxic dumping in Black neighborhoods. And in alliance with Native Nations, we must honor a shared demand: that the land stolen through conquest be restored through justice.

This land is not property; it is covenant. It is scripture, written in roots and rivers, waiting for us to read it again.

Historical Precedents and Lessons

We do not walk blind; our ancestors lit torches on this road.

- Garvey and the UNIA proved that millions could unite under a flag of sovereignty, even as empire tried to crush it. His Black Star Line was sabotaged, but his dream of global trade and independence remains.
- The Bandung Conference (1955), held in Indonesia, brought together African and Asian nations who declared together: colonialism, in all its forms, must end. Leaders like Sukarno, Nehru, and Nasser reminded the world that the South could unite without permission from the North. That lesson endures for us today.
- The Black Panthers fed the hungry, healed the sick, and protected the vulnerable—showing that sovereignty begins with survival. Their destruction by COINTELPRO warns us of the need for vigilance.

- Native Nations endure within U.S. borders, their sovereignty intact despite centuries of assault. Their existence proves that multiple nations can coexist inside empire's territory.
- Haiti showed the world that enslaved people could overthrow empire itself, though it has been punished ever since. Its revolution is inspiration and caution: victory requires preparation, defense, and unity.
- Reconstruction revealed how quickly progress can be rolled back without protection, reminding us that liberation requires defense, not just declarations.

History speaks: unity without compromise, defense without apology, alliances without fear.

The 10-Year Roadmap

Phase 1 (Years 1–3): Foundations

- Form sovereignty councils in 10 cities.
- Launch the African Redemption Fund 2.0.
- Establish digital academies and cultural schools.
- File petitions for recognition.

Phase 2 (Years 3–6): Expansion

- Build cooperative banks and blockchain economies.
- Launch global media networks.
- Secure recognition from AU, CARICOM, BRICS, and Asian partners.
- Train Civil Defense units nationwide.

Phase 3 (Years 6–10): Consolidation

- Achieve recognition under U.S. law.
- Offer dual citizenship.
- Secure land reclamation and renewable projects.
- Ignite a cultural renaissance uniting Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Asia.

Ten years is not long—but it is long enough to change everything. A child born today deserves to come of age in freedom, not chains.

Global Positioning in a Multipolar World

Empire is no longer eternal. The twenty-first century is multipolar. BRICS rises. Africa asserts. Asia emerges with renewed strength. The Global South no longer bows.

We must step into that current:

- With BRICS, for finance and technology.
- With the African Union, which calls us its sixth region.
- With CARICOM, whose struggle mirrors our own.
- And with Asia's rising nations—Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Malaysia, and others—who once gathered in Bandung to declare that colonialism must end.

This is not isolation—it is participation in the renewal of Bandung's spirit: solidarity, dignity, and resistance to domination. We stand not only with Africa and the Caribbean, but also with Asia, for they, too, have endured empire's lash and risen from its shadow.

We are not begging for a seat at empire's table—we are building our own.

Risks and Countermeasures

Every chain resists being broken. Empire will not sit idle.

- State Suppression: The U.S. dismantled Garvey, the Panthers, and King. We must anchor ourselves in law, alliances, and international recognition.
- Division Within: Empire thrives on divide-and-rule. We must build political education and rituals of unity to resist infiltration.
- Economic Sabotage: Just as Black Wall Street was bombed, our institutions will be targeted. Diversification and global alliances are our shield.
- Co-optation: Leaders may be bought or neutralized. We must hold them accountable to the people, not outside forces.
- Militarized Response: Our defense must remain transparent and humanitarian to resist criminalization.

Every trap has been laid before. Every trap can be disarmed.

Conclusion: From Deficit to Destiny

For centuries, five pillars of domination—science, media, finance, security, land—were used to break us, to bind us, to bury us. But the chains that tried to hold us became the very tools with which we built our survival. We have turned whips into weapons of wisdom before, and we will do it again.

Within a single decade, if we have the courage, a sovereign Black Indigenous nation can rise: recognized in law, rooted in land, defended by resilience, financed by its people, and connected to the great currents of the Global South.

But this will not come by waiting. No savior is coming. No system that profits from our suffering will volunteer to free us. Freedom is not handed down; it is seized by a people who refuse to kneel.

We must rise. Rise from despair into determination. Rise from division into unity. Rise from survival into sovereignty.

This is the choice before us: either remain a scattered people at the mercy of empire, or become a sovereign nation guided by dignity and destiny. The future is not promised—it is claimed.

Black men, Black women, Black children—this is your call. Do not look away. Do not wait for tomorrow. Build. Defend. Organize. Rise.

This is our Call to Liberation—Garvey’s vision reborn, Bandung’s spirit renewed, the Panthers’ defiance remembered, the ancestors’ memory honored.

One God! One Aim! One Destiny!

Russia and the Global South: From Bandung Ideals to BRICS Aspirations

Olga Volosyuk

Nikita Zhukov

1. Ideals of Bandung: “We Seek to Build a New, a Better World!”

In April 1955, delegates from 29 newly independent Asian and African states met at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, forging a momentous statement of unity among the developing countries. This unity encapsulated the *Bandung spirit*—a vision of an international order based on peace, mutual respect, justice, and equitable prosperity, in contrast to the colonial domination and Cold War power politics of the time. The Bandung Conference affirmed that Afro-Asian nations, though recently freed from colonial rule, aspired to chart a new course in world affairs, one not dictated by the two superpower blocs but by principles of equality and self-determination. President Sukarno of Indonesia, in his address to the UN GA on September 30th, 1960, developed the spirit of the Bandung Conference with a stirring call: “We do not seek to defend the world we know: we seek to build a new, a better world! We seek to build a world sane and secure. We seek to build a world in which all may live in peace. We seek to build a

world of justice and prosperity for all men. We seek to build a world in which humanity can achieve its full stature”.¹

Sukarno’s ideas of peaceful coexistence and global justice helped inspire the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, uniting countries that refused to be aligned with either the Western or Eastern bloc. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev forcefully argued that “the problem of the complete liquidation of the colonial system is in large measure the problem of preserving and strengthening peace and international security”.² In other words, world peace was seen as inseparable from ending colonial domination—a stance that aligned the USSR with the demands of Asia, Africa, and Latin America for independence and dignity. This shared agenda between the socialist bloc and the post-colonial nations lent weight to Global South voices in international forums.

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, developing countries steadily increased their influence on the global agenda. The newly sovereign states in the 1950s and 1960s transformed the United Nations General Assembly, which passed the landmark 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples with broad support. In the 1970s, they pushed for a “New International Economic Order” to redress inequities between rich and poor nations, leveraging their numerical majority and collective platforms like the Group of 77. While the Cold War forced countries to choose sides, many in Asia, Africa, and Latin America asserted their autonomy whenever possible, championing causes such as disarmament, development rights, and racial equality on the world stage. The contributions of India and China—two ancient civilizations that emerged as modern states—became especially noteworthy by the century’s end.

By the late 20th century, India and China were rising pillars of the developing world’s clout. India, a leading voice in the NAM, had long advocated for decolonization and South-South cooperation, and by the

¹ Sukarno’s Speech: To Build the World Anew. September 30, 1960. Memory of the World. UNESCO. <https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/sukarnos-speech-build-world-anew-september-30-1960>.

² United Nations. General Assembly. Fifteenth Session. Official Records. 902nd Plenary Session. October 12, 1960. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/679180/files/A_PV-902-RU.pdf.

1990s its economic reforms and technological advances increased its global stature. China, after decades of isolation and then rapid economic growth since the 1980s, rejoined the international community with newfound weight—gaining a permanent UN Security Council seat in 1971 and demonstrating dramatic growth that would soon make it the world’s second-largest economy. Both countries undertook independent initiatives that signaled their intent to shape the international order. Together with other large developing nations like Indonesia, Egypt, and Brazil, they embodied the transition from a bipolar Cold War era to a more multipolar global landscape. In essence, the ideals proclaimed at Bandung—of a “new, better world” of peace and equality—persisted through the decades in the Third World’s quest for greater voice and justice in world affairs, even as the immediate post-colonial period gave way to new geopolitical realities.

2. Primakov’s Vision: Russia-India-China and Post-Soviet Outreach

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 initially led Russia to turn inward and westward. In the early 1990s, under President Boris Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, Russian foreign policy was oriented toward integration with the West, even at the expense of traditional partnerships in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Moscow drastically scaled back its presence and influence in regions where the USSR had once been a patron—closing military bases, cutting foreign aid, and largely acquiescing to Western initiatives in conflict zones from the Balkans to Africa. This “unconditional acceptance” of Western leadership, as it was later critiqued, meant that Russia temporarily retreated from the Third World arena where the Soviet Union had vied for influence during the Cold War. By mid-decade, however, the limitations of this approach were becoming apparent: Russia had gained only modest support from Western powers, while losing the geopolitical reach the Soviet Union once had.³

A strategic shift came in 1996 with the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov as Foreign Minister. Primakov—a distinguished orientalist, expert on the Middle East and former intelligence chief—brought a markedly different philosophy.

³ Bogaturov Alexey, Lebedeva Olga, Bobrov Alexander. The Evolution of Russia’s Foreign Policy Doctrine. *International Affairs*. Vol.68, No.2, 2022, pp.72–91. <https://www.eastviewpress.com/the-evolution-of-russias-foreign-policy-doctrine/>.

He believed Russia must pursue a “multipolar” world and reclaim an active role across all regions, not just Europe and North America. He spoke frequently of “national interests” and was wary of Russia’s overdependence on the West, though he did not seek direct confrontation. Instead, Primakov’s strategy was to diversify Russia’s partnerships—strengthening ties with major non-Western powers and neighboring regions—so as to limit any one pole from monopolizing global affairs.⁴ Russia would henceforth practice a “multi-vector” diplomacy: maintaining dialogue with Western powers while simultaneously expanding relations with the East and the Global South. This doctrine, often called the “Primakov Doctrine”, signaled a return to great-power realism in Moscow’s foreign policy.⁵

A centerpiece of Primakov’s vision was the concept of a strategic triangle linking Russia, India, and China (RIC). At the time, this idea was bold: Russia was recovering from economic crisis, India and China had a history of rivalry, including a border war in 1962, and all three had very different political systems. Yet Primakov anticipated the “rise of China and India” as fundamental forces in the coming century and argued that Russia’s long-term interests would be best served by aligning with them. Such a coalition, he believed, could act as a counterweight to unipolarity and champion a more equitable world order. “It was he [Primakov],” Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov later recalled, “who, as a practical embodiment of his ideas, suggested initiating interaction within the ‘triangle’ Russia-India-China, the so-called RIC”.⁶ During an official visit to New Delhi in December 1998, Primakov proposed that these three large Eurasian countries coordinate their efforts in international affairs. Indeed, starting in 2002 the foreign ministers of RIC began holding regular trilateral meetings—tangible proof that Primakov’s once ambitious idea had taken root as a diplomatic forum.

Primakov’s push for RIC foreshadowed a broader shift in Russian policy back toward the Global South in the late 1990s. Under his guidance, Russia revitalized its relationships across Asia: it rebuilt strategic ties with India,

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Shabbir Muhammad. Primakov Doctrine and Russian Foreign Policy. Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA). March 27, 2023. <https://issra.pk/pub/insight/PrimakovDoctrine/.pdf>.

⁶ Lavrov spoke about Primakov’s idea to create a Russia-India-China “triangle”. RIA Novosti. 29.10.2019. <https://ria.ru/20191029/1560334084.html>.

signing a declaration on strategic partnership in 2000,⁷ and mended relations with China. The two countries declared their commitment to a “Multipolar World and a New International Order” in April 1997.⁸ Russia also cultivated partnerships in the Middle East and rekindled contacts in Africa and Latin America that had languished after Soviet days. This multi-directional outreach laid the groundwork for Moscow’s later initiatives to engage the Global South on equal footing, rather than through the ideological lens of communism as in Soviet times. By the end of the 1990s, although Russia was still grappling with domestic troubles, it had clearly signaled a return to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, from reopening diplomatic missions and renewing arms sales, to offering debt relief for some African states and joining dialogues in regional forums.

Primakov’s tenure as foreign minister and briefly prime minister in 1998–99 thus marked a turning point. He reoriented Russian foreign policy to embrace multipolarity and the “Bandung spirit” of solidarity with the developing world, albeit now in a post-Cold War context. This rebalanced foreign policy set the stage for what came next: the formation of new coalitions linking Russia with the major emerging powers of the Global South.

3. The Birth of BRICS: Origins and Russia’s Rationale

By the early 2000s, global economic shifts were dramatically raising the profile of a set of large, fast-growing countries—notably Brazil, Russia, India, and China. That period also witnessed the fundamental shifts in their political landscape, marked by the rise of new political leaders: Vladimir Putin’s election as President of Russia in 2000, Hu Jintao’s appointment as Chairman of the People’s Republic of China in 2003, the ascent to power in India of the Indian National Congress under Manmohan Singh in 2004, and Brazil’s leftward shift in 2002 with the Workers’ Party led by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. These new leaders embodied fresh political determination and the aspiration to implement overdue global changes. President Putin and his

⁷ Prime Minister Vladimir Putin held negotiations with Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh. Government of the Russian Federation. December 7, 2009. <http://archive.government.ru/eng/docs/8458/print/>.

⁸ The history of BRICS. Brics Expert Council – Russia. <https://bricscouncil.ru/en/history>.

foreign policy team, which included veterans of Primakov's school, like Lavrov, viewed the BRIC concept as aligning with Russia's strategic goal of a multipolar world. For Russia—a country straddling Europe and Asia, and recovering from the 1990s tumult—leading such an initiative promised to both boost its great-power status and secure partnerships less encumbered by ideological or historical baggage. Putin's central priority became leading Russia out of the structural economic and financial crisis that characterized the country during the Yeltsin presidency, along with implementing a series of structural market reforms.⁹

The first steps in forming a BRIC coalition were spearheaded in 2006. On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, Lavrov convened an informal lunch meeting with his counterparts from China, India, and Brazil—the first ever BRIC foreign ministers' gathering. This Russian initiative built on momentum from earlier that year, when President Putin had invited the leaders of China, India, and Brazil as guests during the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg. A series of high-level meetings culminated in the inaugural BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on June 16, 2009. The Summit issued a joint statement calling for a more democratic and multi-polar world order, reform of international financial institutions, and cooperation on issues like the global financial crisis, energy security, and food security.¹⁰ In effect, BRIC was launched as a political alliance of emerging economies determined to reshape aspects of global governance that they viewed as outdated or unfair.

For Russia, the creation of BRIC—and later BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa in 2010—carried several strategic benefits. First, it reinforced Russia's identity as a key player in the non-Western world, not just a former superpower tied to its Soviet legacy. By standing shoulder-to-shoulder with China, India, and Brazil, Russia could demonstrate that it had influential friends and alternatives to partnership with the West. This was especially pertinent after events like the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, which strained Moscow's relations with the US and Europe—BRIC provided a platform

⁹ Volosyuk Olga. BRICS: New Geo-Economics for a New Geopolitical Era. In: *The Global South in the Kremlin's Foreign Policy after 24/2*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2025.

¹⁰ President of Russia. Press Statement following BRIC Group Summit. June 16, 2009. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/4475>.

where Russia was not isolated or vilified, but respected as an equal. R. Salzman noted that Russia was often the “driving force” in shaping the BRICS narrative and pushing its institutionalization.¹¹

Second, BRICS alignment dovetailed with Russia’s economic and security interests. China and India were growing markets for Russian energy exports and arms sales, while Brazil offered opportunities in high technology and agricultural trade. Regular BRICS consultations allowed Russia to deepen bilateral ties with each in a multilateral context. By collaborating with other fast-growing economies, Russia aimed to diversify its trade and investment links, reducing vulnerability to any single partner. This paid off, particularly after 2014, when Western sanctions over the Ukraine crisis pushed Russia to pivot more trade toward Asia.

Furthermore, on security issues, BRICS provided tacit support for such principles as state sovereignty and non-interference. While BRICS was not a military or defense pact, the members typically shared skepticism toward Western-led interventions. Such common ground, articulated in BRICS communiqués, buttressed Russia’s diplomatic stance that solutions to conflicts must respect national sovereignty.¹²

Perhaps the most significant joint undertaking of BRICS—and one especially important to Russia—was the effort to create new financial institutions as alternatives to the Western-dominated system. At the BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil in 2014, the leaders announced the founding of the New Development Bank (NDB) and a BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to provide liquidity support in financial emergencies. For Russia, reeling at the time from sanctions and a ruble crisis, this endeavor meshed with the Kremlin’s broader calls to “de-dollarize” the world economy and promote a fairer financial order.

The formation of BRICS was driven by converging interests among its members in seeking a more balanced world system—and Russia enthusiastically embraced it as both *architect* and beneficiary. The BRICS

¹¹ Rachel S. Salzman. From bridge to bulwark: the evolution of Brics in Russian grand strategy. *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, 2015, no.3, p.1. <https://doi.org/10.14422/cir.i03.y2015.001>.

¹² Putin calls for strengthening emerging multipolar world order in address to BRICS summit. TASS. 9 Sep 2021. <https://tass.com/politics/1335835>.

platform gave Russia a renewed leadership role in the Global South, fulfilled Primakov's prophecy of closer Russia-India-China cooperation, with Brazil and South Africa amplifying the voice, and created new instruments to challenge or bypass Western dominance. Even as relations between Russia and the West deteriorated in the 2010s, BRICS cooperation deepened: summits rotated annually among the members, over 100 working-group meetings were held on topics from agriculture to science, and initiatives like the BRICS Think Tanks Council and BRICS Business Council emerged to encourage exchanges beyond government. What began as a Russian diplomatic initiative in 2006 blossomed into a durable coalition—one that Russia considered crucial for its goal of a multipolar world order.¹³

4. BRICS and the Bandung Legacy: Building a “New World” Today

Seven decades after the Bandung Conference, the vision of “a new, better world” championed by Sukarno and fellow post-colonial leaders finds resonant expression in the BRICS grouping. In many ways, BRICS has become the foremost vehicle carrying forward the ideals of the Global South for a more just and equitable international system. The BRICS nations today present themselves as advocates for the interests of the developing world at large—a voice for all those historically marginalized in global decision-making. As Sun Xingjie observed, “since its meeting in 2006, [BRICS] has evolved from a concept into reality, becoming a key force promoting a multipolar world order”.¹⁴ In fact, at the 2024 BRICS summit, collaboration with the broader Global South was explicitly framed in its motto: “BRICS and Global South: Building a Better World Together.”¹⁵ The echo of Sukarno's words is unmistakable: BRICS leaders, like the Bandung generation, are envisioning a world where peaceful coexistence, sovereign equality, and shared prosperity are the norms, not the exception.

One of the clearest links between Bandung-era principles and BRICS is the emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference. The BRICS countries

¹³ Carrer Alberto. BRICS and the Rise of a Multipolar World. BRICS. July 4, 2025. <https://infobrics.org/en/post/51125/>.

¹⁴ Sun Xingjie. BRICS promotes multipolar and fairer world order. China Daily. 2024-10-31. <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202410/31/WS6722acd2a310f1265a1ca884.html>.

¹⁵ XVI BRICS Summit Kazan Declaration. 23 October 2024. <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/en/RosOySvLzGaJtmx2wYFv0IN4NSPZploG.pdf>.

consistently underline the importance of the UN Charter and international law, including respect for each nation's territorial integrity and social system. "The BRICS countries represent different development models, religions, authentic civilisations and cultures, while unanimously upholding equality and neighbourliness. They prioritise traditional values, the high ideals of friendship and accord, striving to contribute to global stability and security, the prosperity and success of all nations," Putin said in an address to an 2025 BRICS Summit.¹⁶ Today, BRICS countries stress that a cornerstone of a fair world order is allowing nations to pursue their own development models without external diktats—reflecting Sukarno's call for a world where "humanity can achieve its full stature" free of any dominance.¹⁷

Another Bandung ideal manifested in BRICS is the pursuit of economic justice and development for all. BRICS countries have positioned themselves as champions of reform in global economic governance to make it more representative of today's world. The BRICS bloc explicitly seeks a "need to reform the current international financial architecture to meet the global financial challenges, including global economic governance".¹⁸ Sergey Lavrov during BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in 2025 noted the importance of joint practical implementation of the initiatives launched during the Russian and Brazilian chairmanships, including the establishment of a new investment platform, a BRICS cross-border payment initiative, a depository and clearing infrastructure, a reinsurance mechanism, and a BRICS grain exchange.¹⁹ Through the NDB, BRICS directly provides development finance, thereby empowering developing nations to follow their own development paths. This resonates with the Bandung participants' dream of attaining economic prosperity free from neo-colonial control. Infrastructure projects funded by the NDB—from renewable energy in India to transportation in Africa—aim to spur growth and connectivity in the Global South, addressing the very gaps in justice and prosperity Sukarno lamented decades ago.

¹⁶ Plenary session of the 17th BRICS Summit. President of Russia. July 6, 2025. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/77373>.

¹⁷ Sukarno's Speech: To Build the World Anew

¹⁸ XVI BRICS Summit Kazan Declaration

¹⁹ Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's participation in BRICS foreign ministers' meeting. 26 September 2025. https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/2049449/.

Crucially, BRICS has also embraced inclusive multilateralism, seeking to amplify the voice of the Global South in setting the international agenda. In recent years, the group launched the “BRICS Plus” dialogue, inviting observers and guest countries from the developing world to BRICS meetings. The outreach to countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific demonstrates BRICS’ intent to act as an incubator of South–South cooperation. In 2024, BRICS moved to expand its membership, inviting Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Ethiopia to join BRICS, a major enlargement that will further increase the group’s geopolitical heft. Moscow welcomed this expansion as evidence that BRICS represented a “World Majority” united by a desire for a more balanced world order.²⁰ This inclusive ethos strongly mirrors the Bandung era’s broad tent of Afro-Asian solidarity, now extended to Latin America and the Middle East.

Finally, the normative vision of a “new world” articulated by BRICS leaders closely parallels Bandung’s humanistic aspirations. Vladimir Putin has repeatedly hailed BRICS as key to forming “a more just multi-polar world”.²¹ Xi Jinping spoke of the “collective rise of the Global South” as a transformative force in world history, emphasizing that developing countries marching toward modernization is “monumental” and unprecedented.²² In essence, BRICS officials often sound like the successors of Sukarno, Nehru, Zhou Enlai and Nasser—advocating for a world system where no nation or group of nations can dictate terms to others, and where global governance is reformed to allow equitable participation and benefit-sharing. These goals are fundamentally in line with the Bandung proclamation of a world of justice and prosperity for all.

The trajectory from the Bandung Conference to the BRICS alliance illustrates a historical continuum in the Global South’s struggle and strategy to “build a new, a better world”. Russia’s policies toward the Global South, shaped by figures like Primakov and carried forward by Putin, have been central to this story. From championing the RIC triangle to taking the lead in

²⁰ Safranchuk, I.A. The World Majority: Growing Significance but Inadequate Agency. *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2025, 23(1), pp.100–3. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/world-majority-safranchuk/>.

²¹ Plenary session of the 17th BRICS Summit

²² Sun Xingjie. BRICS promotes multipolar and fairer world order

BRICS, Russia has aligned itself with the Bandung legacy, positioning BRICS as “the embodiment of multipolarity” and of the developing world’s collective hopes.²³ As BRICS continues to evolve—expanding its membership, deepening its financial cooperation, and coordinating on global challenges—it indeed serves as a modern incarnation of the Bandung ideals. The BRICS slogan could well be Sukarno’s own words: “We Seek to Build a New, a Better World!” In 2025 and beyond, that mission is arguably more relevant than ever, as new geopolitical rifts and inequalities make the quest for a fair international order both challenging and urgent. BRICS, inspired by the past and innovating in the present, stands as a testament that the Global South’s drive to create a better world endures—and is gaining institutional form and power in shaping the 21st-century world system.

²³ “BRICS is the embodiment of multipolarity”: Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin at Sputnik Brazil’s 10th anniversary event. Jul 03, 2025. <https://alexanderdugin.substack.com/p/brics-is-the-embodiment-of-multipolarity>.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

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BANDUNG AT 70: Commemoration and Continuation

Isaac Bazié

The commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference takes place in the shadow of troubling events: Europe has embarked on a policy of rearmament in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war; new forms of conservatism are revoking the fragile gains of struggles aimed at greater inclusion, diversity, equity, and sovereignty; ongoing elections are being closely watched insofar as ballot-box democracy has failed to meet the basic needs of populations in many African countries, which incidentally led the Malagasy president into exile under pressure from a youth seeking a future; meanwhile in the Sahel, three states—Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger—have formed a coalition to establish a confederation they want to make the vehicle for their aspirations to a better life and sovereign governance for their populations; and what can be said of the trade war that shows no signs of ending and to which China is forced to respond, while other Asian countries struggle to negotiate with the United States of America? This picture of challenges on a global scale is far from precise and exhaustive. However, it reveals the tensions that mark the world in the context in which we commemorate the conference that brought together twenty-nine countries from Africa and Asia seventy years ago.

Seen in this light, the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of Bandung had to be conducted under the sign of the challenge to reinvent the world: “To Build the World Anew in a Global Perspective.” More than an option, this title, inspired by Sukarno’s famous 1960 UN speech, is an urgent necessity. This is not the place to examine this speech, which has been the subject of several analyses. Rather, it is about broadly evoking

some aspects of the approach that would enable such a re-engineering of the world from a global perspective. In this, I will emphasize the global dimension of the approach.

The first question we must ask ourselves concerns the “global” character of this reconstruction of the world. It is inscribed at the heart of this book and the contributions that constitute it, because it is in this way that the legacy of Bandung can remain inspiring in facing current challenges. At Bandung, it was not an iconoclastic spirit that brought together African and Asian leaders with the aim of rejecting the world in its entirety. It was a specific world order that they no longer wanted to endure: one marked by colonization and violence that alienated peoples. Bandung was a double gesture: the rejection of a given world order as it had been shaped by centuries of Western domination, and at the same time the affirmation of an innovative quest for models suited to the aspirations of Africans and Asians, and therefore of the world as well. Consequently, there was never any question of autarky or negation of the rest of the world. The major flaw in the configuration of the world, as the leaders at Bandung rejected it, is linked to the fact that this global structuring had been the enterprise of a single actor, which was the colonizing West. Already at Bandung, therefore, the necessity of redrawing the world was felt, but this time, not through the imposition of a particular and hegemonic model, but through respect for the sovereign voice of all peoples. This is what Sukarno formulated very clearly in his speech, five years after the conference.

Seventy years after Bandung, this reconstruction of the world from a global perspective remains relevant. This is why commemoration is continuation, strangely: one need only refer to the context described in the introduction to this article to be convinced of this. So how does one commemorate an event that laid the foundations for a challenge we have not yet finished experiencing? By making a double movement: the first consists of returning to the historical context of the conference. The second, resolutely, updates the challenges that continue to preoccupy Africa, Asia, and the world after the historical event. This is what the authors of this book have done, with perspectives from multiple disciplines and very diverse cultural and geographical areas.

To meet the challenge of reconstructing the world from a perspective that takes all voices into account, among other solutions, the historical actors who have dominated the world order until now would need to adopt a

different attitude, more open and more respectful toward cultures and imaginaries that have been marginalized until now. This is the meaning of the declaration made by historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo (*À quand l'Afrique*, 2003) when he stated: “The North must have enough common sense and modesty to understand that it can learn something from the countries of the South.”

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Authors' Profiles

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A senior Associate Professor at the University of Guelma, Algeria, he also holds the office of Vice-President of the Center for African Studies of the University of Porto (CEAUP), Portugal. He is also Director of *The Journal of US-Africa Studies*, published by CEAUP. He is currently coordinating two research projects at CEAUP. The first is titled “*Colonial Crimes in Africa: Reckoning, Memory, and Reparations*” and aims at exploring the interlinked themes of justice, historical memory, and reparations. The second research line is titled “*U.S. Policies and Foreign Interventions in Africa*”, it delves into the U.S. historical ties to the regions of North Africa, Sahel, and West Africa on one hand and the current time policies on the other. In Algeria, he is the department’s scientific committee president and member of the administration board of the University of Guelma. He is also member of the national bureau of the Algerian Memory Academy in charge of relations with inter/national academic institutions. He has organized several international conferences and cultural forums in Portugal and Algeria. Along his career, he has author several book chapters, articles, conference papers and reports in the field of US history and politics, US-Africa relations, Algerian history, memory and colonial crimes.

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A full professor in the Department of Literary Studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Professor Bazié has been doing research and teaching activities focus on African literature and cultures, African-Asian intercultural and political encounters, and the canon of world literature. He has published many essays on these issues. He has been President of the Canadian Association for African Studies (CAAS, <https://caas-acee.org/caas/people>). He has taught in Europe, Africa, and North America. From 2009 to 2019, he was chair of the Department of Literary Studies at UQAM, chair of the Bachelor of Education program (French), and chair of the Graduate Studies program. In 2016, Isaac Bazié co-founded and chairs since then LAFI (Laboratory of Innovative Africa, www.lafi.uqam.ca). In addition, he founded the academic journal *Afroglobe*, (<https://edition.uqam.ca/afroglobe/index>); With the support of international scholars specializing in African-Asian Studies, Isaac Bazié created with Darwis Khudori the Institute of African-Asian and International Studies (AFRASI Institute) in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

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Student in International Relations and European Studies (University of Florence, Italy), Pietro Fasola graduated in Political Science and International Studies (University of Siena, Italy), who has already carried out academic research on Africa, particularly on Ghana. As part of his academic path, he attended the University of Ghana in Accra, where he obtained a Certificate of English Proficiency and conducted field research on the relationship between Ghana and the United States from 1957 to 1966, the subject of his bachelor's thesis, which was awarded the 2nd edition of the Marco Paolo Tucci Prize (University of Siena, Italy). Interested in history and international relations, he gained experience at the Honorary Consulate of Yemen in Florence and participated in the OSCE Laboratory Programme. He is author of *Traces of Italy in the Gold*

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A final-year PhD student at the University of Siegen, Germany, and a freelance researcher, Jan Niklas focuses on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and populism. He has presented his research at various international conferences and published in academic journals. His research examines how the NAM has evolved into an important actor in international relations. More recently, his interests have broadened to explore how NAM-related multipolarity is represented in contemporary international and regional organisations.

INDRAYANI Etin – Indonesia

Head of the Government Information Systems Engineering Study Program at the Institute of Home Affairs Government (IPDN) in Indonesia, she also teaches in the master's and doctoral programs at that institution. She has been a dedicated academic since 1996, and her interest in ICT research began to grow while she was pursuing her master's degree in engineering at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). During her doctoral program in information systems at the Indonesia University of Education (UPI), she became even more focused on this area. She has worked at IPDN for a considerable time, holding several leadership and management roles, including Head of the Higher Education Database Center, Head of the Library Center, Head of the Information and Communication Technology Management Unit, and Head of the Student and Staff Counseling Unit. She has demonstrated her expertise in e-government and public sector information systems through numerous research projects, articles in international journals, and books she has authored. She also speaks at international conferences and has worked on multiple consulting projects for local governments.

KHUDORI Darwis – Indonesia/France

Darwis Khudori is writer (poems, short stories, novels, essays), architect (Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia), planner (Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Rotterdam, Netherlands), historian (Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, France), emeritus professor of Oriental Studies (Université Le Havre Normandie, France). As socially engaged architect, he participated in the advocacy and development of *Kampung Code* (to be pronounced Tchoday), a slum area on the Code riverbank of Yogyakarta, Indonesia (Aga Khan Award for Architecture 1992). Outside university, he is initiator and co-ordinator of Bandung Spirit Network of scholars and activists of social and solidarity movements for a global future. He is co-founder of AFRASI (African-Asian and International Studies Institute) based in Ouadagougou, Burkina Faso. His recent publication includes *THE RISE OF ASIA 60 YEARS AFTER BLGRADE: What Non-Alignment in a Multipolar World and for a Global Future?* (New Delhi, AAKAR BOOKS India, 2025), *BANDUNG-BELGRADE-HAVANA IN GLOBAL HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVE: The Deployment of Bandung Constellation towards a Global Future* (Surabaya, Airlangga University Press, 2022); *BANDUNG LEGACY AND GLOBAL FUTURE: New Insights and Emerging Forces* (New Delhi, Aakar Book, 2018) and *LA FRANCE ET BANDUNG: Les batailles diplomatiques entre la France, l'Afrique du Nord et l'Indochine, en Indonésie (1950–1955)* (Paris, Les Indes Savantes, 2021).

MACEDO Jamille – Brazil

Professor/historian, she holds a Ph.D. in Social History from the Federal University of Bahia (PPGH-UFBA) and a Master's degree from the same institution. She completed her Licentiate degree in History at the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia (UFRB), where she developed research on the resistance movements among the Tupinambá people in the first century of colonization. She is the author of the book *Ecoss da liberdade: profetismo indígena e protagonismo Tupinambá na Bahia quinhentista* (Salvador, Edufba, 2019). She is currently a Substitute Professor at the same UFRB and at the State University of Bahia (UNEB) in the Department of Education (Campus XIV). She is also a permanent faculty member of the Graduate Program in African Studies, Indigenous Peoples, and Black Cultures at UNEB. She is a member of the following research groups: Cultural practices, religiosity, and imaginary (UFRB) and History of Portuguese America (UNEB). She is part of the team for the Outreach Project *Caminhos de Abya Yala – Intelectuais Indígenas do Continente Americano* (Paths of Abya Yala – Indigenous Intellectuals of the American Continent) at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). She co-coordinates, alongside Professor Renata de Oliveira, the Working Group (GT) on Indigenous History of Bahia, affiliated with ANPUH-BA (National Association of History, Bahia section).

MISHRA Pramod Kumar – India

Retired Professor Delhi University, Professor Mishra has experiences as Professor of Governance and Development Studies, Hawassa University, Ethiopia, and Fulbright visiting Professor at West Florida University, USA. He published 6 books and 96 research papers.

MOHANTY Manoranjan – India

Distinguished Professor at the Council for Social Development, New Delhi he was formerly Professor of Political Science, University of Delhi, Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi and Chairperson of Development Research Institute, Bhubaneswar. His areas of interest are Comparative Politics, China's Political Economy and Global Transformation. He is also a part of the Bandung Spirit Network and Global University of Sustainability. He has authored many research papers and books which include *The Political Philosophy of Mao Zedong* (1977, 2012); *Red and Green: Five Decades of the Maoist Movement in India* (2015); *Contemporary Indian Political Theory* (2000), *Ideology Matters: China from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping* (2014) and *China's Transformation: The Success Story and the Success Trap* (2018). His edited or coedited volumes

include *Chinese Revolution: Comparative Perspectives* (1992); *People's Rights: Social Movements and the State in the Third World* (1998); *Class, Caste, Gender* (2004); *Grass-roots Democracy in India and China* (2007); *Building a Just World* (2015); *Exploring Emerging Global Thresholds* (2017); *China at a Turning Point* (2019), *Migration, Workers and Fundamental Freedoms: Pandemic Vulnerabilities and States of Exception in India* (2021) and *Satyagraha: A Global force for the Twenty First Century* (2025).

MOKAM David – Cameroon

Teacher-researcher, Mokam is Professor of History in the Department of History at the University of Ngaoundere, where he has been teaching for close to thirty years. His fields of research and teaching are, history of civilisation, colonial history of Africa, nationalism associations, democratisation in Africa. He has taken part in many international conferences in America, Africa, Europe and Asia. He is author of many publications, notably, “US and the Democratic Process in Cameroon from 1993 to 2013” (in Sally Burt and Daniel Arnove Arnove (eds.), 2016, *Global Perspectives on US Democratization Efforts. From the Outside in*, New York, Palgrave/Macmillan, p.69–88), “Regional interests versus national Interests in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa: the Case of Cameroon since 1945” (2010, *African Humanities*, Vol.1, p.207–26). David Mokam is Editor in Chief of the *Journal of the Cameroon History Society*. He is also member of many learned societies amongst which are the Cameroon History Society and the International Network on the Study of Conflicts in Africa.

NETSWERA Fulufhelo (Fulu) – South Africa

He is the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Venda. Before then, he spent about 29-year of his career in the South African research and innovation sector straddling Research Councils (HSRC, CSIR, NRF) and universities (Technikon SA, UNISA, UL, CPUT, NWU and DUT) as a researcher, researcher grants manager, and academic leader (Director of Business School, Dean and Deputy Vice Chancellor). His immediate job was Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS) at Durban University of Technology (DUT) where he was headhunted to lead the faculty and establish the DUT Business School. The Business School got operational in 2022 and has graduated numerous MBA, PGDiP and HC candidates. His leadership saw the faculty increase postgraduate graduations (M&D) from 88 (2019) to 134 (2024) and research outputs units from 109 (2020) to 233 (2024). While at it, he equally established the BRICS Research Institute (<https://www.bricsri.co.za/>) bringing together over 90 academics and doctoral students from across all the BRICS nations in multi-lateral collaborative

research. Before joining DUT, he held the position of Director of the Business School at the North West University (2017–19). Before North West he was the Deputy Dean of Research in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and led the South African BRICS Think Tank (SABTT) in 2016–17.

PANGOP Kameni Alain Cyr – Cameroon

Graduated from Division III (Art-Culture-Communication) of the Advanced School of Mass Communication (Yaoundé) in 1998 and got his PhD of Modern Literature from the University of Cergy-Pontoise (France) in 2003, Pangop is a full professor since 2018, affiliated with the Department of African Studies and Globalization at the University of Dschang (Cameroon) where 18 doctoral theses and more than sixty Masters have been defended under his supervision. Founder of the University Theater in 1999, he also co-founded and directs the Group for Research, Animation and Criticism in Performing Arts. He is Alumnus of the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation (Chair of Romance and Intercultural Communication, University of Saarland, from 2007 to 2010) and head of the Information and Conference Department at the University of Dschang from 2005 to 2010. He has taken part in scientific events in Madagascar, Saarland, Bayreuth, Mainz (Germany), Innsbruck (Austria), Paris (France), Ouagadougou (Burkina-Faso), Princeton (USA, videoconference). A graduate of the Haggai Institute in Singapore in 2006, he is an international facilitator in Leadership and Management. As president of the scientific committee of the *Cameroon Debate Association* since 2011, he led several training seminars on structured debate, public speaking, youth leadership and local entrepreneurship. He is the author of hundreds of scientific works, and the promoter of the website www.affocom.com.

RAI Dhananjay – India

Associate Professor and Head of Department of Gandhian Thought and Peace Studies, School of Social Sciences, Central University of Gujarat, Vadodara, Gujarat, India, Rai works on political theory, political thought, and education. His select books include *Debating Swaraj* (ed. 2025, Orient BlackSwan), *Hind Swaraj* (2024, Penguin), *Poorna Swaraj* (2023, Penguin), *Contested Representation' (2022/Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield, New York; Bloomsbury 2025)*, *'Politics: Essays in Tribute to Randhir Singh'* (edited, 2018, Aakar, Delhi), *'Nehru and Modernity'* (edited, 2016, in Hindi, Aakar, Delhi), *'Democracy on the Move? Reflections on Moments Promises and Contradictions'* (co-editor, 2013, Aakar Delhi), and *'Contemporary Indian Political Theory: A Critical Analysis'* (2013, Aakar, Delhi). His research articles and reviews have been published in

Economic and Political Weekly, National Identities, Seminar, Social Change, Social Scientist, Think India Quarterly, Book Review, the Indian Journal of Public Administration, Contemporary Education Dialogue.

REDIX George – USA

A seasoned Human Resources leader with more than twelve years of experience across diverse industries and seven years dedicated to advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) on both organizational and societal levels, George focuses on improving living and working conditions through strategies that expand access to quality healthcare, education, housing, and pathways for economic mobility. Throughout his career, George has partnered with executives, community stakeholders, and policymakers to design sustainable frameworks that strengthen workforce well-being and create inclusive growth. His leadership is defined by a balance of empathy and analytics—turning values into measurable progress and meaningful change. Most recently, George served at JPMorgan Chase, where he helped develop and implement the firm’s \$30 billion Racial Equity Commitment—a global model for corporate responsibility aimed at expanding economic opportunity for underrepresented communities through investments in housing, entrepreneurship, financial health, and workforce advancement. Grounded yet visionary, George approaches his work with humility, purpose, and a steadfast belief that inclusion and equity are essential drivers of organizational excellence and global progress.

SEIXLACK Alessandra – Brazil

Post-Doctoral Fellow in Social and Cultural History from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Alessandra addresses her research during her Ph.D. the relationship between the Mapuche people and the Argentine and Chilean nation-states during the process of state territorialization in the late nineteenth century. Currently, her research is focused on the dialogue between the Anthropocene, history, and Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, as well as the analysis of contemporary Indigenous intellectual production. She is an Adjunct Professor of American History at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ-Maracanã) and a permanent faculty member of the Graduate Program in History at UERJ-Maracanã (PPGH-UERJ). She coordinates the Outreach Project “Caminhos de Abya Yala – Indigenous Intellectuals of the American Continent” and the research project “Indigenous Intellectuals and Political-Ontological Vocabulary: Rethinking the Boundaries of Intellectual History and Historical Knowledge in the Anthropocene.” She is the author of the book *Entre a Araucania Maldita e o Deserto Indômito: debates oitocentistas sobre a Pacificação da Araucania no Chile e a Conquista do*

Deserto na Argentina (Rio de Janeiro, Via Verita, 2018) and one of the organizers of the book *Vozes de Abya Yala: perspectivas indígenas sobre o presente e futuro do continente americano* (Caracas, Biblioteca Digital Latino-Americana de Antropologias, Red de Antropologias do Sul, 2024).

SHI Qing – China

Chinese/China (Ph.D. in Law, Colonial Legal History, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, Comparative Law, Postdoctoral Fellow, Peking University-Institute of Area Studies, China), Shi Qing is a postdoctoral fellow at Peking University, where he earned his Ph.D. in law. His research focuses on British colonial legal systems and U.S. extraterritorial jurisdiction, with particular interest in the relationship between imperial ideologies and legal institutions. He is also a research fellow at the Eurasia Systematic Science Association and PH Institute. Before entering academia, he worked in a leading Chinese law firm, specializing in overseas investment and legal compliance for multinational corporations.

STOICA Diana Sfetlana – Romania/Hungary

Independent researcher on African Studies, Stoica holds a Ph.D. from the West University of Timisoara (Romania), and Post-Doctoral fellow at the European Scientific Institute, on the African Philosophy of Movement. She is also a communication specialist and airline professional with interests in postcolonialist and de-colonial reflections and questionings on topics such as mobility, identity, migration, tourism and transportation, socio-ecology, fine arts (music and fashion), and intercultural communication, from an African narrative's perspective. She is the author of the book: *Towards Africa. Narrative and Development* written in Romanian (Eurostampa, 2024), being in translation into Italian, and of articles or book chapters published in Romania, Hungary, Italy, Russia and The United States of America.

TIBURZI Fabio – Italy

Italian geopolitical analyst and researcher focusing on Euro-Asian relations, BRICS cooperation, and China's role in global governance, he collaborates with the International Department of EURISPES within the BRICS/BRI Laboratory, the only European coordination body dedicated to the study of the BRICS countries and the Belt and Road Initiative. He also works with ASRIE/Special EuroAsia as an analyst on economic, political, and military issues concerning the Euro-Asian, Asia-Pacific, Arctic, and African regions. He has developed and presented Italian projects in China in the fields of artificial intelligence (Tianjin-Chongqing), UAV and UASE drone technologies (Shenzhen), energy, raw materials, and health

prevention, collaborating with institutions such as the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and the Bank of China. He has also conducted exchanges with the Tianjin Belt and Road Office and is frequently invited to visit Special Economic Development Zones, including those in Shandong Province, to strengthen cooperation and research collaborations. He has conducted studies for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) and the Italian Space Agency (ASI), and supported Dr. Tan Weiping, Deputy Director-General of the International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC), during his mission in Rome. Author of several publications, including *Italy, China and the New Silk Road* and *The Evolution of the Chinese Navy*, he regularly participates in conferences and policy discussions on BRICS, global development, and strategic connectivity.

VOLOSUYUK Olga – Russia

D.Sc. in History, Professor, Academic Head of the Department of Regional Studies, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, HSE University, Moscow. One of the leading Russian experts on the history and international relations of the Global South, BRICS and, especially, the countries of Ibero-America. In 2014–23, the Academic Director of the Master's Program "Socioeconomic and Political Development of Modern Asia", being the supervisor of more than 20 students, among them 5 students from Indonesia. Author of more than 150 academic works on International Relations, South-South relations, the foreign policy of Spain and Ibero-America, being the author and editor-in-chief of the first Russian *"History of Spain"* (Moscow, 2014), as well as 4 volumes on Russian-Spanish relations. Co-author of *"The Global South in the Kremlin's Foreign Policy after 24/2"* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). She lectured and presented at Complutense University (Madrid), University of California (Riverside), St. John's University (New York), the Spanish National Research Council, Ortega Marañón Foundation (Madrid), Charles III University (Madrid), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre) etc. She presented at numerous international conferences, including the XXII International Congress of Historical Sciences (Jinan, China, 2015), the Conference of rectors of Russian and Ibero-American universities (Seville, 2019), "The Rise of Asia 70 years after Bandung" (Paris & Le Havre, 2025). In 2017, she was awarded the Order of Civil Merit by King Felipe VI of Spain.

WARDAYA Baskara T. – Indonesia

Holder of a Master's and PhD in History from Marquette University, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, Baskara conducted in 2004–05 a Fulbright postdoctoral research program in the US on US-Indonesian relations during the Cold War (1945–90). In 2011–12 he was awarded another Fulbright grant to teach at the University of California-Riverside. In 2022 he held the Francis Wade Chair and taught the history of Southeast Asia at Marquette University, Milwaukee. Among his works are *Chicago, Chicago* (2006), *Cold War Shadow* (2007); *Truth Will Out* (2013); *Luka Bangsa, Luka Kita* (2013); *Beyond Borders* (2017); *Keeping Hope* (2017); *Memori Genosida* (2021) dan *Awan Merah* (2023). He now works as the director of research for PRAKSIS (Jesuit Center for Research and Advocacy), Jakarta.

WARGADINATA Ella Lesmanawaty – Indonesia

Lecturer at the *Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN)*, Indonesia, she began the professional career at the Directorate of Rural Development Empowerment, Ministry of Home Affairs, from 1999 to 2000, before being assigned as a lecturer at IPDN in 2000. She holds a diverse educational background that combines natural science, environmental studies, and public administration. She earned undergraduate degree in Biology, followed by a Master's in Environmental Management. She then completed a second Master's degree in Public Administration at Kobe University, Japan, under a full scholarship program. She obtained her Doctorate in Public Administration from Padjadjaran University (UNPAD), Indonesia. The academic enrichment is further supported by numerous international short courses and professional trainings, including: *One Village One Product (OVOP) Program* by JICA, Japan (2000); *Rural Development Planning* at NIRD, India (2008); *Governing the Asia Century* at Murdoch University, Australia (2013); *Governance, Democratization, and Public Policy* at ISS, The Netherlands (2014); *Belt and Road Initiative* at Tsinghua University, China (2019); *Natural Resources Management for Sustainable Rural Livelihood* at NIRD, India (2020). Her research interests include local governance, decentralization policy, public service innovation, rural development, and digital governance. She has authored several scholarly works in these areas, and her publications can be accessed via Google Scholar, https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=8i_q5j8AAAAJ&hl=id.

WILKINSON T.P. (Chinese name: 魏三唐) – USA/Portugal

Scholar of American-German descent, he holds a doctorate in Political Science from the University of Bremen and has taught history and languages at several

universities and schools in Germany and Portugal. Currently, he serves as an adjunct professor and research fellow in Comparative Cultural History at the Center for African Studies, University of Porto, Portugal. Professor Wilkinson has published six monographs, along with numerous scientific papers, poems, and journalistic works. As an enthusiast of music and theater, Professor Wilkinson became fascinated by the art of Huangmei Opera after watching the CCTV documentary *The Grand Huangmei Opera*. This fascination inspired him to write the novel *Overtured Chessboard*, his second novel that was published on Amazon in October 2024. He is currently writing an original English-language Huangmei Opera adapted from his novel. He also paints in the style of Chinese calligraphy. His first exhibition *From Traditional Chinese Medicine to Traditional Chinese Media* was held in Anqing during China's 2025 National Day celebrations.

ZHUKOV Nikita – Russia

Master of Law in International Criminal Law. Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, HSE University, Moscow. Expert on the history and modern status of International Legal Relations and Cooperation between states and international organizations. Specializes in such organizations as the United Nations, International Court of Justice of the UN, International Criminal Court etc. Author and co-author of several studies in International Relations, Collaboration between BRICS countries in Law and relations between the countries of the Global South.

"We do not seek to defend the world we know; we seek to build a new, a better world! We seek to build a world sane and secure.

We seek to build a world in which all may live in peace.

We seek to build a world of justice and prosperity for all men.

We seek to build a world in which humanity can achieve its full stature."

[Sukarno, *To Build the World Anew*, speech at the UN General Assembly, September 30, 1960].

The Bandung Conference and the Bandung Era entered History.

Yet, the Bandung Principles, Spirit, and Dream have continued to live in the minds of different peoples, nations, states and institutions worldwide. The Bandung Principles were well formulated and established at the end of the Bandung Conference in 1955, known as the "Ten Bandung Principles of Peaceful Coexistence". The Bandung Spirit has never been officially formulated and is open to interpretation. One possibility is translating it into five ideas centred around Peace, Independence, Equality, Solidarity and Emancipation.

As for the Bandung Dream, it has never been officially formulated either. Inspired by the Bandung Principles and Spirit, it is possible to formulate the Bandung Dream as "A Global and Sustainable Prosperity based on Peace, Justice, Cooperation, Solidarity, and Diversity."

Seventy years after the Bandung Conference, how far has the Bandung Dream been concretized? What are the assessments and the perspectives of the Bandung Legacy for the Global Future? What are the challenges and the opportunities to make the dream come true?

This book is an attempt to answer those questions. It is written by scholars from diverse countries and scientific fields, alphabetically: ATY Mourad (Algeria),

BAKRIE Corine Rahakundini (Indonesia/Russia), BAZIE Isaac (Burkina Faso/Canada), BEGGAR Abdel (France), BISSIO Beatriz (Uruguay/Brazil), CIMEK Gracjan (Poland), DJUMALA Darmansjah (Indonesia), DRWESKI Bruno (France),

FAHLEVVI Mohamamad Rizza (Indonesia), FAGOLA Pietro (Italy), GIRI Ananta Kumar (India), HOU Xiaochan (China), HUHN Jan Niklas (Germany), INDRAYANI Etni (Indonesia), KHUDDRI Darwis (Indonesia/France), MISHRA Pramod Kumar (India), MCHANTY Manoranjan (India), MOKAM David (Cameroon), NETSWERA Fualthelo (South Africa), PANGOP Kames- Abani Cyr (Cameroon), RAI Dharmenjoy (India), REDIX George (USA), SANTOS Jamile Macedo Oliveira (Brazil),

SEIHLACK Alessandra Gonzalez de Carvalho (Brazil), SHI Qing (China), STDIGA Diana Sfetiana (Romania/Hungary), TAHULELA Ntani (South Africa), TIBURZI Fabio (Italy), VOLOSUYK Diga (Russia), WARDAYA Baskara-T. (Indonesia),

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