

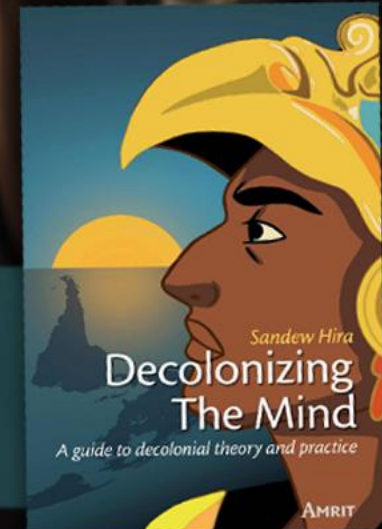
2

What is decolonial theory?

The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice

The current narratives about civilization: India

Decolonizing The Mind,
the final frontier of colonialism
with Sandew Hira



#021

18-12-2023

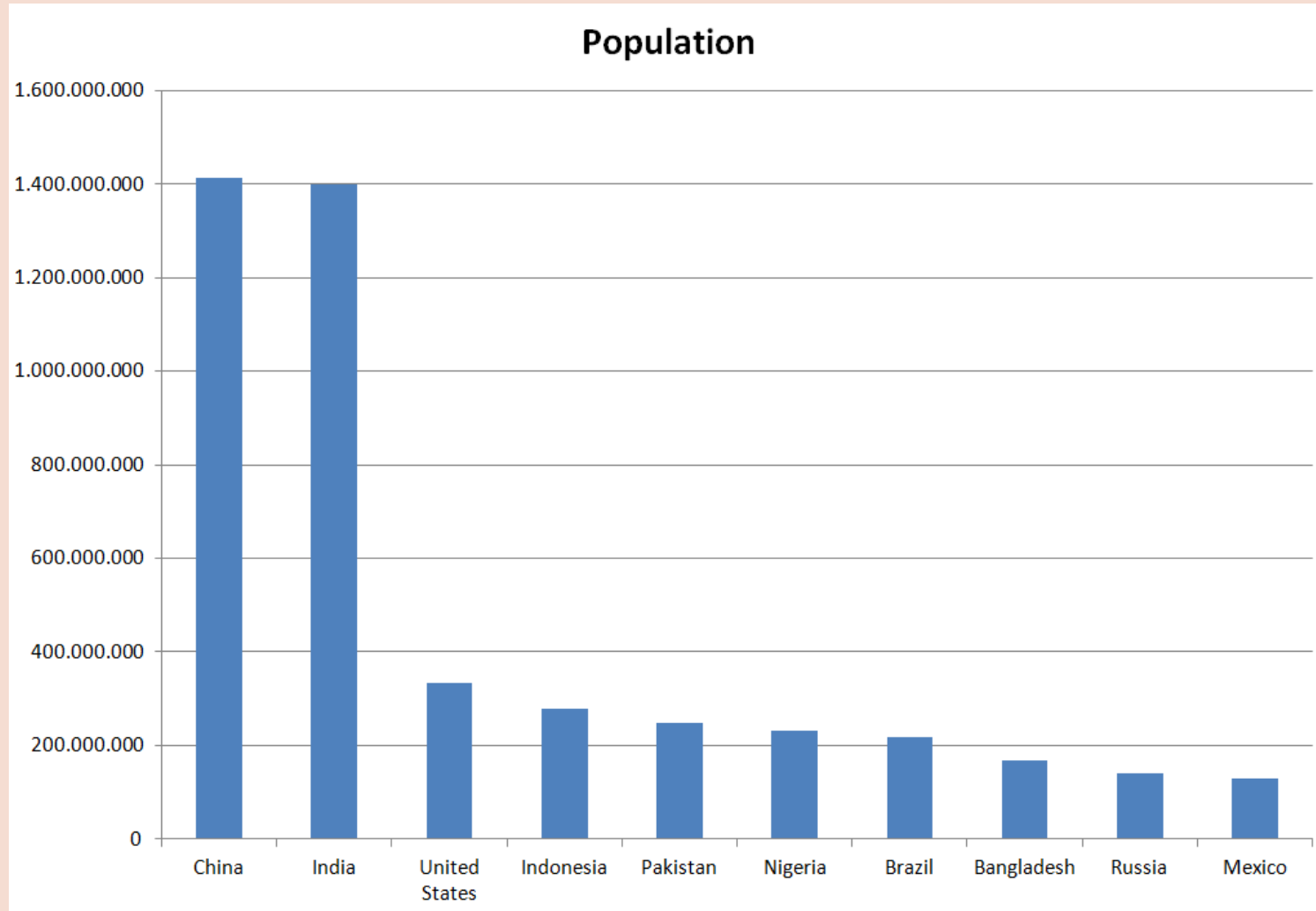
Palestine

- ❑ UNGA vote on ceasefire: shame on the US and Europe
- ❑ 19,000 Palestinian killed, 70% women and children. Heavy fighting going on
- ❑ Resistance still send rockets to Jerusalem
- ❑ Three captives killed by Israeli fire: families cry out for peace and negotiations
- ❑ Hamas: no hostage exchange until end of war

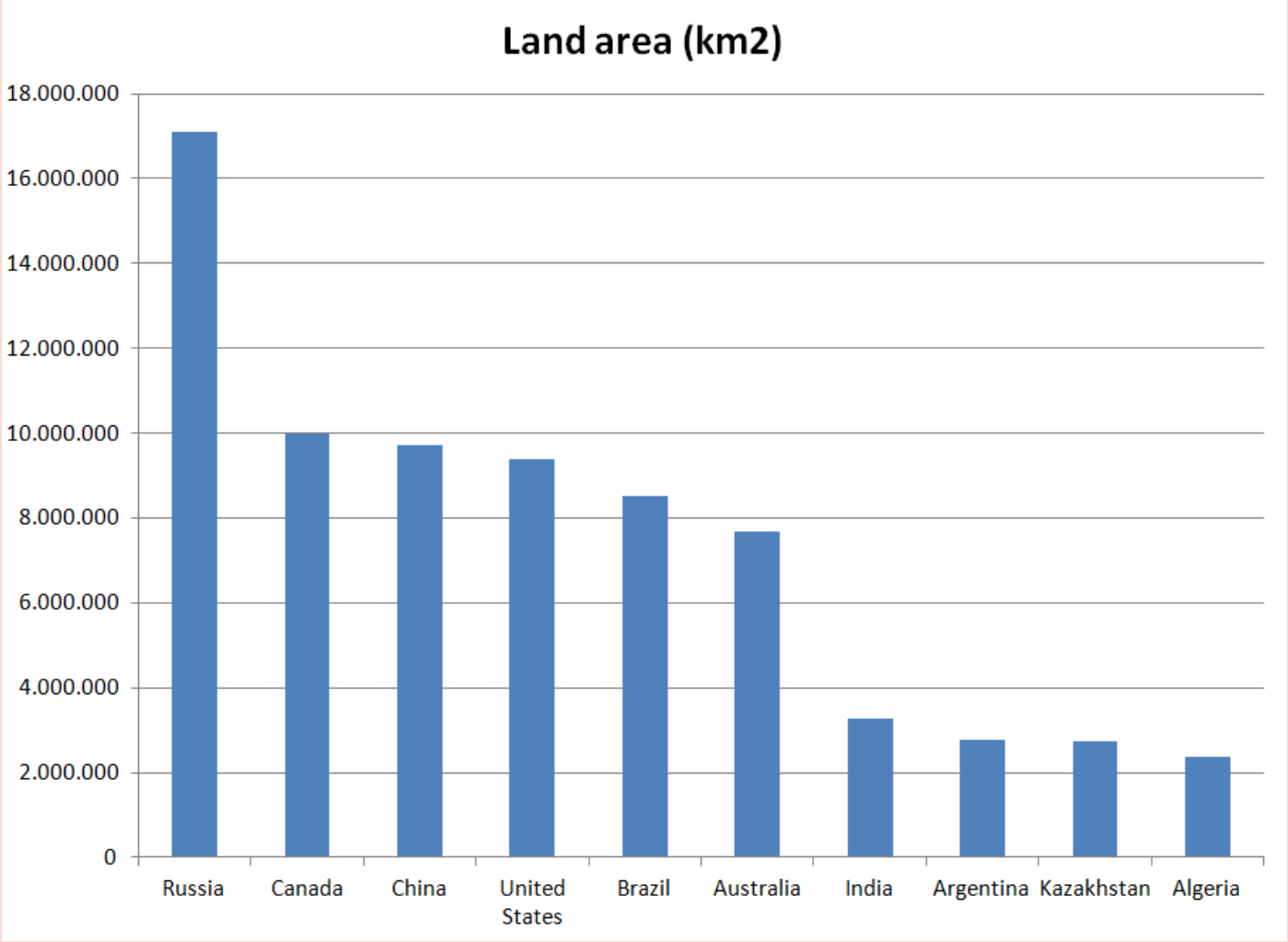
India will become a superpower

- Because of the size of its population: economic base of human resources once infrastructure is there: 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35, technology, physical, education, entrepreneurship
- Because of its old civilization

The 10 populous countries in the world



Land and water area of 10 biggest countries



Indian civilization

- 5000 years ago: Indus Valley civilization in North West India and Pakistan
- Sacred texts of Hinduism used till today



Sacred text of Hinduism still used today - 1

- ❑ Four Vedas (knowledge): 1500 BCE, contains hymns, poems, prayers, and religious instruction and rituals
- ❑ 108 Upanishad (4th section of Vedas, secret doctrine, connection): 800-300 BCE, philosophical treatment about the soul
- ❑ 36 Puranas (ancient): 700 BCE, history of the Universe from creation to destruction, discourses on cosmology, geography and Hindu philosophy
- ❑ Language of these text is symbolic, not to taken literally

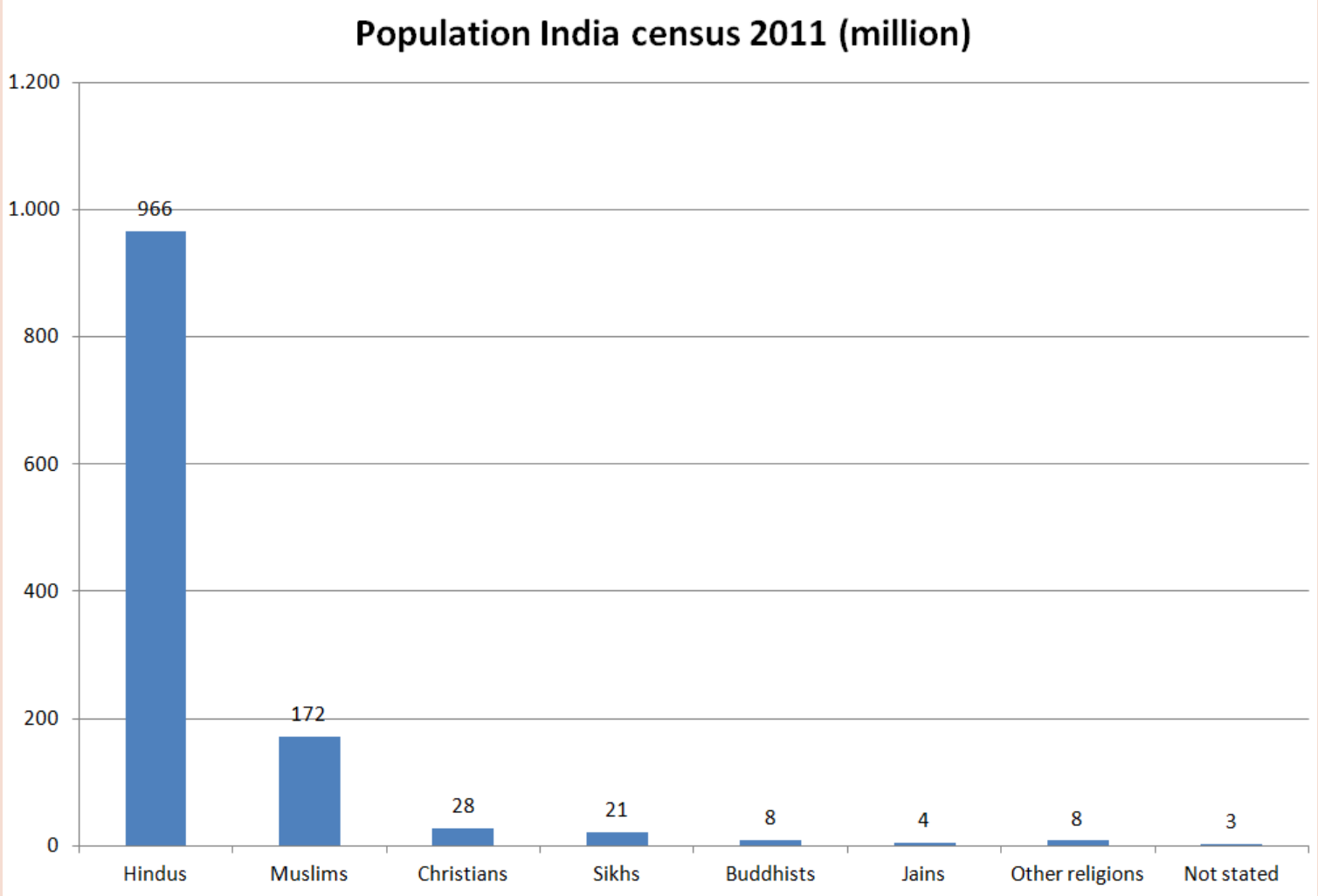
Sacred text of Hinduism still used today - 2

- ❑ Mahabharata (Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty): 400 BCE, an epic story of 200,000 verses that contains philosophical and devotional material on the purpose of life. The Bhagavad Gita is an important chapter of the story with a value of its own and deals with the relationship between war, struggle, family and duty
- ❑ Ramayana (the journey of Rama): 700 BCE, it narrates the life of Rama, a prince of Ayodhya in the kingdom of Kosala. It is a story of devotion, duty, and the triumph of good over evil and the moral value of duty
- ❑ Both books are how-to guides, aimed at the self-realization of mankind, as one with Brahma

Some other religions of India

- ❑ Jainism: 900 BCE, main pillars: non-violence, the truth is not absolute but relative, and asceticism (no attachment to material things)
- ❑ Buddhism: teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha: 480-400 BCE, how to live a life van spirituality and liberation of the soul.
- ❑ Sikhism: spiritual teachings of Guru Nanak (1469–1539) and the nine Sikh gurus who succeeded him, relationship between spiritual development and everyday moral conduct
- ❑ Islam: 900 CE, invasion of Punjab by Turkish Muslim forces, 1200 CE foundation of the Delhi Sultanate

Indian population by religion (2011)



Colonialism and conquest

- ❑ The philosophical ideas about humans and society are very much alive. Colonialism suppressed them, but did not kill it.
- ❑ Islam and Christianity were not home grown in India but were introduced by mainly by traders and later through military conquest, that enabled conversion

The differences between the conquest by British colonialism and the conquest by Muslim forces are important for today

- ❑ The social fabric of India today
 - ❑ Muslims became part of the Indian social fabric after the demise of the Muslim empires
 - ❑ The British were never part of the Indian social fabric
- ❑ The educational system
 - ❑ India's educational system is based on Western knowledge, not on Islamic knowledge
- ❑ The economic exploitation
 - ❑ The Moguls stayed in India and their economy was based in India when India had 25-28% of world GDP up until 1800
 - ❑ The British siphoned out \$45 trillion from India: Utsa Patnaik

The challenges for India to become a leading force in the world

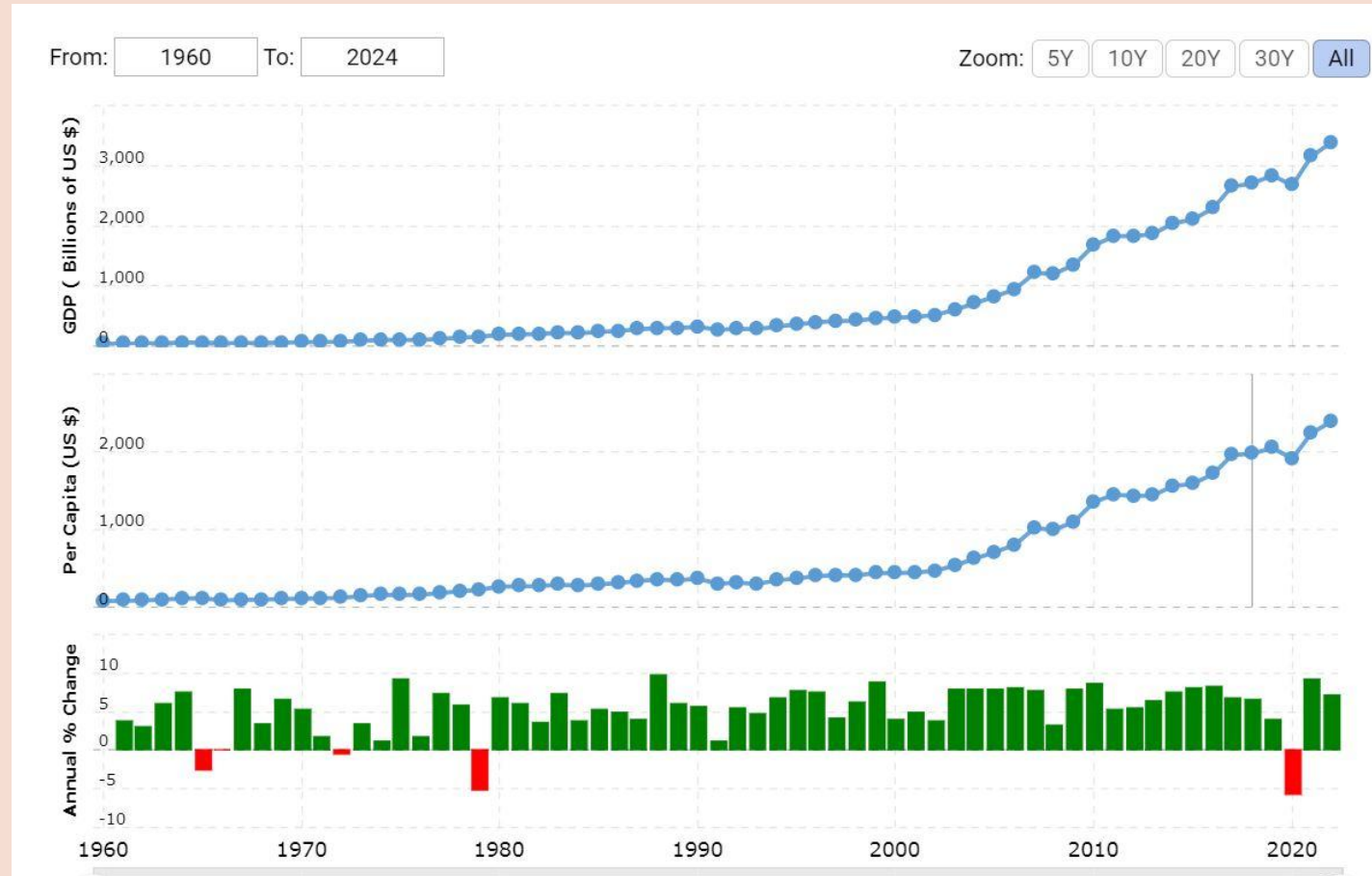
1. Economic challenges
2. Political challenges
3. Ideological challenges

Economic challenges: the problems of planning

- ❑ Constitution of India states: *“WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC”*
- ❑ Development Regulation Act of 1951: nationalization of steel, mining, machine tools, water, telecommunications, insurance, and electrical plants, and other industries.
- ❑ State control of the economy: direct and indirect (licenses, regulation), five year plans
- ❑ Problem: slow economic growth, endemic corruption and welfare compared to the rest of Asia

Liberalization 1990-2000: free market economy

- ❑ Deregulation of markets in all major branches, including financial markets; removing licensing restrictions for major industries
- ❑ Increase foreign investment
- ❑ Introduction of various social welfare programs



Results of liberalization

- ❑ 415 million people lifted out of poverty within 15 years (2005/6–2019/2021)
- ❑ Life expectancy from birth: 35 years in 1950, 57 years in 1990 and 70 years in 2023
- ❑ Technological development in conjunction with foreign technology: the IT-boom
- ❑ Enormous development of the infrastructure: energy, transport, highways, housing, internet

Downside of liberalization

- ❑ Growing rift between rural and urban India leading to farmers protest against losing protection in agriculture
- ❑ Protection of workers right in danger
- ❑ Disregard of long term environmental damage

Political challenges - how to manage a country with:

- ❑ More than 2,000 ethnic groups
- ❑ 22 official languages, 780 spoken languages
- ❑ Problem of former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir
- ❑ A parliamentary democracy
- ❑ The impact of the caste system

Jammu and Kashmir

- ❑ Article 370 conferred the power to have a separate constitution, a state flag, and autonomy of internal administration. Lasted from 17 November 1952 to 31 October 2019, when Modi repealed it. Now they are formally two union territories
- ❑ Population 12 million, 70% Muslims, 30% Hindu
- ❑ Since 1987 armed insurrection began supported by Pakistan.
- ❑ Since then Indian military control and repression.
- ❑ Challenge: how to resolve this peacefully

The caste system

- ❑ Five main castes: Brahmins (priests and teachers), Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (merchants, traders, and farmers), Shudras (laborers), and Dalits (“untouchables,” like street sweepers and restroom cleaners) (37% of Indian population identify as Dalit)
- ❑ Characteristics:
 - ❑ Endogamy prohibits inter-caste marriage
 - ❑ Hierarchy of superior and inferior castes.
 - ❑ No vertical upward mobility
- ❑ Official policy: combat discrimination via affirmative action: quota system in education and public employment

Ideological challenges

- ❑ Combining rising self-confidence with leadership position in the world: the Asian century
- ❑ The problems of Hindutva

Challenges of the Asian century

- ❑ 19th century: British century dominating the world through colonialism
- ❑ 20th century: American century – dominating the world through economic and military power
- ❑ 21st century: dominance of Asian economics and culture.
- ❑ China and India working together or against each other

The problems of Hindutva

- ❑ The combination of anti-colonialism with Islamophobia weakens its authority in the world
- ❑ The inherent confrontational approach will lead to long term instability and contractions
- ❑ The grand narrative. Without a national narrative, India is seen as a confederation of states/provinces that have nothing in common, thus leading to separatist movements. Muslims must accept India as their country of origin (meaning, they were all Hindus to begin with) but can describe Islam as their choice of religion. Buddha and Buddhism, Jainism seen as extensions of Vedic India. Christianity/Sikhism too small to matter!

Hindutva (see episode 010): Hindu civilization

- ❑ Hindutva is the ideology of the paramilitary organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the ruling party of India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- ❑ Founder Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966): *“Hindutva embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole Being of our Hindu race.”*
- ❑ *“Mohammedan or Christian countrymen who had originally been forcibly converted to a non-Hindu religion and who consequently have inherited along with Hindus, a common Fatherland and a greater part of the wealth of a common culture - language, law, customs, folklore and history - are not and cannot be recognized as Hindus. For though Hindusthan to them is Fatherland as to any other Hindu yet it is not to them a Holyland too. Their holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine.”*

J. Sai Deepak: Hindutva is decolonial

- ❑ Book: *India that is Bharat - Coloniality, Civilisation, Constitution.*
- ❑ “(a) Bharat’s indigenous identity must be traced to a period before the Islamic invasions (Middle Eastern colonialism) and European colonisation, and (b) ‘the Hindu religion’ was the glue that bound this civilisation.”

Islamophobia

- ❑ Traditionally India is a progressive force standing with liberation movements; initiator of the 1955 Bandung conference
- ❑ Position on war in Palestine comes from Islamophobia, not from a moral or political judgment. This hurts India's authority as a independent leading force in the 21st century

Confrontational approach

- ❑ Like wahabism in Islam: strategy of confrontation instead of dialogue will lead to violence
- ❑ Violence will lead to instability
- ❑ Instability will lead to economic decline

Next episode: the West Asian narrative

- Historical narratives in Islam on civilization
- Saudi Arabia and wahabism
- Iran



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The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice

**The current narratives about civilization:
Western Asia**

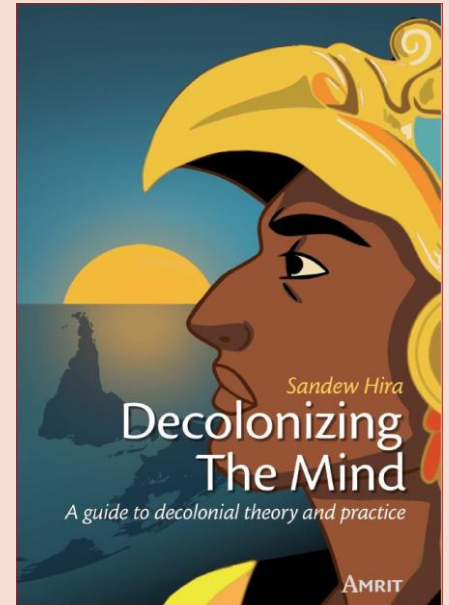
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Decolonizing
The Mind
A guide to decolonial theory and practice
AMRIT

#022
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Source in the DTM book

- Index: India
- Download the PDF of the PowerPoint on www.sandewhira.com



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