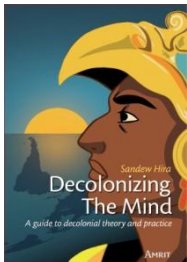


DECOLONIAL INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

What is the future of the decolonial movement?

Sandew Hira, March 6, 2024

1. Introduction



I came into the decolonial movement in 2009 after a long [journey](#) from Marxism to decolonial theory. I started studying decolonial theory since then. Over the past fifteen years I have been invited to engage with decolonial theory at conferences, summer schools, lectures and workshops in Azerbaijan, Belgium, Curacao, England, Finland, France, Iran, Ireland, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Suriname, Venezuela, the United States and Zambia.

I was also involved in practical organizational matters of the decolonial movement, first as secretary of the informal network Decoloniality Europe and later as the secretary of the Decolonial International Network (DIN) Foundation.

The work enabled me to interact with many people in different countries about what decolonization means and where we are heading with the decolonial movement. This article, which draws heavily from my recently published book¹, is the result of processing these experiences to draw a vision for the future of the decolonial movement. It outlines a strategy for building an international network for the decolonial movement.

2. What is the decolonial movement?

I define the decolonial movement as a social movement that locates and connects the origin of the current problems of the world with the system of colonialism while seeking solutions that transcend the colonial system by decolonizing the world.

In the theoretical framework of Decolonizing The Mind (DTM) I define colonialism as "*a collection of global systems of economic, political, social and cultural institutions that the Global North has created in order to rule the world in a colonial world civilization since 1492.*"² I define a civilization as "*a collection of societies with economic, political, social and cultural institutions that have a common cultural base.*"³ The current cultural base of the colonial world civilization is the European Enlightenment. From 1492-1650, the cultural base was Christian theology, but after 1650 the European Enlightenment became the foundation for the colonial world civilization. Compared to other civilizations that lasted for thousands of years, Western civilization is very young and the European Enlightenment even younger.

In the DTM framework I regard the decolonial movement as a movement that wants to transform the current colonial world civilization into a new decolonial world civilization. There are different theoretical and practical problems that we need to solve in order to achieve this aim. I will deal with them in the rest of this article.

3. The theoretical problem of the decolonial movement

A major problem of the decolonial movement is of a theoretical nature. The problem is that it is not a comprehensive, coherent and integral framework.

3.1 The need for a comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework

A comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework has the following characteristics:

1. It is comprehensive because it has produced concepts on how to look at the most important dimensions of a society: a view on world history, economics, politics, social relations including relations with nature (ecology), and culture. There are other important aspects of a society, but these dimensions are essential to make a framework comprehensive.
2. It is coherent because the concepts of the different dimensions don't contradict each other. They are consistent and logical.
3. It is integral because the concepts of the different dimensions are not just lumped together but are related to each other from one or more basic concepts.

A comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework is not a closed system. It is open for innovation and new developments and contributions, but because of its nature it has a framework to assess the value of these contributions.

There are many examples of comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical frameworks from different civilizations. They all have in common that they are guides on how to set up and maintain a social, political, economic and cultural order. Here are a few examples:

Confucianism is a theoretical framework developed by Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BCE) and his followers. His basic idea is that a society should be based on the concept that humans are essentially good with virtues such as compassion, humaneness, trustworthiness, dignity and honor. These virtues need to be instilled by education, rituals and good governance. That is the basis of the social order and hence for the social sciences.

Buddhism is a theoretical framework developed by Siddhartha Gautama (480-400 BCE), the Buddha, in India. The basic concept is that human life is a cycle of suffering and reincarnation that can be broken individually through nirvana, a state of enlightenment that one reaches through meditation and abstinence of desires.

Islam is a religion that provides moral guidelines for a social, political, economic, and cultural order based on the Quran. The basic concept of Islam is Tawhid, the oneness of God. God provides moral guidance to humans regarding their behavior and their setup of social, political, economic, and cultural institutions.

Christianity is also a religion that provides moral guidelines for a social, political, economic, and cultural order based on the Bible. The basic concept of Christianity is Trinity: there is one God manifested in three forms - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God sent his Son to earth to save humanity from the consequences of its sins. The Bible provides moral guidance for setting of a Christian society.

European Enlightenment: The European Enlightenment has produced two comprehensive, coherent and integral frameworks, which I will deal with later in this essay: Liberalism and Marxism.

3.2 The consequences of lacking a comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework

What happens to a social movement when it has no comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework?

The first consequence is that the movement has no road map to develop practical policies to change the world. What kind of economic policies does the decolonial movement propose? How are these policies related to other policies such as geopolitics or policies regarding political institutions such as governments and parliaments? Are we arguing for a revolution? If so, how will it come about and what will the outcome look like? These questions cannot be answered in a consistent way if there is no comprehensive, coherent and integral framework. For now, the decolonial movement is not able to put up such an agenda, because it lacks the framework to do so.

The second consequence is that the movement becomes fragmented at its core. With a comprehensive, coherent and integral decolonial framework there is a basis for political discussion on what fits in that framework and what does not fit and how to develop it. With this framework we have discussions on whether a particular idea or policy can be developed from this framework, and what its practical implications are. If there is no framework, we can put the label 'decolonial' to any idea and policy without any discussion on how it relates to other parts of the framework. We can have decolonial feminism, while decolonial theory can entail a critique of feminism, as I explain in paragraph 10.4.3 in my book *Decolonizing The Mind*.⁴

The third consequence is that there are no organizational guidelines for how to build a decolonial movement. Marxism had such guidelines. The socialist movement needs a vanguard party to lead the oppressed classes in a socialist revolution. It follows from the theoretical framework about the class nature of society. Currently, the decolonial movement does not have an organizational concept for organizing for change.

The last consequence is that the decolonial movement will lose its relevance for social struggle and will become obsolete. If decolonial theory does not provide answers to practical problems, people will move forward to other theories and sources for inspiration in their social struggles. Decolonial theory will be reduced to a topic for future academic studies by historians without any practical consequences. We can see this with a school of thought within the European Enlightenment: postmodernism. Postmodernist theories criticize the European Enlightenment philosophies of rationalism for their preoccupation with grand narratives of rationality and modernity. With the destruction caused by World War I and World War II, skepticism arose within the Eurocentric tradition about the ability of rationalist science to create a better society. Postmodernism did not go beyond this critique and ended as an academic discourse without any practical relevance.

We can see these consequences in different social movements. In the African Diaspora there is a movement for reparations for slavery. Reparations is a concept that argues that descendants of enslaved Africans should receive material and immaterial compensation for the historical injustice of enslavement. It focuses on the outcome of historical injustice, not on the cause. If we focus on the outcome, we are limited to exercises about the nature and extent of the compensation for historical injustice. If we want to address the cause of historical injustice, we look at the system that produced it. But then we need a theoretical framework to analyze that system. In DTM it is about the rise of a colonial world civilization with its economic, social, political, and cultural institutions that produced and maintained historical injustice. We see the link between the European enslavement of Africans and the perpetuation of the colonial system after the abolition of enslavement. Addressing historical injustice from a DTM perspective is not about repairing a system of injustice, but about destroying it and reconstructing a new system based on justice.

Another example is the concept of intersectionality.⁵ Intersectionality argues that the oppression of an individual is the result of different layers of oppression: racism, sexism, sexual oppression, etc. The practical policy implication is the need to combine these struggles. If we don't have a comprehensive, coherent and integral framework this concept can lead to contradictory results. Intersectionality presents itself as a theory of liberation, but in some cases it is used to justify oppression of liberation struggle. The CIA, the US intelligence agency that is responsible for many coup d'états and murders to

preserve the US empire, use intersectionality to recruit women of color to work for the CIA. ⁶ For a more detailed critique of intersectionality, see paragraph 6.6.6 of my book.

4. The theoretical frameworks of the European Enlightenment

The European Enlightenment produced two ideological schools with a comprehensive, coherent and integral framework: Liberalism and Marxism. They developed economic, social, political, and cultural theories within their frameworks.

4.1 Liberalism

Liberalism is based on the concept of the individual as the basic unit of society and individualism as the basic value of its ethics. The economic structure is based on the freedom of the individual capitalist to exploit labor by using free markets. The political system is based on multiparty parliamentary democracy. The cultural system is based on scientific knowledge. Its view on world history is that with capitalism, human history has come to an end. Liberalism is the apex of human development.

Liberalism has been the ideology of oppression in the colonial world civilization. It was contested by Marxism as an ideology of liberation.

4.2 Marxism

Marxism is based on the concept of the labor theory of value, which states that the value of a commodity is based on the average number of labor hours required to produce it. Surplus value is the difference between the value that the ruling class gets from the commodity and the value that the laborer receives. Surplus value is the basis for class societies.

Marxism is a comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework. Its concept of surplus value is the basis for analysis of social relation in terms of classes, which are characterized by the relationship of a social group to the control of the means of production. It looks at world history through the concept of mode of production: the totality of economic, technological and material conditions for the production of goods and services.

Capitalism is the latest stage in the history of humankind. In this mode of production surplus value is appropriated from wage labor through the market mechanism and private ownership of the means of production. Capitalism will be brought down by a socialist revolution. Markets and private ownership of the means of production will be replaced by nationalization of the means of production and the institution of a planned economy. Parliamentary democracy is replaced by a system of representation by workers and peasants. The social system moves to a classless society. Culture is based on rationalism and scientific knowledge. In order to organize for the socialist revolution, you need a vanguard party of dedicated revolutionaries who understand Marxist analysis and thus are able to interpret developments in the world and lead the masses to the socialist revolution. The socialist revolution is an international global revolution, so Marxists need international coordination between the vanguard parties to bring down the global system of capitalism. Communism is the end of history. This strategy proved to be successful in many ways.

4.3 The development of Marxism

Marxism became the leading theory of liberation and led to the rise of a socialist bloc in the world. In 1924, Mongolia saw the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic. Between 1944 and 1949, eleven countries became socialist: Albania, Poland, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, Hungary, China, and East Germany (German Democratic Republic). The countries in Eastern Europe, North Korea, and China were not European colonies. However, Vietnam was a French colony.

Socialism was an attractive narrative of liberation for many colonized countries fighting for freedom. Between 1950 and 1989 eleven countries joined the socialist bloc: Cuba, Laos, Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Cambodia, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, and South Yemen. These countries had a one-party system and a planned economy. There are other countries that articulated the goal of socialism in their constitution, although they have a multi-party system and some form of economic planning, but not central planning: Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Nepal, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania.

In total, the socialist bloc represented two third of the world population. And yet at the end of the twentieth century it dissolved. Capitalism did not beat socialism. Socialism imploded and destroyed itself. In a period of just four short years, many socialist countries ended their existence as socialist states. In 1989 Cambodia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania; in 1990 Benin, Czechoslovakia, South Yemen, East Germany, Mozambique, and Bulgaria; in 1991 Somalia, Ethiopia and Soviet Union; in 1992 Mongolia, Congo-Brazzaville, Albania, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Angola. In other countries with central planning, liberal market policies replaced central planning. Only three countries have a government in which a communist party is in power: China, Vietnam and Cuba.

The story of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union is exemplary in this regard. The gains of the Russian Revolution of 1917 for the daily lives of people had been immense, especially in the first years of the revolutions. The revolution was not just a political revolution that brought the Communist Party to power. It was a social and cultural revolution that touched upon the lives of millions of people. "*On the abolition of marriage*" and "*On civil partnership, children and ownership*" were among the first decrees of the Soviets in 1918. Church weddings were abolished and civil partnership was introduced. Divorce was a matter of choice. Abortion was legalized. Homosexuality was decriminalized and gay marriage was legalized. All of that implied a total liberation of family and sexual relations. Oppressed nationalities in the Russian empire had the right to establish their own state. With central planning came full employment for workers. Education was free. So, why did the Soviet Union collapse despite such gains?

The people of the Soviet Union paid a heavy price for the communist experiment. Stalinism caused the death of 10 million peasants in the process of forced collectivization. Millions more died after show trials, being tortured and executed. A corrupt bureaucracy developed that oppressed its own people.

In the 1980s, it became clear that the Soviet planned economy was collapsing. Long shopping lines, empty store windows, broken-down cars, deteriorating living standards became part and parcel of the life of an average Soviet citizen. Within the elites, discussions on the economic and political system led to challenging basic assumptions about the Soviet system. As such, should central planning be abandoned in favor of decentralized management of the economy? Should prices, profit, credits, and other market instruments be introduced into the economy? Should workers participation in the management of firms be introduced? For Gorbachev, the leader of the Communist Party, the answer was to introduce the idea of *perestroika* (restructuring of the economy and society). Restructuring would go hand in hand with opening up society up to public discussion and political participation (*glasnost*) in clear contradiction to corrupt Stalinist political rule.

In 1987, for the first time all kinds of organizations began to rise, independent of the party, that brought important discussions into the public domain regarding ecology, democratization and political reform. Some people began to argue for the establishment of political parties outside the Communist Party. A new civil society arose that openly called for the dismantling of the Soviet system and the Communist Party along with an end to economic misery and the lack of freedom. It was only a matter of time for this movement to succeed. If Marxism cannot lead to an improvement of the daily lives of the people (economically, politically, culturally) and the leadership is corrupt and unable to

educate the people about the causes of their misery, then ultimately it will fail as a philosophy of liberation.

4.4 How pragmatism saved Marxism

Why is it that the Soviet Union ultimately ceased to exist, while Communist China has thrived? China had a similar experience as the Soviet Union. The establishment of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949 led to immediate gains for the people: dramatic increases in literacy and life expectancy. But disastrous economic policies during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) led to the death of 16.5 million people. Another disastrous policy was undertaken during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) which caused the death of 20 million people.

And then came Deng Xiaoping as the leader of the Communist Party of China (CPC). He is one of the most creative thinkers of the 20th century. He tackled the theoretical question of Marxism. He used a Marxist category ("production forces") to argue that these forces can be developed with private capitalists under the leadership of the Communist Party. Thus, you get an important segment of the population (creative entrepreneurs) involved in building the economy. He was pragmatic. He did not care about what this meant for the Marxist labor theory of value. He cared about what this meant for fighting poverty. The results of his vision are amazing.

In 2022, the World Bank acknowledged that China had lifted 800 million people out of extreme poverty. No country in the history of humanity has ever recorded such an achievement. Behind these statistics we see a completely new world for the average Chinese citizen. Poverty comes with hunger and diseases. Poverty alleviation means that their living environment has changed dramatically. The difference between urban and rural areas is decreasing. Housing programs enable people to build and rent or own homes. People in the rural areas, who once lived in dilapidated mud-and-straw cottages, now live in decent houses. They have decent clothes. They have access to safe drinking water, garbage disposal, and sewage treatment. Water infrastructure enables irrigation in rural areas. Soil and water conservation are part of a strategy of eco-environmental conservation. They have access to medical services (medicines, doctors and hospitals), elderly care and social assistance. There is a system of social security that enables people, who are in dire need, to get help. Old people now receive a pension. Public services have been improved significantly. All school age, rural children receive kindergarten and elementary education within their own villages. Electricity makes it possible to have light, refrigerators, and other consumer goods (television, internet access, mobile phones and computers). Villages with electricity can develop their economic base. This base is enforced with the building of new roads (including highways) and railways. People can now move to find work or establish enterprises and earn money with various economic activities and opportunities. Government credits for startups have a greater tolerance for non-performing loans in severely impoverished areas. The Chinese program of poverty alleviation has strengthened the traditional cultures of different ethnic groups. New cultural centers are established that protect and promote traditional culture, folk culture and fine craftsmanship which opens up tourism. Another cultural effect is that the mindset changes when people are climbing out of poverty. They are more confident and self-assured. They strive for excellence and hard work. They value material progress; they don't take it for granted. They are more involved in decision making processes in their own communities. The Chinese programs have targeted specific groups for additional assistance: women, children, the elderly, and the disabled.

These developments have led to massive support for the CPC-led government over the course of decades. The CPC made an important theoretical adjustment that saved Marxism. The party did not repudiate Marxism. It called its theory "*socialism with Chinese characteristics*". This opened the door to theoretical innovations. President Xi Jinping developed this theory and added to it the concept of "civilization". He regards the current civilization of China as part of the millennia old civilization that began with the

Shang Dynasty. He invokes classical Chinese philosophers from thousands of years ago to develop ideas about how to rebuild and rejuvenate Chinese society.

In this way, basic concepts of Marxism (production forces, the vanguard party) are combined with other concepts outside of Marxism to build a comprehensive coherent and integral framework and use it to develop policies for building the Chinese society and civilization. Marxism is saved by dropping those policies and underlying analyses that don't work and by adding new policies and underlying analyses from other philosophies that do work.

In Latin Abya Yala, we see similar developments in Bolivia and Venezuela where socialist governments build a new society combining elements from socialism with indigenous or nationalist philosophies in their theory of liberation. In Bolivia socialism is combined with indigenous philosophies of Pacha Mama and Sumak Kawsay (Buen Vivir/good life). It connects humans with nature. In Venezuela socialist use the parliamentary system to achieve social justice with the concept of socialism of the 21st century.

What are the theoretical implications of these developments for Marxism? Is there a way to find a decolonial Marx in the European Enlightenment? This is a big challenge for Marxist thinkers in Abya Yala.

Latin Abya Yala has contributed much to the decolonial movement, theoretically and practically. I deal with some of these contributions in my book on DTM. For example, in reconstructing economic theory I discuss the work of the current president of Bolivia, Luis Arce on economic theory.⁷ Arce developed a new economic model called the new social economic communitarian and productive mode. I also dealt with the concepts of Pacha Mama and Buen Vivir as key concepts in reconstructing social theory where humans and nature are connected rather than separated.⁸ I think it is possible to develop alternative knowledge that incorporates these concepts in DTM and maybe combine them with Marxist concepts.

5. The pros and cons of decoloniality

5.1 The rise of decoloniality

The past decades have seen a flurry of contributions to decolonial theory. "Decolonizing knowledge and power", "Decolonizing the universities", "Decolonizing international relations", "Decolonizing the diet", "Decolonizing God", "Decolonizing mathematics", "Decolonizing wealth" and "Decolonizing The Mind (DTM)". The internet is full of references to decolonizing something, yet many of these concepts seem to be unrelated to a far more common notion of decolonization: the political independence of European colonies. Decolonization goes far beyond the question of political and economic independence of former colonies. It touches upon the cultural dimension of colonialism. It was captured with the term "decoloniality".

Decoloniality became part of social movements for liberation. Decolonizing knowledge and power refers to the need to transform the centers of knowledge production (the universities) and confront the political power that maintains these centers.

5.2 The contributions of decoloniality

The contributions of decoloniality can be summed up as follows:

1. The acknowledgement that there is another side of modernity. Modernity is seen by the European Enlightenment as something good because it represents (European) progress and rationalism. The other side of modernity is the brutal colonial oppression and exploitation of the colonized world.
2. The acknowledgement that colonialism has a cultural dimension besides the economic and political dimension. Decolonization is not only about liberating the colonized

people from the political and economic shackles, but also about liberating colonized people from an oppressive colonial culture.

3. An important part of the cultural dimension is knowledge production. The European Enlightenment claims that the knowledge production of modernity is universal and objective. In the European tradition there was a critique of modernity from postmodern theorists. They question the grand narratives of modernity and its claims of universalism and objectivity, but they don't make the connection with colonialism as decoloniality does. Decoloniality analyses the bias in Eurocentric knowledge production and locates this in the colonial system of domination. Furthermore, it offers a fundamental critique of Eurocentric knowledge production by pointing out that its epistemology (the theory of knowledge which is at the basis of every knowledge production) is not objective, and influenced by the position from which the knowledge producer acts. Eurocentric scientists act from the position of defending Western colonialism.
4. The acknowledgement of the importance of race and racism in social relations and the impact of colonialism on these relations including in the field of identity formation.
5. A critique of the nation-state as the center for social analysis and the need to look at colonialism from a global perspective.

These are important contributions by decoloniality to our understanding of how the current world works.

5.3 The deficiencies of decoloniality

I see five major problems with decoloniality.

1. Decoloniality is not comprehensive. There is no decolonial economic or political theory. Many other disciplines of knowledge have no decolonial theory.
2. Decoloniality is not coherent. The many different contributions can contradict each other. Some thinkers argue that Eurocentric theory is biased, but then recommend economic theories that go back to Marxism, a major school of the European Enlightenment. Some see feminism and intersectionality as part of decolonial theory, while others offer a decolonial critique of feminism and intersectionality.
3. Decoloniality is not integral. It is not clear what the foundational category for decolonial theory is from which to reconstruct a whole new (decolonial) knowledge system. In Liberalism it is individualism. In Marxism it is class. What is it in decoloniality?
4. Decoloniality is mostly a critique, but in order to survive it needs to move to the stage in which it provides practical answers to practical problems. The lack of practical solutions for current world problems is a big defect of decoloniality.
5. Decoloniality does not provide organizational concepts for social struggle. How do we organize for social struggle? Marxism proscribes building political parties to lead socialist revolutions. What does decoloniality suggest?

5.5 The next step in the decolonial movement

I propose that we move towards a comprehensive, coherent and integral decolonial theoretical framework. This enables us to overcome the defects of decoloniality. I have made a first attempt to develop such a framework under the label Decolonizing The Mind (DTM). Other decolonial theorists might start with their own basic concepts to build a comprehensive, coherent and integral framework. In Latin Abya Yala Enrique Dussel is an inspiration for many decolonial theorists and activists. They might take a step in another direction to develop a comprehensive, coherent and integral framework

I base the DTM framework on the concept of mental slavery and the concept of civilization. The concept of mental slavery was introduced by Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) in 1938. I build on this concept to develop the DTM framework. I take the concept of civilization to characterize the world system we are living in. I regard capitalism as part

of colonialism and not vice versa. In my view this enables us to overcome the defects of decoloniality.

There are three dimensions in DTM:

1. The critique of Eurocentric knowledge production. In this regard it resembles decoloniality. But DTM goes further. While decoloniality is stuck in general criticism, DTM moves to the critique of individual disciplines, including mathematics and natural sciences.
2. The development of an alternative comprehensive, coherent and integral knowledge production. DTM goes deep into the knowledge that was produced in civilizations from the Global South (Chinese philosophy, Hinduism, Islam, Indigenous philosophies, etc) and looks for useful concepts that can be integrated in a trajectory to decolonize the disciplines and reconstruct new knowledge per discipline. Decoloniality does not go there.
3. The translation of this new knowledge into viable policies to build a new pluriversal world civilization. DTM tackles the problem of power. For example: how to reconstruct a new economic order? What are the practical implications of this reconstruction? What kind of economic institutions are needed and how will they be built? How do we organize to transcend from the colonial world civilization to a new world civilization? Decoloniality does not go there.

Decolonizing knowledge takes place on the level of individual disciplines. DTM is a long-term trajectory that requires the involvement of many specialists in different disciplines. There are five steps in decolonizing a discipline.

The first step is questioning the purpose of a discipline. For example, in Eurocentrism the discipline of economics is about the study of how societies use scarce resources to produce valuable goods and services and distribute them among different individuals. Eurocentric economic theory is about scarcity and efficiency. Islamic economic theory on the other hand is about social justice and ethics: how to produce, finance and distribute goods and services in such a way that you balance justice and ethics with a material and spiritual life. Decolonial economic theory is based on social justice.

The second step is isolating the basic concepts that are used in a discipline. What are the core concepts on the basis of which the whole discipline is erected? How did colonialism impact these concepts? What concepts did other civilizations produce regarding the topics of the concept?

The third step is to ask the question: what new concepts can we think of when we want to reconstruct the discipline? How do they relate to the old concepts? What are the policy implications of the new concepts compared to the old ones?

The fourth step is to outline the methodology of the discipline. What methods do we use to further construct the discipline in different directions given the basic concepts? What are the sources of knowledge that we use? How do we use these sources of knowledge in a systematic way? How is it different from the methods used in the Eurocentric approach?

The last step is to set up research and teaching trajectories for the discipline that takes the first four steps into account.

The end results are new textbooks for reconstructing disciplines.

Below I provide a summary of what decolonizing the disciplines might mean, based on my book. It might change once we get more specialists from the different disciplines and civilizational backgrounds involved.

6. The DTM framework: decolonizing the disciplines

6.1 DTM theory of racism

The DTM theory of racism is a foundation of the theoretical framework. It differs from liberal theories, which are rooted in a common approach that centres the individual in the analysis of racism. In psychological theories racism is about the perceptions and behaviour of individuals, mostly of the racist who is inhibited with prejudices. Studies on racism and the Holocaust focus on how personalities are formed in their psychological constitution. Theories of white privilege, everyday racism, intersectionality, and critical race take individual experiences as the basis for their analysis.

In DTM we define racism as a global system of economic, political, social and cultural institutions that organize the relationship between human beings on the basis of superiority and inferiority. The defining characteristic is not biological race and not even ethnic group, but the organization of relationships between human beings on the basis of superiority and inferiority. The principle of this organization can be race or ethnic group, but colonialism started with religion as the organizing principle. Although the term racism contains "race" as the core concept, the system should not be limited to race. It is about superiority/inferiority that is linked to race, but not limited to race.

Racism has not always existed in the history of mankind, nor will it remain forever. Before Western colonialism people were oppressed, exploited and dehumanized in brutal ways. Their oppressors and rulers have regarded and treated them as inferior people. The differences between these forms of racism and the racism that has been established by Western colonialism are in economic, political, social and cultural institutions and justified by an elaborate system of knowledge production.

With colonialism, racism became a worldwide phenomenon and was institutionalized in economics, political structures, social relations and cultural institutions on a global scale. While other systems of oppression, exploitation and dehumanization were regional or local, Western colonialism brought this to a global scale. This means that even in countries where there are no or hardly any people of color - like Japan - ideas about inferiority of people of colour can still exist because of the global impact of colonialism.

Another difference is the fact that racism became an integral part of knowledge production. The concept of superiority/inferiority was and is used to justify the colonial world system. It also created and institutionalized the mechanisms of the colonization of the mind.

Three concepts of racism have been developed in colonialism. They are linked to the authority of knowledge production.

- Theological racism: the concept of superiority/inferiority is argued from theology and is linked to theologians as the authority of knowledge production.
- Biological racism: the concept of superiority/inferiority is argued from philosophy and the natural sciences and is linked to philosophers and natural scientists as the authority of knowledge production. This coincide with the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.
- Cultural racism: the concept of superiority/inferiority is argued from the social sciences and is linked to social scientists as the authority of knowledge production.

Racism was embedded in the different disciplines of knowledge production of the European Enlightenment.

6.2 A view on world history

Many civilizations have a view of where the world is heading. The European Enlightenment has the concept of the end of history. It is an old concept that was put forward almost two centuries ago by German philosopher George Hegel (1770-1831) in his notion that Europe is the pinnacle of human history, the end of history, or as Hegel

puts it: "*the last stage in History, our world, our own time.*"⁹ History has come to an end with the rise of European modernity. Hegel wrote this in 1830. Since then, a lot has changed. Conservative American political theorist Francis Fukuyama repeated this claim 160 years later in 1989 in his book *The End of History and the Last Man*. Since then, a lot has changed.

Marxism also foresees an end of history in which communism rules the planet forever: social classes are abolished, the planned economy provides goods and services for everybody in abundance, science governs culture, and the state has withered away.

If there is one single lesson that we can draw from history, it is the proposition that there is no end of history. We can not know how the world will look like in 70,000 years. The last 7,000 years of the history of civilizations show that there is a wide variety of possible worlds. The colonial world civilization is only five hundred years old and its dominant knowledge base - the European Enlightenment - is only 350 years old. Both philosophies have a unilinear view of the development world history.

How did other civilizations look at where world history is going? Many of them also had a concept of the end of history in the notion of eschatology, a theological doctrine about the final days of the world to come.

In Christianity, there is the notion of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. There will come a period in the history of humankind of terrible suffering caused by oppression and persecution. Jesus Christ will return to earth to save humankind.

In Islam, there is a similar notion of a future in which wars, natural disasters and immoral behavior are the signs of the end of the world in which the Mahdi (the Guided One), a descendant of the prophet Muhammad, will appear to lead humankind to a better world.

In Hinduism, there is the notion of Kali Yuga, the last of the four ages through which humankind has gone. This period will end with plagues, famines and natural calamities. Then Kalki, the prophesied tenth and final incarnation of the god Vishnu, will appear to end the Kali Yuga and usher in a final period in which all evil spirit and sins in the world have been destroyed.

In Buddhism, there is the notion of the disappearance of Buddhist teachings five thousand years after the passing of the first Buddha and the degeneration of society into violence, greed, lust and murder. Then a new Buddha will arise, the Maitreya, who will reestablish a society based on morality.

Many major cosmologies have this idea that after period of immense misery a new and bright future will follow and a better world is possible. In DTM we build on the concept that colonialism is the nadir, the lowest point, in the development of human history. It ushered in an era of genocide, brutal violence and misery for the majority of humankind that are justified by Eurocentric knowledge production with concepts as the rise of modernity and rationalism.

Although in DTM we don't subscribe to the notion of the end of history, that does not mean that we can not have a vision of a better history for the future of mankind. World history has not developed in a unilinear way, but as a spider web. Each civilization has contribute to the growth of humankind from its own specific background. With the colonial world civilization we have reached a stage in which humankind has become a global community with legacies of diverse civilizations.

We are at the end of a historical era - the colonial world civilization - that has been characterized by invasion, occupation, genocide, robbery of land and resources, kidnapping, displacement, greed, violence, and chattel/mental slavery. We are faced with the reality of ecological disasters, pandemics and a possible nuclear holocaust in the future.

The question "What are we fighting for?" has a very simple answer that can be found in the hearts and desires of human kind and has been articulated in many civilizations. We are fighting for a future based on social justice, prosperity, peace, harmony, dignity, love, and freedom.

Social justice is about eradicating exploitation and oppression. Prosperity is about providing a decent standard of living and eradicating poverty. Peace is about creating conditions for a life without violence. Harmony is about creating conditions to solve problems through dialogue instead of fights. Dignity is about showing respect to yourself and others. Love is about caring for yourself and others. Freedom is about finding a balance between rights and duties.

We live in a world, a civilization, without social justice, prosperity, peace, harmony, dignity, love, and freedom. We are fighting for a new world civilization that is based on these values.

A civilization is characterized by a knowledge base. The colonial world civilization is based on knowledge that originated in the European Enlightenment. It claims that its knowledge is universal, exceptional when it is actually racist. The theories they have produced in Europe are based on European experiences, but are pushed as universal theories. They claim that rationalism (thinking with your head and mind) is an exceptional European trait. Non-European don't think. They are only emotional and irrational. with other parts of their body. Therefore, their assertion is false and racist, because its claims that Europeans are superior in their knowledge production compared to other civilizations.

What is the knowledge base for a new world civilization? It will be pluriversal, inclusive and based on the human values that I explained previously. Pluriversal means that we accept a wide variety of valid opinions on different topics to be up for discussion and debate. Inclusion is not primarily about representation, but about respect for other ethical and cultural systems.

In building a new world civilization, we start with a fundamental critique of the knowledge base of the colonial world civilization, which is the European Enlightenment.

The development of an alternative knowledge base is done on the level of the disciplines. It draws from contributions by old civilizations and uses creativity to add something new. But the ultimate aim is to create a knowledge base that helps humanity to build a world of social justice, prosperity, peace, harmony, love and freedom. That is the practical implication of a DTM view on world history.

6.3 DTM philosophy

I focus on one topic in philosophy: epistemology. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge: what is knowledge and how is it produced? The Eurocentric view (both the Liberal and Marxist one) is that the purpose of knowledge production is the search for truth about the natural and social world. In DTM epistemology, it is not only about seeking the truth, but it is also about exposing lies. In DTM, the notion of lies is inherent to Eurocentric epistemology. DTM epistemology has a specific method in detecting lies. The method is conceptual thinking. A concept is an idea that describes and explains certain aspects of the social and natural world. Knowledge is contained in concepts. The concept is the basic unit of knowledge. A concept consists of five elements: terminology (a term is a linguistic expression of a concept), observation (a collection of facts about the object of knowledge production), analysis (a framing and a storyline with a certain logic that makes us understand reality), theory (a collection of interrelated concepts that provides a bigger picture of the natural and social reality) and ethics (knowledge is not only about true or false, but also about right and wrong).

DTM analyses the colonization of the mind on the level of epistemology by showing how these five elements are used to manipulate our view of reality.

There are six major differences between Eurocentric epistemology and DTM.

First, the purpose of knowledge. In Eurocentrism the purpose is seeking the truth. In DTM is about seeking the truth and dismantling lies, which are part of the colonization of the mind.

Second, the object of knowledge. In Eurocentrism the object of knowledge is limited to the observable world. In DTM the object of knowledge extends to the spiritual world, because the spiritual world is the basis for ethics in many civilizations.

Third, the sources of knowledge. In Eurocentrism there are only two sources of knowledge: observation and reasoning. In DTM we acknowledge the importance of these sources, but take other sources of knowledge into account: innate knowledge, common sense, social interaction, revelation, creativity, and imagination.

Fourth, the methodology of knowledge production. In Eurocentrism the same methods are used for natural and social sciences: mathematics, induction and deduction, separation of ethics from knowledge, employing two value logic (only true and false). In DTM there are different methods for natural and social sciences, because ethics are intertwined with knowledge.

Fifth, the logical system. Eurocentrism uses two value logic (true and false). Marxism uses Hegelian dialectics which goes beyond two value logic. DTM uses seven value logics of Indian philosophy of Jainism that includes the factor of uncertainty that is missing in Hegelian dialectics.

Sixth, the role of ethics. In Eurocentrism knowledge is objective. Ethics is separated from knowledge. In DTM ethics is part of knowledge.

With this framework we reconstruct knowledge for a new world civilization using the insights of old civilizations and our creativity and imagination.

The practical implication of DTM epistemology is the development of trajectories to reconstruct the disciplines based on its epistemology.

Six major differences between Eurocentric and DTM epistemology

Eurocentric epistemology	DTM epistemology
Purpose of knowledge	
The purpose of knowledge production is the search for truth about the natural and social world	The purpose of knowledge production is the search for truth as well as detecting the lies inherent to Eurocentric epistemology
Object of knowledge	
Sources of knowledge	
Methodology of knowledge production	
The system of logics	
The role of ethics	

6.4 DTM economic theory

DTM offers three points of critique of liberal economic theory.

First, a critique of the definition of economics as the study of how societies use scarce resources to produce valuable goods and services and distribute them among different

individuals. This definition contains hidden ethics. Scarcity and efficiency are ethical values, not objective truths.

Second, this definition claims to have universal value, but that is not so. This particular definition is produced in the West and is based on the ethics of the West, not on a scientific study of economic processes in the history of all societies. In non-Western societies the discussion about the problem of economics is not defined in terms of scarcity and efficiency, but in terms of social justice.

Third, this definition is an axiom. An axiom is a proposition that is accepted without empirical proof (see below on decolonizing mathematics). It is not based on empirical evidence. No society - not even Western capitalist society - is organized on the basis of how to efficiently use scarce resources.

DTM also offers a critique of Marxist economic theory. The core of Marxist economic theory is the theory of labor value. Labor produces value. The value of a commodity is determined by the amount of labor that is necessary to produce the commodity. Because the capitalist owns the means of production and the commodities that the laborer produces, it has the power to appropriate the total value and to pay the laborer less than the total value. The difference is surplus value. Marxism does not acknowledge a right of an entrepreneur to surplus value. Profit is surplus value that is appropriated by the capitalist, and this is the essence of capitalist exploitation. Marxism regards this as a scientific discovery. It is fact, no ethics.

DTM regards the labor theory of value as an axiom and based on ethics, not on science. Entrepreneurship can add value to the economy with innovation, vision and managerial talents. Private ownership of means of production is not by definition equal to exploitation. Whether there is exploitation depends on how in a particular society social justice is perceived. It depends on ethics.

DTM economic theory is concerned about how to build economic institutions and structures that can develop the infrastructure of a society and provide a decent standard of living for the people. It is also based on social justice. Each society will have its own ethics that defines social justice. It is not universal.

The practical implication of DTM economic theory is the rebuilding of the economy of different societies and reorganizing the global economy in order to serve the need of the people.

6.5 DTM social theory

Liberal social theory is based on individualism. The individual is the cornerstone of society. Marxist social theory is based on class as the cornerstone of society. A class is a social group whose nature is determined by its relationship to the control of the means of production. DTM social theory is based on the concept of community. A community is a social group that is defined by an identity. The basis of this identity can be historical (a common history), ideological (a common belief system), cultural (a common language and other cultural traits) or other characteristics that define the identity of a community.

A big difference between DTM social theory and Eurocentrism is that in Eurocentrism humans are regarded as social objects. Natural sciences study natural objects like the moon, a rock or an atom. It studies the characteristics of the object: its shape, matter, functioning etc. In a similar way, Eurocentric social sciences study human beings as objects. The concept of patriarchy studies gender as part of a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. In this concept there is no room for love between men and women. Humans are studied as social object with characteristics as domination, oppression and exploitation. Yet, the same human beings can be seen in loving relationships as husband and wife, father and daughter, brother and sister. In order to understand both elements (oppression and love), we need another concept of human beings, not as social objects, but as ethical beings with the capacity to shape their lives (individually and socially) by interacting with the natural and

technological environment and based on an ethical system that provides guidelines for norms and values. Once we take this approach, social theory cannot be universal nor objective. Some communities, like the Yoruba in Africa, don't even have words for gender (father, mother, man and woman). Therefore, how would their social theory look like?

In DTM social theory we acknowledge the role that colonialism has played in instituting racism in social relations. Racism is the articulation of superiority and inferiority among human beings based on theology, biology or culture. It plays an important part in the study of social relations.

The practical implication of DTM social theory is to develop policies to empower communities that fight injustice and to develop anti-racist policies that confronts the foundations of the institutions that drive racism. It constructs the unity of relation between humans and nature and between communities with divergent ethics.

6.6 DTM political theory

Political theory studies the process of power, administration, control, and resistance. Eurocentric theories have the same universalist and objectivist approach as in social theories. For example, the separation of religion from state is regarded as a universal concept in both Liberalism and Marxism. In Liberalism the state is neutral. In Marxism the state is an instrument of the ruling class.

In DTM every state has an ethical foundation, be it implicit or explicit. Ethics determines how a community should run its society through the state. A Buddhist, Confucian, Muslim or Hindu society is based on the ethics of that particular civilization. That is as legitimate as a European society that wants to base its political structures on the European Enlightenment. Human rights are not universal, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) claims. They are based on a particular ethics. The UDHR is based on Liberalism. There are other concepts of human rights possible, such as the one that is embedded in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (also known as the Banjul Charter). All the individual rights of the UDHR are also included in the Banjul Charter. But it acknowledges that an individual has not only rights, but also duties. It makes a distinction between individual human rights and people's rights. It clearly looks at how colonialism has impacted individual and peoples' right in the colonized world.

While Liberal political theory is much about control, DTM theory is much about resistance. DTM studies social movements and draws lessons from their successes and failures. That is the practical implication of DTM political theory.

6.7 DTM cultural theory

I define culture as a system of production and dissemination of knowledge about nature and society and the material and immaterial expression of this knowledge. The production of knowledge is not only about producing insights into nature and society. It is also about values, belief systems, communication, feelings and emotions of individuals and social groups about their identity and rules and rituals that express their identity. Furthermore, it is about the relationship between humans and nature. Culture is institutionalized in educational institutions that produce knowledge, in institutions for the dissemination of knowledge and expressed in material culture (clothing, food, housing, architecture etc) and immaterial culture (language, art, customs, rituals etc).

Cultural theories are theories that describe and explain the phenomenon of culture. Liberal theory looks at culture in disciplines like cultural and social anthropology. Anthropology is probably the most racist discipline in Western social sciences, because its subject is the study of "culture", but then immediately "culture" is defined in terms of "tribes", "primitive" and "civilized" cultures. The civilized culture is the culture of white Europeans, but they don't make the connection with race and color, nor with power.

In Marxism culture is part of the superstructure of a class society and as such is influenced heavily by its base (economic and technological foundation). Italian Marxist

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) developed a Marxist cultural theory with the concept of hegemony. The capitalist class maintains its rule not only by force and coercion, but also through cultural domination. Gramsci saw Europe as basis for his theory. He did not study colonialism, which dominated much of the world. His narrow-mindedness prevented him from seeing how colonialism colonized the mind.

His contemporary from Jamaica, Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), had a much wider vision of culture and power. He developed the concept of mental slavery and the mechanism of how Western political domination was based on racism and the colonization of the mind.

The practical implication of DTM cultural theory is a wide range of policies to decolonize the mind.

6.8 DTM and biology

Biology, mathematics and natural sciences are seen in Eurocentrism as objective knowledge which cannot be decolonized. In DTM we dispute this proposition. Biology is based on the theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest by Charles Darwin (1809-1882). According to this theory only those individuals in nature survive who are adapted to their environment. It sees competition for food and sex as the main drive for survival. In DTM we see here the influence of liberalism in biology with the concept of individualism. But nature shows many examples of cooperation between animals to survive. Biology is not an objective science. There are ethics involved about the classification of life, the relationship between body and mind, the relationship between humans and ecology and the separation of humans from nature. There are alternative views of the relationship between humans and nature that lead to a more balanced view of current ecological problems and how to solve them. That is the practical dimension of DTM and biology.

6.9 DTM mathematics

Eurocentrist scholars might think that if there is one discipline that cannot be decolonized, it would be mathematics. In DTM we distinguish six dimensions in decolonizing this discipline.

1. A critique of the foundations of Euromathematics: the axiomatic approach. Mathematics in other civilizations was based on empirical proof. Euromathematics introduced the concept of an axiom, a proposition that does not require empirical proof. This can lead to a distortion of reality. The notion of axioms is also seen in the social sciences where propositions are postulated without empirical proof. For example: the propositions that parliamentary democracy is the best political system is not based on empirical research; it is just an axiom.
2. A critique of the Western historiography of mathematics. Euromathematics regards mathematics as a Greek invention and displays a racist history of math. DTM criticizes this racism and the Greek invention of mathematics.
3. A critique of the use of Euromathematics in natural and social sciences. Mathematics is used in social sciences as a proof of the objectivity of social theory. DTM shows how mathematics creates distortions of social reality in Eurocentric social theory.
4. A critique of the ethics of mathematics and hard sciences. Should mathematics be used in developing nuclear bombs that can destroy the world? DTM poses these ethical questions. These questions are absent in Euromathematics.
5. The concept of reverse engineering in mathematics. How did the Egyptians build their pyramids that needed precise mathematical calculation, although they did not have the instrument of modern mathematics. This is part of DTM research into mathematics.
6. A new educational system for mathematics. The practical implications of decolonizing mathematics is the development of a new system of education and research into mathematics.

6.10 DTM and physics

Much of physics is based on observations of natural phenomena and experiments to test theories about these observations. What is there to be decolonized? Well, there is a segment of physics that uses observations to develop fantasies. These fantasies are then based on axiomatic mathematics. The most vivid example is the Big Bang theory. The Big Bang theory is based on the argument that since the Hubble Telescope showed that the universe is expanding in all directions, then looking back into the past there must have been a point from where the expansion started: the Big Bang. The instruments of physics cannot be used to prove this theory. There is observation of the expansion of the universe, but there is no observation of the beginning. It is impossible to get this observation, because you cannot replicate the Big Bang as you can replicate experiments in physics. Furthermore, advocates of the Big Bang theory argue that the laws of physics don't apply to the beginning of the Big Bang. How do they know that? This is an axiom, not a scientific proposition that can be tested. Finally, how do you explain that something came out of nothing? And what is nothing? Is it just the absence of something? This avenue of physics is filled with contradictions. They are not able to answer the critical questions that DTM poses and yet they present the Big Bang theory as a scientific theory, while it has become more of a secular theology. The practical implication of decolonizing physics is to expel Eurocentric fantasies from scientific knowledge production.

6.11 DTM and applied linguistics

Applied linguistics deals with the practical application of language studies. DTM looks at how colonialism has impacted language. There are five issues:

1. The role of terminology in DTM conceptual thinking: the structure of knowledge ((de)colonizing the mind) influences the use terminology.
2. The role of language in the type of knowledge production. In Yoruba language most names and all pronouns are ungendered. What is the impact on gender theory?
3. Colonialism introduced inferiority and superiority in culture. Language is part of culture. Colonialism distinguished between inferior and superior languages.
4. The study of mechanism of colonizing the mind and how language is used in these mechanisms to colonize the mind.
5. How is the relationship between identity formation and language and what role does colonialism play in this relationship?

6.12 The future of decolonizing the disciplines

In decolonizing the disciplines, we apply the three elements of the DTM framework (critique, alternative knowledge and the translation of knowledge into practical policies) to decolonize the disciplines. In this endeavor we go back to knowledge production from civilizations in the Global South. What contributions can the civilizations from Africa, Asia and Abya Yala make in decolonizing the disciplines. We need expert knowledge from and about these civilizations to get a sense of the nature of these contributions. And then we use our creativity and imagination to reconstruct the disciplines. Ultimately, this will lead to new textbooks for the disciplines.

Reconstructing the disciplines might include the development of new disciplines or fundamentally alter the nature of the existing disciplines. Take economic theory. If the purpose is changed from studying the processes of optimization of scarce resources to studying social justice in the process of the production, distribution and financing of goods and services, then the nature of the study changes. A study of economic process from the perspective of so called objective facts is of a different nature than the study from the perspective of ethics.

7. The problem of organization

7.1 The question of power

DTM is a theory of liberation. It is not just a theory to understand the world. It is a call for action to change the world. Marxism is also a theory of liberation with a call to action. In order to change the world, you have to have an analysis of the power that you will confront in that change and how to deal with that power. That will be the foundation to tackle the problem of organization.

The Marxist analysis of power is that capitalism is a system of oppression and exploitation. Injustice follows from the labor theory of surplus value. It is an objective concept devoid of ethics. By definition any class society is a society of oppression and exploitation of the working classes by the ruling classes. The dominant class controls the oppressed classes through the state. The administration of the state has instruments to oppress the resistance of the working classes who want to fight against their exploitation and oppression: the police, the army and the intelligence services. Furthermore, the capitalist class uses the cultural power of the educational system and the media to control the mind of the oppressed classes.

Liberation of the oppressed classes will come through a revolution that destroys the instruments of oppression: police, army and intelligence services and rebuilds a new state: a workers' state with a people's army and workers' councils to rule the state.

A revolution will not come spontaneously. It needs years of educating the oppressed classes in order to wake up their class consciousness and have them understand the cause and nature of their oppression and exploitation. They cannot do this on their own. They need a vanguard party of trained Marxists that can educate and lead them to the stage in which a revolution can bring down capitalism. The organizational structure follows from the theoretical analysis of power in all class societies.

What are the organizational consequences of the liberation philosophy of DTM? DTM has no universal concept of power and injustice like Marxism. In Marxism power in a class society is the ability of the ruling class to impose injustice, oppression and exploitation on the oppressed classes. The purpose of a revolution is to change power from the capitalist class to the working class.

In DTM, injustice is not inherently linked to class, but to ethics. A class society like China can have justice if it is able to uplift people from poverty and provide them with a better life. That is justice, although it is a class society. China has social classes in the Marxist sense, but it is not a capitalist society, because the ruling party is not the party of the capitalist class. It does not act in the interest and on behalf of the capitalist class. It is a party of the working classes. If you regard China as a capitalist society from a Marxist point of view, then you need to build a political party in China to lead the working classes towards a socialist revolution, which means ousting the Communist Party from power.

If you argue that the Chinese society is based on justice, although there can be many cases of injustice, then you don't argue that a change of power is needed. You can disagree with certain policies in the process of achieving social justice, but that is an argument about changing policies, not about changing power. Since DTM is not a liberation philosophy based on universalism (one analysis holds for every society), we argue that a policy that holds for China might not hold for the USA, Zambia or Jamaica.

In America, injustice is inherent to the American society. The history of colonialism has embedded racial injustice in the system, first through slavery, then through segregation (apartheid/Jim Crow) and now through the military industrial complex that acts in the interest of the capitalist class. It neglects the rights of the working classes and prioritizes oppressive war (the ultimate form of injustice) to maintain its dominance. The absolute number of all US citizens living in poverty has increased in the last 45 years from 23 million to 37 million. The policy of perpetual war originates from the power structure that puts the interests of the military industrial complex above the interest of the people.

A DTM strategy is about changing the power relations. How do we do that and what will replace these relations? There are no easy answers. The basic strategy in DTM is to change society with a strategy of non-violence resistance. How will this strategy look like and how will that impact change in the power relations? What is the role of ethics in American politics? Dr. Cornell West, an independent candidate for the 2024 presidential elections talks about the need of a spiritual awakening and moral reckoning.

In a non-violent strategy, we might start to focus on changing policies by using methods of non-violent confrontation of power. Then, the action of power will define the dynamics of change, either in policies or in power. From a DTM perspective it is all about trial-and-error. There is not one proscribed strategy. The experience of social movements in the USA and similar countries will be the basis to decide what works and what not.

The DTM strategy on how to deal with power is not universal, but depends on the history of a particular country, its power structures and policies and the nature of social movements.

7.2 The question of organization

If there is no general universal answer to the question of how to deal with power, are we then not lost in fragmented answers? Not really. In the DTM framework, the goal of social movements is to transform from the current colonial world civilization to a new decolonial world civilization. A key element in this transformation is the acknowledgement that the colonization of the mind is instrumental in maintaining colonial power. The mind of the people is colonized in various ways. Any social struggle for changing the world is a struggle for changing the minds of the people. Once the mind has been decolonized, it will be much easier to organize struggle for change by the people.

We live in an era in which technology has fundamentally changed the capacity of social movements to develop leadership. There are three dimensions in leadership.

First, the ability to articulate a vision for the future for social movements. What are we fighting for? It is not only about articulation, but also about breaking the vision down in understandable pieces so it becomes practical and answers the question: what do we do next?

Second, the ability to organize and manage people and activities to achieve specific results. The managerial capabilities are an important part of practical leadership.

Third, the ability to build a team and a legacy. Decolonial leadership is not about building egos, but about building teams in which individuals support each other in order to build a movement. And it is not just about a movement of today, but also a movement for the future. That entails a policy of building future leadership and passing on a legacy for building that future.

In the past, building leadership had certain limitations regarding space, time and technology. Yet, Marcus Garvey was successful in building one of the largest Black organizations in the world without the use of the technology that we currently have at our disposal - the Internet, social media, mobile phones, Zoom, FaceTime, etc. However, modern technology has overcome these limitations. Today it is possible to build social movements and leadership without the limitations of space, time and technology. We can meet, talk and organize from any place in the world and at any time. Furthermore, resources for education and propaganda are freely available.

Any person can start a group on the smallest scale to organize people for change and build this to connect with other groups that work towards decolonizing the world. An important element in this work is the culture of organization. The European Enlightenment (Liberalism and Marxism) has promoted the idea of universalism (one way of thinking all over the world on all topics). Once you subscribe to universalism, then the political and organizational consequence is a political culture with the maxim: my way or

the highway. Either you do it my way, or we split and go our own way. This leads to sectarianism in social movements. The concept of pluriversalism leads to another political culture in social movements: a culture of dialogue, respect for differences of opinion and a policy to build on issues we agree on and use discussions on differences of opinion as a matter of education and dialogue. Building this culture is the corner stone of the organizational work from a DTM perspective.

The colonization of the mind takes place on two levels: on the level of the production of knowledge and the level of the distribution of knowledge.

The production of knowledge is done by three categories of people and institutions.

The first category consists of universities and Think Tanks. They conduct research and produce knowledge. Their knowledge is the basis for government policy, media content and the content of education. From a DTM perspective it is important to organize networks of academics who are dedicated to reconstructing the disciplines and produce the material for society to make the transformation towards a new world civilization.

The second category consists of leaders of social movements. They produce concepts about social struggle that can deviate from concepts produced in academia. Their knowledge is the basis for building social movements.

The third category consists of artist who create knowledge from their artistic abilities. They are capable of creating an imagination of how to understand the world and change it. They use their art to inspire and educate people.

A key component of the question of organization in the decolonial movement is capacity building. Marxism uses the term cadre formation. Capacity building will be the main organizational task in the future. Capacity building in academia focuses on four topics:

1. Curriculum development based on DTM.
2. DTM in the class room: how does the classroom works with DTM?
3. Developing a guide to decolonize the disciplines.
4. The production of new textbooks based on DTM.

With the concept of DTM and the policy of decolonizing the disciplines we are now in a position to pursue the idea of building an institute for higher education: a decolonial pluriversity to replace the concept of a uni-versity (one universal truth). It will be an institute that takes an integral approach to knowledge production. It presents the different disciplines in an interconnected way as is shown in DTM: epistemology, DTM theory of racism, world history, social sciences (economic, social, political and cultural theory), ecology and biology, mathematics, physics and technology including AI. The institute can take different forms:

- A private campus based institute, like Harvard University in the USA, that starts with an economics and math department and grows into a wide range of disciplines.
- A public institute funded by public money in a country that support decolonization.
- An existing university that offers DTM courses per discipline and evolves towards a pluriversity.

There are other options possible, with the concept of DTM we can set up a trajectory to build a decolonial pluriversity.

Capacity building in social movements focuses on two topics:

1. Develop educational programs that connect the different struggles from a DTM perspective.
2. Develop train-the-trainers programs that train activists on different levels to be able to present the DTM framework.

Another aspect of decolonizing the mind is the distribution of decolonial knowledge. This requires some form of cadre formation, of training the trainers who educate people in the theoretical framework of DTM. This process is not about passing out knowledge in the form of facts and insight. It is about interacting with people who add knowledge from

their own experience and education. It is also about improving social and technical skills. And finally, it is about creating an attitude that promotes building a new world of social justice, prosperity, peace, harmony, love, and freedom.

Sooner or later, there will be initiatives to connect all the organizational structures, but that is something that will not be decided by some centre of power. It grows organically when the time is ripe.

7.3 The revival of the spirit of Bandung

In 1955 leaders of newly independent nations and liberation movements in Asia and Africa came together in the Indonesian city of Bandung. Indonesian president [Sukarno](#) opened the conference with these words: *"This is the first intercontinental conference of coloured people... in the history of mankind... It is a new departure in the history of the world that leaders of Asian and African people can meet together ... to discuss and deliberate upon matters of common concern. In spite of diversity that exists among its participants, let this conference be a great success. Yes, there is diversity among us. Who denies it? ... What harm is there in diversity? .. This conference is not to oppose each other."*

The conferences focus on economic and political cooperation but it also dealt with the issue of culture. The final [declaration](#) says: *"Asia and Africa have been the cradle of great religions and civilizations which have enriched other cultures and civilizations 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."*

The spirit of Bandung got lost in the decades following the intensification of the Cold War. A major challenge for the future is to rekindle this spirit and link it to world politics. The Global South has set up two institutions that are outside of the control of the West: BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). BRICS is about economic cooperation and SCO about security cooperation. The Non Alignment Movement (NAM) that came out of the Bandung Conference of 1955 is still influenced by the West, but BRICS and SCO are quite independent from the West. We need to build an international movement that focuses on culture: how to develop a knowledge base for a pluriversal world civilization. What kind of intellectuals, activists and artists are needed for such an endeavor? What is the role of universities? What is the role of governments and international institutions like BRICS, NAM, and SCO? I argue that BRICS should develop a cultural program aimed at building a new world civilization.

Conclusion

In this essay I argue that the decolonial movement needs to make a qualitative step forward towards a comprehensive, coherent and integral theoretical framework. One direction is DTM. Other decolonial thinkers might develop decoloniality in another direction. Creativity and imagination should not be limited in one direction.

I see three major tasks that lie ahead for DTM:

1. The articulation of the concept of a new world civilization as the ultimate goal of the decolonial movement.
2. The need to move from general critique towards decolonizing the disciplines and reconstruct knowledge production from a pluriversal perspective.
3. The need to set up forms of capacity building based on DTM.

It is not an easy task, but as the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu once said: *"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."*

¹ This article is based on my book. See Hira, S. (2023): *Decolonizing The Mind. A Guide to Decolonial Theory and Practice*. Amrit Publishers. The Hague. I want to thank Arzu Merali, Basey Antia, Biel Delgado Trabal, Gabriel Medina, Guilherme Roman Borges, Guillermo Barreto, Munyaradzi Mushonga, Patrick Delices, Raj Mathur, and Sitla Bonoo for their critical comments on earlier versions of this essay.

² Idem, p. 76.

³ Idem, p. 74.

⁴ Idem, paragraph 10.4.3 on gender.

⁵ See idem, paragraph 6.6.6 for a critical discussion of the theory of intersectionality.

⁶ Idem, p. 450.

⁷ Hira, S. (2023), p. 327.

⁸ Idem, p. 470.

⁹ Idem, p. 476.