

DECOLONIALITY OF POWER AND THE RISE OF AGENCIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE: THE POWER THAT NEVER LEFT

For centuries, the world's map was not just drawn; it was shaped by power. Colonialism did not only take land; it influenced thought. Even after empires fell, the coloniality of power, as Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano called it, "persisted". It determined who gets to speak, who makes decisions, and whose knowledge is seen as "universal". The Global North became the center for theory and progress, while the Global South remained a source of labor and resources. Independence happened, but inequality still runs deep in the world's structure.

After the last European flag was taken down, people around the world celebrated. Colonies became free nations. But for the people of the Global South, freedom felt incomplete. The military rulers left, but the coloniality of power remained. Quijano explained that this coloniality is not just a history lesson; it's the invisible rulebook of the modern world. It sets out unwritten rules that determine who becomes rich, who makes global policy, and whose ideas get taken seriously.



Kanishq Chauhan

Department of Political Science, 1st year
Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi
Kanishqscdav@gmail.com

Think of it as a global game of Monopoly—one team (the North) wrote the rules, owns all the utilities, and continues to collect rent even after the game is "over." This enduring imbalance keeps the North as the hub of universal theory and advanced technology, while the South is often relegated to providing raw materials and cheap labor. It is the same power, only dressed in new institutions and global hierarchies.

THE SOUTH WRITES BACK

Today, the story is changing. A quiet revolution of agency is emerging across continents. This includes India's G20 leadership highlighting Southern voices, the African Union gaining a permanent seat at the table, Latin America pursuing sovereignty-driven diplomacy, and indigenous knowledge reclaiming its value. This movement is not about replacing one center with another; it's about rethinking what power means. Power can be participatory, diverse, and global. It listens before it leads.

THE DECOLONIAL IMAGINATION

This shift also involves culture. From Asian postcolonial film to Afrofuturism, the South is now producing rather than just reflecting. It offers fresh modernities that interact with the West on an equal footing rather than imitating it. However, colonialism is still present in travel hierarchies, digital surveillance, and international marketplaces. It is a struggle of ideas rather than a military conflict. It necessitates rethinking dignity and unlearning reliance.

MOVING TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE

The emergence of agencies in the Global South is about reclaiming rather than exacting revenge. It entails uniting to mold the future, where authority is a shared table rather than a throne. The world is being rewritten, and this time, the ink comes from the South.



DECODING THE INVISIBLE CAGE: FOUR FACES OF DOMINATION

The emerging agency in the South is powerful because it has learned to fight this invisible structure on all fronts. This invisible cage has four main sides:

1. The Power Cage (Economic Control)

This is the most obvious aspect. It governs who holds the money and who owes the debt. For decades, institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided needed loans but often attached strict conditions. Critics argue these conditions forced developing countries to privatize resources and cut social spending, making it nearly impossible for them to genuinely build their economies. As a result, nations were caught in a vicious cycle of sending riches north only to pay off their debts.

2. The Knowledge Cage (The Ideas That Rule)

This is the rule that declares Western thought, science, and education as the only "universal" and "modern" ones. Indigenous medicine, ecological farming methods, or political theories from Africa or Latin America are often dismissed as merely "local culture" or "underdeveloped. Because of the Coloniality of Knowledge, Southern countries frequently believe they must copy Western models rather than innovate based on their own rich histories and circumstances in order to be seen as intelligent or advanced. This restricts their capacity to find original solutions to their particular challenges.

3. The Being Cage (Who You Are)

The subtlest cage controls how people from the South are perceived, both by the world and by themselves. The Coloniality of Being operates through global media and entertainment, often portraying Southern nations through stereotypes: poor, politically chaotic, or in need of rescue. This constant devaluation erodes the dignity and humanity of non-Western people, making it hard for them to assert their power and identity on the global stage.

4. The Nature Cage (The Right to Extract)

This is the belief that nature is just a resource to be exploited for human (and specifically capitalist) profit. This viewpoint conflicts with many local and indigenous cultures' long-standing, sustainable customs. The reasoning for the historical extraction of gold and rubber is known as the "Coloniality of Nature," and it still fuels the unrelenting neo-extractivism of today. It leaves the Global South suffering the worst effects of climate change, despite



THE SOUTHERN TOOLBOX: BUILDING AN ESCAPE ROUTE

The rising agencies today form a clever strategy to dismantle these four cages. to dismantle these four cages. The South isn't just complaining; it's building parallel systems that rewrite the rules of the game.

FINANCIAL REBELLION: THE BRICS BLOCKADE

A significant power move is the effort to escape the dollar's dominance. For decades, most global trade had to be settled in U.S. dollars, giving the U.S. tremendous control over global finance. The BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) is leading a financial rebellion. The New Development Bank (NDB): Created by BRICS, the NDB acts as a direct competitor to the World Bank. It offers loans without the demanding political conditions often linked to Western institutions, focusing instead on quick, flexible funding for vital infrastructure and green energy projects. A. It's a daring move toward a financial world that is truly multipolar. Local Currency commerce: De-dollarization is the process by which nations like China and India are progressively settling commerce in their local currency. The Global South is less dependent on the West because of this movement, which also protects them against sanctions and foreign policy shocks from other big countries.

A PLACE AT THE MAIN TABLE: DIPLOMATIC POWER

The South is calling for a permanent voice in world affairs, not merely a transitory invitation. A historic change in power occurred when the African Union (AU) was able to secure a permanent seat at the G20, the forum for the biggest economies in the world. It formally acknowledged the AU as a significant geopolitical grouping, guaranteeing that the top decision-makers in the globe now prioritize the issues facing a full continent, from structural debt to climate funding. The combined bargaining strength is working better than the efforts of any one country.

THE IMAGINATION ENGINE: NEW BLUEPRINTS FOR SOCIETY

To challenge the Coloniality of Knowledge and Being, the South is using its strongest weapon: the Decolonial Imagination. This involves creating completely new, non-Western blueprints for society.

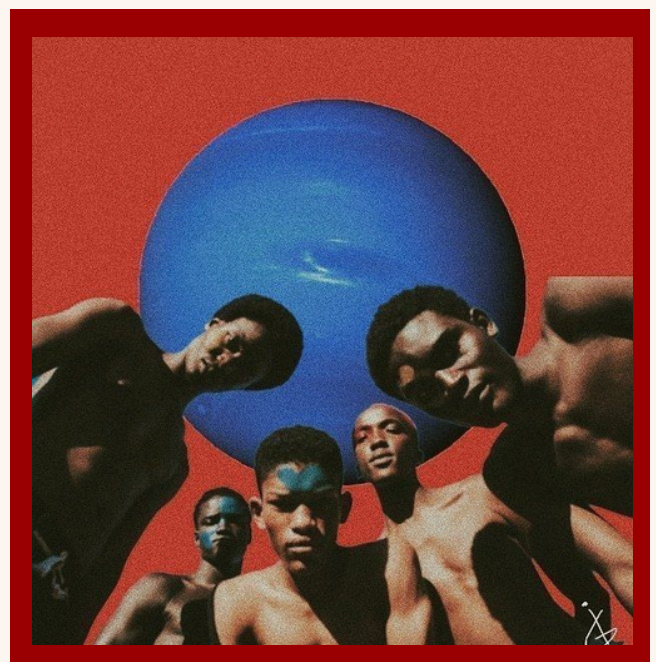
BEYOND GDP: THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIVING WELL

The most groundbreaking idea coming from the Andes is the concept of "Buen Vivir" (Living Well), or "Sumak Kawsay" in the Quechua language. It is enshrined in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia. Rejecting Growth at All Costs: Buen Vivir rejects the Western notion of "Development"—which focuses on endless economic growth and resource consumption—as the sole measure of success. A. Rather, it puts communal cohesion and ecological balance ahead of GDP. It makes the case that

a society is wealthy when its members coexist peacefully with Pachamama, or Mother Earth, rather than when it has more material belongings. This way of thinking provides a profound and long-lasting substitute for global capitalism

RECLAIMING TOMORROW: AFROFUTURISM

On the cultural side, movements like Afrofuturism—evident in cinema, art, and music—are reclaiming the future itself. It blends African history and spiritual traditions with advanced technology and science fiction. Seizing the Future: Afrofuturism challenges the Coloniality of Being, which attempted to confine the Black experience to historical pain, by envisioning dynamic, technologically sophisticated African and diasporic nations. It affirms temporal sovereignty, or the freedom to shape one's own destiny free from the weight of former oppressors.



INDIA: THE NEW ANCHOR OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

India's emergence has made it a critical anchor in the direction of the Southern agency. As the world's most populous country, and rapidly growing economy, its diplomatic and technology capabilities are now harnessed for the benefits of developing countries. G20 Leadership and Voice Elevation: India's presidency of the G20 was a milestone moment for amplifying Southern voices. In particular, India was able to effectively advocate for the permanent membership of the African Union (AU) at the G20 table, which is unprecedented. It was a significant diplomatic victory that brought a continent's problems—such as its structural debt crises and discussions about climate finance—to the forefront of the world economy

India was able to leverage its global profile, not just for itself, but to cement a permanent



Technological Cooperation (Tech Drive): India is also actively advocating for its digital public infrastructure, like the Aadhaar digital identity and the UPI payment system, as models for other developing countries. Quite simply, by advocating for this technology, India is aiding Southern countries from having to use proprietary technology systems controlled by the North—hence increasing their digital sovereignty and their economic inclusion. Sharing this kind of technology is a foray into effective South-South cooperation.

THE FINAL BATTLEFIELDS: WHERE COLONIALITY STILL LINGERS

Despite the massive progress in agency, the fight is far from over. Colonialism changes and endures in contemporary forms: Digital Markets and Surveillance: The unseen laws of colonialism are still present in the systems of international trade, digital surveillance, and travel hierarchies. Data sovereignty is a new frontier in the digital world, for example, when a few Northern businesses control the platforms and the data.

The Debt Crisis: Many Southern countries are trapped in enormous debt, which restricts their options for development and sovereignty. Climate Injustice: The nations of the Global South—despite having contributed the least to climate change—are suffering the most from its effects. Their demand for climate finance and

reparations from industrialized nations is the current, high-stakes moral battleground. The rise of agencies in the Global South is a call to action. It is a demand that power be participatory, diverse, and global. The movement requires unlearning dependency and reimagining dignity. It is about coming together to shape a future where power is not a throne, but a shared table. This process is complex, but it is underway. The world is being rewritten, and this time, the ink comes from the South.

