

DIVERSITY IN AFRICA AND ASIA:
Discourses and Realities
55 Years after 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference
Book Project / Special Issue of a Journal
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PROBLEMATICS

The year 2010 has been declared by the UN as the Year of Biodiversity. Diversity has been recognised largely as a fundamental condition for the survival of the planet. However, this diversity has been suffering from impoverishment, as indicated among others by the continuous disappearance of rare species, languages and civilisations. The world society has come to be aware of this situation especially since the end of the 20th century, thanks to the progress of science and technology accompanied by the rise of global civil society movements. For thinkers and activists of social and solidarity movements, the main reason of this impoverishment is a type of globalisation, which is dominated by economical and materialist interests, which has appeared to be a single model of development, which puts on the top of priorities material productivity and profit, which transforms nature into commercial commodities, which pushes people to be greedy consumers. This globalisation is led by a small number of economically rich countries, but which take the major part of natural resources of the planet for their own profit, comfort, pleasure and security. It is this single model of development that threatens the survival of the planet, because it would need natural resources of several planets if the whole world follows the model. That is why an alternative model of development is needed if human beings wish a sustainable world.

This alternative model would certainly not be the one that threatens the diversity of life. In the contrary, it should be the one that supports it, that allows to live and develop nature and human beings whatever their skin colour, conviction, ethnic belonging, or mode of life. This model would certainly not be based on the worldview that perceives the diversity of civilisation as successive steps from lower to higher, from less to more, from misery to nobility, but as a continuous process in which diverse modes of life take place, meet, interfere and mix up. Today, all societies in the world are divided by five civilisations following the modes of life of their inhabitants, either inside a country or among the nations. These five modes of life are nomadism, agriculture, trade, industry and digital. The problem starts when one perceives that one civilisation is inferior to another, and that one civilisation pretending to be superior tries to dominate, eliminate or change by force the other.

The challenge of globalisation for a sustainable world is therefore how to deal with diversity of life so that it becomes source of happiness and prosperity, and not source of conflicts and calamities. And Africa and Asia are the huge pool of diversity, either in term of culture, ecology, economy, politics, or religion and spirituality. Within the context of globalisation dominated by short term economical and materialist interests leading to a single model of development and threatening the survival of the earth, Africa and Asia, as the source and as the pool of diversity, must be theoretically able to contribute in directing globalisation towards a sustainable world. How is it possible? Are Africa and Asia ready to take their potential role?

It seems that the answer to those questions is not yet sure, not to say negative. The state of knowledge on diversity issues in Africa and Asia is still fragmentary. A collective work is

necessary to draw a general picture of the question. This book is an effort to answer this challenge.

FOCUS

The book is to be focused on the question of how Nation-States and civil society organisations deal with diversity within a country, a region, or a continent, in the context of globalisation. The Nation-State here can be represented by a constitution, a law, a presidential decree, governmental measures, police operations, army interventions, and other types of concept and practice by the agents of Nation-State. The geographical areas of concern is Africa, Asia and/or Africa-Asia. While the diversity may be identified according to its five dimensions:

Dimensions of Diversity	Related Issues (examples)
Culture	ethnic, linguistic, local-global, minority-majority, male-female relationship,...
Ecology	natural ecology (forests, deserts, rivers, lakes, seas, flora, fauna,...) and built ecology (cities, rural areas, villages, housing, sky scrappers, slums,...)
Economy	formal-informal, modern-traditional, urban-rural, nomadic, agriculture, commercial, industrial, digital sectors
Politics	organisations, systems, interest groups of politics; civil-military, local-central government relations, political engineering, Nation-State, non-state-Nation, monarchy, republic,...
Spirituality / Religion	syncretism, co-existence, dialogue or hostility between local believes and trans-national religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam), fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, spirituality and religion-based political and social movements,...

BASIC QUESTIONS

Every paper is expected to take into account the following basic questions:

1. What are the existing elements of diversity (according to one or more of its dimensions mentioned above) and how do they take place in a given geographical area (village / town / region / province / country)?
2. How do the Nation-State (represented by constitution, law, presidential decree, governmental measures, police operations, army interventions, and other types of concept and practice by the agents of Nation-State) and civil society organisations deal with the expressions of diversity (described in point 1)?
3. What lessons can be learned from the case presented in points 1 and 2?

CONTENT

The book will present diversity issues in five areas: Culture, Ecology, Economy, Politics and Religion/Spirituality. Each area will be covered by at least two authors representing respectively African and Asian cases. Intercontinental or transcontinental issues are also welcome.

GENERAL RULE OF PRESENTATION

Paper is to be sent by e-mail to secretariat@bandungspirit.org by respecting the following rule of presentation.

Paper size: A4 (kwarto)

Margins: 3 cm from all the borders (top, bottom, left, right)

Interline: double space

Typography: Times New Roman, 12 points

Article size: around 2500 words

Language: English, British style, article to be checked by a competent person in language editing before submission

For the paragraph, alignment, heading, sub-heading, and other details, see the CODESRIA Guide for Authors in the attached file.

AGENDA

Date of publication: end of July 2011

Deadline of submission of the final manuscript to the publisher (CODESRIA): May 20, 2011

Deadline of submission of the final manuscript to the editor: April 20, 2011

Deadline of submission of the abstract to the editor: March 20, 2011