

INDIA, CHINA AND THE BRICS VISION OF GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING

Manoranjan Mohanty*

(Draft paper for discussion)

Abstract

Asian governments and people face new challenges and opportunities as they look forward to the shaping of the global future at the mid-point of the 21st century. This paper presents the view that Asian countries should identify with the agenda and the possibilities of the new global formation, namely, the BRICS which can play the role of the midwife for the birth of a democratic world order. The challenge it confronts is that the existing international political and economic order with World Bank and IMF at the driver seat is still strongly rooted in the US-led Western political economy. The opportunity that they see is the crisis that has frequently arisen from the prevailing global financial and economic system on the one hand and the rising demands of people and regions in every part of the world for equitable development and cultural dignity on the other. The fourth BRICS Summit in New Delhi in March 2012 reflected this situation. The five countries cautiously demanded reforms in the world financial system, but at the same time took steps such as new agreement on Extending Credit Facility in Local Currencies and the proposal to set up a BRICS Development Bank.

India and China as participants in the BRICS process face two kinds of options. One is to use the BRICS forum as a pressure group to share more power with the existing big powers while maintaining the prevailing world economic system, thus acting as forces of *status quo*. The other option is to play the role of agency of transformation of the prevailing unequal world order into a more just, equitable and democratic world order. There are significant people's movements in both in India and China and in fact all over the world, who carry forward the legacies of their liberation movements and are struggling for building structures of democratic participation, social justice and mutual development within their countries and at the global level. Policy makers in India and China have to assess the implications of their current line of action from this vantage point. Asian diplomacy in the coming decades has to confront the task of making a choice between two contending scenarios of global future. One is the hegemonic path led by newly enshrined big powers or the democratic path which accords equal status to all countries, peoples and cultures.

Key words: BRICS, Global future, Global Restructuring, Asian Diplomacy, People's Movements

* Honorary Fellow and former Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies, (www.icsin.org), Delhi, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, (www.csdindia.org), New Delhi and Retired Professor of Political Science, University of Delhi, E-mail: mmohantydu@gmail.com

Global Rebalancing to Global Restructuring

In the contemporary discourse on global transformation there are two contending perspectives. One is the path 'global rebalancing' that maintains the essential features of the post-World War II international political and economic order inviting the newly rising economies such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) to join the high table. The other is the path of what can be called 'global restructuring' which aims at transforming the unequal Breton Woods system into an equitable, just and fair world order. It is an irony of our times that the ruling elites of the rising economies such as those of India, China and Brazil send out confusing messages as to whether they are engaged in rebalancing or restructuring of the present world economic order.

It is noteworthy that the Fourth BRICS Summit held in New Delhi on 29 March 2012 did not explicitly challenge the structure of the prevailing economic order, thus playing safe with the Western powers which are yet to take serious note of the formation of BRICS. At the same time the leaders of the five countries called for reforms of the quota and governance system in the World Bank and IMF, initiated measures such as to form a new Development Bank for the BRICS and other emerging and developing countries. In fact they took steps on many fronts which have the potential for restructuring the power relations in world scale.

Ever since the world took note of the economic successes of China and India a new concept acquired currency in the global discourse, namely, global rebalancing – a concept that gathered even greater salience after the global economic crisis of 2007-2009. Pushed by the IMF, the G-20 forum has been used to propagate the line of thinking mainly to persuade China to accept the balancing role in the world economy by promoting domestic demands and revaluing its currency and so on. China, India and other rising economies are also called upon to play the role of the major stake-holders in environment, information, peace-keeping and other spheres, besides getting integrated with the prevailing financial and trade system of world economy. Thus global rebalancing process seeks to incorporate the emerging powers in the big power club to run the existing global political and economic order.

Global restructuring, on the other hand, refers to fundamental restructuring of the world political economy to fulfil the demands for equity, justice and autonomy at every level in all regions of the world from local to global realms in all spheres, economic, political, cultural, science and technology, information and knowledge spheres. The crises in many spheres in the contemporary world, namely, economy, environment, cultural alienation, terrorist violence and wars are manifestation of the new era that we live in.

The BRICS vision of global future has to be placed in the emerging process of global restructuring. This vision brings together two sets of trilateral efforts which had started independently a few years before BRICS was formed. They were the RIC (Russia-India-China) and the IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa). It is important to observe that even after the formation of BRICS the two trilaterals continue to exist because they had a distinct value of long-term significance in the process of global transformation. IBSA Forum represented not only legacies of liberation movements in three continents, but also experiences of democracy in three developing countries. The RIC embodied traditions of three large, populous countries which were contiguous and had legacies of revolution and freedom struggle have a specific significance of its own. The RIC vision to build an equitable and democratic world order which was proclaimed in RIC Foreign Ministers Communiqué in Wuhan in November 2010 is clearly linked to the process of global restructuring rather than merely global rebalancing. Even if a transition from a “unipolar” world to a “multipolar” world is often mentioned as a goal of many countries and multilateral organisations and it was also in the Wuhan Communiqué, that may be conceived only as a part of the further democratisation of the world order where the affairs of the world are not left to be managed by an oligopoly of a few countries. One of the main trends in the contemporary world is persistent challenge to any exercise of hegemony by any power in any part of the world. Hence the world order should be based upon “principles of international law, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making by all states”- a vision that was stated in the Wuhan Communiqué and which embodies the Panchasheel (Five Principles) legacy of 1954. The New Delhi Declaration of the BRICS Summit too reiterated that vision.

Multilateralism as a democratising trend

In the recent decades multilateralism has emerged as a democratising trend in the global political economy. But the multilateral formations are of different kinds and are different stages of evolution. Some of them are only *initiatives*, some are more structured already as *organisations* and a few are highly stabilised as multilateral *institutions*. Like the IBSA and RIC, the BRICS is currently a multilateral initiative which is yet to evolve a full-fledged organisational structure. On the other hand SAARC and MERCOSUR have developed structures and specialised offices and agencies with rules and regulations which are binding on all. At a still higher level, EU and ASEAN have become stable institutions with a high degree of integration of economies and in case of EU in even more areas including politics. The SCO is a multilateral organisation which is fast evolving into an institution. The AU (African Union) which inherited important traditions of OAU is also fast becoming an institution. There are a vast number of examples in the world in each category. Each grouping has to be seen in

its specific historical and political context. However, all of them play an important role in creating areas of cooperation and have the potential to contribute to the democratisation of the global political economy.

To promote regional cooperation, develop zones of autonomous action in a multilateral framework and to contribute to the creation of a fair and just economic order, several regional initiatives have come into being. Many globalists from the developed countries, who would like individual countries to accede to an agreed world mechanism like the WTO, see regional organisations as obstacles to the global order. But it should be stressed that regional organisations at every level and of every kind are needed to facilitate fair negotiations, create zones of common interest and bring pressure on big powers to agree to just arrangements. Hence, rather than seeing the multilateral initiatives as having negative impact on global order they should be seen as positive developments for global democratic transformation.

BRICS: Some basic indicators

Categories	Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
GDP per Capita Current Prices US\$ at PPP	12,726 (2011) 11,171 (2012)	12,945 (2011) 14,604 (2013)	1,325 (2011) 1,418 (2013)	5,432 (2011) 6,768 (2013)	7250 (2010) 7,810 (2011)
Infant Mortality Rate	21 (2011) 15.0 (2013)	7.3 (2001) 8.2 (2013)	50 (2009) 42.0 (2013)	13.1 (2010) 10.3 (2013)	46.9 (2010) 45.1 (2013)
Mid Year Population (Millions)	201.0 (2013)	144.0 (2013)	1211 (2013)	1357 (2013)	52 (2013)
Female (% of total population)	51.0 (2011) 50.6 (2013)	53.7 (2011) 53.7 (2013)	48.4 (2011) 48.5 (2013)	48.7 (2011) 48.8 (2013)	52.0 (2010) 51.4 (2013)
Unemployment rate in Urban Areas	8.3 (2009)	6.6(P) (2011)	2.5 (2009-10)	4.1 (2011)	24.9 (2010)
Unemployment rate in 2013	6.1 (2013)	5.5 (2013)	5.3 (2013)	4.1 (2013)	25.1 (2013)
Share of Public Exp. on Education as % of GDP	4.3 (2009) 5.3 (2012)	4.2 (2010) 4.3 (2013)	3.9 (2009) 3.3 (2012)	3.7 (2010) 4.3 (2012)	10.1 (2010) 6.8 (2011)
Share of public exp. on health as % of GDP	5.0 (2012)	3.5 (2013)	1.4 (2012)	5.4 (2012)	4.0 (2011)

Source: **BRICS Statistical Report, 2014**. Released at Fortaleza, 15 July 2014.

BRICS is a unique formation of five big countries spanning four continents i.e. all the major ones except North America, covering 43 per cent of the world's population. In 2011 in PPP terms BRICS accounted for about 30 per cent of the global GDP poised to be 45 per cent by 2030. Even though the Goldman Sachs, the economic forecasting firm had coined this term in 2003 predicting the emergence of these economies as leading ones – China as the world's largest by 2040 and India, second largest by 2050- the WTO negotiations have been the forum where the grouping took its shape. Many academic efforts in these countries linking countries forming IBSA and RIC and BASIC (Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, India and China) were picked up by government leaders to promote these initiatives. When the Fourth Summit was held in New Delhi BRICS had moved into a new stage of development. It enacted two important agreements indicating the transition from the present world economic arrangements into a more dispersed one. First, the Agreement on Extending Credit Facility in Local Currencies reduces dependence on the dollar as the main medium of international trade. This phenomenon is already growing in other cases of bilateral trade involving BRICS countries. Second, the BRICS Multilateral Letter of Credit Confirmation Facility Agreement signed by Development Banks is another significant step facilitating inter-BRICS trade. This is also a prelude to the setting up of a BRICS Development Bank for BRICS as well as other developing countries which a task force has been assigned to work on. The first ever Statistical Report produced on this occasion is an important tool for taking this multilateral process forward.

Cooperation among the various regional organisations, especially those in Asia is extremely important. Among them some are directly connected to the agenda of BRIRIC and all efforts should be made to orient these collective efforts in the direction of global restructuring. The major economic and security challenges Asian people face at present can be handled effectively if the regional initiatives are coordinated. Whether it is rebuilding Afghanistan as an independent, peaceful, self-governing, prosperous country, whether it is tackling the challenge of terrorism or the challenges of poverty, energy scarcity, water crisis, environmental degradation or whether it is creating a suitable international economic arrangement for investment, production, technology and market or similar challenges in the fields of communication and culture, knowledge and innovation the regional initiatives can make enormous contribution.

BRICS-SCO coordination can facilitate a common strategy to help Afghanistan in building its own capacity for maintaining peace and stability in the country. The military assistance given by any of these countries under bilateral agreement can then be less misunderstood as building special relationships aimed against another country. The geo-civilisational and geo-political position of

Afghanistan linking South Asia with Central Asia on the one hand and West Asia on the other makes this coordination significant. India, Pakistan and Iran (Mongolia as well) as observers in SCO make this coordinated action possible. Similar steps can be taken in economic, cultural and energy related issues. The issue of full membership of India in SCO should be pursued fairly and objectively.

BRICS should encourage RIC-SAARC interaction which is extremely significant in making the larger Eurasian region create conditions of peace and development. The recent India-Afghanistan Agreement which has been seen in an adverse light by Pakistan would have a very different meaning if it were put in a framework of SAARC of which Afghanistan is a member and China and Russia are observers. Global rebalancing also has a strategic version in terms of new formations of balance of power which carry on the military balances and alliances and counter-alliances in a geo-politics framework. The neo-realists who still dominate US public opinion and influence US foreign policy, despite counter claims by President Obama are still pursuing the balancing and containment schemes in Asia. They wish to see a pro-US network of countries to maintain their hegemonic influence in regions of Asia. The current phase of AF-Pak policy of the US is designed to promote that line. The new US strategy of a relocated 'pivot' in Asia with greater naval deployment makes this abundantly clear. A RIC-SAARC-SCO coordination promoted by BRICS has the potentiality to forge alternative processes of democratic and non-hegemonic environment of peace and development after the US troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

The convergence of two innovative formations in the modern world- IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) and RIC which has created BRICS which had its first summit in Sanya in April 2011 is a world historic development in advancing the process of global restructuring. It will not only act as an important group in G-20 in formulating responses to crises like in Eurozone or US, not only orient the Doha Round negotiations and many tasks in the UN, but will henceforth be the major forum to deliberate on world economy, environment and strategic issues. They may have different positions on some issues, they may also have bilateral problems, but the historical process to work for democratization of the world will be facilitated substantially by BRICS. The value of the IBSA Forum which met in Tshwane (Pretoria) in South Africa in October 2011 lies in the fact that it represents the voice of people of three great countries from three continents who have struggled against colonialism, racism and dictatorship, fighting against all forms of hegemony and envisioning alternative futures of the human civilization in every sphere. India brings the IBSA input into RIC and in turn BRICS brings the force of people's history into world forums to restructure the unequal world of today. In this emerging process of global restructuring RIC can play the role of a catalyst.

BRICS Vision in a Global Perspective

Despite being a rather loose initiative and despite being an arena of contradictory forces, the process of global restructuring that is ushered in by the BRICS process is a part of a wider spectrum of national, regional and global initiatives for democratic transformation of the presently unequal world. They are a part of the civilisational movement taking place while humanity is making a transition from the epoch of industrial revolution led by capitalism to a new phase of global history.

The evolving process of civilisational movement has been the result of three trends in the world all of which are likely to gather further momentum in the near future. They are: social movements in various countries, the world people's movement and regional organizations of states. Let us briefly deal with the way they are affecting the global process of change.

First is the rise of social movements in the various countries such as the women's movement, indigenous people's movements, anti-caste movements, environment movements besides the peasants and workers movements. The upsurge of these movements has brought about a creative society in many countries of the world in which each oppressed group is more conscious of its creative potentiality than before and is determined to carry on the struggle to reduce the constraints on the realization of their potentiality. It is the coming of the creative society that has redefined the parameters of development as social development and civilisational movement. In India, for example, the autonomy movements, the tribal and peasant movement and the dalit movement have acquired unprecedented momentum and are likely to be more and more assertive in the coming years. The autonomy movements and the land rights movement and the civil liberties movement are likely to grow stronger in China as well.ⁱ In Brazil, the indigenous people's movement, the unorganized workers movement and the peasant movement for land rights will continue to influence the course of politics.ⁱⁱ This is true in many other parts of ASAFRA where self-determination movements of one kind or the other are going on.

In case of the movements who challenge the state in their own countries often there is state repression that sometimes incapacitates the movements. The Indian experience presents a typical case in which even though the functioning liberal democracy allows movements to emerge and flourish pursuing non-violent as well as violent methods, both kinds of movements face severe repression from time to time. The movements also face the challenge of fragmentation into splinter groups and manipulation by ruling parties. However, their cumulative impact on the agenda-forming of the polity is clearly noticeable. Some of the laws such as NREGA (National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act, 2005) and Forest Rights Act, 2006 and the right to Education Act, 2009 may actually be the responses to the social movements. India has been a typical example of both responsiveness to and repression on people's movements. The autonomy movements in Kashmir and Northeast have been subjected to severe repression as has been the Maoist movement in central Indian tribal region. But occasional initiatives for dialogue and development measures are also visible. The movements opposing displacement caused by mega mining projects in Odisha, Chhatishgarh and elsewhere have raised serious issues of the nature and pattern of development, especially during the neo-liberal phase. Over all it is clear that the people's movements have a major impact on the shaping of the development discourse in India.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second major current that has influenced the global transformation process is the world people's movement through the solidarity groups across countries. Since 2000 the World Social Forum (WSF) has been the key example of this trend articulating the alternative to the World Economic Forum, the latter representing the forces of globalization of capitalist market forces. Social movements from various countries come together in this forum that generally holds its annual meetings in Porto Alegre in Brazil and demands restructuring of the current world order.^{iv} WSF upholds the rights of the oppressed groups of the world and focuses on the interests of the countries and regions of the South. The groups in the WSF also take up issues relating to environment in a major way. With the slogan, "Another World is Possible", the WSF has become a crystallized platform of many of the ideas represented in the concept of civilisational movement. All continents of the world are represented in the forum which is basically a powerful voice of the south supported by sympathetic activists and intellectuals of the north.^v

Even before the WSF came into being the UN summits played an important role in bringing the NGOs together in a parallel summit. The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992, the Vienna Summit on Human Rights in 1993, the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development in March 1995 and the Beijing World Congress on Women in September 1995 were land mark events which brought the world thinking on fundamental issues of human progress into the common consciousness of humankind. Thereafter, the agenda of each country on such issues was scrutinized to assess the record of achievements and failures. Later the UN Summit on Racial Discrimination in Durban in 2001 and the Environment Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 were also milestones which charted courses of action for the transformation of global agenda. Some of the subsequent summits to review the UN processes and country performances on the same issues created major platforms of global opinion on matters relating to people's rights and environmental concerns. Some of the new structures in the UN system are clearly the outcomes of this process. The formation of the Human

Rights Council in 2006 and the UN Women in 2011 are example of this process. Some of UN's existing agencies get more and more energized despite the political constraints of the big power pressures. For example, the ECOSOC whose Committee on NGOs coordinated much of the interaction among the NGOs has become more important in the recent years. In a world dominated by nation-states the global people's movement has many limits in its functioning. Only those NGOs who are permitted by the national governments to go abroad are represented in such forums. As distinct from NGOs there are social movements who may not have funds to travel abroad. Some who manage to do so are supported mostly by foreign agencies that may have their own motivations for supporting such movements. Despite all such limitations, one can see the emergence of a multi-stranded global civil society contributing to the evolving civilisational movement.

The third agency is the rising trend of regional organizations of countries which originally came together for economic cooperation, but in the process influenced the course of history impacting on the structure of the global political economy. They range from regional initiatives of informal kind or organizations still in the making, to steadily consolidating regional institutions. The IBSA forum consisting of India, Brazil and South Africa started in 2003 as an informal grouping of three major developing countries belonging to three continents. As three large multi-ethnic societies with liberal democratic systems the IBSA Dialogue Forum has emerged as an important initiative for alternative thinking from the perspective of the south. With China included in this grouping in course of the environmental negotiations at the Copenhagen Summit in 2009 a new grouping was born called BASIC. This now acquired added clout in global discourse. Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) came together in their first summit in 2009. The prediction made by Goldman Sachs in 2003 that these four countries will be the leading markets in the coming decades and China and India would be the two leading economies by 2050 began to be seen in concrete terms. With the inclusion of South Africa this formation became BRICS which held its first five country summit in Sanya, China in April 2011. Now this formation covered three billion people of the world spanning four continents. The Sanya Declaration of BRICS released on 14 April 2011 was a good indication of the possibilities that this new formation presented in the reshaping of the international economic and political order.^{vi} Now they hold annual summits and their ministers and joint task forces plan to meet frequently on the burning issues affecting global economy. In the recent years they have coordinated their views on environmental issues and have taken collective positions on trade and finance issues in world forums. The coming of what is called 'emerging markets' of China, India and Brazil has vastly influenced the prevailing structure of power in the world.^{vii} Even though US Dollar remains the most powerful world currency, the Chinese economic growth, especially its exports to the world market,

especially to US has established China's special status in the world economy. The high rate of growth of India and Brazil in addition to China's also has had a similar effect as their markets are also growing.^{viii} The Sixth Summit of BRICS which took place in Fortaleza, Brazil in July 2014 took many concrete steps which would have longterm effects on the global political economy. It set up a New Development Bank (NDB) with the mandate to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development in developing countries, launched a Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to help out in situations of liquidity pressures and initiated Export Credit and Guarantees Agencies.^{ix}

This new situation has brought about a new grouping called G-20 – the group of twenty largest economies of the world which has replaced the G-8 of the industrialized countries which until recently were deciding the rules of world trade and finance. The developing countries known as G-77 or the Group of 77 whose number later rose to 112 countries at one point used to make appeals and present proposals to the G-8. The latter started inviting leaders of China, India and a few other countries to attend its extended meetings during the recent years. The emergence of the phenomenon of G-20 may have heralded the coming of a new period of world history with the western industrialized countries losing pre-eminence over world economy. China surpassed Japan's US\$5 trillion GDP in July 2010 and became the second largest economy of the world after US. This development has been in the making for some years now. Combined with the US military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan this process has been described as the decline of US Empire.^x That the Orient had a higher GDP than Europe until early eighteenth century and now had regained its economic pre-eminence has been pointed out by many scholars.^{xi} *Adam Smith in Beijing* is a title of the Chinese success story of regulated market economy that has brought a new global status to China.^{xii} "Peaceful Rise of China's has been a theme of much Chinese discourse in the past two decades."^{xiii}

Would G-20 carry forward the banner of G-8 and promote the path of global capitalism or is it likely to put the world on a new course of equitable development? It is clear that the path advocated by G-8 generates uneven development worldwide and inside countries and ecological destruction as well as alienation, social inequality and consumerism. To what extent is it likely that the developing countries among G-20 would represent the liberation urges of the post-colonial societies and pursue a path of equitable and sustainable development and thus become a part of civilisational movement? That is still an open question.

We have two contrasting models of regional organizations, one consolidating the existing world order dominated by capitalist market economy and another seeking to alter it. During the Cold

War period, transformation of the world political economy into an equitable and just order was the principal goal of the Panchasheel Agreement (Five principles of peaceful coexistence) signed by India and China in 1954, the Bandung Conference of newly independent Afro-Asian countries in 1955, and the Non-Aligned Movement which started in 1961 and continued to meet even today. The developing countries took the initiative in the UN to launch a drive for NIEO (New International Economic Order) – an initiative which got swept away with the coming of the neo-liberal wave of globalization promoting free trade through WTO. But regional initiatives of various kinds continued to be pursued.

The relatively well institutionalized EU (European Union) is very clearly wedded to promoting market economy and liberal democracy at the global level. Having shared the military line of NATO under US leadership it is the epitome of the industrial revolution models of development. The other institutionalized grouping, ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) started as a Cold War security grouping against communist party-ruled states like China. But it has evolved into a free market economic block which has also initiated many regional trade and security measures. The ASEAN plus three (China, Japan and South Korea) has emerged as a formidable economic zone. The East Asia Summit which includes India, Australia and New Zealand in addition to ASEAN plus three has emerged as an important annual forum to take stock of the world economy. Another important grouping is SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) which started as a neighbourly cooperation forum of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in 2001. But over the years it has grown into a comprehensive economic and security organization in East and Central Asia with India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Mongolia as observers in it. It is also a grouping of market economies seeking a regional role in tackling regional problems. Unlike ASEAN, the SCO with China and Russia as the major players in it clearly has the objective of making their presence felt in the region in competing with the US and EU. However, EU, ASEAN and SCO are all pursuing the paths of industrial revolution and market economy while also pursuing a security policy of balance of power.

As distinct from the EU, ASEAN and SCO an alternative trend in global political economy is symbolized by the ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance of Latin America) which has a transformative vision not only for Latin America, but for the whole world. It aims at restructuring the world political economy so that it is more equitable and just. Starting as a joint initiative of Venezuela and Cuba in 2004 it was joined by Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and several other smaller states by 2010. Opposing the free trade system which is promoted by the US-led effort to form the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) or the already functioning NAFTA (North American Trade Agreement) ALBA promotes equitable exchange and solidarity among states and peoples to struggle for freedom, equality and

justice both globally and in their own countries. It is interesting to note that the BASIC countries share the same general perspective but are not as explicit as ALBA in their action program.^{xiv}

In Africa, the decade-old African Union has also been actively pursuing a transformative perspective through regional cooperation. Established in 2002 as a successor to OAU (Organization for African Unity) AU has 53 member states with the objective of achieving greater unity and solidarity among the African countries, defend sovereignty, promote political and socio-economic integration of the continent and African common positions on issues of interest to the continent. During the decade of its existence it has undertaken a number of economic and social measures in support of human rights and democracy. Despite being a large continental organization with diverse tendencies its historical legacies make it a transformative body rather than a regional front of Western capitalist countries.^{xv}

There are many other organizations in different parts of the world aiming at achieving regional cooperation, but not all of them are geared towards altering the dominant patterns of global development. But as the world politics gets more pluralized such organizations acquire greater autonomy. For example, the objective of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) was mainly to facilitate regional trade and cooperation in social development matters. But gradually it took collective positions in climate change negotiations vis-à-vis the Western powers. But SAARC has been unable to make substantial progress in regional cooperation due to bilateral problems of member countries, mainly India and Pakistan. There are initiatives such as the RIC (Russia-India-China), the BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar), BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Scientific, Technological and Economic cooperation), the ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization), MERCOSUR (launched by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991 joined by Venezuela in 2006) and many others in different continents which seek to promote regional cooperation. All of them strive to secure regional autonomy in their respective spheres and hence have the potential of reducing the influence of big powers. The cumulative effect of all these inter-state initiatives on the restructuring of global political, economic and cultural relations may not appear dramatic at a point of time, but over a long period they definitely alter the pre-existing global structure. Such effects are clearly visible in the functioning of the UN agencies, World Trade Organization, climate change negotiations and other spheres.

The three catalytic trends of the contemporary world, namely, social movements in various countries, the world people's movements and the regional organizations, together constitute a

massive historical force propelling civilisational movement of the human race. But there are many paradoxes as well as possibilities for the global future by the middle of the 21st century.

Contestations over Global Restructuring

One of the paradoxes of the contemporary times is the position in international forums taken by the representatives of the developing countries. In BRIC meetings as well as in G-20 forums they play the role of the radical transformers demanding democratization of the world order often in tune with the demands of their own social movements at home. Many of the movements in their countries challenge the forces of global capitalism and the many adverse consequences of globalization. Paradoxically, when the same governments operate back at home they often treat many of those very movements as hostile forces, subject them to repressive laws, curb their activities and sometimes violently suppress them. The governments strongly argue at home that they need to build their economies, achieve high growth rate and become stronger vis-a-vis neighbours and big powers. This has been the case with India, China and Brazil in the recent years. As a result of this paradox the global struggle against western hegemonic forces gets weakened as the latter realize that after all the developing countries need their capital and technology as well as their markets. This remains the main reason underlying the persistence of the existing hegemonic order. As a result, many elements of the US-led world system continues to hold good even though much change is taking place in the world with the emergence of the BRICS countries. The UN system is still greatly dependent on the US policy support. The movement for an independent Palestinian State is still not successful in achieving its goal despite tremendous support worldwide; because of the US-Israeli opposition. The counter-terrorism operations by the Western countries provided an alibi for extending their spheres of influences in different parts of the world. The WTO negotiations are still greatly influenced by the US and its allies. The military and economic power of the US still manages to impact political developments all over the world. As a result the movement for a just and equitable world continues to face obstacles.

This situation is likely to change when the domestic pressures on the regimes multiply and the regimes begin to reorient their policies to fulfil the urges of self-determination of their people. Already there are signs that the dominant growth-oriented policies are undergoing some adjustments. The acknowledgement of people's rights in India through the introduction of several laws such as NREGA, the FRA and the RTE in India some initial signs of this change. In China the package of policies associated with the notion of 'Scientific development' too marks the same trend as also the goal of building a political civilization in addition to the building of material and spiritual

civilizations. The question is whether these measures are minor concessions by the regimes as a tension management measure or are they serious structural steps for social transformation in the swaraj-ubuntu mode, it is yet to be seen. If they are indeed measures to fulfil the freedom urges of the oppressed people and regions in the country, then they would be consistent with the international postures taken by their regimes in the global forums.

When third world governments come together to seek an alteration of the prevailing unequal global order they participate in the ongoing civilisational movement perhaps without being aware of the monumental significance of this historic process. They demand that the developed countries, most of them former colonial powers must recognize their responsibility in the making of the present unjust world system. Colonialism plundered the natural resources of the ASAFAN countries and paved the way for global warming. The same governing elites take a different stand when it comes to domestic policies. They stress the need for economic growth and even build alliances with the developed countries to impose their models of growth as has been the case under globalization. They seek foreign direct investment to exploit minerals and build mineral-based export-oriented industries. They do so even in the face of resistance from local people whose livelihoods are adversely affected and who face large scale displacement and environmental destruction. The governing elite of the developing countries has bought the ideology of neo-liberal growth on the belief that growth was necessary for reducing poverty and acquiring higher status in the world.

Is this dilemma going to be perpetuated through the coercive power of the state backed by military and economic power of big powers of the west? There are two forces at work which give some hope for the civilisational movement to go on. First is the dynamic of the social movements and the unprecedented momentum in the rising consciousness among common people about their democratic rights. People's rights movements are especially focused today on local people's rights to the natural resources of their regions and their cultural rights. History has shown that use of force to appropriate those resources and deny socio-political rights to the local people cannot go on for long. Therefore, the regimes have sooner or later responded to the people's struggles. In many cases the people's movements themselves have come to power. The other is the global trend of groups of countries in specific regions and across regions trying to come to terms with the new reality of a post-hegemonic world. No people and no region can be forcibly controlled by outside forces whether from within a country or from abroad, for long. In other words, self-determination of people is as powerful a trend in the twenty first century as self-determination of nations was in the twentieth century. In both cases, people are relating themselves to deeper civilisational trends in shaping new relationships with nature. They are simultaneously struggling to establish new

relationships among themselves as individuals, groups and regions in a swaraj-ubuntu framework to generate conditions of greater freedom, equality and justice to realize their creative potentialities.

Hence there are positive hopes for global future that India and China can work for through BRICS.

ⁱ Manoranjan Mohanty et al (eds) *Grassroots Democracy in India and China* (New Delhi: Sage, 2008), see also *Ideology Matters: China from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping* (New Delhi: Aakar, 2014)

ⁱⁱ Monica Bruckmann, Alternative Visions of the Indigenous People's Movement in Latin America: Reflections on Civilisation and Modernity, *Social Change* Vol. 40, No. 4 (December 2010) pp 601-608

ⁱⁱⁱ Medha Patkar and Amit Bhaduri, "Industrialization for the people, of the people and by the people" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (January 3, 2009) pp. 10-14

^{iv} Walden Bellow, *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New world Economy* (London: Verso, 2009)

^v Jai Send and Peter Waterman (eds), *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires* (New York: Black Rose Books, 2007), See also Samir Amin and James Membrez, *The World We wish to See : Revolutionary Objectives in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008)

^{vi} The Sanya Declaration said: " BRICS aims at contributing significantly to the development of humanity and establishing a more equitable and fair world." http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-04/14/c_13829453.htm

^{vii} Abdul Nafe, IBSA, Trinity of the South: Potential of India-Brazil-South Africa Partnership (New Delhi: Research and Information system, 2008), see also Alan S. Alexandrof and Andrew Fenton (eds), *Rising States and Rising Institutions: Challenges for Global Governance* (Washington D C: The Brookings Institution, 2010)

^{viii} In May 2011 when the process for appointing a new head of the IMF began after the resignation of Dominique Strauss Kahn who faced sexual harassment charges, the BRICS and many other developing countries demanded that the practice of having a European as the chief of IMF (and an American as the head of World Bank) should be discontinued and candidates from other countries, particularly developing countries should be considered for the job on the basis of merit. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-05/23/c_13889943.htm.

^{ix} VI BRICS Summit-Fortaleza Declaration, www.brics6.itamaraty.gov.br/media2press-releases/211 accessed on 25 April 2015.

^x Chalmers Johnson, *Dismantling the Empire: America's Last Best Hope* (New York: Metropolitan Biooks, 2011), Immanuel M. Wallerstein, *Decline of American Power: The US in a Chaotic World* (New York: The New press, 2003)

^{xi} Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (New York: Sage, 1998)

^{xii} Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the 21st Century* (New York: Verso, 2009)

^{xiii} Zheng Bijian, *China's Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian 1997-2005* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005)

^{xiv} For ALBA see Olivier Dabene, *The Politics of Regional Integration in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

^{xv} John Akokpari et al (eds), *African Union and its Institutions* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009)

BRICS Sixth Summit Fortaleza Declaration 15 July 2014

5. The Sixth Summit takes place at a crucial juncture, as the international community assesses how to address the challenges of strong economic recovery from the global financial crises, sustainable development, including climate change, while also formulating the post-2015 Development Agenda. At the same time, we are confronted with persistent political instability and conflict in various global hotspots and non-conventional emerging threats. On the other hand, international governance structures designed within a different power configuration show increasingly evident signs of losing legitimacy and effectiveness, as transitional and ad hoc arrangements become increasingly prevalent, often at the expense of multilateralism. We believe the BRICS are an important force for incremental change and reform of current institutions towards **more representative and equitable governance, capable of generating more inclusive global growth and fostering a stable, peaceful and prosperous world.**

18. We remain disappointed and seriously concerned with the current non-implementation of the 2010 International Monetary Fund (IMF) reforms, which negatively impacts on the IMF's legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness.

21. We believe all countries should enjoy due rights, **equal opportunities and fair participation in global economic, financial and trade affairs, recognizing that countries have different capacities and are at different levels of development.** We strive for an open world economy with efficient allocation of resources, free flow of goods, and fair and orderly competition to the benefit of all. In reaffirming our support for an open, inclusive, non-discriminatory, transparent and rule-based multilateral trading system, we will continue our efforts towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), following the positive results of the Ninth Ministerial Conference (MC9), held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2013.

22. In congratulating UNCTAD for the 50th anniversary of its foundation in 2014, which is also the anniversary of the establishment of the Group of 77, we further reaffirm the importance of strengthening

UNCTAD's capacity to deliver on its programs of consensus building, policy dialogue, research, technical cooperation and capacity building

24. ...reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding a just and fair international order based on the UN Charter, maintaining world peace and security, as well as promoting human progress and development.

We condemn unilateral military interventions and economic sanctions in violation of international law and universally recognized norms of international relations. Bearing this in mind, we emphasize the unique importance of the indivisible nature of security, and that no State should strengthen its security at the expense of the security of others.