



*New Regionalisms Series*

# **CONNECTING AFRICA AND ASIA**

**AFRASIA AS A BENIGN COMMUNITY**

Yoichi Mine



# Connecting Africa and Asia

By 2100, more than 80 per cent of the world's population is expected to live in Afrasia (Africa and Asia). This book draws lessons from history, provides a new cognitive map of the world, and discusses multiple challenges global citizens will face in the age of Afrasia, an emerging macro-region.

The centre of gravity of the world is shifting. Whether the world can manage a soft landing into sustainable equilibrium depends on the nature of the dialogue people in Africa and Asia will organise. The author argues that a state of equilibrium between the two is achievable, provided issues related to gender, employment, agriculture, human–nature relationships, and multicultural coexistence are simultaneously addressed. Can future Afrasia present itself as a community determined not to allow the return of predatory practice internally and externally? Will the fates of African and Asian peoples converge or diverge? How about the future relationships between Afrasia and the rest of the world?

Exploring these questions using multiple disciplines, this book will be of interest to professional researchers and graduate students in IR and Afro-Asian relations as well as Asian and African area studies, demography, geography, history, development economics, anthropology, language education, and religious studies.

**Yoichi Mine** is Professor at the Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University, Japan, and Visiting Fellow at JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development. His research interests include human security, global history, and African studies. His English publications include several co-edited volumes: *Migration and Agency: Afro-Asian Encounters* (Palgrave), *Preventing Violent Conflict in Africa: Inequalities, Perceptions and Institutions* (Palgrave), *Human Security Norms in East Asia* (Palgrave), and *Human Security and Cross-Border Cooperation in East Asia* (Palgrave). He is among the founders of the Japan Association for Human Security Studies and the Japan Society for Afrasian Studies.

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# Connecting Africa and Asia

## Afrasia As a Benign Community

**Yoichi Mine**



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**For my family**  
**Aline, Yaël, and Simon**



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# Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
ECC	European Economic Community
EF	Ecological Footprint
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	foreign direct investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GDP	gross domestic product
GIS	geographic information system
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPE	international political economy
IR	international relations
IRT	international relations theory
IS	Islamic State
IT	information technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPP	purchasing power parity
TCS	Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat
TFR	total fertility rate
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development

UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# **A note on the projection methods used in the world maps**

It is impossible to reproduce the shape of the Earth, which exists in three dimensions, accurately on two-dimensional paper. If the area of each country in the world is represented correctly, its shape will always be distorted, and vice versa. The cartograms in this book (Figures 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, and 3.1), which translate statistics to the geographic area of nations, are based originally on the Eckert IV projection in which the area is represented correctly. Figure 0.1 is based on an azimuthal equal-area projection in which the direction from the centre point and the area of countries are accurate. Figure 9.1 is based on the Miller projection.

All other statistical maps are based on the Robinson projection. Area study specialists are used to local maps that correctly depict the topography of countries; hence, when they see a world map with purportedly accurate areas, they are often concerned about the distortions in the shapes of countries. The Robinson projection is an eclectic mix of the authalic and equidistant projections, showing relatively little distortion in the shape of the low latitude zone in and around Afrasia.

ArcGIS (Ver.10.6.1) developed by ESRI was used to produce the statistical maps. ScapeToad (Ver.1.1) was used to create the cartograms (Figures 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, and 3.1).

# Acknowledgements

I have many friends who helped me nurture the concept of Afrasia. In order of geographical distance from Japan, I would like to thank Shamil Jeppie (University of Cape Town), Scarlett Cornelissen (University of Stellenbosch), the late Sam Moyo (African Institute of Agrarian Studies), Nathaniel Agola (African Development Bank), Eloi Ficquet (EHESS: École des hautes études en sciences sociales), Kweku Ampiah (University of Leeds), Philippe Peycam (University of Leiden), Aparajita Biswas (University of Mumbai), Ajay Dubey (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Liu Haifang (Peking University), Sun Xiaomeng (Beijing Foreign Studies University), and Seifudein Adem (Doshisha University).

In Japan, I have presented the notion of Afrasia at events at Tokyo University, Kyoto University, and Soka University and received valuable feedback. Dozens of Afrasian graduate students who attended my classes at Doshisha University have provided me with inspiration. They are from countries such as Afghanistan, Cabo Verde, China, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, South Africa, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. I truly appreciate their participation in knowledge production.

An additional attraction of this book is the variety of maps and figures that visually illustrate the challenges experienced by Afrasians. The work pertaining to the use of a geographic information system (GIS) to prepare statistical maps was done by Dr Yasumoto Shinya and Dr Kawamura Shinya under the supervision of Fukui Hiromichi, Director of the International GIS Center at the Chubu Institute of Advanced Studies.

Special thanks go to Timothy Shaw (University of Massachusetts Boston), who appreciated the value of this work and introduced me to Routledge, as well as Alan Hunter (Coventry University), who read through the manuscript and gave me insightful comments and suggestions.



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# Introduction

We have mixed feelings towards what is growing close to us. Imagine something next to you. When you regard it as an extension of yourself, you rejoice in its growth and wish it would grow bigger and better. You even share with it the lessons you learned as you grew up. However, its growth becomes a threat when it is perceived to be an alien thing – or you may try to estrange it from you if you think it could hurt you at some point in the future. If you cannot stop that growth, you might go as far as to turn away and try to protect your own territory.

The populations of Asia and Africa are growing. In the first year of the 21st century, 2001 AD, the world's population was approximately 6.22 billion. The population of Asia was 3.79 billion, the Americas 0.84 billion, Africa 0.83 billion, Europe 0.73 billion, and Oceania 0.03 billion. However, according to the projections released by the United Nations (UN), by the last year of the 21st century, 2100 AD, the world's population is expected to reach 10.88 billion, of which the population of Asia will be 4.72 billion, Africa 4.28 billion, Americas 1.17 billion, Europe 0.63 billion, and Oceania 0.07 billion.<sup>1</sup> This means that in less than a 100 years from now, Asians and Africans are each likely to make up about 40 per cent of the world's population or 80 per cent of the world's population in combination.

We can quickly get a sense of the magnitude of such changes by looking at data through pictures rather than numbers. In this book, a variety of maps are presented to visualise information such as population distribution on a global scale. First, let us look at Figure 0.1, a map (an azimuthal equal-area projection)<sup>2</sup> utilising a satellite image of the globe. Although the natural environment of Africa and Asia is extremely diverse from the tropical to the arctic regions, the combined area of the two continents constitutes one colossal world. In this book, we use the term 'Afrasia' as a geographic frame encompassing both Africa and Asia. The area of the countries of Afrasia accounts for about 46 per cent of the total area of countries worldwide. Geographically, Russia, east of the Urals, can be considered a part of Afrasia, but since Russia is inseparable in terms of national statistics, it is included in Europe throughout this book.

Let us now visually follow the change in the regional distributions of the world's population. Figures 0.2, 0.3, and 0.4 depict projected changes in the global population in the 21st century. These are illustrated in the form of cartograms in



*Figure 0.1* Afrasia in the World

Note: This satellite image centres on the sea area stretching from the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea, which ancient Greek sailors called the 'Erythraean Sea'.

Source: Reto Stöckli, NASA Earth Observatory; G. Projector

which the geometries of different regions are artificially distorted. Here, a country's population size is shown as the area of the country. If we shift our gaze from Figure 0.2 to Figure 0.4, the three maps will appear like an animation. These cartograms may give an eerie impression because of the expansive shapes, especially for the African continent. The world's population will increase by 1.8 times in the 100 years that comprise the 21st century, with Africa's population growing by five times. In 2001, the population of Asia accounted for 61 per cent of the world's population. However, by the 2060s, Asia's population will account for no more than 50 per cent of the world total, while Africa's population is expected to make

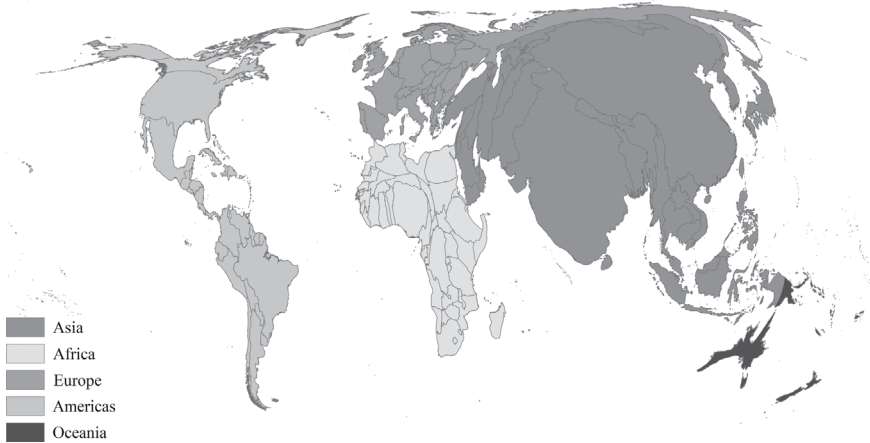


Figure 0.2 World Population Distribution, 2001

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

<https://population.un.org/wpp/download/>

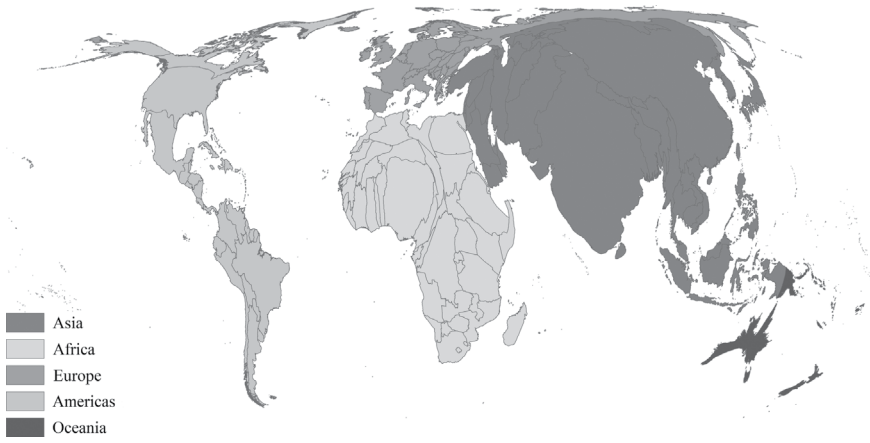


Figure 0.3 World Population Distribution, 2050

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

up 30 per cent. By 2100, the populations of Asia and Africa will then account for about 40 per cent each, overwhelming Europe and the Americas.

Let us return to the question posed at the beginning of this introduction. Is this rapid growth in Afrasia's population a threat to anyone? I am writing this book in Japan, so let me think about this country. I wonder what Japan's position in the

## 4 Introduction

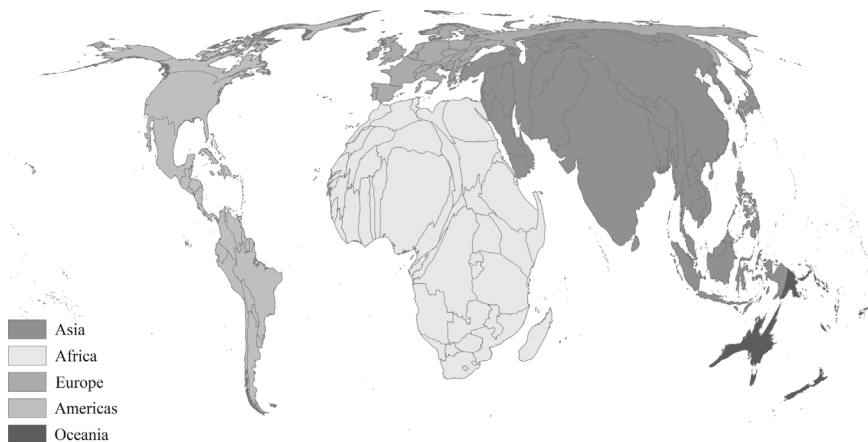


Figure 0.4 World Population Distribution, 2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

world will be a 100 years from now. Will this country be a part of an expanding Afrasia or will it be an ally of the West with a shrinking population? Will it be swallowed up by the big wave of population transition or be isolated from the rest of the world? Personally, I want the country to strive to mend the cracks in the world.

As reading material for contemplating the future of this half-globalised world, this book starts with a presentation of the ongoing trends of world population transition and examines multiple factors that could influence this process in the coming decades. Then, historical contexts that have occasioned today's rise of Afrasia are discussed. Towards the end of the book, I examine the conditions for imagining a benign community of Afrasia. To accomplish all these endeavours, I show data, draw maps, and muse on history. I believe this kind of work that situates Africa and Asia in a long-term perspective is urgently needed to prepare both – Asia, which is still gaining strength, and Africa, which is catching up with Asia towards the next century – for peaceful and dynamic dialogues with each other and with the rest of the world.

In recent decades, Afrasia and the entire world have been undergoing a period of enormous challenges. After the Cold War, several countries in Africa and Asia faced a spate of violent conflicts, Asia was hit by a series of gigantic natural disasters, authoritarian regimes have become the default choice of the world's rising powers, climate change destabilises people's livelihoods and settlements through severe droughts and rainfall, and dramatic changes in the relationship between nature and humans are leading to the unexpected outbreaks of infectious diseases. In the following chapters, I also discuss the implications of some of these events over the span of a century and sometimes centuries.

## The structure of the book

Before getting into the main chapters, let me present a summary of the discussions in this book. Part I, 'World Maps in 2100', examines the world's population dynamics with a focus on the macro-region we call Afrasia. Chapter 1 shows how the distribution of the world's population is likely to change towards the end of the 21st century. Trends will be discussed by country and region. Noticeably, the working-age population of African countries is expected to expand significantly.

To what extent is such a population projection reliable? Chapter 2 discusses the main drivers of population change. In a closed system, there are only two determinants of population change: fertility and mortality rates. This chapter emphasises that a decline in fertility rates is a universal trend, and Africa is no exception in the long run. The world can be divided into nations with rapidly shrinking populations and those with expanding ones. Nevertheless, in theory, if people could move freely from the latter to the former, the world's population distribution might reach a sort of equilibrium. In Chapter 3, therefore, we take a closer look at the trends in the global population movement. Voluntarily or not, people move around actively within Afrasia, and migration within the South is now becoming more frequent than that from the South to the North.

Part II, 'The Last Shall Be First', considers the socio-economic history of Afrasia. In Chapter 4, evolving relationships between the East and the West are reviewed in terms of catching up and being caught up. This chapter confirms that the centre of gravity of economic growth is turning back from the West to the East, which means that Asia is not emerging but re-emerging. Then, what if one were to add an axis of Afrasia that connects the east and the west of the Indian Ocean to the existing axis of Eurasia? Chapter 5 focuses on high degrees of social fluidity as a shared historical characteristic of the continental world of Africa and the maritime world of Southeast Asia. The key phrase is 'liberal archipelago' coined by the philosopher Chandran Kukathas. Chapter 6 summarises the discussions in Part II and considers possible directions future Afrasia might take. Will the paths of development in Africa and Asia diverge or converge? Whichever scenario prevails, it is crucial for all regions to cultivate people's empathy and problem-solving capacity.

Part III, 'The Age of Afrasia', discusses the international relations (IR) and cultures across Africa and Asia. There is no reason for a maturing Asia to fear a growing Africa. Chapter 7 describes the characteristics of pan-nationalist thought in 20th-century Afrasia. We note that in that century, thinkers across the continents articulated the powerful anti-colonial ethos. Aware that they were part of a global torrent at the time, these individuals did not advocate the liberation of a particular nation-state but the emancipation of peoples in a broader South. Paying attention to the history of Islam in Afrasia, Chapter 8 confirms that the restoration of peace in the node of Afrasia is the cornerstone of peace in the entire world. Chapter 9 then deliberates on several ways to accomplish communication between Africa and Asia. As instruments of international communication, we often use languages of European origins, but the appropriateness of such a choice is not self-evident. The tools must be chosen consciously.

## 6 Introduction

In the final chapter, I offer a discussion that rounds up the book, referring to Afrasia's relationship with the rest of the world, and consider whether it is politically viable to imagine Afrasia as a real community. I would also like to draw certain conclusions about the rationale for advocating a broader Afrasianism rather than Asianism or Africanism. Is the framework of Afrasia anti-Western? The reader may eventually find such a question irrelevant. In navigating Afrasia towards the 22nd century, the same compass that was used in the past is no longer available. This book concludes by emphasising the significance of utilising the comparative method of cultural triangulation.

If this book is read in 2100 as an antique, the reader may have a laugh. Why was the author so optimistic? Or why was he this pessimistic? The prediction was not at all correct, or the era of Afrasia already arrived decades ago! Although it is difficult to foresee future readers' reactions, now is the time to root out colonial macroparasitism. Peoples who care about sustainability and equitable redistribution, respect healthy nationalism, and make wise use of market forces will generate a peaceful global federation from below; moving forward in this direction will require reciprocal cooperation between all African and Asian nations, both large and small. As a precondition for realising this dream, I believe that the notion of Afrasia still has a powerful *raison d'être*. The era of Afrasia is both an opportunity and a challenge. May people get through the dream of Afrasia and find themselves living in a more peaceful and equitable world that values ecosystems, cultures, and the infinite diversity of individuals in the 22nd century.

### **The origins and development of the book**

In the rest of this Introduction, let me write about how this book was conceptualised and evolved. The notion of Afrasia came to my mind in early 2015, when I was exploring the UN statistics and came across long-term projections of population change. Then, within a relatively short period, I managed to assemble the key elements for this book, while giving academic talks here and there about the idea of uniting Africa with Asia to constitute a single macro-region.

The first people who welcomed the Afrasian perspective were Indian scholars of African studies. In October 2015, when I made a presentation at an international conference at Jawaharlal Nehru University, I felt that this pan-regionalist idea resonated strongly with the Indian intellectuals in attendance. When I spoke at the University of Cape Town in South Africa in September 2016, I was reminded of the importance of Islam in the intersection of Afrasia. In April 2019, I showed several maps (that are now part of this book) at an international conference organised by the Institute of Area Studies, Peking University. Chinese scholars were much interested in the GIS technique. Eventually, I also had a chance to present the concept of Afrasia at an international online conference organised by RUDN University, Moscow, in February 2021 and received deliberate responses from participants.

When explaining my dream of Afrasia, people's reactions were not always positive. Some people told me that they just could not accept such a big framework.

Intriguingly, wherever I visited, some people welcomed the concept of Afrasia with open arms, while others reacted with scepticism, and the pattern had nothing to do with whether the person lived in the South or the North, or whether his or her political leaning was right or left. However, the concept of Afrasia is expected to be more inspiring than frightening. The future image of Afrasia is thus introduced here in the hope that people do not have to be dismayed when they witness the magnitude of its demographic transformation in the real world.

The pristine concept of this book was first presented in ‘Dreaming Afrasia: An Essay on Afro-Asian Relations in Space-Time Perspectives’, a chapter of a Routledge handbook on Afro-Asian IR.<sup>3</sup> Extending the discussion in that article, I published a paperback in Japanese in August 2019,<sup>4</sup> and the present book is an extended, fully revised English version of that publication. My propositions in this work, which emphasise relative achievements in the developing world, may remind the reader of Hans Rosling’s *Factfulness* (2018). Some of my arguments in this book also parallel those in Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson’s *Empty Planet* (2019), which were also inspired by the UN population projections and highlighted the importance of immigration policy.<sup>5</sup> Although these trends undoubtedly reflect a global shift in priority towards long-term demographic policy discussions, I do not think that it is ideal for African and Asian countries to become like Sweden or Denmark, nor do I believe that enclosing foreign labour as scarce resources should become the standard policy for countries in the North.

Pictorial books such as Parag Khanna’s *Connectography* (2016) and Ian Goldin and Robert Muggah’s *Terra Incognita* (2020) described global challenges with colourful maps and infographics.<sup>6</sup> The present book also makes use of maps, which are not as spectacular as those in these two books. Possibly, the comparative advantage of this one lies in its focus on population and economic history. The recent fad for geopolitics has led to a rediscovery of classic ideas espoused by Halford John Mackinder and Alfred Thayer Mahan. However, in cutting-edge strategic studies, less weight is attached to factors such as the shapes of the land and the sea, and there is a growing awareness of the need to combine natural geography with the study of history, culture, and language.<sup>7</sup>

I am not sure to what category this book belongs. Broadly speaking, it would fall under IR or international political economy (IPE). However, the methodology of this work is eclectic, combining discrete academic fields such as demography, migration studies, economic history, anthropology, business administration, political thought, religious studies, and linguistics. There may be a backdrop unique to Japan. Partly due to sincere regret over the devastating war caused by Japan’s ethnocentric mobilisation, social science in post-war Japan was set up in pluralistic ways. For example, the IR course at the University of Tokyo was designed to teach in not so much a coherent as a ‘multiplex’ discipline characterised by collaboration between economics, law, politics, and sociology, and embedded in a graduate school of liberal arts that features area studies. Japanese IR researchers are well aware of global trends such as the rise of constructivism, but they seem to prefer securing slow and steady intellectual dialogue with other research fields to contributing directly to rigorous theory construction.

## 8 Introduction

Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan answered the question ‘Is non-Western international relations theory (IRT) possible?’ in this way: ‘Western IRT does not, in our view, need to be replaced (though some might think that it does)’.<sup>8</sup> If I am asked, while I do not see the need to replace what is enshrined in the secular edifice of IRT either, I am afraid that people in the non-Western world are not inclined to contribute willingly to the intellectual traditions unequivocally qualified by the adjective ‘Western’. Instead, why don’t we juxtapose variants of distinctive worldviews and organise mutual learning between the theories?

I wish this book could have presented a theoretical alternative. However, what it is going to bring forward is not a theory but a proto-theory at best. I hope to design something like a federation of autonomous islands representing disciplines. There would be a space where the deities sit in a circle chatting and laughing rather than struggling against each other for hegemony or replacement. A pluralistic order would provide a perfect setting for the age of Afrasia.

### Notes

- 1 All figures on population in this book are based on the *World Population Prospects 2019* (medium variant) released by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), unless otherwise specified. <https://population.un.org/wpp/>
- 2 In this type of map, orientations from the centre point as well as the area of all parts of the globe are represented correctly, while the forms of the land away from the centre are heavily distorted.
- 3 Pedro Miguel Amakasu Raposo de Medeiros Carvalho, David Arase, and Scarlett Cornelissen, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Africa-Asia Relations* (London: Routledge, 2018).
- 4 Mine Yoichi, *20 seiki no sekai chizu: Afurashia no jidai (World Maps in 2100: The Age of Afrasia)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2019). This original version was published as the 1,788th volume of the Iwanami Shinsho paperback series that was launched in 1938 modelling on Pelican Books founded in Britain in the previous year.
- 5 Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Rönnlund, *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We’re Wrong About the World – and Why Things Are Better Than You Think* (London: Sceptre, 2018); Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, *Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline* (London: Robinson, 2019).
- 6 Parag Khanna, *Connectography: Mapping the Future of Global Civilization* (New York: Random House, 2016); Ian Goldin and Robert Muggah, *Terra Incognita: 100 Maps to Survive the Next 100 Years* (London: Century, 2020).
- 7 Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate* (New York: Random House, 2012).
- 8 Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, eds., *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 236.

**Part I**

**World Maps in 2100**



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# 1 Population change towards the 22nd century

## One century as a unit of time

In this chapter, we draw world maps for the year 2100, the last year of the 21st century and the year in which we will be standing on the doorstep of the 22nd century. Here, we contemplate a 100-year time frame. In the world of the decimal system, 10 years, 100 years, and 1,000 years are natural units of numbers based on digits. However, a single person is capable of being active only for decades, not for a century. When the average human life expectancy exceeds 100 years, then there will be more people talking about their memories from a century ago, but this is not yet the case.

The range of 100 years is more appropriate when narrating a generational drama than when describing an individual's experiences. García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, for instance, is a quirky tale of an extended family's experiences over a century, from its birth to its disappearance in a fictitious village in Colombia.<sup>1</sup> On a personal note, my grandmother happened to be born in 1900. For me, born in 1961, her life story served as a good benchmark for remembering the textbook events of Asian and world history in the 20th century.

Looking to the future, the children of the kids who are in schools today will likely be witnessing the world at the beginning of the 22nd century. One hundred years may be just the right amount of time to go beyond the length of one's lifetime and use one's imagination to look a little further into the past and the future, because one century ago or one century from now is a time when people who are not entirely strangers to us were or will be alive. When it comes to the millennium, the reality of individual life disappears from the story.

It is at a critical juncture in history that people are compelled to think in terms of a century instead of a decade. Japanese intellectuals who pondered over the future of the country in the middle of the 19th century must have been aware that the Tokugawa Shogunate lasted for some 250 years. However, traditional rulers in East Asia widely feared the Western powers' encroachment at the time. The question was whether the new system local nationalists were building would have any hope of lasting for 100 or 200 years or more. In 1875, Fukuzawa Yukichi, born in 1835, wrote the following in *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*:

Discussing the merits and demerits of a matter is simple, but it is quite difficult to establish what is heavy, light, good, or bad. One cannot argue the good

of the nation from the advantage of one individual. One must not discuss what is convenient for the coming year and err in plans for a hundred years ahead. One must listen to all theories, old and new; obtain extensive knowledge about conditions in the world; judge, without prejudice or personal feeling, where the highest good lies. Breaking through a thousand obstacles and remaining unfettered by the bonds of public opinion, one must occupy a lofty vantage point, from which to look back upon the past and to cast a sharp eye to the future.<sup>2</sup>

Do not mistake long-term public good and priorities for one's personal benefits within a year. Our decision should not be swayed by erratic mass opinion. We should learn from history, know the world, and develop a 100-year strategy with a calm mind. It must have been an urgent need for Afrasian nationalists in the last century to observe the entire world carefully and plan for the future of their nation. Fukuzawa was right in saying this, even though it is doubtful that the 'quit Asia and join Europe' direction he and his colleagues chose was appropriate.

### **A sense of direction towards the 22nd century**

Now, in the first half of the 21st century, the world order of the Cold War has gone, but the new order is still not in sight, while big nations around the world have started to lock themselves into their own spheres of influence. The inclination towards national closure intensified in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is precisely because we live in the age of defensive nationalism that we should attempt to go beyond short-term, parochial preoccupations with merits and demerits and towards discussions about right and wrong. To proceed in this direction, this book takes a snapshot of what the future world might look like and what it would mean for us.

The world's situation at the end of the 21st century as seen here will not arrive suddenly. It is hard to imagine opening your eyes one morning and seeing the world completely changed unless there has been a total nuclear war or a giant meteorite impact. Instead, this book attempts to grasp critical aspects of the gradual change in the world. Instead of considering the desirability of a possible image of the future as in most future studies, I would like to question our preparedness for the challenges with which the very likely future will confront us.

### **Population distribution in 2100**

Let us take a fresh look at the world in 2100. In the 22nd-century world, which places on Earth will be inhabited by whom? We have already traced the likely global population change in three cartograms (Figures 0.2, 0.3, and 0.4). Let us break this down and examine the trends by country and region.

Figure 1.1 describes the world population change by region as provided by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Note that national censuses are not conducted annually, and their accuracy varies

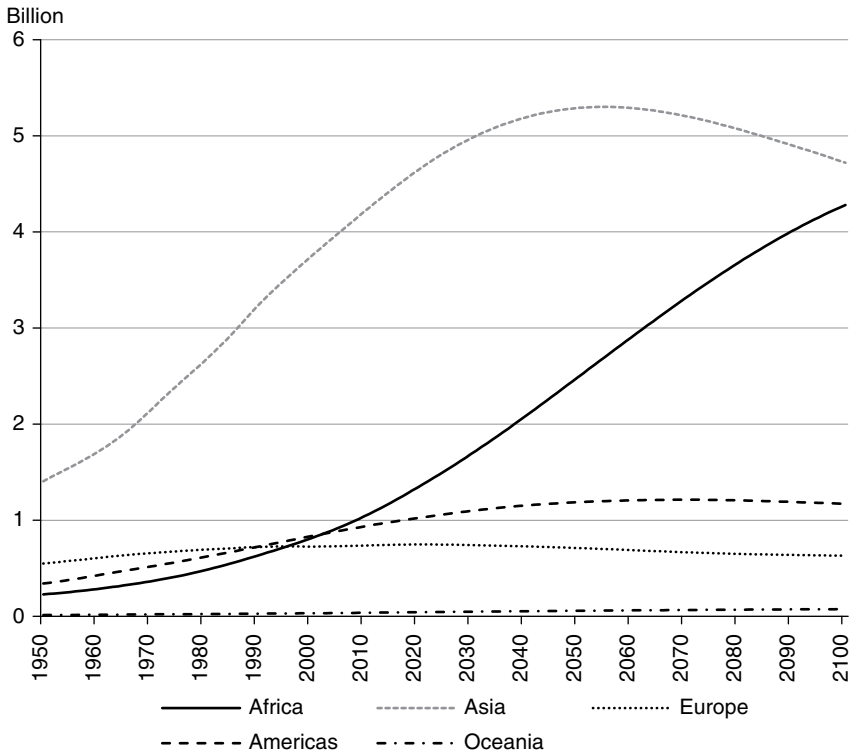


Figure 1.1 Projection of Population Change by Region, 1950–2100

Source: UNDESA (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*. <https://population.un.org/wpp/download/>

from country to country; thus, the figures representing the past world populations remain estimations. The projections from the present up to 2100 are based on the most likely assumptions. We discuss the certainty of future population projections in the next chapter, but for now, we examine the medium-variant projection that has the highest probability of realisation.<sup>3</sup> Let us set the years 2001 and 2100, the first and the last years of the 21st century, as two points of comparison. In 2001, while the violent conflict that erupted after the end of the Cold War in parts of Africa and the Balkans had largely subsided, the 9/11 attacks ushered in the new century. The United Nations agreed upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that same year. The figures representing population distribution for the two distant years are shown in Table 1.1, while the process of long-term change starting in 1950 is traced in Figure 1.1.

Here, we compare regions, not countries. The definition of the groupings of Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania used in this book is the conventional

Table 1.1 Projection of World Population

	2001 (Thousand)	2001 (%)	2100 (Thousand)	2100 (%)
World Total	6,222,627	100.0	10,875,394	100.0
Asia	3,789,285	60.9	4,719,907	43.4
Africa	830,903	13.4	4,280,127	39.4
Americas	844,829	13.6	1,170,881	10.8
Europe	725,772	11.7	629,563	5.8
Oceania	31,838	0.5	74,916	0.7

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

one.<sup>4</sup> Asia is a vast region encompassing countries from China, Korea, and Japan within East Asia to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia, including the Middle East, and stretching to Turkey. Africa includes North Africa. Europe includes not only Western Europe but also Eastern Europe and Far Eastern Russia. Oceania consists of the islands of the South Pacific as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Let us look at Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 together. As of 2001, the aggregate population of the world's regions was 6.22 billion. Of these, Asia had a population of 3.79 billion, which was 60.9 per cent of the world's total. Asia's population will continue to grow throughout the first half of the 21st century, but as the curve in the figure shows, this is expected to peak at 5.30 billion in 2055 and begin to decline gradually. By 2100, the world's population is expected to be almost 10.88 billion, while Asia's population will be around 4.72 billion, accounting for 43.4 per cent. Throughout the 21st century, the absolute size of the Asian population is expected to increase by 24.6 per cent, but its share in the world's population will decrease.

The population of Africa, on the other hand, is expected to increase more than fivefold throughout the 21st century, from 0.83 billion in 2001 to nearly 4.28 billion in 2100. The share of the African population in the world's total population was 13.4 per cent in 2001, but this is expected to rise to 39.4 per cent by 2100. As shown in Figure 0.4, Africa's demographic presence will be immense. The population of the Americas is expected to increase from 0.84 billion in 2001 to just over 1.17 billion in 2100. It is assumed that the populations of Latin America and the Caribbean countries will rise by 28.5 per cent and that the populations of the United States and Canada will expand by 55.5 per cent over the same period. The population of Europe will decrease from 0.73 billion to about 0.63 billion, while that of Oceania will increase from 32 million to about 75 million.

Let us confirm the big picture. UNDESA predicts that the world's population in 2100 will be 4.72 billion in Asia and 4.28 billion in Africa, accounting for 43.4 per cent and 39.4 per cent of the world's population, respectively. Regardless of whether the exact figures will be close to these estimations, it seems reasonably sure based on the trends shown in Figure 1.1 that 40 per cent (or more) of the world's population will be living in Africa, about 40 per cent (or less) will be

living in Asia, and the remaining 20 per cent will be living in the rest of the world in the early 22nd century. Afrasia's population will reach 80 per cent by the middle of the 21st century, and during the second half of the 21st century, Africa's presence within Afrasia will be dramatically strengthened.

### **Population distribution by country**

When we look at the Earth from afar, a continent appears as a single landmass, and oceans and seas connect seamlessly to each other (Figure 0.1). However, when viewed closely, artificial national borders run across the land in every direction, humans' movement is constrained by force, and groups of people wave flags and fight for control of tiny islands. From a distance, such situations must seem bizarre. However, every person on the Earth lives in an artificial box called a nation-state, and this reality is not likely to change anytime soon. We ask people we meet for the first time, 'Where are you from?' Upon learning the name of the country of the person's origin, we intuitively understand its position on the world map, as well as its approximate topography, climate, and culture, and from there, the dialogue with the person begins.

Therefore, we may justifiably begin by looking at demographic change by country. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 are treemaps that summarise the population sizes of all nations worldwide. The size of each country's population is presented as the area of the block. Countries with large populations are placed at the top left, while those with small populations are at the bottom right. China has an overwhelming presence in terms of economic and political strength, but looking at population size, China (1.30 billion) and India (1.08 billion) stood side by side in 2001 (Figure 1.2). By 2100, the population of three South Asian countries (2.00 billion in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh combined) is expected to overwhelm East Asian countries (1.06 billion in China alone).<sup>5</sup> In the meantime, the population of African nations as a whole will grow and become comparable to that of the whole of Asia (Figure 1.3).

In 2019, the population of three East Asian countries, i.e., China, Japan, and South Korea, accounted for about 20 per cent of the world's population, while the shares of automobile production and international patent applications for this region in the world reached around 50 per cent.<sup>6</sup> However, while East Asia's fertility rates have already fallen far below the replacement level (South Korea: 1.11, Japan: 1.37, and China 1.69 in 2015–2020), these countries are not enthusiastic about accepting overseas citizens. Consequently, the share of the population of this region is projected to dwindle to no more than 10 per cent of the world's population by 2100. The East Asian countries cannot afford to quarrel with each other and have no choice but to co-ordinate and tap into other regions' growth dynamics.

It would be interesting to identify which countries will match your own. In 2100, the populations of Britain and Japan will be 78 million and 75 million, respectively, paralleled by those of Ghana (79 million), Somalia (76 million), Afghanistan (75 million), and Germany (75 million). Figures 1.4 and 1.5 trace

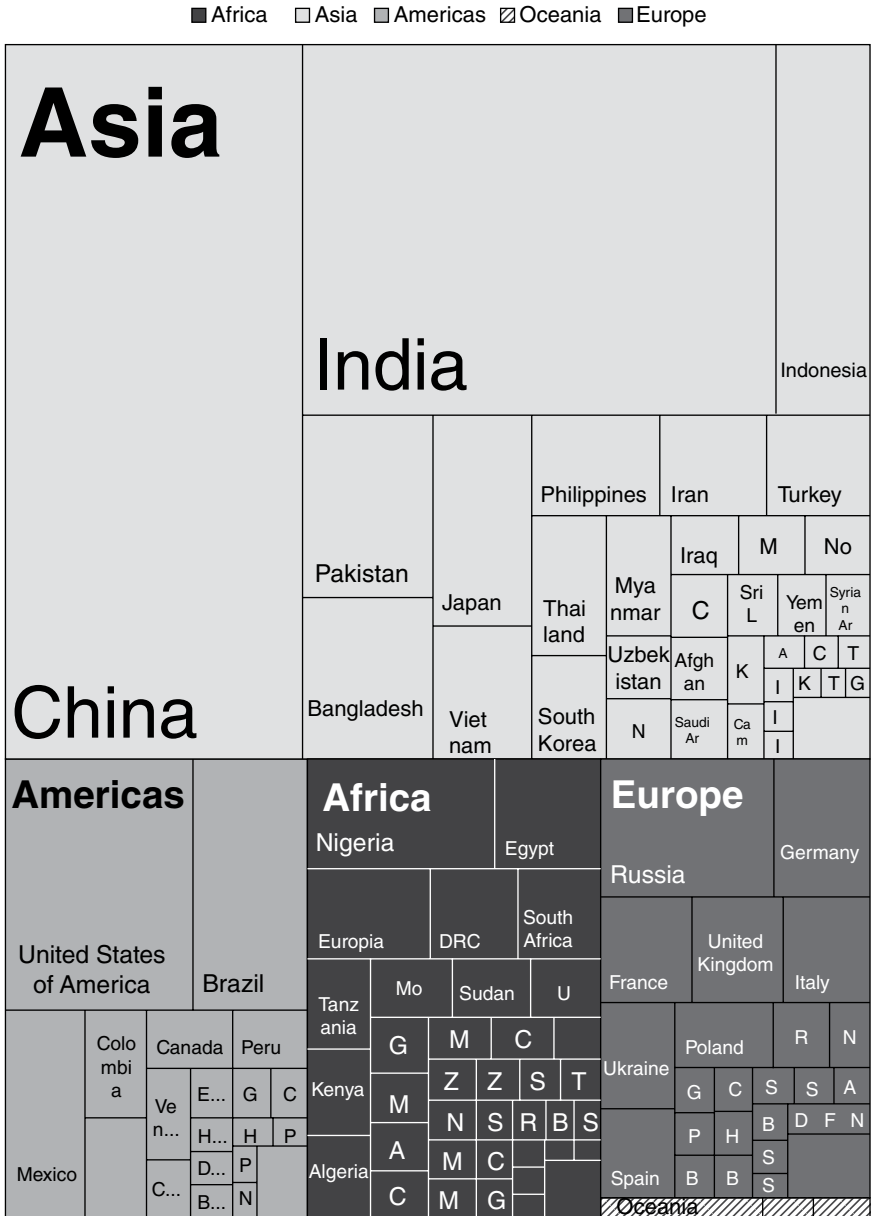


Figure 1.2 Distribution of Global Population, 2001  
 Source: UNDESA, World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

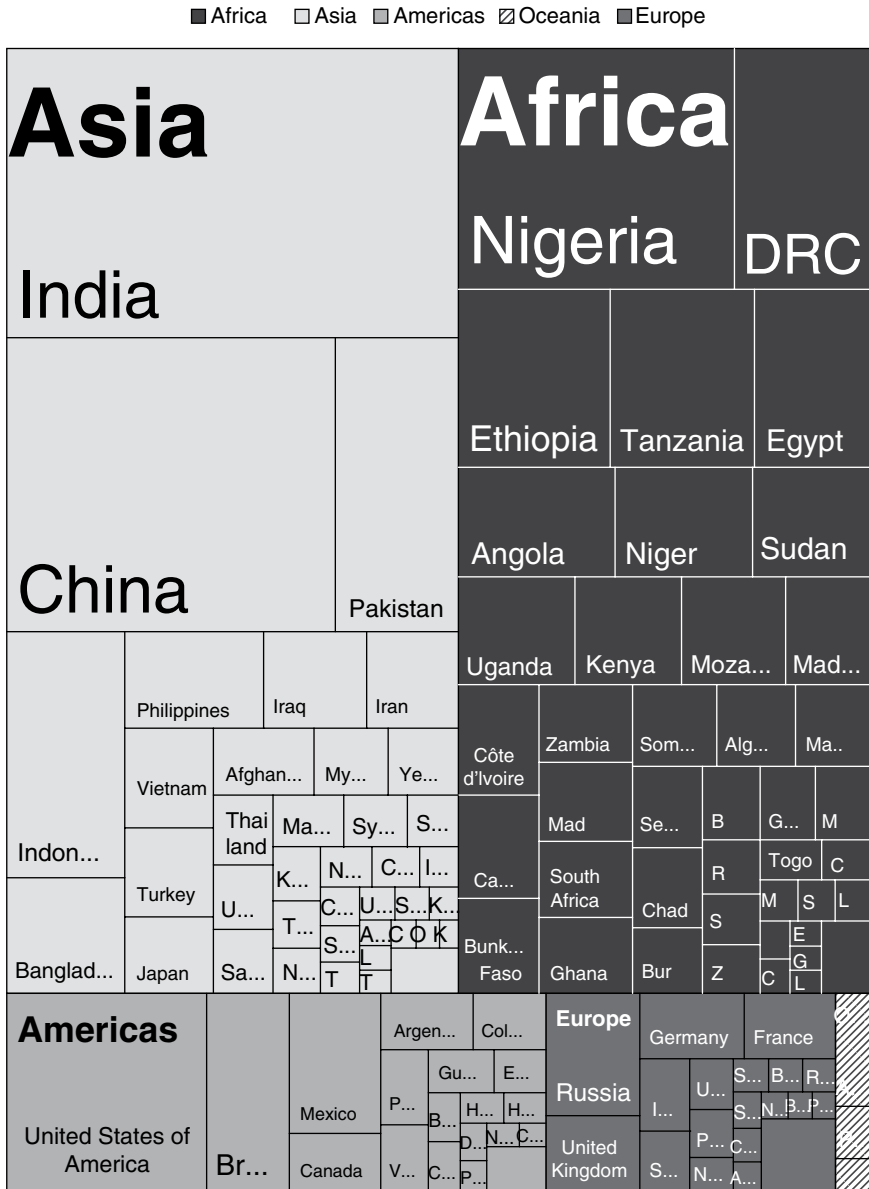


Figure 1.3 Distribution of Global Population, 2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

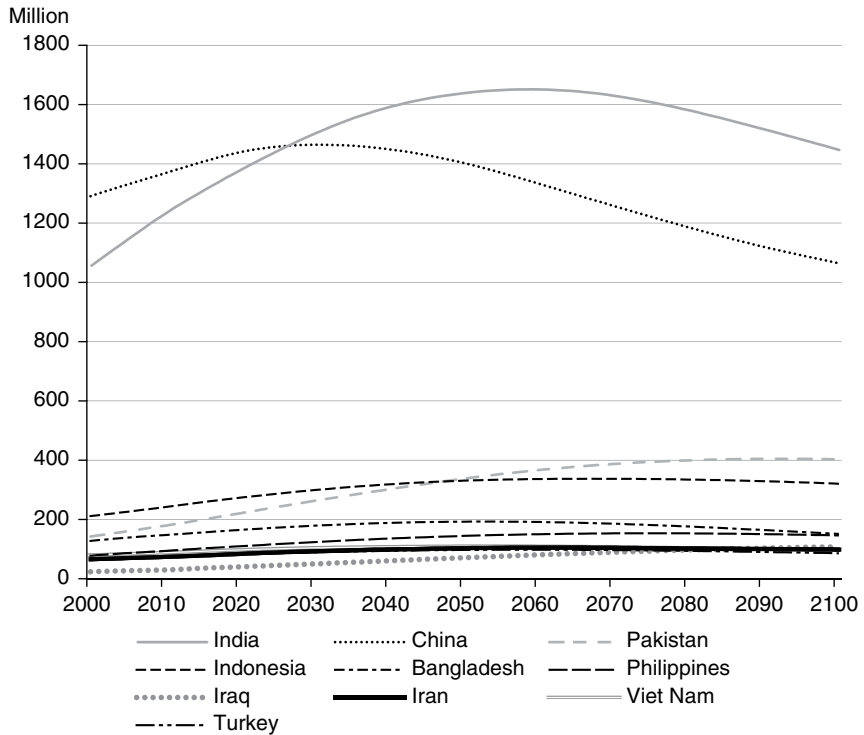


Figure 1.4 Population Change by Country (Asia), 2000–2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

the population change during the 21st century for relatively big countries in Asia and Africa. By 2100, the populations of India, China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Iraq, Iran, Viet Nam, and Turkey, sorted in the order of the projected population size, will account for 83.1 per cent of the total population of Asia. All these Asian countries are expected to enter a depopulation phase at some point in the latter part of the 21st century, except for Iraq. As has been widely discussed, declining birth rates and ageing populations are a general trend in all Asian countries. As shown in Figure 1.1, the aggregated population of Asia will reach its peak in the second half of the 21st century and then decline.

In contrast to Asia, Africa's population is expected to increase consistently. By 2100, the total population of Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Egypt, Angola, Niger, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, sorted in the order of population size, will make up 62.0 per cent of Africa's total population. The population of Nigeria was 125 million in 2001, but the figure is expected to reach 733 million by 2100. While Asia accommodates several populous nations

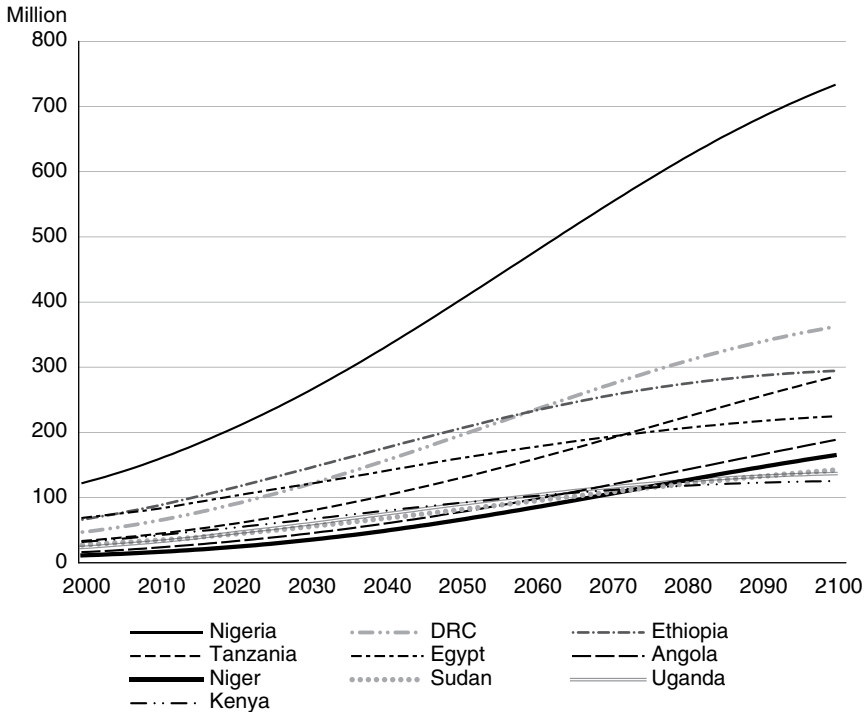


Figure 1.5 Population Change by Country (Africa), 2000–2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

such as India, China, and Indonesia, it is only Nigeria that stands out with a prominently large population in Africa. When the borders of Africa were drawn by the European powers at the Berlin Conference (1884–85), the colonial architects created relatively small units of administration for the convenience of ‘divide and rule’.<sup>7</sup> Post-independence African nations have decided, after much deliberation, not to touch the existing borders in the interest of peace on the frontiers. As a result, the African continent has remained decentralised as an assembly of dozens of small- and medium-sized states.

At present, the populations of China, India, and Africa are over one billion each. As Africa is divided into no less than 54 sovereign nations, a list of the countries according to wealth gives a depressing impression; a vast number of African nations are in the ‘low-income’ group (see the statistical appendices of the World Bank’s *World Development Reports* and the United Nations Development Programme’s *Human Development Reports*).<sup>8</sup> However, if we regard Africa as a single country alongside China and India, the image instantly changes;

Africa emerges as a significant power that is slightly poorer than India. Leading Ghana into independence, Kwame Nkrumah dreamed of creating a 'United States of Africa' that would march forward with the collective strength of the continent. Nevertheless, once Africa's population exceeds four billion, it will become impractical to consider the continent as a single nation. More attention will have to be paid to the geographic, cultural, and historical uniqueness of its units.

### **Population pyramid**

As the absolute size of the population changes, so does its generational composition. We witness the shift from a pattern involving more births and deaths to one with fewer births and deaths in all nations. Given the decline in birth rates, the total population is bound to decline in the long term. However, as the voluminous generation of children born in the past years grows older and life expectancy increases due to the improved nutrition and medical technology, the proportion of older people in the total population will swell temporarily.

One method devised to inform us about the dynamics of demographic transition is a special horizontal bar chart representing population composition by age and gender called the population pyramid. Figure 1.6 shows the projected change in the shape of the pyramids for Africa, Asia, and Europe (the pyramids for the Americas and Oceania take intermediate forms between Asia's and Europe's). The shape of the pyramid of a society with a combination of a high birth rate and a high death rate takes the form of an 'expansive' type; this is applicable to Africa in 2000. Then, as both fertility and mortality decline, the gravity of the pyramid shifts upwards (the reasons that fertility declines in the process of economic development are discussed in Chapter 2). African society in 2100 will fall into this type. If we move further, the graph transforms into a 'constrictive' type in which we have much fewer children and much more old people as the birth rate declines further. The expected shape of population composition in Asia in 2100 is close to this top-heavy type. It is tempting to think that the current population composition of Europe anticipates the future pattern for Asia and that Asia's present population represents Africa's future. The predictions in Figure 1.6 endorse this assumption.

Of all the cohorts, the population of persons aged 15–64 is defined as the productive-age population (based on the world standard definition). The non-productive-age population (dependent population) is composed of children aged up to 14 and the elderly aged 65 and over. We then calculate the share of the productive-age population in the total population by the world's major regions. Figure 1.7 shows the expected change in this rate throughout the 21st century. Africa's 'demographic dividend' (abundant labour) in the second half of this century is clearly observable. In 2100, the proportion of the production-age population is expected to be 64.3 per cent in Africa, 57.7 per cent in Asia, and 55.2 per cent in Europe.

Let us also consider the proportions of the elderly. The share of the population aged 65 and over in the total population of Japan, a rapidly ageing country, is expected to rise from 17.0 per cent in 2000 to 37.3 per cent in 2100. The projected

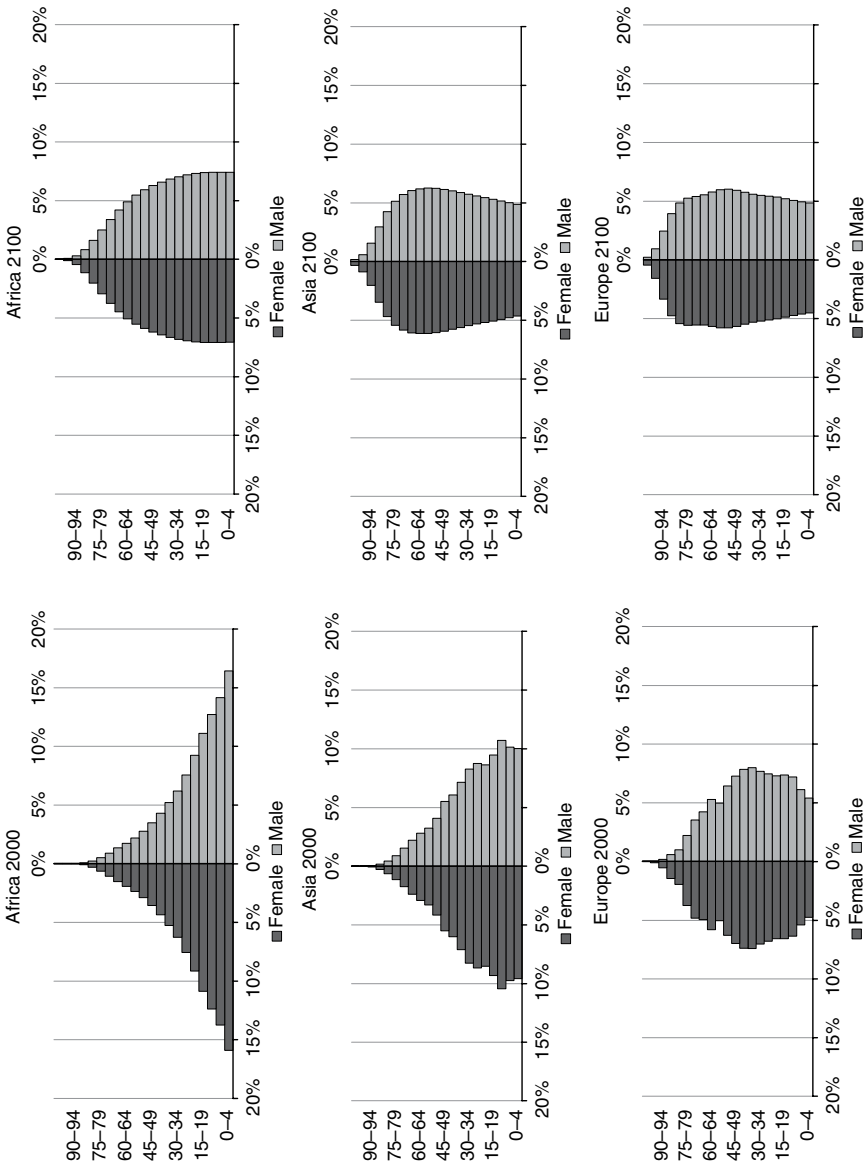


Figure 1.6 Population Pyramids, 2000 and 2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

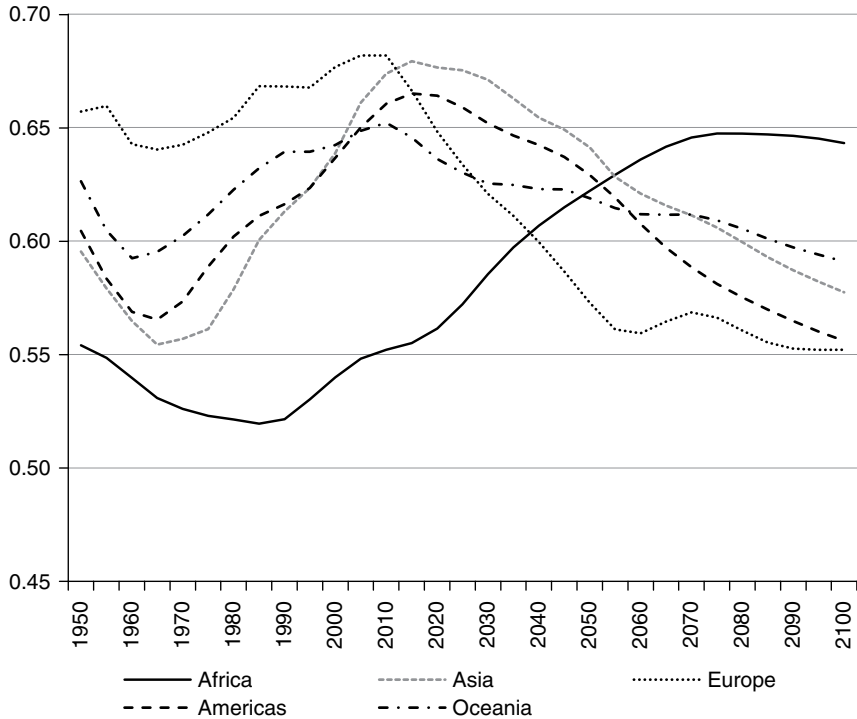


Figure 1.7 Ratio of Productive-Age Population by Region, 1950–2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

proportions of the same age group in other Afrasian countries in 2100 will be 31.8 per cent for China, 26.9 per cent for Indonesia, 26.7 per cent for India, 19.2 per cent for South Africa, 17.3 per cent for Iraq, and 10.1 per cent for Nigeria. The figure for Africa as a whole is 13.9 per cent. Obviously, Africa will face no serious ageing in the next 100 years.

### The frame called ‘Afrasia’

People living in Africa and Asia will make up a large majority of the world’s population. In particular, the pace of population growth in Africa will continue to be breathtaking. The core message of this book is that the shape of the world will be determined by what kind of dialogue Africans and Asians will organise regarding the future of the planet. The remainder of this book provides materials for such a dialogue and discusses the serious challenges facing the people living in both regions.

As a prerequisite for preparing a meaningful dialogue between the peoples of Africa and Asia, I would like to discuss how the geographic frame should be defined. The term 'Asia and Africa' is often used in Asia, but in this book, I basically write Africa first, as in 'Africa and Asia'. This could go either way, of course, but one reason for my preference for this order is a shifting gravity; as already emphasised, the African population is growing rapidly and is likely to overtake the Asian population sooner or later. Furthermore, let us remember that the African continent is the birthplace of humankind; the ancestors of all people on the planet migrated from Africa. Let us therefore pay homage to the land of our common ancestors. Yet, the phrase 'Africa and Asia' sounds somewhat formulaic and prosaic. As a unit for dialogue, can we envision a single frame that encompasses the two regions? In English, the expression 'Afro-Asia' is often used, but it may not be very smart to hyphenate two words to refer to a single unit.

In this book, I use the term 'Afrasia' as a geographical unit that encompasses both regions. I first came across this word in the name of the Afrasian Centre for Peace and Development Studies (later renamed the Afrasian Research Centre) at Ryukoku University, a Buddhist tertiary institution in Japan. The centre was headed by Nobuko Nagasaki, a respected scholar of the life and thought of Mohandas Gandhi. According to Takehiko Ochiai, a specialist on West Africa who took a leading role in the establishment of the centre in 2005, the term Afrasia, which refers to a single 'sphere' linking Africa and Asia, was tabled as a keyword for joint research ventures involving African and Asian area study scholars.

Perhaps the first person who consciously used the term Afrasia was the British historian Arnold Toynbee. In the first volume of his masterpiece, *A Study of History* (1934–54), Toynbee portrayed the culture and environment of the 'Afrasian Steppe', which ran 'from the western shore of the Persian Gulf to the eastern shore of the Atlantic' in parallel with the 'Eurasian Steppe' in the north. For Toynbee, Afrasia was the space composed of major parts of West Asia and North Africa, where Asia and Africa were geographically joined. Afrasia was also the cradle of civilisation, where the Egyptian and Sumerian civilisations were born. After the Ice Age ended 10,000 years ago, Afrasia underwent a period of rapid desiccation. Toynbee argued that the birth of those great civilisations was primarily the result of the creative responses of local people in Afrasia to the challenges brought by the intense environmental change.<sup>9</sup>

It is the American historian Michael Pearson who gave the name Afrasia to a different place. In his 1998 book, Pearson noted that the cultural hybridisation of Africa and Asia had occurred in the Arab-Swahili maritime region in East Africa for centuries and proposed that the western part of the Indian Ocean should be called the 'Afrasian Sea'. Calling this cosmopolitan space part of the Indian Ocean's coastal region will distort our understanding of global history because the place was not just a periphery of the big ocean south of India but a microcosm in which elements of Africa and Asia mingled on equal footing through active trade and circular migration.<sup>10</sup>

In 2013, the great Kenyan-born scholar of peace studies Ali Mazrui and the Ethiopian-born IR scholar Seifudein Adem jointly published a book titled *Afrasia*,

which turned out to be one of the last works by the prolific Mazrui, who passed away in 2014. They argued that Africa and Asia, while internally diverse, were becoming united through the process of contemporary globalisation. The book extended the horizon of the debate on China-Africa and India-Africa relations to include other Asian nations and thereby attempted to consolidate a broader 'region-to-region' perspective of Afro-Asian relationships.<sup>11</sup> Against the backdrop of the various definitions given so far, in this book, the term Afrasia is used as a geographical framework that comprises the whole of two regions, Africa and Asia, following Mazrui and Adem's perspective.

### **Afrasia's siblings**

Before closing this chapter, let me briefly introduce Afrasia's unique and distinctive siblings. The term Afrasia is a composite word. There are other examples of 'chimerising' two region names to signify a single macro-region, of which the most extensively circulated would be Eurasia. Although Europe and Asia are culturally contrasted and often dichotomised, this combination is readily accepted because the Eurasian continent is an inseparable landmass in natural geography. In addition to this physical contiguity, exiled Russian intellectuals espoused the idea of Eurasianism in the interwar period. While criticising both Eurocentrism and Bolshevism, they envisioned the civilisational potential of Russia as a hybrid entity that would transcend the duality of Europe and Asia, which is being reclaimed in post-Soviet Russia.<sup>12</sup>

Compared with Eurasia, which is based on a single continent's solid frame, other terms are more or less artificial. Though it is almost completely forgotten, the European powers 'loudly and repeatedly' asserted the notion of Eurafrika from the 1920s to the 1950s to control human and natural resources in Africa collectively. The term was used to justify the venture of making their individual colonial rule over Africa Europeanised, from which the very attempt at European integration was born. According to Peo Hansen and Stefann Jonsson, unity was emphasised as a façade for exploitative relationships.<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein, terms such as *Françafrique* and *Chinafrique* were coined to expose unequal relationships between France and China on the one hand and Africa on the other.<sup>14</sup>

The Middle East is regarded as a node of greater Afrasia in this book, though scholars' attitudes to this region have tended to diverge into anti- and pro-Arabs. Eurabia, as described by the Egyptian-born writer Bat Ye'or, is a cultural space of conspiracy involving the European elite and their Arab counterpart to deceive and dominate European citizens.<sup>15</sup> Contrastively, Ali Mazrui used the term Afrabia to highlight the significance of solidarity and reconciliation between Africa and the Arab world, which should not be divided by a mere strip of water, the Red Sea. Mutual trust must be restored despite the unfortunate history of the slave trade involving Arab traders. According to Mazrui, compared with Eurafrika and Eurabia, the concept of Afrabia still remains 'inchoate and premature', necessitating the adequate structuration of the relationships between the Arabs and the Africans to complete the triangle.<sup>16</sup>

Afrasia is an addition to all these preceding controversial frames and polemics. Like Afrabia, the notion of Afrasia is defined by history. As will be elaborated in the second half of this book, two dimensions would justify the framing of a macro-region of Afrasia. First, Afrasia is contoured by the shared history of being colonised or semi-colonised by the West (and Japan as a Western ally) from the 19th century to the 20th century. This awareness of historical injustice should not be confounded with Occidentalism as essentialist loathing or even demonisation of the West, which, ironically, ‘was born in Europe, before it was transferred to other parts of the world’.<sup>17</sup> The second rationale of Afrasia lies in indigenous freedom developed in the core of Afrasia. The small population worlds in continental Africa and maritime Asia nurtured self-seeded attitudes that are willing to respect behaviours and opinions different from one’s own, which one may call non-Western, emancipatory ‘liberalism’. I will explicitly discuss this Afrasian social trait in Chapter 5.

In Mauritius, an island nation in the Afrasian Sea (western Indian Ocean), there exists a financial institution named AfrAsia Bank. After the original Japanese edition of this book was published, a Chinese firm asked me if the word Afrasia is registered as a trademark in China. Over time the name Afrasia may gain currency, but, as the concept is not widely circulated at the moment, I also use similar terms such as AfroAsia. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, we cannot rule out the possibility that the interests of Africa and Asia will conflict with one another and that a united region of Afrasia may eventually split into two camps. At the end of this book, however, I hope the reader will be convinced that there remains a solid moral and practical reason for imagining a macro-region combining these two regions.

### **The likelihood of the scenario**

In this chapter, we have examined a scenario in which people living in Afrasia will constitute a large majority of the people who live on this planet. (See Figure 1.8 to confirm the ratios. This is based on Table 1.1.) However, this does not mean that the actual state of population distribution in 2100 has already been determined. The projections that the UN demographers have presented are not premised on inevitability but on probability. The UNDESA projections are open to scientific critique.

In 2020, an article written by a team from *The Lancet* indicated that the UNDESA projections could be revised downwards. On the one hand, for countries in Europe and East Asia where fertility rates are already below the replacement level, the figures may not recover in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, in some populous African countries, the fertility rates may fall more rapidly than largely assumed. As a result, the world’s population in 2100 could be 8.79 billion rather than 10.88 billion based on UNDESA’s medium-variant projection. At any rate, the general trend *The Lancet* team predicted was still similar to UNDESA’s; Asia’s population will start shrinking soon, and Africa’s population will continue expanding for decades, with the result that the populations of Africa and Asia will

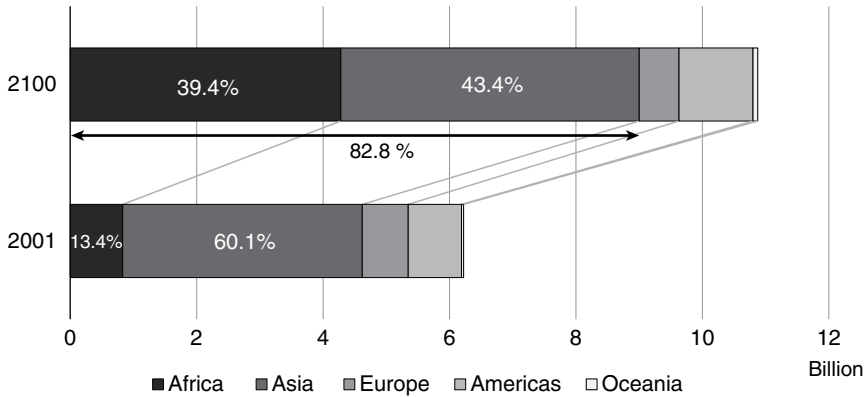


Figure 1.8 Afrasia's Share in the World's Population, 2001 and 2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

each account for about 40 per cent of the world's population by 2100. The direction of intertemporal change presented in Figure 1.8 remains essentially the same, though the bar for 2100 might be somewhat shorter according to *The Lancet*.<sup>18</sup>

How solid are all these projections? Apart from the precision of figures, would it be safe to assume that Asia's population will decrease while Africa's population will increase sharply? Or could it be the other way around with the population of Asia continuing to expand while that of Africa fails to grow? Is it impossible for the populations of Europe and East Asia to increase again? In the first place, what are the factors that determine population change over a 100 years? To what extent are these factors changeable? In the chapters that follow, I consider these issues.

## Notes

- 1 Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).
- 2 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, trans. David A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst III (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 15.
- 3 UNDESA releases three types of projections: high, medium, and low.
- 4 The United Nations' definition of world geographic regions is used in this book unless otherwise stated. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>
- 5 European economists used to regard population growth as a serious obstacle to development. The case of South Asia was considered to be typical. See, for example, Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations* (New York: Pantheon, 1968).
- 6 See the website of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS). <https://tcs-asia.org/en/statistics/index.php>
- 7 As for the long shadow of colonial partition to contemporary African politics, see Adekeye Adebajo, *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War* (London: Hurst, 2010).

- Adebajo pays due attention to the leadership quality and the significance of regional co-operation.
- 8 See the websites: [www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr/wdr-archive](http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr/wdr-archive) and <http://hdr.undp.org/>
  - 9 Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History, Vol. 1* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 254–255, 302–321. Note that Toynbee's historical depiction of Afrasia was very brief, though he used the word naturally as if it were an established term.
  - 10 Michael N. Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 36–37.
  - 11 Ali A. Mazrui and Seifudein Adem, *Afrasia: A Tale of Two Continents* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2013).
  - 12 The contemporary revival of Eurasianism is well captured in Mark Bassin, *The Gumi-lev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016). See also the innovative re-evaluation of so-called oriental despotism. Alessandro Stanziani, *After Oriental Despotism: Eurasian Growth in a Global Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
  - 13 Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 8, 13.
  - 14 François-Xavier Verschave, *La Françafrique: Le plus long scandale de la République* (Paris: Stock, 1999); Serge Michel et Michel Beuret, *La Chinafrique: Pékin à la conquête du continent noir* (Paris: B. Grasset, 2008).
  - 15 Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005).
  - 16 Ali Mazrui, 'Afrabia: Africa and the Arabs in the New World Order', *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 20, no. 3 (1992): 51–62; 'Eurafrica, Eurabia, and African-Arab Relations: The Tensions of Tripolarity', in *Interdependence in a World of Unequals: African-Arab-OECD Economic Cooperation for Development*, ed. Dunstan M. Wai (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1982). For more on this threefold comparative approach, see the method of cultural triangulation proposed at the end of this book.
  - 17 Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 6. Yet, the evil must be shared evenly by the West and the rest, because hatred is born out of a relationship.
  - 18 Stein Emil Vollset et al., 'Fertility, Mortality, Migration, and Population Scenarios for 195 Countries and Territories from 2017 to 2100: A Forecasting Analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study', *The Lancet* 396, no. 10258 (October 17–23, 2020): 1285–1306. According to this forecast, the global population will peak at 9.73 billion in 2064 and decline. In this article, Central Asia is grouped with Central Europe, and North Africa is grouped with the Middle East. If these regional groupings are converted to the UN classification, the population distribution in 2100 will be 41.5 per cent living in Asia and 39.7 per cent in Africa. This is similar to the UNDESA predictions.

## 2 A soft landing into a stationary state

### Determinants of population change

The reason the change in society's population can be predicted with considerable certainty is that there are only a limited number of variables that have a direct impact on the pace and intensity of demographic change. The size of a population is determined by the number of people entering society and the number of people leaving it, and there are only three variables that affect this flow of entry and exit. The first variable is how many children are born within the population, namely, the birth rate or the fertility rate measured per woman; the second is how many people die within the population, namely, the death rate or the mortality rate; and the third is the extent to which people move in and out between different population units, which is the size of migration.

Fertility and mortality do not fluctuate much in the short term unless there is a catastrophic incident such as total warfare or the spread of a deadly disease. Since human beings are not machines but living organisms, we cannot suddenly double the productivity of childbirth nor can we throw seniors away like old vehicles. In the first place, there is a kind of inertia effect in demographic change. Let us consider the population of society 20 years from now. People who will be 20 years old or over at that time have already been born at the present time; we have substantive continuity in the membership of society between two relatively close points of time. Economic indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) fluctuate greatly from year to year, but the population does not increase or decrease at such dizzying rates. Concerning population, therefore, we can predict relatively slow change as an independent variable.

Such a relatively slow change is also true of the UNDESA's future population projections, on which this book's discussion largely relies. The change from Figure 0.2 (2001) to Figure 0.3 (2050) is almost certain (we are now already in the middle of this half-century period). On the other hand, the data for Figure 0.4 (2100) are based on no more than a probabilistic scenario that has been calculated on the basis of past trends. In Figure 0.4, the expansion of the African population is striking. Note, however, that this hypothesises that Africa's birth rate will *drop* steadily, as will be discussed later. If the rate does not fall as assumed, Africa's population will be much larger than this in 2100. UNDESA regularly updates

its projections for the future; hence, the more years go by, the more accurate the forecasts for 2100 will be.<sup>1</sup> For future figures, the reader can always check the UN website (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>), though I am not quite sure if what is called the Internet will still exist half a century later.

This chapter examines two of the three variables that affect population change: the mortality rate and the fertility rate. Since migration is a variable that is more directly influenced by policy measures and social events, it is discussed separately in Chapter 3.

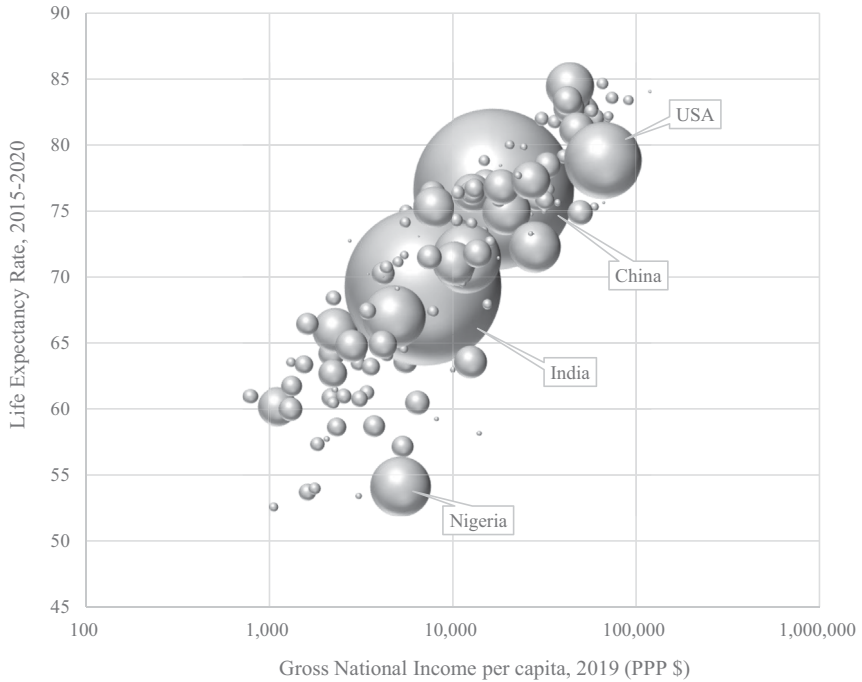
### **Change in mortality rates**

When discussing mortality, life expectancy at birth is often used. This refers to how many years a newborn baby is expected to live on average. When mortality rates fall, life expectancy naturally increases. In Japan, the average life expectancy around 1600 was more or less 30 years, and it was not until 1947 that expectancy exceeded 50 years.<sup>2</sup> In 2018, it reached 87.32 years for women and 81.25 years for men. These are one of the best in the world, though the figures are slightly better in Hong Kong.

It is important to note that life expectancy is measured as a national average value. In countries with chronically high infant mortality rates and where the youths are exposed to risks of diseases and social violence, a high mortality rate of younger generations will push down life expectancy. Despite such adversities, many people survive. Walking in the villages of Asia and Africa, one can meet many older people who have lived through tumultuous times and are now 80 or 90 years old and full of vigour.

There seems to be a correlation between economic development and life expectancy. A scatter plot of the world's countries with life expectancy on the vertical axis and per-capita income on the horizontal axis shows a clear correspondence (Figure 2.1). On the one hand, it is assumed that households with higher incomes invest in their health and live longer. On the other hand, there may be reverse causality in which national income rises due to a healthy and productive workforce. According to Samuel Preston, who directly addressed these relationships, the effect of social policies and institutions appears to be a significant determinant of life expectancy.<sup>3</sup> In fact, in Africa, while per-capita income did not increase much throughout the 1970s and 1980s, life expectancy increased steadily from 37.49 years in 1950–1955 to 50.74 years in 1980–1985 and then 60.25 years in 2010–2015. This massive improvement is primarily attributable to domestic as well as international interventions in health systems in Africa over the years.

Indeed, the spread of primary health care to rural areas and the improvement of sanitation infrastructure in urban areas depend largely on the quality and quantity of international assistance in the health and hygiene sector and, more importantly in light of institutional sustainability, on national governments' policy efforts. There are many oil-producing countries in the Middle East and Africa where per-capita income is high, but life expectancy has not improved correspondingly. As seen in Figure 2.1, life expectancy in Nigeria remains conspicuously low at



*Figure 2.1* Life Expectancy and Income

Note: The area of the circle represents the population size (2019).

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*; World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ny.gnp.pcap.pp.cd>

54.18 years, even though the country enjoys significant national revenue due to oil exports. Equatorial Guinea, a small oil-producing country in Central Africa, had a per-capita income of no less than 14,070 dollars (PPP: purchasing power parity) in 2019 with a life expectancy of only 58.25 years in 2015–2020. In contrast, Jamaica had a per-capita income of no more than 9,930 dollars with a life expectancy of 74.33 years.<sup>4</sup>

Historically, there have been occasions on which human society faced a sharp decrease in life expectancy. When the Black Death (the Plague) raged throughout Europe in the 14th century, one-third of the population is estimated to have fallen victim to it. As depicted in William H. McNeill's *Plagues and Peoples* and Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, America's indigenous peoples were driven to near extinction because of their lack of immunity to alien diseases such as smallpox brought by European intruders.<sup>5</sup> Around the last turn of the century, human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) reduced life expectancy by more than ten years in Southern Africa, though

it is now possible to live for a long time with AIDS by receiving anti-retroviral therapy.<sup>6</sup>

Life expectancy in the world's nations has improved remarkably since the 20th century, and there is potential for further extension, especially in Africa. However, as long as humans are biologically animals, there seems to be a natural limit to how long we can live.<sup>7</sup> Even if our body parts could be replaced by artificial limbs and new organs, the quality of our brain cells would deteriorate; it is improbable that the average life expectancy for humans would ever become 150 years or more. While it may depend on the progress of medical care, a possible situation in the next century is that the world's life expectancy will gradually converge with that of Hong Kong as the upper limit.

If we compare mortality rates instead of life expectancy, one can observe a different picture by country. Looking at the crude death rates (the annual number of deaths per 1,000 people without adjustment for age) for 2015–2020, the figure was 5.5 in Kenya, 6.4 in Brazil, 7.1 in China, 7.2 in India, 8.7 in the United States, 10.4 in Japan, and 11.2 in Germany. Generally, countries with better longevity seem to have higher death rates. The reason for this is simply that in an ageing society, many people reach a point where they have lived their lives almost to the fullest with a life expectancy of several years or a decade. In countries with an expanding young population, the average person tends to live longer than in an ageing society, even if a relatively big number of people die at a young age. It may seem counterintuitive, but a randomly selected person in Sweden (with a crude death rate of 9.2) is more likely to die than a randomly selected person in Afghanistan (with a crude death rate of 6.5).

The measures taken against COVID-19 vary from country to country. Despite the diversity of reactions, our experience in and after 2020 has been unprecedented in protecting the vulnerable (especially the elderly and sick) through the combination of medical R&D and people's behavioural change as co-ordinated (often-enforced) action. Compared to the case of the Spanish flu that ravaged the world from 1918 to 1920, the measures taken to contain COVID-19 have been remarkable in terms of both evidence-based strictness and shared consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Human society is gradually moving in the direction of reducing unreasonable deaths and advancing life chances for the public. The effect would be that as people become more able to anticipate their own courses of life over a more extended range of time, they will be willing to invest more in their own lives and those of their family whose chances of survival will be much higher than before. If social norms change in the direction of valuing every life, people will also take more intensive care of their children who have already been born, and this will contribute to the decline in the fertility rate.

### **Change in fertility rates**

While mortality calculations are based on national populations that already exist, it is the fertility rate that ultimately determines the size of a national population. Obviously, the variable that has the most direct impact on the size and composition

of a population is how many children are added to the existing population; the future shape of a country much depends on whether having six or seven children per family is the norm or whether a couple tends to have only one or two – or zero – children. When discussing this aspect statistically, the total fertility rate (TFR) is often used. This refers to the average number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime in a given society (henceforth, this is simply referred to as the fertility rate). Demographers take macroscopic views and treat groups of human beings as aggregates of living organisms like animals and plants. Given that the human race is also an animal species that propagates and may go extinct, we can treat ourselves in the same way as we consider salmonids and ferns. It must be noted, however, that statistical change in the human population has no moral implication that would urge people to take a specific action. Individuals decide to have or not to have a child with no regard for statistical trends, and they are not required to do so.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the argument of this book is premised on the tendency that over the next 100 years, Afrasia's presence in the distribution of the world's population will become more substantial, and in particular, that the population of Africa will increase fivefold. Suppose that the fertility rate is 6 per woman, and this rate remains constant. For every two persons from the original parents' generation, there will be 6 children, 18 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren, and 162 great-great-grandchildren. In a society with a sufficiently low child mortality rate, a fertility rate of 6.0 would mean that the population size will expand nearly 80 times during turnover from the first to the fifth generation. The UNDESA statistics show that the country with the highest fertility rate in 2015–2020 was Niger with a figure of no less than 6.95.

However, as shown in Figure 2.2, fertility rates have been on a downward trend in all regions of the world, and it has clearly been declining in Africa since the late 1980s (after peaking at 6.71 in the 1960s). Africa's fertility rate in 2015–2020 is estimated to be 4.44, which is already lower than the global average (4.97) in 1950–1955. Let us compare Figure 2.2 with Figure 1.1, as both are based on the same UNDESA dataset. In Africa, in the second half of the 21st century, the population size is expected to continue expanding, even though the fertility rate constantly declines. Why is this so? The reason lies in the composition of the population. Children born in an era of relatively high birth rates will become biologically and socially mature to be suitable to have children 20 or 30 years after their birth.<sup>9</sup> Even if fertility rates fall in this period, the generation of reproductive-age women is still substantial, and therefore, the absolute size of the population continues to grow. Theoretically, if the fertility rate is 6.0 in a society with 5 million women, 30 million children will be added to society. If the fertility rate is 3.0 in a society with 10 million women, the same 30 million children will be born.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, as generations turn over while the fertility rate is falling, the number of children entering society will surely decline in the long run. Once the fertility rate settles around the replacement level of slightly more than 2.0 (that should be more than two because some suffer premature death), the population will eventually reach a stationary state where it neither increases nor decreases. Figure 2.2 shows that Africa's fertility rate is expected to fall to a level close to

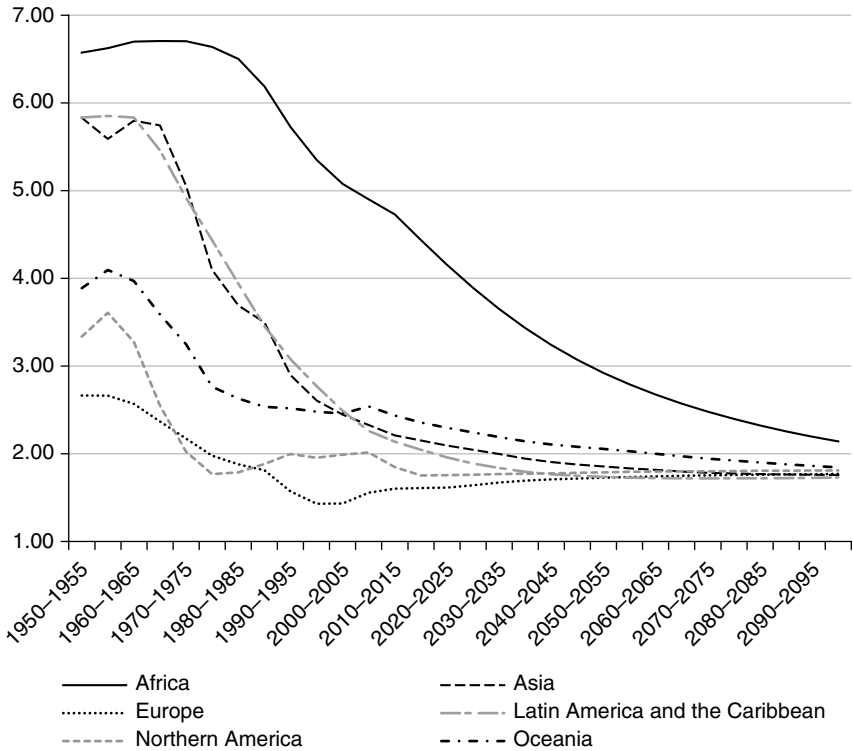


Figure 2.2 Projection of Fertility Change by Region, 1950–2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

2.0 by the beginning of the 22nd century. If this scenario plays out, the population of Africa should roughly reach equilibrium, and the world’s population should be stabilised at some point in the early 22nd century.

It is difficult for people to choose when to die (exit), but it is relatively easy for coupled people to decide when to have children (entry). More and more couples independently decide when to get legally married and try to implement family planning with contraceptives and other measures. This is true in both developing and developed countries. There are a variety of factors behind such decisions, but aside from cultural and religious ones, economic factors undoubtedly play an essential role.

Figure 2.3 shows the relationships between per-capita income and fertility rates across different countries. There is a clear correlation: the more prosperous the country, the lower the fertility rate. In an increasingly urbanised society where childrearing is becoming expensive, it is not a rational choice to have five or six children. In addition to direct costs such as school fees, food, and clothes, there are also indirect costs such as the loss of income that the working parent(s) would

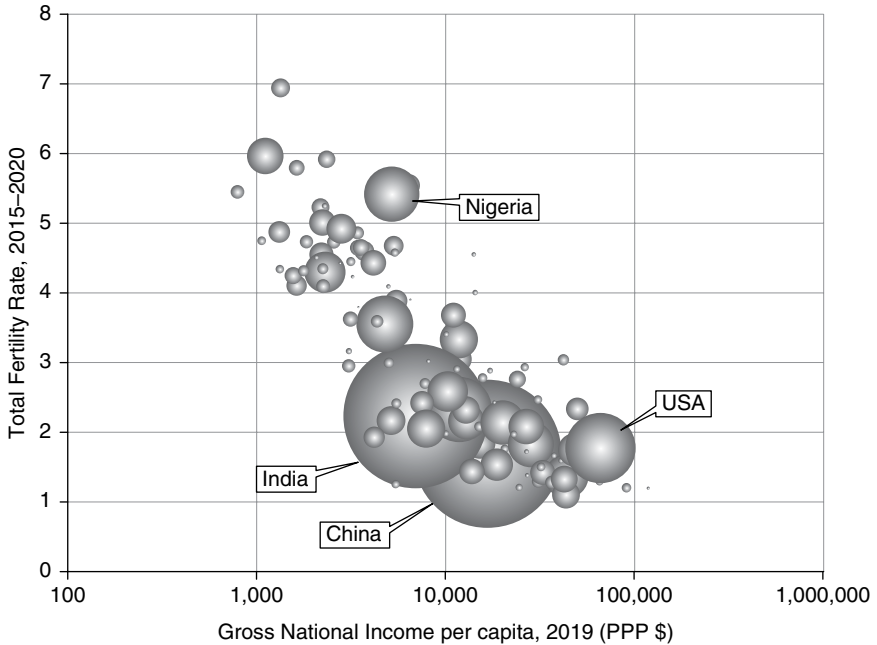


Figure 2.3 Fertility Rate and Income

Note: The area of the circle represents the population size (2019).

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*; World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ny.gnp.pcap.pp.cd>

have otherwise earned if there were no children. Furthermore, when children are required to attend school, they are not expected to engage in agricultural labour every day. As Amartya Sen emphasised in *Development as Freedom* (1999), the most potent way to reduce fertility rates in developing countries is not only to promote contraceptives but also to ensure that educated women really engage in gainful activities outside the home.<sup>11</sup>

As it concerns women's agency, it is crucial to examine how women's active participation in the labour market affects actual intra-household power relations. It is not always true that the more exposed to Western culture a society is, the more empowered women are.<sup>12</sup> Childbearing and parenting require a great deal of time, money, and hassle, and young people tend to have other things they want to do. If one were to talk to young urban middle-class people in any Asian or African country, one would find that they generally do not desire to have too many children for precisely the same reasons as given by people in the countries of the North. No matter where they live, people with some disposable income are rational and cautious judges when it comes to expensive purchases. The same applies to having children.

Will Africa's overall fertility rate continue to decline steadily in the future? UNDESA has also presented a high fertility variant scenario where Africa's overall fertility rate will not fall to 2.14 but only to 2.63 by the end of the 21st century. In this case, in 2100, Africa's population will reach 5.88 billion instead of the figure based on medium fertility variance, 4.28 billion. If the majority of young Africans are placed in a situation where they cannot plan for their households rationally, Africa's population could grow further in the future. In the high fertility variant scenario, the area of Africa in the cartogram shown in Figure 0.4 will become 1.4 times larger.

At any rate, humanity is not experiencing a never-ending population explosion. There is no need to worry excessively about Africa's population explosion; fertility rates are on the decline worldwide, and this is also true in Africa. Nevertheless, Africa's population will continue to grow significantly throughout the second half of the 21st century. To what extent will Africa's population increase by the time of a probable equilibrium in the 22nd century? This will depend on how far and how steadily the overall fertility rate in Africa falls and ultimately on the extent to which the fruits of economic development and poverty reduction reach ordinary people.

## **Policies to Change Fertility Rates**

While poverty reduction is the high road to putting demographic transformation on track, policy measures to control population change also have a direct, immediate impact on fertility rates. Figure 2.4 shows the change in fertility rates in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries and Israel.

High fertility rates may be considered endemic in developing countries in the South. However, it is Israel that has become a laboratory for suspending relatively high fertility rates. Located in West Asia, Israel is a member state of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with a per-capita GDP that is roughly on par with Spain's and Portugal's. In the period 2015–2020, Israel's fertility rate was 3.04, by far the highest among the OECD members and much higher than those of neighbouring countries such as Turkey (2.08), Lebanon (2.09), Iran (2.15), and Saudi Arabia (2.34). There are unique political circumstances, and yet, the case of Israel is a good example of a relatively small country making a difference by intervening in childbirth through determined policy measures and material incentives aimed at pulling up fertility.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, China has been experimenting with artificially lowering the fertility rate. The Chinese government turned towards strict birth control in the 1970s and formally introduced the one-child policy in 1979, thereby drastically reducing childbirth (the system was abolished in 2015). By putting an effective brake on population growth through coercive policy measures, China managed to increase the per-capita income and mitigate the impact of the growing population on the environment. Soon, however, China is expected to encounter the same serious ageing problem Japan and several other affluent nations in Asia are facing.<sup>14</sup> Although this is not widely known, India's Indira Gandhi's government in the

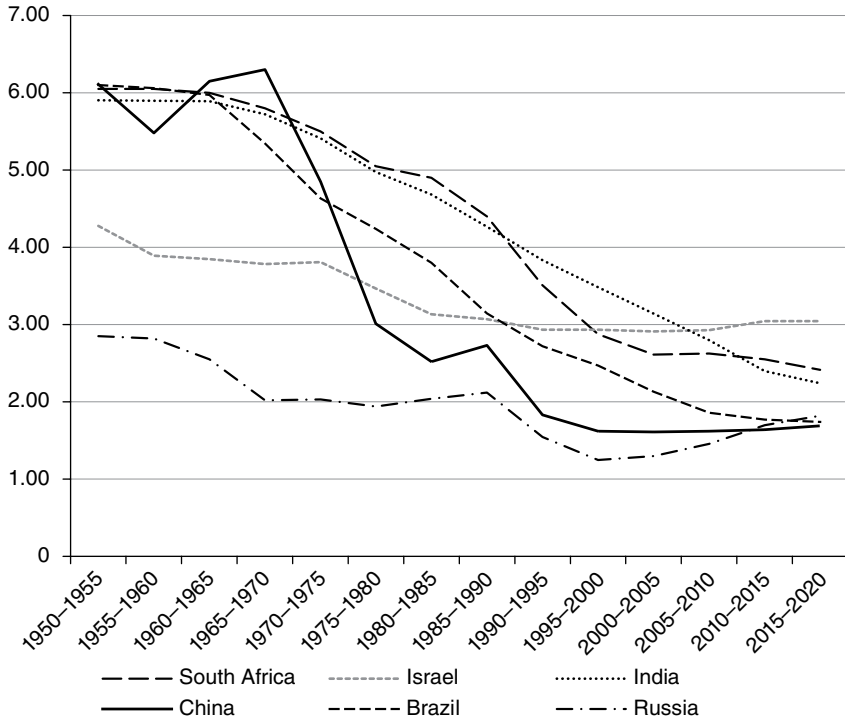


Figure 2.4 Fertility Rate of BRICS Countries and Israel, 1950–2020

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

mid-1970s also attempted to introduce a top-down population control policy similar to China's. However, it was abandoned due to fierce protests from civil society over measures such as sterilisation that would target the poor.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, as Figure 2.4 shows, despite the lack of hard policy measures, India's fertility rate has also been declining, albeit at a slower pace than China's.

South Africa is globally known as a multi-racial country. However, in terms of demographic composition, black South Africans currently make up more than 80 per cent of the total population. Therefore, South Africa should not be considered an offshoot of Europe like Canada and Australia, but, more appropriately, an African country with a high degree of industrialisation. South Africa's urbanisation rate has already reached 66 per cent, which is conspicuously high among the large nations in Africa, with its unemployment rate hovering around as high as 30 per cent. Thus, the country's fertility rate during the period 2015–2020 dropped to 2.41. The dubious, generic assumption that Africans are culturally and intrinsically inclined to have many children cannot explain this low fertility rate in the

Table 2.1 Total Fertility Rate by Region in Africa

	1985–1990	2015–2020
Northern Africa	5.05	3.25
Western Africa	6.66	5.18
Middle Africa	6.75	5.53
Eastern Africa	6.78	4.43
Southern Africa	4.49	2.50

Note: Based on the UN definition of regions.

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

South African population. A universal tendency for fertility to fall in industrialising countries is evidenced.<sup>16</sup>

The patterns of fertility transition in the BRICS countries seem to indicate that fertility rates will naturally converge to the replacement level in the long run unless strong, artificial interventions are made. However, turning our attention to Africa, as indicated in Table 2.1, the decline in fertility rates in Central and West Africa has only just begun. The demographics of these sub-regions of Africa, rather than that of Africa at large, will determine the outcome of the global demographic shift that is taking place this century. A closer look at the African part of Figure 0.4 reveals that the gravity of the African population will lie in the central part of the continent.

### The Curse of Malthus

In every civilisation of the world, studies in the disciplines of philosophy, literature, history, and law have achieved marvellous degrees of sophistication in its own way. However, the discipline of economics, a policy science that pays special attention to the dynamics of marketplace transactions, has made great strides only in the modern West. In the Islamic world, as early as the 14th century, the Tunis-born North African historian Ibn Khaldûn presented a proto-theory of the division of labour and labour value that was surprisingly similar to Adam Smith's. Yet, it was only after Smith's 18th-century work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that economics became a specific discipline and started to produce generations of intellectual giants in this field.<sup>17</sup>

Here, let us briefly review how the founders of modern economics approached the population issue. The leading economist who squarely addressed this problem in the late 18th century was Thomas Robert Malthus. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) states that given that humans' sexual desire for procreation is difficult to control, the human population will increase geometrically (multiply like animals). If the populace's desire cannot be checked, in the Malthusian perspective, the population will expand at a staggering rate: 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, and 1600.

Humans born in those volumes will need enough food and basic materials to survive. However, according to the Malthusian framework, since the area for farmland on the Earth's surface is finite, food production will increase only in an arithmetical ratio and eventually touch the ceiling, even with innovations in agricultural technology. Given that food production cannot increase in correspondence with the population increase, the per-capita availability of nutrition will decrease, and poverty and hunger will spread. This is the premise of Malthus's argument.

God's providence then comes into play. This process will be apocalyptic and ferociously violent. Catastrophic events such as wars, epidemics, and famines might occur, and the population will shrink to a low equilibrium level commensurate with the food supply. From there, the population will grow again, and we will face the same catastrophes again and again. The discussion in the first edition of *An Essay on the Principle of Population* stops there, but in the revised edition (1803), Malthus added the argument that such a fate is avoidable if poor people practise moral restraint like late marriages, though the effect of such preventive checks is supposed to be relatively feeble compared with wars, famines, and diseases.<sup>18</sup>

In the first volume of *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith, who influenced Malthus, wrote that the 'lower classes' would have no choice but to 'kill children' if there was a shortage of living materials (as seen in the poor 'Highlands of Scotland'). However, he added that if the rewards of labour are more bountiful, children will be better fed, increasing their survival chances. As the industry develops and the demand for labour increases, people supply more labour by providing the market with a healthier young population.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Smith maintained that even in the human population, a sort of market mechanism is at work.

Following Smith and Malthus, David Ricardo endorsed the Malthusian framework and accordingly presented an argument related to population in his major book *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817).<sup>20</sup> Karl Marx's subsequent discussion was eclectic. In the first volume of *Capital* (1867), in addition to Malthusian-style absolute surplus population, Marx added the concept of a relative surplus population, which corresponds to unemployment in the modern industry and fluctuates amidst the winding processes of capital accumulation.<sup>21</sup> Except for Smith, the keynote understanding of modern economics was that population increase, which could be a source of wealth if adequately supplied, tends to swallow national wealth and pauperise people in the process. Generally, 19th-century Western economics, which was called political economy at the time, used to be a 'dismal science'.

It was John Stuart Mill who introduced poignant optimism. Mill argued that if population, capital, production, and consumption grew to a certain extent in human society, they might reach a desirable equilibrium that nobody would want to alter any further. In *Principles of Political Economy* (1847), Mill wrote that in such a stationary state, 'while no one is poor, no one desires to be richer, nor has any reason to fear being thrust back, by the efforts of others to push themselves forward'.<sup>22</sup> Even when there remains no room for economic growth, society may not be stagnant. Every spiritual culture will improve, the scope of moral and social

progress will expand, and spontaneous activities of nature will develop. The central question for visionary social activists after Mill has been whether humanity is capable of making a soft landing onto such a state.

Looking back at the past, it is clear that Malthus's prediction of catastrophic population expansion did not come true. While the world's population doubled from 1961 to 2000, global crop production increased by 2.5 times, and food prices remained generally stable during the same period, as Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistics show.<sup>23</sup> This means that the world's growing population can be successfully fed on a global scale, at least so far; major famine death in Africa (such as in Darfur) was occasioned by health factors and local political economies rather than a general shortage of food.<sup>24</sup> In the meantime, in some countries that have entered an era of zero growth, the stationary state envisioned by Mill seems to be gaining a sense of reality through the gradual introduction of basic income provisions.

### **The limits to growth**

In the early 1970s, the world's total population exceeded four billion. By the beginning of the 22nd century, each of Africa's and Asia's populations will have surpassed that number. Will this doubling be sustainable? Can the Earth's metabolism between humans and nature reach equilibrium by then? The Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* (1972) systematically developed such a discussion.<sup>25</sup> The Club of Rome was founded in 1968 and has been active to date, but it was the publication of this report that had the most significant impact.

*The Limits to Growth* was written principally by Donella Meadows, a systems engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Club team considered the entire world as a single system and attempted to simulate the future of the globe by feeding the following five variables that would act on each other into a big computer: population, capital, food, natural resources, and environmental pollution. The result revealed that if population and human economic activity grew geometrically at the same rate as they had until the early 1970s, a sharp decline in population and capital – a 'catastrophe' – would occur by 2100. Thus, drawing on the framework established by the Malthusian theory, *The Limits to Growth* advocated a deliberate reduction in human population and economic activity to prevent such a systemic breakdown. Before the wrath of God bursts forth – *The Limits* did not refer to any god, though – we should choose to be small and modest. Moreover, as described by Mill, such a state of no-growth would not necessarily be an unfortunate state for human beings. People could live moderately affluent lives without further plundering nature. The proposal that it would be necessary for humankind to utilise human wisdom and technology to realise 'zero growth' was taken seriously worldwide, not least because of the outbreak of the oil crisis in 1973, the year after the publication of *The Limits*. This report also seems to have influenced China's one-child policy.

Just as Malthus's prophecy did not come true, neither has the prediction of catastrophe in *The Limits to Growth*. The Club of Rome's model may have

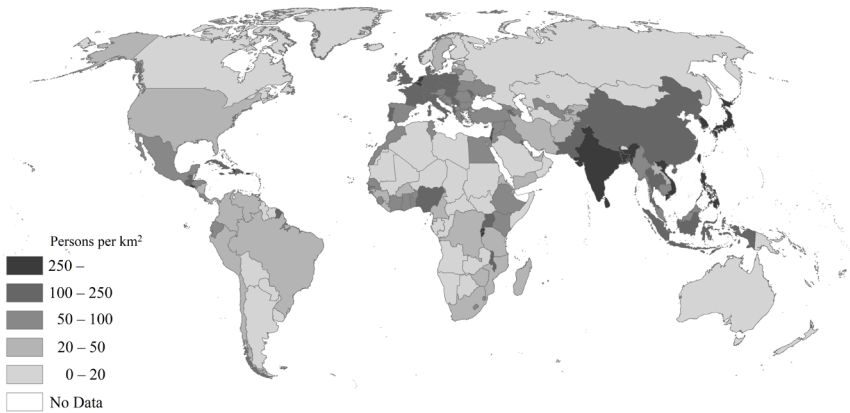
underestimated the effects of resource-saving innovation and the capacity to augment agricultural productivity. Moreover, it did not anticipate that the countries of the North would head into an era of rapid ageing and population decline, thereby alleviating the population pressure. However, nearly 50 years since the publication of *The Limits*, the alarm has not become irrelevant. The system's catastrophe may not have disappeared but just been postponed.

### **Towards a stationary state**

Any system should allow a certain amount of redundancy. The major limit to growth for Malthus was food production, so let us consider food security. If massive amounts of cassava and plantain bananas were imported from West Africa to East Asia, it would not be easy for East Asians to eat them daily as staple foods in terms of taste and recipes. More people are eating rice in Africa, but Africans do not necessarily prefer japonica rice. In Asia, people outside north-eastern Asia will continue to eat indica rice, and people in Laos will be loyal to sticky rice. In the first place, the conditions for growing certain agricultural products vary with regard to temperature, water, and soil. Yet, given the pace of population increase in Africa and parts of Asia, food security is a significant cause for concern in Afrasia. Now that we have entered an era of radical climate change, we should redouble our efforts to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency and prepare ourselves for the emergency transfer of similar crops between regions in the event of a bad harvest. In this regard, the gradual diversification of people's food preferences should be a welcome trend. Production of crops such as cassava in West Africa is substantial, though this is rarely reflected in agricultural statistics. Despite such a bonus, many African nations are not self-sufficient in terms of basic grain consumption.

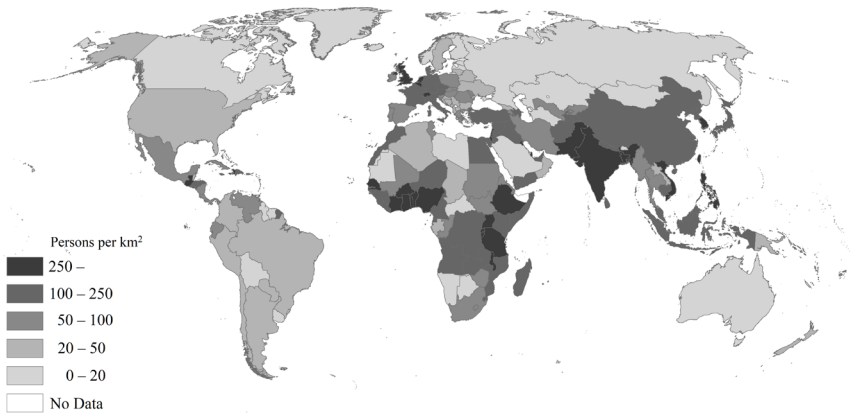
As discussed in Part II of this book, Africa's population density has been low compared to Asia. In 2020, the population density was 464.1 in India, 346.9 in Japan, 153.3 in China, and 151.0 in Indonesia, while the African continent was inhabited only by 45.2 persons per square kilometre (Rwanda's 525.0 and Burundi's 463.0 are exceptional). When Africa's population reaches around 4.28 billion by 2100, however, the population density of the entire African continent will become 147 people, almost the same as that of China today. Africa will no longer be a small population world in the next century. Figures 2.5 and 2.6 visualise the population density of countries around the world in 2001 and 2100. By comparing these two maps, it is evident that population pressure will massively increase in Africa, especially in its tropics. The fact that densely populated Asian tropical regions such as southern India and Java in Indonesia have been able to support their populations may serve as a model for future African agriculture.

The views held by such eminent thinkers as Mohandas Gandhi and King Rama IX of Thailand were to actively choose a stationary state economy and take spiritual pleasure in living a frugal life. In Africa, where anthropocentric thinking has been traditionally influential, the Kenyan woman activist Wangari Maathai's fight against deforestation was accepted and admired. In the age of Afrasia, the



*Figure 2.5* World Population Density, 2015

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.



*Figure 2.6* World Population Density, 2100

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

level of metabolism between humans and nature shall be kept under control, and a variety of spiritual cultures will flourish. To transform global society in such a direction, local cultures that endorse a consensus towards a stationary state should be promoted.<sup>26</sup>

In a stationary state future, social discrimination should not be reproduced. While women and men need to be treated equally in policymaking, management, and professional and technical fields, it is also crucial that the challenges many women face for bare survival are effectively addressed.

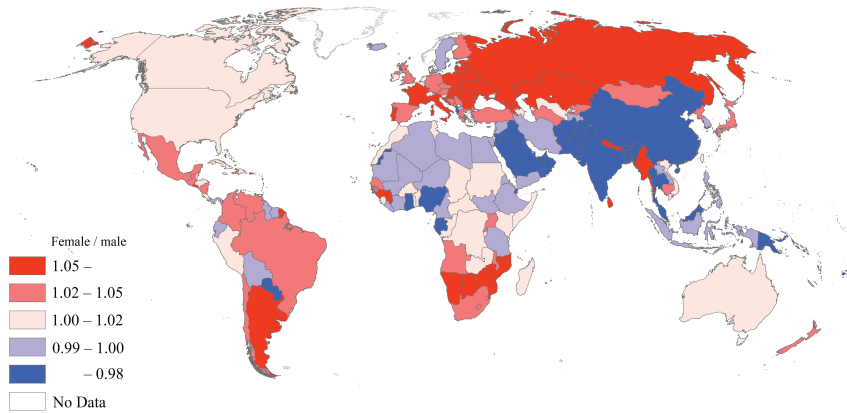


Figure 2.7 Sex Ratio (Women/Men), 2020

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*.

Figure 2.7 shows the proportion of the female population to the male population by country. Biologically, women tend to live longer than men; hence, the female population must be slightly larger than that of the male. However, as the figure shows, there are countries where women are fewer than men due to a combination of factors such as abortion after the gender of the foetus is known, neglect of girls who are sick, and malnutrition of women of all generations. The map illustrates global gender bias by showing how many women are deprived of their natural life chances because of the mere fact that they are women.<sup>27</sup>

As we have seen, the populations of poorer countries tend to have shorter life expectancies and higher fertility rates. Are women then always at a disadvantage compared to men in these countries? As Figure 2.7 shows, in the south-eastern part of Africa and continental Southeast Asia, female–male ratios are close to those of developed countries. As Danish development economist Ester Boserup discussed in her acclaimed classic, *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* (1970), agrarian societies in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia used to have a strong focus on shifting cultivation that utilised vast areas of land in which women played significant roles in sowing, planting, weeding, harvesting, carrying, and storing, in addition to household chores: ‘little remained for the men to do’.<sup>28</sup> The social norms of the small population world where diligent women were regarded as a source of wealth and good harvest remain in place in these regions.

As for the fact that women outnumber men in Russia, another set of serious circumstances must be considered. There was a period of very high mortality among adult males in Russia due to social stresses caused by the abrupt regime collapse. Alcoholism among men was rampant. In the period 1985–1990, the

average life expectancy in Russia was 73.86 years for women and 63.86 years for men (a 10-year difference). These figures were aggravated to 71.98 and 58.63, respectively, in the period 2000–2005 (a 13-year difference) and then recovered to 75.92 and 64.66, respectively, in the period 2010–2015 (an 11-year difference).<sup>29</sup> In societies of the former Eastern bloc, men faced great social difficulties.

## Notes

- 1 As the figures of World Population Prospects are revised every two years, a new version of 2021 could have been available by the time of writing this, but its release was postponed to 2022 to take account of the effects of COVID-19. The data of this book are therefore based on the 2019 version. The change in the future projections will be incremental.
- 2 Kito Hiroshi, *Jinko kara yomu Nihon no rekishi (A Japanese History Seen From the Perspective of Population)* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2000), 174.
- 3 Samuel H. Preston, 'The Changing Relation Between Mortality and Level of Economic Development', *Population Studies* 29, no. 2 (1975): 231–248.
- 4 This contrast of welfare situations between resource-exporting and non-resource-exporting countries was highlighted in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- 5 In the Americas, domesticated animals did not transmit infections to humans on a large scale. The 'Amerindian civilizations seem comparable to ancient Sumer and Egypt, rather than to the epidemiologically scarred and toughened communities of sixteenth-century Spain and Africa'. William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), 210. See also Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), chaps. 3, 11.
- 6 John Iliffe, *The African AIDS Epidemic: A History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, Oxford: James Currey, Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006). Iliffe points to the high mobility of people as a historical background of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa.
- 7 A plethora of academic articles are written on this subject. See, for instance, Xiao Dong et al., 'Evidence for a Limit to Human Lifespan', *Nature* 538 (2016): 257–259; Timothy V. Pyrkov et al., 'Longitudinal Analysis of Blood Markers Reveals Progressive Loss of Resilience and Predicts Human Lifespan Limit', *Nature Communications* 12, no. 2765 (2021).
- 8 The Spanish flu spread across the world with the military mobilisation of the First World War, claiming 50 million lives or more (especially of the youth). In the beginning, the information was not fully disseminated due to wartime censorship. Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
- 9 Women may have children earlier. In Chad, according to the *Demographic and Health Survey 2015*, 51 per cent of women aged 20–24 years give birth before the age of 18, though regional variance within the country is very high. [www.unfpa.org/data/adolescent-youth/TD](http://www.unfpa.org/data/adolescent-youth/TD)
- 10 The opposite applies to ageing society. Once the young population shrinks, even if the fertility rate goes up, the number of children added to society will not increase much.
- 11 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), chaps 8, 9. The *Lancet* article (Vollset et al., 'Fertility, Mortality, Migration, and Population Scenarios') points to women's education attainment and access to contraceptive measures as major reasons for fertility decline.

- 12 See the classic comparative work on garment workers in Dhaka and London. Naila Kabeer, *The Power to Choose: Bangladeshi Women and Labour Market Decisions in London and Dhaka* (London: Verso, 2000).
- 13 In Israel, demographic trends vary depending on such factors as religiosity and ethnicity. See Jona Schellekens and Jon Anson, eds., *Israel's Destiny: Fertility and Mortality in a Divided Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2007).
- 14 Zhongwei Zhao and Fei Guo, eds., *Transition and Challenge: China's Population at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Wang Feng, Baochang Gu, and Yong Cai, 'The End of China's One-Child Policy', *Studies in Family Planning* 47, no. 1 (March 2016): 83–86.
- 15 Massimo Livi-Bacci, *A Concise History of World Population*, 5th ed. (Chichester: Blackwell, 2012), chap. 5; Tim Dyson, *A Population History of India: From the First Modern People to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 232–241.
- 16 See the UNDESA dataset, as well as Statistics South Africa for unemployment data. [www.statssa.gov.za/](http://www.statssa.gov.za/) A tentative comparison of population transition between South Africa and Japan was made in Mine Yoichi, 'The Political Economy of Population Change in Japan: Implications for South Africa', in *Distant Mirror: Japan and South Africa in a Globalising World*, ed. Chris Alden and Katsumi Hirano (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 242–265.
- 17 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations, Books I-III* (London: Penguin, 1999).
- 18 Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population: The 1803 Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 148.
- 19 Smith, *The Wealth of Nations Books I-III*, 181–183.
- 20 David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy, and Taxation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- 21 Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin, 1990), chap. 23.
- 22 John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy and Chapters on Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 127.
- 23 Figures are available at: [www.fao.org/faostat/en/](http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/)
- 24 Alexander de Waal, *Famine That Kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1984–1985* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- 25 Donella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York: Universe Books, 1972).
- 26 Gandhi argued that the suppression of individual desires and the rejection of machines were not only ethically superior but also economically viable. Ajit K. Dasgupta, *Gandhi's Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996). With regard to the Thai notion of sufficiency economy, see Prasopchoke Mongsawad, 'The Philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy: A Contribution to the Theory of Development', *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* 17, no. 1 (April 2012): 123–143. Maathai's thought and action are presented in Wangari Maathai, *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* (New York: Lantern Books, 2003).
- 27 See the discussion by Sen regarding 'missing women': Amartya Sen, 'Missing Women: Social Inequality Outweighs Women's Survival Advantage in Asia and North Africa', *British Medical Journal* 304, no. 6827 (March 1992): 587–588. For the effect of the one-child policy on gender balance in China, see Avraham Ebenstein, 'The "Missing Girls" of China and the Unintended Consequences of the One Child Policy', *Journal of Human Resources* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 87–115.
- 28 Ester Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), 19.
- 29 All figures are taken from the UNDESA dataset.

### 3 New economic spheres and migration in Afrasia

#### The age of migration

Three variables govern population change: fertility, mortality, and migration. As fertility and mortality have already been considered, this chapter discusses the third variable: migration. UNDESA's population projection used in this book assumes that North America and Oceania will continue to accept migrants, while the Asian population will remain more or less self-contained. According to the medium variant, in 2100, the population of North America will be 49.8 per cent larger, that of Oceania will be 35.2 per cent larger, and that of Europe will be 17.7 per cent larger than they would be without immigration. Such a bonus is not calculated for Asia and Africa.

Nonetheless, the growing presence of Afrasians inside and outside of Afrasia could turn the 'Downfall of the Occident' into reality. According to demographic historian Paul Morland, the world is rapidly becoming 'less white'.<sup>1</sup> The population of 'racially pure' Europeans is shrinking after reaching its zenith in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the deficit has been supplemented only by new migrants from the South. In the longer term, as the fertility rates are declining globally (Figure 2.2), the world will face a severe shortage of the young labour force. This will accelerate a new global scramble for scarce resources – not natural but human resources in this century. To put it bluntly, in the West, immigration is promoted as 'the *means* by which advanced societies with below-replacement birth rates can sustain their populations, or at least mitigate population decline' (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup> The question is whether people are willing to settle in a society that will treat them as means, which contradicts the principle of universal human dignity. Human beings should always be treated as ends, not as means only, as argued eloquently by Immanuel Kant.

Still, people move around. Conventional economics did not consider that factors of production such as land, labour, and capital would move freely across international borders, though some portion of domestically produced goods could be traded internationally. However, as Western imperialism and colonialism were entrenched, the age of cross-border transfers of production factors was ushered in. Colonial rule began with the transfer of land ownership from indigenous populations to the hands of Europeans, followed by the settlement of Europeans in the

temperate colonies. The movement of people was not just from the imperial centres to their colonial peripheries; the Atlantic slave trade that lasted for 350 years since the end of the 15th century brought 12 million Africans into the Americas. Then, Indian and Chinese indentured workers were mobilised around the empires. There was a huge wage gap between European migrants in the temperate colonies and other migrants in the tropical colonies, which, according to the development economist W. Arthur Lewis, could be explained in terms of the parallel gap in agricultural productivity between Europe and the tropics.<sup>3</sup>

Although colonial rule is now relegated to the past, vast tracts of farmland in Afrasia are being appropriated by foreign (and domestic) investors and speculators. A large portion of land in Africa is reported to be controlled by Chinese investors, though the field evidence indicates that this has been somehow exaggerated.<sup>4</sup> Foreign direct investment (FDI) has also become massive and now covers extensive territories in former socialist countries. Furthermore, with the developments in transportation and remittance, the flow of people and money across borders has accelerated. In addition to peaceful migration for study or work abroad, the exodus of economic as well as political refugees and human trafficking continue and are becoming heartlessly business-like.

In theory, voluntary migration from an overpopulated country with an excessive labour supply to a country with declining fertility and rapid ageing should benefit both sides. As will be discussed in Parts II and III of this book, migration tends to rejuvenate communication; in general, there is more cultural vitality and conviviality in countries that receive migrants than in parochial nations that have fewer people coming and going. The forced closure of national borders to contain COVID-19 is a poignant reminder of how the movement of people has already become part and parcel of the world order.

### **Economic Growth in Afrasia**

There are many factors behind an individual's decision to settle in, rather than just travel to, a foreign land. People may be trying to escape political or religious persecution or avoid the shackles of traditional society; they may also be attracted by greater economic opportunities. People in the South want to leave a land riddled with economic hardships and political instability and move to a new land of promise where they may be able to live a more prosperous and stable life. There is no need to consider too complex a model of the causality of migration because, as a rule of thumb, migrants from the South to the North are looking for a 'better life'. The policies of the receiving and sending countries, the presence of relatives and friends, and the availability of guidance from networked brokers are all variables related to the means to achieve the goal.

Where are the lands of opportunities for migrants located? Here is an attempt to geographically map the economic powers that attract people from abroad. The cartogram in Figure 3.1 shows the GDP of the world's nations. East Asia, Western Europe, and North America are the three major regions with the highest concentration of national wealth. It is assumed that people are induced to relocate to



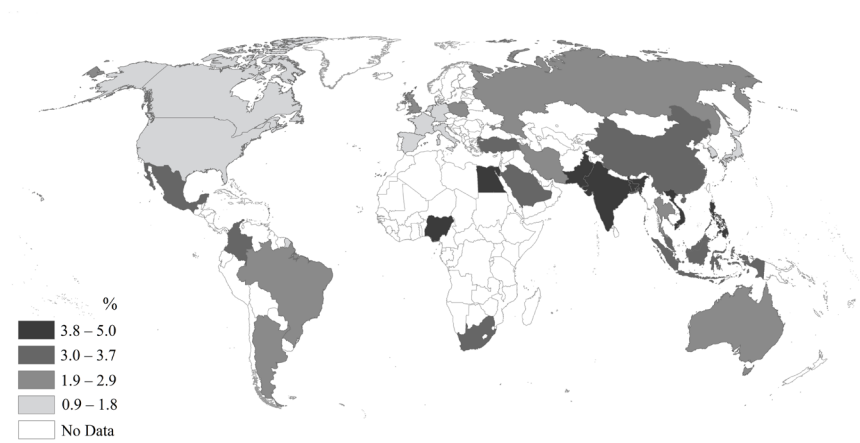
Figure 3.1 World GDP, 2018

Note: Based on US dollar.

Source: World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/>

these economic centres from countries in close geographic, cultural, or linguistic proximity. In this cartogram, Africa's lack of economic strength stands out, but the configuration of economic power may change over time. In the early 21st century, the economic growth rates of Europe and Japan have been around 1 per cent, and that of the United States has been no more than 2 per cent. It is unlikely that an era of 10 per cent growth will return to these developed countries in the foreseeable future. PwC, a London-based consulting firm, has forecasted the average GDP growth rates from 2016 to 2050 for the world's 32 major countries. Its predictions are presented in Figure 3.2, which shows that seven economies that are expected to grow at an average growth rate of more than 4 per cent are all located in Afrasia. In Africa, the data for Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa are available, and all are high performers.

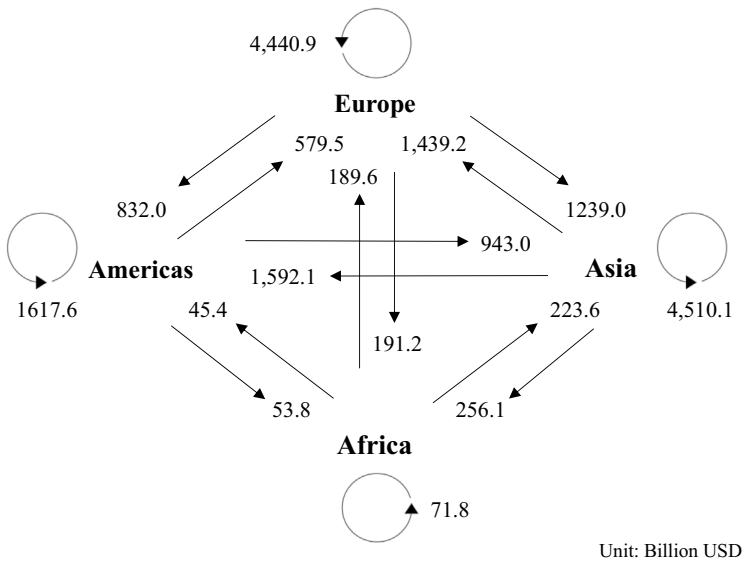
Economic strength is reflected in the flow of global trade. Figure 3.3 shows the directions and amounts of inter- and intra-regional trade in 2019. Trade between developed nations and emerging Asia is substantial, as high value-added products, including industrial components and semi-finished goods, are exchanged. Europe's intra-regional trade is overrated: all cross-border transactions in Europe are counted as international trade, even though the European Union (EU) is a single market with no trade barriers. On the other hand, Africa's trade activities are underestimated: there is a good amount of intra-African trade that is not captured in the statistics. In addition, the prices of non-renewable natural resources produced in Africa are not rightly valued in the market. At any rate, it is worth noting that from the African perspective, the total value of its trade with Asia has already exceeded the value of its trade with Europe. If the global growth centres



*Figure 3.2* Projection of GDP Growth Rates, 2016–2050

Note: Annual average based on the domestic currency.

Source: PwC, *The Long View: How Will the Global Economic Order Change by 2050?* (2017).  
[www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/economy/the-world-in-2050.html](http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/economy/the-world-in-2050.html)



*Figure 3.3* Regional Trade in the World, 2019

Source: International Trade Statistics. [www.trademap.org/Index.aspx](http://www.trademap.org/Index.aspx)

shift further into Afrasia as shown in Figure 3.2, the directions of future trade and investment will shift accordingly.

### New Migration Patterns

With this map of the global economy in mind, let us look at who are migrating where. When we think of migration, we are inclined to imagine people from the South risking their lives to smuggle themselves into the North. Children drown when small boats capsize in the Mediterranean Sea. There are refugees from the Middle East who are taking a new step in life by gaining citizenship in Germany, the United States, and other countries. Some of them go underground as illegal immigrants and are exploited in factories. At the same time, citizens of the North are concerned about terrorists blending in with immigrants, and they worry that their daily lives are threatened by heathens. Some are willing to vote for populist, right-wing politicians.

Figure 3.4 shows the ratios of ‘migrants’ (defined in UN statistics as ‘persons who are either living in a country other than their country of birth or in a country other than their country of citizenship’)<sup>5</sup> in the world’s nations in 2019. In Afrasia, the presence of migrants in Middle Eastern oil-producing countries stands out, with the United Arab Emirates topping the list at 88 per cent and a relatively big country, Saudi Arabia, at 37 per cent. Migrant workers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and the Philippines reside in these countries. The men are mostly construction workers, and the women are domestic workers.<sup>6</sup> The ratios of 20 per cent in Kazakhstan and 17 per cent in Equatorial Guinea were occasioned by the resource export boom. Migrants are also prominent in small, affluent East

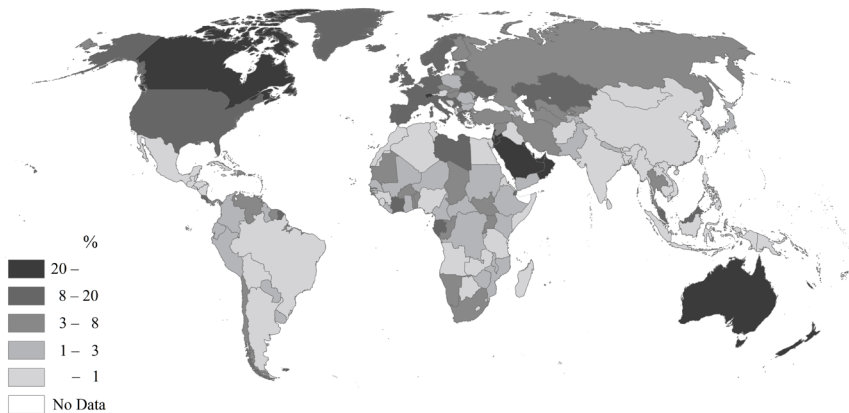


Figure 3.4 Ratio of Foreign Population, 2019

Source: UNDESA, *Trends in International Migration Stock: The 2019 Revision*.

[www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp)

Table 3.1 Size and Growth Rate of Migrants

	Number of Migrants (Million, 2019)	Annual Growth Rate of Migrants (%)	
		2010–2015	2015–2019
World Total	271.6	2.4	2.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	11.7	2.7	5.3
Africa	26.5	5.5	3.1
Oceania	8.9	2.5	2.5
Europe	82.3	1.2	2.3
Asia	83.6	3.2	2.0
North America	58.6	1.8	1.3

Source: UNDESA, *International Migration Stock 2019*.

[www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp)

Asian countries such as Singapore (37 per cent), though it is difficult to identify them on the map.<sup>7</sup>

Table 3.1 shows that the region where the largest presence of migrants can be seen is Asia (79.6 million), followed by Europe (77.9 million), North America (57.7 million), and Africa (24.7 million). Looking at the growth rates of migrants since 2010 by region, however, Latin America and the Caribbean have the highest rate at 5.3 per cent, while North America has the lowest at 1.3 per cent (in the right column of the table). The UN statistics revealed that the South–South migration tends to be larger than the South–North migration. In 2019, 39 per cent of all international migrants were born in the South and residing in the South (South–South migrants), while 35 per cent were born in the South and residing in the North (South–North migrants).<sup>8</sup>

The origins of migrants are presented in Figure 3.5. While people continue to move from Asia and Africa to Western countries, we also witness that larger-scale migration takes place within Afrasia. Although massive internal migration is observable in Europe, the figure is misleading; the count drops sharply if the Schengen Area, consisting of 26 European countries in which people are free to move, is regarded as a single unit. On the other hand, although Africa’s internal migration appears to be relatively small, there are dozens of spacious countries on the continent where land-based border controls are porous or even non-existent. There is therefore a multitude of cases of migration that do not show up in statistics in Africa. Keeping these caveats in mind, let us focus on inter-regional rather than intra-regional migration. As shown in the official statistics for 2020 (Figure 3.5), in Asia, there are 7.2 million European migrants, 4.7 million African migrants, and 1.0 million American migrants, while in Africa, there are 1.2 million Asian migrants, 0.6 million European migrants, and 0.1 million American migrants. From these figures, it is obvious that Africa hosts a large number of migrants from Asia and that Asia is reciprocating.

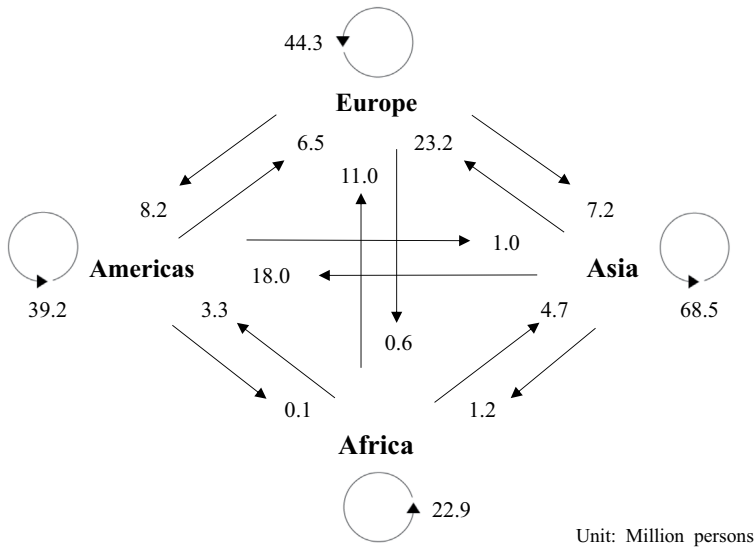


Figure 3.5 Origins of International Migrants, 2020

Note: This figure indicates which regions resident migrants originally come from as of 1 July 2020. Intra-regional international migration is presented in the form of circles.

Source: UNDESA, *International Migrant Stock 2020: Destination and Origin*.

[www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock](http://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock)

Some of these global migrants include refugees who escaped from neighbouring countries as a result of violent conflicts. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 2019, there were 9.81 million refugees and people in refugee-like situations in Asia (49 per cent of the total), 6.78 million (34 per cent) in Africa, and 2.95 million (15 per cent) in Europe.<sup>9</sup> Syrian refugees tend to go to Turkey, Venezuelan refugees to Colombia, Afghan refugees to Pakistan, and South Sudanese refugees to Uganda, and hot spots change every year. Northern countries are surprised when these refugees arrive at their doorsteps. The circumstances and motivations of those who cross national borders vary, but recent developments suggest that Afrasia is becoming relatively open to migrants, whereas the West tends to close the gates. It is not just that people knock on their neighbours' doors; opportunities to attract migrants and travellers are also growing in Afrasia.

### Mobility of migrants in Afrasia

Migrants are wandering around from west to east and east to west *inside* Afrasia. The growing presence of Chinese in Africa has started to attract wide attention

in recent years. From top elites such as diplomats and businessmen to tourists, cooks, language instructors, construction workers, and shopkeepers who blend into townships to trade with the locals, diverse Chinese people from all walks of life travel to Africa in such a way that it is difficult to apply the single identifier 'Chinese' to them in terms of their varying skills, status, values, origins, and culture.

Due to the wide circulation of African American journalist Howard W. French's *China's Second Continent*, it is widely believed that 'one million' Chinese have settled down in Africa.<sup>10</sup> According to statistics, however, the total number of Chinese people living abroad was about 40 million, of which 29.75 million were in Asia, 7.29 million were in the United States, 1.26 million were in Europe, 0.93 million were in Oceania, and 0.24 million were in Africa as of 2009. Even taking into account the migrants who were not captured in the official statistics, it was surmised that the number of Chinese residents in Africa could be no more than half a million,<sup>11</sup> while Figure 3.5 indicates that there are no less than 1.2 million Asian (including Chinese) migrants on the African continent in 2020. Exact figures aside, the Chinese presence has been growing in Africa. Yet, because East Asians stand out in Africa due to their behaviours and cultures, which are perceived to be 'new' compared with traditional visitors from the West, the numbers tend to be overstated, and the same holds true of Africans in East Asia.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest worldwide in China–Africa relations. However, since China is a country and Africa is a region, perhaps we may contrast Asia and Africa as a natural pair for comparison,<sup>12</sup> all the more because these two regions are expected to be demographic twins, each covering 40 per cent of the world population in the near future. In addition to European colonial settlements, there was large-scale migration from Asia to Africa in the past; Lebanese scattered in West Africa, while Arabs and Indians took root in East and Southern Africa, and these individuals typically engaged in commerce.<sup>13</sup> Notably, however, the Indian government did not care much about ethnic Indians abroad, not least because nationality and national territoriality were considered inseparable at the time of the post-war ubiquity of sovereignty. In 1972, tens of thousands of Indian Ugandans were persecuted by the dictator Idi Amin and expelled from Uganda. In recent years, there has been a move to strengthen ties between India and Indians in Africa to further the national cohesion of broader ethnic Indians and promote mutually beneficial business interests.<sup>14</sup>

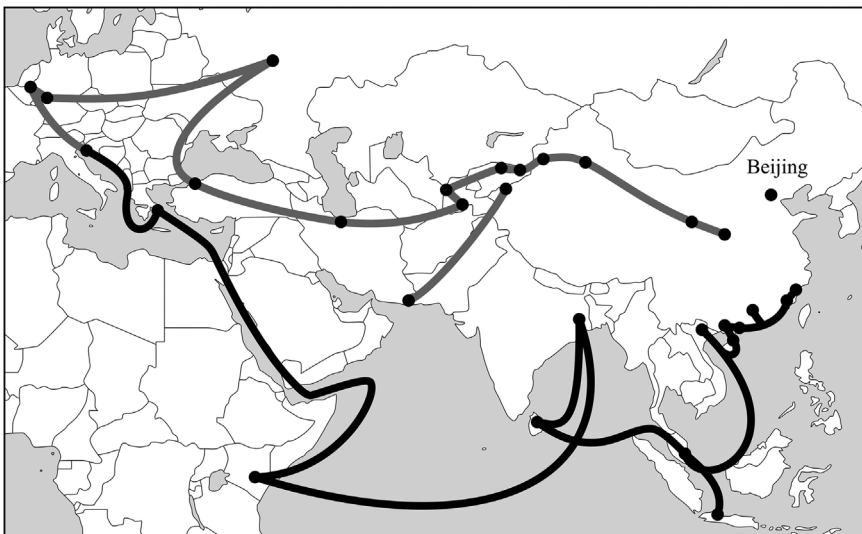
Like in a mirror, more Africans have begun to live in various places in Asia. Some argue that Africans living in China have also reached one million, though there are no evidential statistics, and these Africans also come and go frequently. By the turn of the 21st century, in China, Guangzhou in Guangdong Province and Yiwu in Zhejiang Province were inhabited by African traders who purchased a large number of Chinese daily commodities and information technology (IT) gadgets and shipped them to Africa, but their numbers plummeted every time the authorities cracked down. It is reported that African traders evacuated those cities after the outbreak of COVID-19. Other than these cases, there are many Africans who hail from Lusophone Africa and live in Macau. The professions of

Africans in Asia are not limited to commerce; for instance, African footballers play in countries from the Middle East to Southeast Asia. There have been several unfortunate incidents of African migrants being attacked by xenophobic mobs in metropolitan areas of India.

### **The impact of the Belt and Road Initiative**

We have entered an era in which Africa and Asia are directly and more closely connected and entangled in the flow of people, goods, money, and information. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or the ‘One Belt, One Road’ development strategy was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 and is exerting a significant impact on these trends (Figure 3.6).<sup>15</sup>

The concept of ‘One Belt’ was first proposed during President Xi’s visit to Kazakhstan (the third largest country in area after China and India in Afrasia) and is formally known as the Silk Road Economic Belt. It seeks to accelerate the development of land-based infrastructures such as roads and railroads and thereby dramatically enhance the connectivity between the east and the west on the Eurasian continent. It connects China’s inland with Central Asia, West Asia, Turkey, and Eastern and Western Europe. On the other hand, President Xi proposed the concept of ‘One Road’ during his visit to Indonesia, and it is officially called the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. Aiming to be a maritime version of the ancient land-based Silk Road, ‘One Road’ seeks to connect China’s coastal area with ports across Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Africa, the Middle East, and the



*Figure 3.6* Belt and Road Initiative

Source: Author

Mediterranean. In the early 15th century, the Chinese fleet led by Admiral Zheng He explored the Indian Ocean region to the Middle East and East Africa.<sup>16</sup> The main part of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road overlaps with this route sailed by Zheng He, who happened to be Muslim.

‘One Belt, One Road’ is a carefully crafted slogan. First, as the initiative is presented as an attempt to restore the major traffic routes that once existed, rather than to create an entirely new trade order, it can easily be accepted as a historically legitimate project. Second, while ‘belt’ and ‘road’ are both words that signify connectivity, the initiative does not necessarily specify which hubs are to be connected with each other. Given this flexibility, new regional stakeholders are expected to join and compete with each other, thereby revitalising the whole process. Third, roads, railroads, and ports are open public goods that do not preclude the use of any party. Although there has been mounting criticism that countries that embrace Chinese-led projects may be crippled by the debt they owe to China, the infrastructure itself is accessible to anyone, including Western big businesses. If the BRI were derailed, it would be when the Chinese and global economies fall into a severe recession.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 3.6 was created on the basis of various maps that show supposedly major routes of the BRI, as Chinese sources do not provide an official map of the routes as of writing this. Flexibility in business planning is welcome, but some opine that the Chinese ambitions are hidden behind the apparent openness, as the lack of identification concerning who enjoys what benefits from the BRI raises doubts about the planners’ intentions. A democratic mechanism that allows the voices of affected locals to be reflected in decision making is also weak, though this is true of infrastructure development in general, not just in China. What works in the BRI may be a principle closer to that of shareholder democracy where resourceful investors’ decisions govern. In the latter part of this book, I argue that projects such as the BRI should be combined with Afrasian ethics based on historical experiences and dreams.<sup>18</sup>

While ‘One Belt’ is meant to strengthen the land traffic east and west of Eurasia, ‘One Road’ aims to strengthen the maritime traffic east and west of Afrasia. As this undertaking progresses, not only the connectivity between the traditional economic powers of the West and the East – Western Europe and China – but also the economic bonds between Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia may become much stronger. The future of the BRI will significantly affect Afrasia’s growth path, and this will have a major impact on regional demography and migrant patterns as we move towards the 22nd century.

### **From rural to urban**

Afrasia’s population will increase and become more mobile. This trend will depend not only on changing industrial connectivity around the world but also on the ongoing process of urbanisation. To feed the accrescent African population, it will be essential to increase food production, at least at the pace it has been, and achieve as much regional food self-sufficiency as possible. To that end,

it may be necessary to diffuse the method of agricultural modernisation commonly referred to as the Green Revolution. The combination of the introduction of improved grain varieties, irrigation systems, fertilisers, pesticides, and agricultural machinery, as well as the streamlining of farmers' work organisation, will greatly increase grain productivity.

However, if labour-saving and capital-intensive agriculture such as plantation farming expands, family or waged labour will be less needed in rural areas. Typically, farmers in Africa and Southeast Asia are smallholders. If there are no work opportunities in rural areas, young people will abandon their native villages and head for the cities. If the urban industry cannot absorb labour, people will have nowhere to go. Suppose that a village's food production increases from 100 tons to 200 tons, while the number of agricultural workers on the farmland decreases from 100 to 20 due to technological progress. The output per capita would be ten times higher. But if the 80 workers who lost their jobs in the rural areas could not find employment elsewhere, those people would starve to death. Otherwise, a large part of the increased produce should be distributed to them for free. Samir Amin, an Egyptian-born political economist, argued that innovations in agricultural technology that neglect job security would lead to 'genocide against half of humanity' and that the ruthless enclosure in British economic history would be repeated in the South.<sup>19</sup>

The shock of Britain's rural transformation concomitant with the Industrial Revolution was mitigated by the colonisation of the frontier world. Britain's surplus population was dispersed across the temperate zones in North America, Oceania, and Africa. France also colonised the world, while Germany triggered world wars. The Russians marched to Siberia. The Japanese sailed to the United States and Latin America and then to Manchuria. As for China, overseas Chinese scattered throughout Southeast Asia and the world, and Indians migrated across the British Empire.<sup>20</sup> However, by the latter half of the 20th century, the era of imperialism that gave vent to surplus populations finally terminated.

Yet, Africans will continue to move from rural areas to cities even though they cannot resettle outside the continent any more. As seen in Figure 3.7, Africa's overall urbanisation rate was 14.3 per cent in 1950, it reached 41.2 per cent in 2015, and it is projected to rise to 58.9 per cent by 2050. This growth rate is similar to Asia's, but if UNDESA's medium-variant population projection is to be followed, assuming that Africa's population will increase by 2.1 times in the period 2015–2050 (compared to 1.2 times in Asia in the same period), then the absolute number representing African urban populations will increase about threefold over the same period (compared to 1.6 times in Asia). For those acquainted with the massive traffic congestion in urban centres in Africa, a tripling of the urban population seems like a nightmare.

If urban employment increases on a scale parallel to population growth in cities, and if urban infrastructure related to housing, health, sanitation, and education also improves, the problems concomitant with rural–urban migration will be alleviated. If not, the exodus of the population from rural areas will have devastating effects on people's well-being. The modality of labour-absorbing family farming

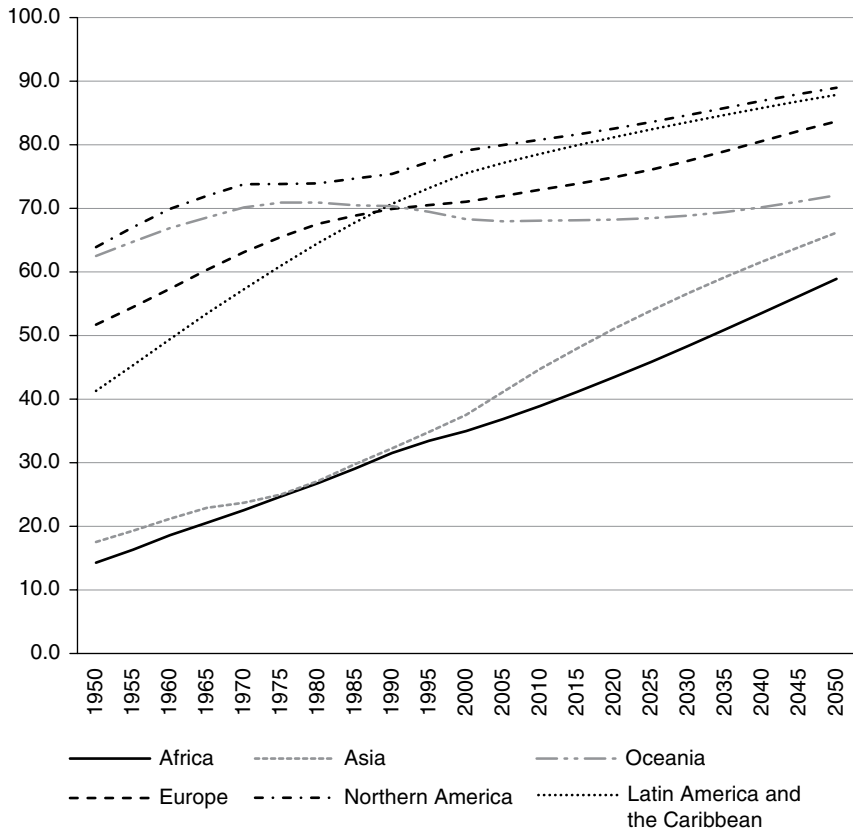


Figure 3.7 Urbanisation Rate by Region, 1950–2050

Source: UNDESA, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision*.

needs to be maintained, combined with the modernisation of farming technology, in order to check the expansion of jobless slums in cities.<sup>21</sup>

### Revisiting Afrasian history

In Part I of this book, I have examined some of the current and future socio-economic challenges Afrasia is expected to face pertaining to the dynamics of population change. The key points are summarised as follows. It is estimated that the population of Afrasia will account for around 80 per cent of the world's population by the beginning of the 22nd century or earlier. The shape the world will take on will depend largely on the kind of dialogue to be organised between Africans and Asians, being that combined, they will constitute the absolute majority of the world's population. The population change in Africa is

expected to be immensely impactful in the coming century; it is projected that this continent's population will increase fivefold in the 21st century. It is lesser known, however, that the fertility rate in Africa has already begun to decline. In the second half of the 21st century, the size of the African population will continue to increase, not least due to a strong inertia effect, but by the end of the 21st century, Africa's fertility rate is also expected to settle down to the replacement level, and the world's population will stabilise thereafter.<sup>22</sup>

There are a variety of policy measures that may influence the pace of population change. These include health care policies that could lower mortality rates, social welfare policies that could affect fertility rates, and migration policies that could regulate the flow of people crossing national boundaries. However, we cannot expect the kind of immediate effects that a massive fiscal stimulus would have on adjusting business fluctuations. Population change is like a giant ship changing its direction. If the crew does not steer the right course immediately after noticing a dangerous blockade, the ship will collide and sink. However, even when the captain makes a clear decision, the path forward can only change slowly. The world's population in 2019 was 7.7 billion, and it is projected to reach around 10.9 billion (or less according to the research by *The Lancet*) by 2100. Rather than fearing an endless population explosion, we may well envision a stationary state with a sustainable metabolism between humans and nature at that level of population size. Even though the Earth is supposed to be a single systemic entity, one could also consider the form of a loose federation of regional units that would offset deficiency, especially when it comes to food security.

In the coming 100 years, African nations are expected to be equipped with distinctively valuable human resources: plenty of youth. If this demographic dividend is fully utilised, a virtuous circle of economic development and declining fertility may be in place. However, if Africa (especially West and Central Africa) should face development failure, Africa's demographic transformation will end halfway through, and population pressure in the region could become a major challenge for the entire world. In the meantime, as Asian countries' fertility rates have started to plummet, a gigantic ageing nation, China, is emerging in East Asia on a scale ten times larger than Japan's. We will have a situation in which 'old Asia' and 'young Africa' face each other. The reader may want to hear a story about a fine balance between the West and the non-West, but this balance is already being undermined, and a new equilibrium is emerging between the new centres. In the first half of the 21st century, Asians, who comprise 60 per cent of the world's population, are strengthening their presence and being careful not to unsettle the minds of the people in the rest of the world. In the next stage, when Africans and Asians, being combined, come to form 80 per cent of humankind, it will become a crucial task to organise a reciprocal, dynamic dialogue between the two regions. This message should be circulated in English, the reason for which will be discussed in Chapter 9.

We can clearly see the trend of the centre of gravity of the world's population shifting from Europe to East Asia, to South Asia, and then to Africa. The dynamics of population change in the world are closely intertwined with economic,

social, and environmental challenges. Migration between Asia and Africa is also accelerating. Can we conceive of a shared value based on which Afrasian people can organise a dialogue to contribute to the future of the planet in a meaningful way? The chapters in Part II will shed light on the historical preconditions for such an intellectual dialogue to take place.

## Notes

- 1 Paul Morland, *The Human Tide: How Population Shaped the Modern World* (London: John Murray, 2019), 278–280.
- 2 Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, *Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline* (London: Robinson, 2019), 67.
- 3 W. Arthur Lewis, *The Evolution of the International Economic Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 14–20.
- 4 Deborah Brautigam, *Will Africa Feed China?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). The state of land grabbing is recorded and analysed by groups such as GRAIN and International Land Coalition. <https://grain.org/> <https://www.landcoalition.org/en/>
- 5 UNDESA, *International Migration 2019 Report* (New York: United Nations), 3. [www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019_Report.pdf)
- 6 There is a paucity of empirical data on migration in the Gulf States. For an overview, see Abdulhadi Khalaf, Omar AlShehabi, and Adam Hanieh, eds., *Transit States: Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf* (London: Pluto Press, 2015); Prakash C. Jain and Ginu Zacharia Oommen, eds., *South Asian Migration to Gulf Countries: History, Policies, Development* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2016).
- 7 For a comparison of migration in global cities like Singapore and Johannesburg, see Steven Vertovec, ed., *Diversities Old and New: Migration and Socio-Spatial Patterns in New York, Singapore and Johannesburg* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- 8 UNDESA, *Population Facts*, No. 2019/4, September 2019. In this UN statistics, the group of Western countries and Japan is defined as North and the rest as South.
- 9 UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019* (Copenhagen: UNHCR Global Data Service, 2020), 76. [www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf)
- 10 Howard W. French, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa* (New York: Vintage, 2015).
- 11 Li Anshan, 'China's African Policy and the Chinese Immigrants in Africa', in *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora*, ed. Tan Chee-Beng (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 59–70.
- 12 Detailed case studies of Asians in Africa and Africans in Asia are found in Scarlett Cornelissen and Mine Yoichi, eds., *Migration and Agency in a Globalizing World: Afro-Asian Encounters* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). Also visit the dynamic research network on China-Africa entanglements moderated by Dr Yoon Jung Park. <https://ca-ac.org>
- 13 Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); J.S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa, c. 1886 to 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Dharam P. Ghai, *Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965).
- 14 Ajay Dubey, ed., *Indian Diaspora: Global Identity* (New Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 2003); Antoinette Burton, *Africa in the Indian Imagination: Race and the Politics of Postcolonial Citation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

- 15 Although plenty of books and articles are being written on the BRI, many of them will become obsolete in a decade. The writings by Bruno Maçães have uncovered the venture's uniqueness from a European/Eurasian perspective. *The Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2018); *The Dawn of Eurasia: On the Trail of the New World Order* (London: Penguin, 2018).
- 16 Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405–1433* (London: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- 17 The US appraisal of the BRI and a proposed alternative to it as of 2021 are found in Jacob J. Lew, Gary Roughead et al., *China's Belt and Road: Implications for the United States, Independent Task Force Report No. 79* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, March 2021). [www.cfr.org/report/chinas-belt-and-road-implications-for-the-united-states/](http://www.cfr.org/report/chinas-belt-and-road-implications-for-the-united-states/)
- 18 As Jamie Monson describes, the TAZARA (Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority) railway built between 1970 and 1975 contributed to the liberation of Southern Africa, involving lively exchanges between Chinese and Tanzanian engineers. The quality of China's current development projects must be evaluated in light of the legacy of this experiment. Jamie Monson, *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).
- 19 Samir Amin, *Ending the Crisis of Capitalism or Ending Capitalism?* trans. Victoria Bawtree (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, Dakar: CODESRIA, Bangalore: Books for Change, 2011).
- 20 In a broad definition of the word, these migrants can all be classified as 'global diasporas'. Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008).
- 21 In 1954, Arthur Lewis predicted that in socialist China, peasants could enjoy the fruit of extra food production, though the pace of industrialisation might be slower under its peasant-first policies. W. Arthur Lewis, 'Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour', *Manchester School of Economic and Social Sciences* 22, no. 2 (May 1954): 139–191. It is not clear whether post-Maoist Chinese economy has already reached a Lewisian turning point.
- 22 If we were to envisage the future of the future, the global population might shrink further in the 22nd century, probably with an African majority being maintained. People might break into numerous bands, utilise wearable devices, and begin to lead a hunter-gatherer life-style again. See the discussion in Chapter 5.



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**Part II**

**The last shall be first**



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## 4 Eurasian connectivity

### The West and the rest

The scriptures of the world's religions are encrusted with imaginative and cautionary phrases that invite everyone, even non-believers, to ponder their true messages. In the New Testament, we find the words 'Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them' (Matthew 13:12). The inequality between the rich and the poor not only persists but also widens over time. This is the very process Thomas Piketty, the French economist, described in *Le Capital au xxi<sup>e</sup> siècle* (2013).<sup>1</sup>

Andre Gunder Frank, the German-born economist, was known as an exponent of dependency theory and a staunch critic of world capitalism in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Based in Chile in the era of President Salvador Allende, Frank argued that the world system was divided sharply between the centre and the periphery, between the metropolises and their dependent satellites in a single network. Underdevelopment of the periphery, the Third World, or the Global South to use more recent terminology, had been historically reproduced. The deepening trade and investment relationships with the United States and Europe deprived Latin America of wealth and left the people mired in poverty and destitution for centuries. Africa and Asia too were relegated to the bottom of the world economy through contact with the West. The division between the haves and the have-nots was not just a question of disparity within one country but a global phenomenon that has been exacerbated and perpetuated throughout history.

Frank criticised the interpretation of the economic development of world nations as a track race in which athletes would run on independent tracks, wherein talented and assiduous runners reach the finish line early, while others lag behind. We should break with such thinking and see the world as a single, indivisible system in which eventual winners and losers have always interacted with each other. There was no fair competition in world capitalism. Wealth and poverty were two sides of the same coin, and any location that was incorporated into the network of world capitalism began to be impoverished by its very engagement with the system. Frank's argument remains impactful as a theory that vividly describes the essence of the mechanism of structural violence and disparity inherent in the world system.<sup>2</sup>

The Bible also tells the following. The worker who works in the vineyard since morning will be given a day's wage. The worker who waits for the employer without knowing if he will be given a job and is finally given one in the vineyard in the evening will also be given a day's wage, even though he has only worked for one hour. The master of the vineyard shall pay the same compensation to everyone, in order from the person who came to the vineyard last to the person who came first. All who were willing to work will receive the same reward, and it will be given first to those who remained anxious about the course of events for nearly a whole day. 'So the last will be first, and the first will be last' (Matthew 20:16). It may be that the Western world arrived first in a world of prosperity while the non-Western world was left behind longing for an opportunity. The day may then come when everyone finds salvation in the order from the periphery to the centre.

Now, assuming that there is such an aspect in world history, did the strong always stay strong and the weak consistently weak?

### **The orient re-emerging**

The framework of the dependency theory presented by Frank and other scholars has made a considerable impact on emancipatory activism, but we may be placed in an awkward position when it comes to taking practical action. The more the periphery engages in the system dominated by the centre, the deeper the former's subordination to the latter becomes. If this is always the case, the only way for the periphery to become self-reliant would be to sever its relationship with the centre. However, staying on the path of economic development while secluding oneself from global trade and cultural interaction is no easy task. Cambodia's Khmer Rouge destroyed itself; North Korea's economic performance continued to deteriorate; and since the 1970s, the economies that kept a distance from the free trade regime have stagnated.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, a solution to the conundrum emerged from reality. At the end of the 20th century, some Asian countries in the South that were supposed to be subordinate to the North developed rapidly, while expanding their trade relationships with the countries of the North. Since the 1960s, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore have achieved dramatic economic growth, followed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and then Mainland China that began to steer towards reform and opening up.

Against this backdrop, the World Bank published *The East Asian Miracle* (1993), which acknowledged that in these Asian nations and economies, government interventions in the areas of education and industrial policy had been noticeably effective. The report included a list of countries with relatively high per-capita GDP growth rates from 1965 to 1985. Six countries and regions of the world grew at an average rate of more than 3 per cent during these 20 years, and these were South Korea (sixth), Singapore (fifth), Hong Kong (fourth), Indonesia (third), and Taiwan (second). The first was Botswana, the Southern African diamond exporter, with an average growth rate of more than 4 per cent over this

period. Japan ranked seventh, and no major Western countries made it into the top group on the list.<sup>4</sup>

H.W. Arndt, a historian of economic thought, maintained that the notion of economic development had its origins exclusively in Western society. He then argued that reactive nationalism fermented by the Western intrusion played a major role as a psychological catalyst of modernisation in Japan, China, India, and other emerging Asian nations.<sup>5</sup> While such nationalism surely began with the self-assertion of one's own values against the hegemonic powers, the articulation of nationalism often reached beyond a mere preservation of a narrow territorial identity. In fact, economic growth in East Asia in the second half of the 20th century was deeply rooted in the regionwide division of labour that united all economies – both capitalist and Confucian socialist.

Having read a fair amount of works about dependency theory, I was taken aback when I learned that Andre Gunder Frank himself, who was keen on these developments in Asia, radically reinterpreted the history of world capitalism in a way that could be regarded as renouncing what he had once espoused. In his first substantial book in the post-Cold War era, *ReOrient* (1998), Frank argued that the world economy was centred in Asia roughly from 1400 to 1800 and that the West was nothing but the periphery dependent on development in the East. The world economy was already a single system in which China and to some extent India were in a dominant position. The West expropriated silver from its Latin American colonies and transferred this metal to China in exchange for advanced manufacturing products (Japan was doing the same by providing its own silver to China). Then, the pendulum of global economic hegemony swung in the direction of the West, but this took place only in the past two centuries.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, the centre of the world was not the West but the East. Frank's new theory thus reversed the positions of the West and the East in centre–periphery relations; it portrayed the East as an enlightened monarchy and the West as a usurper of the throne, while keeping the framework of a single world system in place. The glory of the West is only temporary, as the centre of gravity of the world system is now returning to the East. From a world history point of view, therefore, the East is not 'emerging' but 're-emerging'. According to Frank's new interpretation, the West is neither the original nor the eventual victor.

Frank was not the only one who tried to dismantle Eurocentrism in the study of global economic history. Many more academically rigorous pieces of work have emerged after him. For instance, the economic historian Kenneth Pomeranz argued in *The Great Divergence* (2000) that the original levels of development in the West and the East were at least comparable, if not to say that China overwhelmed Europe as Frank maintained, and that the economies and societies of some parts in both regions were surprisingly similar. Some advanced locations in the East and the West – such as China's Yangtze River Delta and England – were like twins. It was only in the 18th century that the process of the Great Divergence in which the West emerged as the global powerhouse started to be rolled out. That the West could usher in the Industrial Revolution was essentially coincidental. Britain was able to launch the Revolution thanks to the large deposit of coal that

happened to be available at home, as well as due to the possession of resourceful colonies in North America. These were endowments acquired outside market forces.<sup>7</sup>

As an aside, in *The Great Divergence*, Pomeranz pointed out the importance of ‘reciprocal comparison’.<sup>8</sup> When comparing regions A and B, one should not approach the substance from a one-sided perspective of seeing region A as the norm and region B as a deviation from it. As region A appears to be a break-away from the viewpoint of region B, the deviation is mutual and only relative. Moreover, each region is heterogeneous. By putting oneself in each other’s shoes or by observing both sides from an equal distance, the method adds depth to the research on historical paths of development. This two-way comparison is also an effective way to overcome conventional Eurocentrism. This approach can be eye-opening, especially for social scientists in the non-Western world, who have tended to regard Western society as an ideal and evaluate their own stages of development based on their apparent distance from the West.

### **The Asian path of development**

For Pomeranz, the East and the West used to be equal, some developed places resembled each other, and divergence was more of a coincidence than destiny. For Frank, it was the East, not the West, that used to be dominant in the world, and we are now in the process of returning to the original state. In addition to these arguments, Giovanni Arrighi, the Italian economist who was initially a scholar of African political economy, maintained that the East followed a more orthodox and qualitatively natural path of development than the West did.

The founder of modern economics is Adam Smith, and the principal feature of Smithian economic growth is the process in which market relations expand from localities to wider spaces, and productive forces gain momentum through the widening and deepening of the division of labour, resulting in sustained accumulation of the wealth of nations. In a work with an unusual title, *Adam Smith in Beijing* (2007), Arrighi argued that it was the East, especially China, that followed a natural and endogenous Smithian path of economic growth, while the West followed an unnatural, mercantilist path that relied on military power and foreign trade. While the West worshipped Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* as an ideology, China put its recipe into practice. Through self-centred, inclusive development utilising indigenous market forces, China achieved peace, prosperity, and significant population growth throughout the 18th century. According to Arrighi, the recent high growth in China is a testament to the universality of the Smithian path.<sup>9</sup>

Whether natural or unnatural, it is evident that the regions located at the western and eastern ends of Eurasia followed different and yet comparable paths of economic development. That it is inappropriate to claim that the West is inherently superior to the rest has become a widely accepted new normal, at least in the research in economic history. The paths followed by the nations in the East are not categorical deviations from a universal example embodied by the West.

In the West and the East, the initial conditions for development were far from the same. The climate and landscape were different, the local ecosystems were different, and the distribution patterns of natural and human resources were also different. As such, the developmental paths chosen by the West and the East were distinctive. Japanese economic historians such as Hayami Akira and Sugihara Kaoru presented the concept of an Asian-style, labour-intensive ‘industrious revolution’, which stood in contrast to the Western ‘industrial revolution’.<sup>10</sup> In Britain, in the process of the agricultural revolution that preceded the historical Industrial Revolution, large numbers of livestock and farming tools were introduced, and capital-intensive, labour-saving agriculture was thereby consolidated. In the meantime, labour-intensive and capital-saving agriculture developed in East Asia, where land was becoming scarce due to the rapid population growth in the countryside. These different patterns had a significant impact on the subsequent paths of economic development in the West and the East. The peasants’ diligence and the respect for craftsmanship in the rural family industry were nurtured in the East Asian labour-intensive contexts and contributed to the rapid growth of manufacturing in the region in the 20th century.

Looking at a series of recent great works on global economic history, the power of naming should be appreciated: ‘industrious revolution’, ‘re-orient’, ‘great divergence’, ‘Smith in Beijing’, and so forth. The global social sciences are entering an era in which Eurocentrism is being overturned, and scholars have begun to compete with each other to present new paradigms as responses to global epistemic crises.<sup>11</sup> If Asia’s developmental path was more natural and endogenous than Europe’s, then the development of nations stimulated by Asia’s developmental initiatives could be more peaceful and self-centred with no replication of unfair centre–periphery relations. However, in my view, this is not that self-evident.

### **Africa erased from the map**

There remains a critical concern. The fact is that few mentions of Africa have been made in these spirited discussions about the reinterpretation of global history. While Pomeranz wrote briefly about slavery in the Americas,<sup>12</sup> Arrighi made almost no statement about Africa in *Adam Smith in Beijing* and his other works. Frank even argued that Europe grew not ‘through the direct exploitation of its American and Caribbean colonies and its African slave trade’ but by climbing up on the shoulders of the Asian economy.<sup>13</sup>

In the first place, the emphasis on the rivalry between the East and the West may have led to a disregard for the historical interactions that transpired in the intermediary space between the East and the West. There is an insightful work by Janet L. Abu-Lughod that depicts the rich horizontal connectivity in the Eurasian world, *Before European Hegemony* (1989), in which she argued that a federated world system functioned across vast areas of Eurasia around the late 13th century. In this alternative presentation of the historical world system, autonomous and diverse regional sub-systems coexisted, and the European world was merely one unit of the larger assemblage. She presented a compelling and lively historical

narrative that would clear away the Eurocentric view still in place under Immanuel Wallerstein's modern world system.<sup>14</sup>

In the 13th-century world system Abu-Lughod described, the autonomous regional units of Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, India, Southeast Asia, and China cooperate, trade, and prosper together. But even in her compelling argument for an alternative account, Africa was not included in the coexisting family, despite the fact that North Africa, West Africa, and East Africa were closely integrated with the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds through the activities of Muslim merchants in that period as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Shall we go back further? The first *Homo sapiens* was born in Africa about 300,000 years ago at the latest, with some of them leaving the continent and spreading throughout the world, where agrarian livelihoods gradually adapted to the diverse local ecosystems, as traced by historians and natural scientists. *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997), written by the medical scientist and evolutionary biologist Jared Diamond, has enjoyed a large readership.<sup>15</sup>

Diamond's argument is shadowed by environmental determinism concomitant with the recent fad for geopolitics. According to Diamond, by 1500 AD, people living in different regions of the world were divided into those who were influential and affluent and those who were powerless and destitute. The ultimate determinant of their divergent fates was the shape of the continent they inhabited, which is shown in Figure 4.1. Biodiversity and inter-regional connectivity were

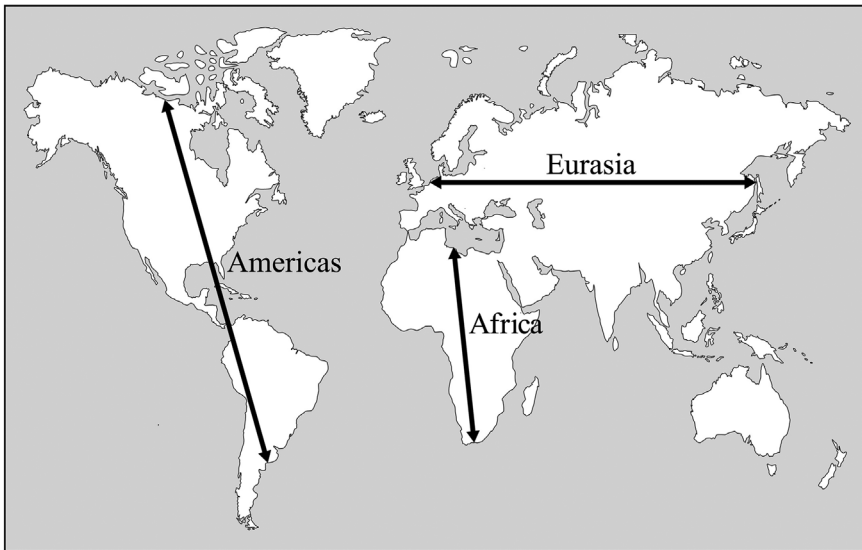


Figure 4.1 Geographic Axes of the Continents

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 177. See also Figure 6.5

closely related to the geography of the continents. On the Eurasian continent, the temperate zone where human survival is easier spreads latitudinally from east to west so that new food varieties, technologies, and inventions could be easily transmitted to other areas. This is where economies of scale worked; there emerged a virtuous circle in which invented technology was applied on a larger scale, lowering the cost, increasing the population, and creating conditions for the next technological advances.

However, this was not the case with Africa. In contrast with Eurasia, the African continent stretches longitudinally from north to south. Along the climate zones, Africa can therefore be ‘sliced’ horizontally. There are tropical rainforests along the equator, sandwiched by belts of savannah grasslands to their south and north and further by straps of the desert. Each zone developed different optimal livelihoods due to the significant differences in temperature, rainfall, soil, and topography, thereby making it difficult to transfer locality-specific agricultural technology to other places. The same was true for the Americas. Moreover, what was catastrophic to the indigenous peoples in the Americas is that they had not acquired the immunity that Europeans acquired through their daily contact with a diversity of livestock.<sup>16</sup> The indigenous peoples in the Americas were exposed to new diseases such as smallpox brought by Europeans, which drove the former to total or near extinction across the continent.<sup>17</sup>

Diamond’s argument was to challenge the recent criticism of Eurocentrism with scientific sophistication. Some readers of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* may have lightened the burden on their minds. According to Diamond, the proximate reason the West was able to conquer the world of indigenous peoples was that by the 15th century, the West had come to possess an overwhelming advantage over the non-West in all aspects of military, technology, and health. However, the ultimate reason the West became that powerful was because of Eurasia’s advantageous *geography*. It is inutile to condemn the inevitable causality in moral terms. The European domination of the past is now justified not by dubious genetics but by incontestable ecological geography. I am rich because my ancestors were born on an adequately shaped island, and you are poor because yours were born on a remote, misshapen island. Curse your family and the place where they were born!

However, there seems to be a causal relationship that Diamond did not thoroughly discuss. Diamond claimed that the fundamental reason Europe was able to conquer the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific was that the Eurasian continent stretches in a specific direction. This geographic advantage is shared equally by both the eastern and the western ends of Eurasia. However, there is little mention in *Guns, Germs, and Steel* of the east–west connectivity in Eurasia, which Abu-Lughod vividly described in her *Before European Hegemony* and has now been revived in the gigantic and controversial BRI.

Given that both East Asia and Western Europe are located geographically in the temperate zone of Eurasia, why is it not China and other Confucian polities at the eastern end of Eurasia but Europe at its western end that became the world’s supreme ruler by the end of the 19th century? Diamond pointed out that Europe was decentralised to belligerent nations that competed for acts of aggression

abroad and that China was unified and adopted a relatively inward-looking policy. A centralised empire loved peace, while a group of small competing nations waged brutal wars outwardly. This sounds like an interesting hypothesis but does not seem to be compelling as universal logic.<sup>18</sup> Europe could have imploded before sending settlers overseas.

While it is true that European domination in the Americas was established only after the massacre of indigenous peoples through the spread of infectious diseases brought by Europeans, there is a flip side to the coin. In the same period, Europeans visiting Africa fell ill with tropical diseases one after another. In the mid-19th century, in the British colonies in West Africa, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, about half of the European settlers died within a year of their arrival due to tropical diseases including malaria. These places were therefore called ‘white man’s graveyards’.<sup>19</sup> When it comes to infectious diseases, the same Europeans were winners in the Americas but losers in tropical Africa that erected pathologic defences successfully. Diamond’s historical narratives about this aspect were not very articulate.

### **Before the initial conditions were set up**

Those who celebrate Asia’s re-emergence and those who embrace European hegemony both tend to erase Africa’s presence from world history. Until colonial domination began, it is as if human society did not exist on the African continent since humanity was born. Despite the future preponderance of Africans, we are short of knowledge and insight into the history in which the African people lived their lives, adapted to their environments, and developed their livelihoods.

To fill in this lacuna, let us return to the discussion about population change. Diamond writes, ‘In general, the larger the size and the higher the density [of a political unit’s population], the more complex and specialized were the technology and organization’, which appears to be a standard understanding of the evolution of human society.<sup>20</sup> Where environmental conditions are moderate, people opt for sedentary agriculture, and food production increases. Then, the Malthusian constraints on human survival are weakened, population increases, and society stratifies into delicate layers of labour division and eventually prospers. The Great Divergence between the East and the West began around the 18th and 19th centuries. Here, let us have an overview of the global, long-term change in population growth and economic activity before the beginning of the Divergence.

Angus Maddison, a British-born economic historian, is well known for having developed a bold global estimation of the GDP of all nations over a long time.<sup>21</sup> Maddison’s method of reconstructing GDP from a wide variety of information for about 2,000 years, including early centuries in which national income statistics did not exist, is a real coup de maître. Even though we cannot expect the accuracy of nation-specific historical demographics from the world table he developed, a meaningful comparison can be made using that table.

Let us look at population change by the world’s major regions based on Maddison’s database (Figure 4.2). There are two salient groups of regions. One consists

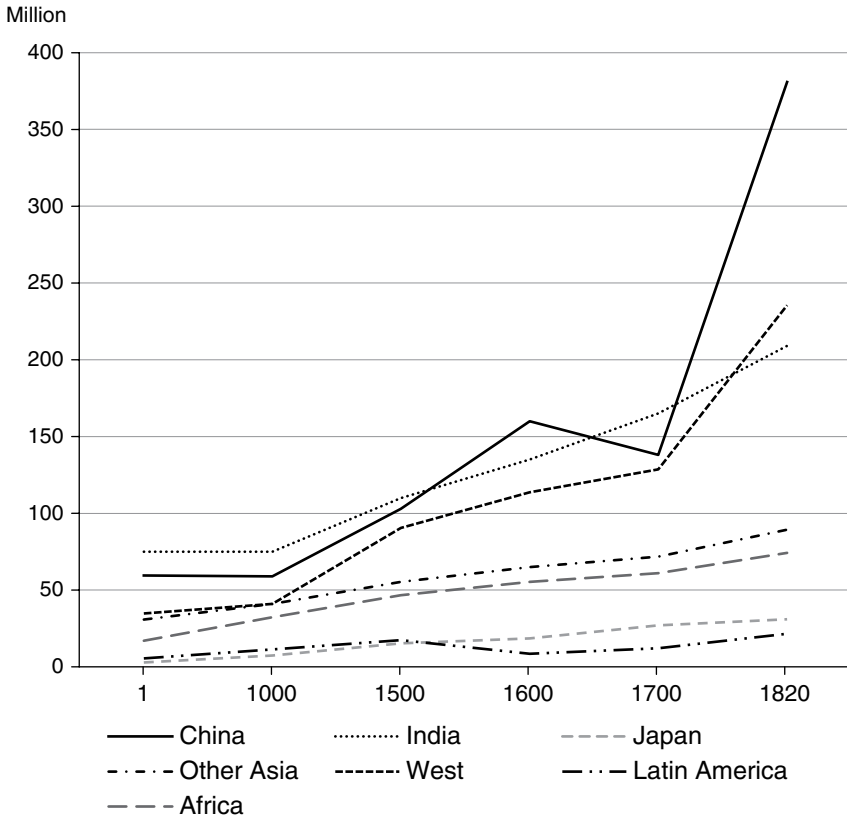


Figure 4.2 Population Change by Region, AD 1–1820

Note: Years are not evenly spaced.

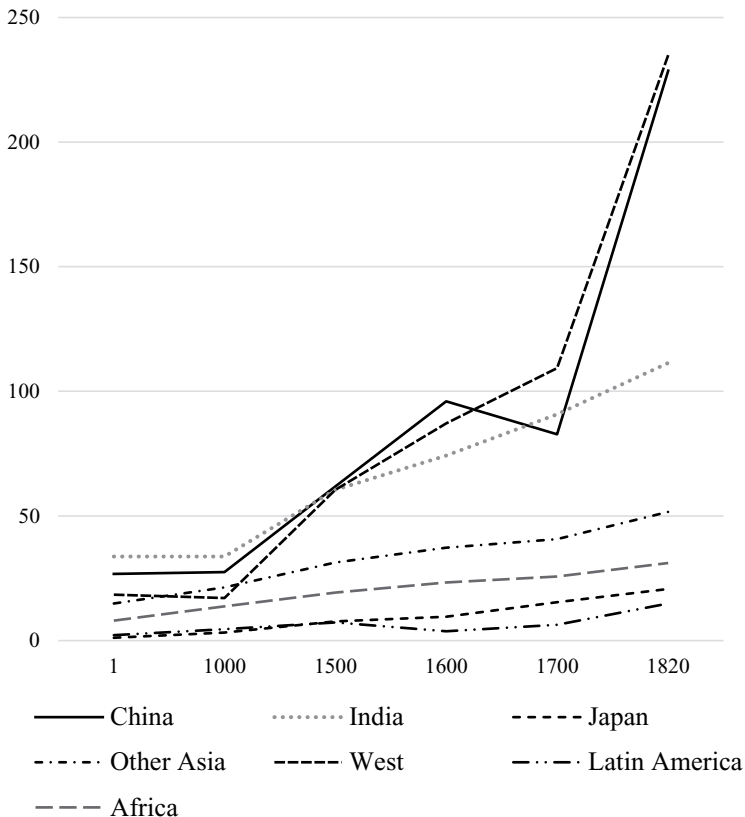
Source: [www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010](http://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010)

of China, India, as well as the West that corresponds to today's Europe, North America, and Oceania. All these nations and regions recorded high population growth in the past millennium. Particularly striking is the rapid growth of the Chinese population in the 18th century. While Morland's population history emphasises Europe's remarkable demographic expansion in modern times, the pace was much quicker in China.<sup>22</sup>

The other consists of Africa, Japan, Latin America, and the rest of Asia (excluding China, India, and Japan), a group that has experienced relatively slow population change over time. The population of Africa after the end of the 15th century would have been much larger had it not been for the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Maddison's population estimates disclose that Africa's population rose from 46.61 million in 1500 to 74.24 million in 1820 during the period of the slave

trade.<sup>23</sup> The shock of a continuous exodus of the youth population totalling 10 million must have been enormous, but Africa's population continued to grow modestly. In Latin America, there has been a marked decline in population since the early 16th century (the only region that witnessed substantial population decrease during the last millennium). There is much debate about the size of the indigenous population in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans, and the initial size may have been much larger. The spread of diseases brought from Europe was the primary reason for the population decline in the Americas, as Diamond endorsed.

Figure 4.3 shows the change in GDP for the same regions. The first evident feature is that GDP changed in much the same pattern as population change for these regions. Since pre-modern industries including agriculture were generally labour-intensive, there must have been a simple causality in which the output increased as the population increased. The other way round, there was a virtuous



*Figure 4.3* GDP Change by Region, AD 1–1820

Note: Years are not evenly spaced.

Source: [www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010](http://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010)

circle in which the capacity to support the local population was enhanced with increased food production. According to Pomeranz, China's population growth in the 18th century was occasioned in places like North China rather than in the more advanced Yangtze River Delta.<sup>24</sup> Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show that in the 18th-century West, the pace of population growth was much slower than that of economic growth. However, Maddison's database also revealed that the population of economically advanced England increased from 8.6 million in 1700 to 21.2 million in 1820 and 31.4 million in 1870, at a rate similar to that of the whole of China.

By comparing Figures 4.2 and 4.3, we understand that between 1700 and 1820, China's population and GDP grew at a similar pace, and therefore, per-capita GDP did not change substantially. Per-capita GDP in 1820 was estimated to be 1,194 dollars in Western Europe, 600 dollars in China, and 669 dollars in Japan, though some argue that the income gap between the East and the West at the time may not be as large as Maddison's estimation. At any rate, as far as total GDP is concerned, Maddison's data show that the West and the East were the two giant regions in economic development at the dawn of imperialism. The East was not lagging behind.

### Learning from slow development

Looking at the world before the Great Divergence, the world at both ends of Eurasia – the East (especially China and India) and the West (Europe combined with its temperate colonies) – continued to grow in terms of population and economy. However, by the late 19th century, when the European conquest of colonial territories had been completed, the notion that Africa and Asia failed to take off due to their own fault started to take root in the minds of people in the West. One hundred years later, East Asia was on its way to a *revanche*, and the era has come when the powers of the West and the East, which have been playing a seesaw game of development for centuries, once again countervail each other as embodied by the new Cold War between China and the United States. On the other hand, such regions as Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, where population growth was not so dramatic in the past, were assumed to have harsher natural conditions, more dispersed populations, and lower levels of technology. For a long time, this bloc of the world was considered to be below Western standards in many ways. China (and India) could be a sleeping lion that used to be awake centuries ago, while other nations did not wake up at all.

Let us here invoke the perspective of reciprocal comparison offered by Pomeranz, i.e., the perspective of seeing each other as a deviation from each other. Were small societies that have grown slowly over the past millennia inferior to the giant Eurasian nations? The question Diamond poses at the beginning of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* is 'why weren't Native Americans, Africans, and Aboriginal Australians the ones who decimated, subjugated, or exterminated Europeans and Asians?'.<sup>25</sup> Would it not be appropriate to answer that they neither wanted to kill other people nor needed to do so, though this is different from the answer Diamond gives in the conclusion of that book? It is about time that we free ourselves from the fetishism

of weapons and heavy industrial products. It may be that it was the Western civilisation as a conglomerate that deviated from human norms.

In the next chapter, I will consider the unique characteristics of the sparsely populated societies of Africa and Southeast Asia. Can we not envision a future for Afrasia in which smaller nations check the behaviour of larger nations, advance conviviality, and make humanistic ideals blossom? With this in mind, let us first look back at the past of the small population worlds focusing on Africa.

## Notes

- 1 Thomas Piketty, *Le Capital au xxi<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2013).
- 2 Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution: Essays on the Development of Underdevelopment and the Immediate Enemy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–191.
- 3 As Acemoglu and Robinson argued, institutional choice matters, but some nations were *forced* to accept institutions that would inhibit development. They discussed this coercive pattern using the case of racial segregation in South Africa. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), chap. 9.
- 4 The World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- 5 H.W. Arndt, *Economic Development: The History of an Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
- 6 Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
- 7 Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). As for historical conditions that made European conquest of the New Europe possible, see Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- 8 Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 9–10.
- 9 Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century* (London: Verso, 2007).
- 10 Hayami Akira, *Japan's Industrious Revolution: Economic and Social Transformations in the Early Modern Period* (Tokyo: Springer, 2015); Gareth Austin and Sugihara Kaoru, eds., *Labour-Intensive Industrialization in Global History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Sugihara Kaoru, 'The East Asian Path of Economic Development: A Long-Term Perspective', in *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives*, ed. Giovanni Arrighi, Hamashita Takeshi, and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2003).
- 11 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), chap. 8.
- 12 Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 264–269.
- 13 Frank, *ReOrient*, 4.
- 14 Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). The rationale behind the world-system approach is succinctly explained in Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 15 Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.
- 16 African slaves had been exposed to the pathogens of tropical forests and interacted with Europeans before being transferred to the Americas.

- 17 ‘Ratios of 20:1 or even 25:1 between pre-Columbian populations and the bottoming-out point in Amerindian population curves seem more or less correct, despite wide local variations. Behind such chill statistics lurks enormous and repeated human anguish, as whole societies fell apart, values crumbled, and old ways of life lost all shred of meaning’. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 223–224. See also Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, chaps. 7–9.
- 18 Diamond discusses it in light of cultural idiosyncrasies. *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 417–419.
- 19 This image was in part the product of European stereotype. Philip Curtin, ‘“The White Man’s Grave”: Image and Reality, 1780–1850’, *Journal of British Studies* 1, no. 1 (November 1961): 94–110.
- 20 Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 62.
- 21 Angus Maddison, *Contours of the World Economy, 1–2030 AD: Essays in Macroeconomic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- 22 Morland, *The Human Tide*, chap. 2.
- 23 There is a large amount of academic literature that deals with slave trade. Basil Davidson’s approach remains the most authentic. Basil Davidson, *Black Mother: Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980).
- 24 Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 124–125, 244–245.
- 25 Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 15.

## 5 Frontiers on the continent and the ocean

### Land and people

Less industrialised Afrasia is supposed to be more friendly to the environment. A useful method to measure the extent of environmental destruction is the ecological footprint (EF). Humans consume large amounts of natural resources in their lives to varying degrees. The EF is a rough estimate of the total area of land and sea required to reproduce these resources (the unit is one hectare of land with an average productive capacity called a global hectare: gha). The footprints show how much humanity is trampling the Earth.

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, for 2017, the per-capita EF (consumption) of the world's major countries and regions was 6.61 gha for North America, 4.61 gha for the EU, 2.39 for Asia-Pacific (4.65 for Japan, 3.71 for China, and 1.19 for India), and 1.34 gha for Africa. The combined EF of all people living on the planet reaches 1.73 times the surface area of the Earth, which is already far from sustainable. However, if the average human being in the world consumes the same amount of natural resources as the average African or Indian, most global environmental problems would be solved. The way to achieve sustainable development is simple: the people of the world need to live like the average African. People in the North do not have to worry too much about the daily inconvenience. Africa's mobile subscribers already make up about 80 per cent of its population, and solar power and 5G services are set to take off rapidly on the continent.

However, being 'nature-friendly' is not necessarily a traditional African value, which is why Wangari Maathai had to raise her voice. The original African view of nature seems not to be one of protecting and caring for fragile nature, but rather of fighting against the harsh natural environment, and expanding human space little by little in an effort to survive individually and collectively. John Iliffe wrote,

Africans have been and are the frontiersmen who have colonised an especially hostile region of the world on behalf of the entire human race. That has been their chief contribution to history. It is why they deserve admiration, support, and careful study.

There is a saying in Malawi that goes, 'It is people who make the world; the bush has wounds and scars'.<sup>1</sup> Protecting weak and vulnerable species may be a new

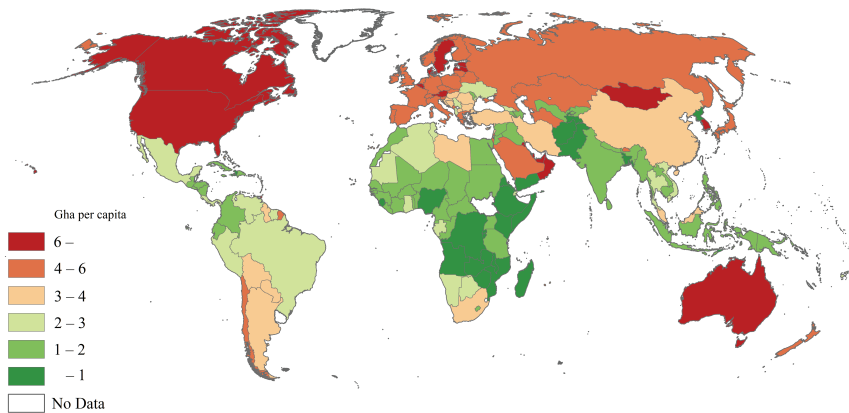


Figure 5.1 Ecological Footprint (Consumption), 2017

Source: [www.footprintnetwork.org/resources/](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/resources/)

notion in human history. In folktales throughout Africa, wild animals come alive, behave like humans, and speak human languages. Anthropocentrism has been a key norm in Africa.

In fact, tropical Africa's natural environment is not human-friendly. Historically, there are several reasons Africa's population growth rate has been relatively low over time. The first is endemics and epidemics. Diseases such as malaria transmitted by anopheles, sleeping sickness carried by tsetse flies, as well as smallpox and plague were present in Africa before Europeans' arrival. Although not as dense and dangerous as those in Africa, the rainforests in Southeast Asia and South America also checked the expansion of human settlements. Second, in areas where cultivation was widespread, major famines caused by droughts and locust outbreaks could trigger sharp population decline.<sup>2</sup> Third, there was the destruction of society occasioned by the invasion of outside enemies, the most pervasive of which were made by Europeans. Young Africans were captured by local slave traders and transferred to the Americas for centuries, and the cohesive village order fell apart in various places of colonial Afrasia.<sup>3</sup> It was only in the second half of the 20th century that Africa's population overcame these natural and human vulnerabilities and began to grow steadily.

In addressing natural and biological calamities in contemporary Africa, it is crucial to learn humbly from local communities. When the Ebola epidemic broke out in West Africa in 2014, medical teams wearing protective suits frightened local villagers. Attempts to persuade locals to segregate patients and restrict the movement of people were often met with resistance. Given such an experience, anthropologists who were immersed in the values and customs of African society formed a platform and began to work with medical staff to conduct a sort of 'intelligence' operation.<sup>4</sup> This has been a positive development in public health, but it is

Table 5.1 Change in Population Density in Major Countries and Regions

	1500	1700	1900	2009
India	33.5	50.2	86.6	352.0
Japan	40.7	71.4	116.7	336.2
Germany	33.6	42.0	152.2	230.4
China	10.7	14.4	41.7	138.7
Indonesia	5.6	6.9	23.7	121.0
Africa	1.5	2.0	3.6	32.6
USA	0.2	0.1	7.8	31.2
Latin America	0.9	0.6	3.4	30.4
Former Soviet Union	0.8	1.2	5.6	12.6
Persons per km <sup>2</sup>				

Source: [www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010](http://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010)

more important to develop the local capacity so that local experts who know their own society are mobilised at the heart of medical support.

In Chapter 2, we discussed the world's current and projected population density (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6). Tracing history, Table 5.1 summarises the past change in population density in major countries and regions across the world. Strictly speaking, one cannot judge a society to be underpopulated or overpopulated simply by comparing the number of persons per land area. There are several reasons for this. First, a vast tract of land is not always utilisable as a factor of production. For example, the deserts of West Asia and North Africa, as well as Siberia's tundra and icy regions, are not suitable for settled farming. Second, human institutions may be transplanted from entirely different places. British and French institutions were transplanted in North America, Spanish and Portuguese institutions in Latin America, and British institutions in Australia and New Zealand. These places were settled by people who had been steeped in the values of their home countries. In these cases, the institutions of the overpopulated areas became dominant in the scarcely populated areas.

Nevertheless, as shown in Table 5.1, it is still striking that there was a massive variance in population density over time between different regions. In 1900, Africa's population density was 3.6 persons per square kilometre, compared to 152.2 persons in Germany. It is necessary to consider that the African continent contains vast rainforests and deserts, but 30 per cent of Germany's surface area is also covered with forests. All things considered, the approximately 40 times difference in density was still significant. In these two places, one can imagine that the way people are connected or the way human society is organised has evolved into contrasting patterns.

### **Free people in small population worlds**

A society in which the population is dispersed over a large area of land is considered to be close to the primordial state of human society. According to the

conventional understanding of human history, after going through this original state of foraging, sedentary agriculture took root in places suitable for permanent settlement, where the population increased, political systems became more complex, and a hierarchical social order developed. However, there is an alternative interpretation of history according to which human beings who possessed the spiritual and material richness of society's original state degenerated into depravity. Based on field data from Southern Africa and Australia, the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins wrote about the 'original affluent society' of hunter-gatherers. On the basis of more recent scientific findings, Yuval Noah Harari argued that 'The human collective knows far more today than did the ancient bands. However, at the individual level, ancient foragers were the most knowledgeable and skilful people in history'. As the practice of agriculture spread, people were pauperised. 'Everywhere, rulers and elites sprang up, living off the peasants' surplus food and leaving them with only a bare subsistence'.<sup>5</sup>

Modern society, whether in the West or the East, has become so antithetical to the state of nature. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755) may be the first philosophical work in the West to criticise the moral descent of human society systematically. There is a passage that reads as follows:

Savage man, when he has eaten, is at peace with the whole of nature and the friend of all his fellow-men. Is it a matter of disputing his meal? He will never come to blows over it without first comparing the difficulty of winning with that of finding his sustenance elsewhere, and as pride does not enter into the fight, it is ended by a few fisticuffs; the victor eats, the vanquished goes off to seek better luck elsewhere, and all is pacified. But in the case of man in society, these are very different matters: in the first place it is a question of providing what is necessary, next what is superfluous, then afterwards come luxuries, then immense riches, then subjects, then slaves; man in society does not have a moment of respite.<sup>6</sup>

Rousseau also wrote: 'I am chased from one tree, I am free to go to the next; if I am tormented in one place, who will prevent my moving somewhere else?'<sup>7</sup> People in the state of nature would look for food elsewhere rather than fight with their neighbours over food. However, the prerequisite for being able to 'seek better luck elsewhere' is that there is unoccupied land in some other place and that one can find food there. Thus, humans living in the state of nature before becoming obsessed with private property would have been living in a less densely populated world surrounded by open frontiers.

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders; how much misery and horror the human race would have been spared if someone had pulled up the stakes and filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: 'Beware of

listening to this impostor. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to everyone and that the earth itself belongs to no one!’<sup>8</sup>

When living in a small population world, there is no need to enclose the land, for your neighbour will find as much land elsewhere as you occupy. Given that there is no hereditary estate in such a world, the class distinction between those who have real property and those who do not is hardly reproduced. There may have been times when people would not skirmish over food before moving but rather move to a new place before such a dispute occurs. When one visits a wide sandy beach, one sits a little distance away from other visitors who are already sitting. According to Rousseau, in order to survive, humans want to live separately rather than jointly. Yet, humans are bound to each other by affections, even when they are physically separate. This is where language is born.

It would be absurd to suppose that the means of uniting them derived from the cause of their separation. Whence then this origin? From moral needs, passions. All the passions tend to bring people back together again, but the necessity of seeking a livelihood forces them apart. It is neither hunger nor thirst but love, hatred, pity, anger, which drew from them the first words.<sup>9</sup>

The state of nature in which the savage (natural man) lives is an idealised, hypothetical state based on Rousseau’s thought experiment. It is based on a procedure similar to the ‘veil of ignorance’ proposed by the philosopher John Rawls in later years, in which people enter society without knowing their social attributes, positions, and status – who they are – in advance.<sup>10</sup> The authenticity of Rousseau’s reasoning does not depend on whether the free, mobile, and peaceful savages described in the abstract existed at one stage in history.

### **Natural persons in captivity**

However, the fact is that in writing *Discours*, Rousseau was inspired by his contemporaries’ accounts of the indigenous peoples in Africa, America, the Pacific, and the deep forests of Europe.<sup>11</sup> After pointing out that the hunter-gatherers and pastoralists in Southern Africa were masters of their activities regarding nature, Rousseau presented an anecdote of a European slave master who took in a Khoikhoi child, converted him to Christianity, educated him, clothed him in Western garb, and taught him Western languages. This Khoikhoi man came of age and, after working for the Dutch East India Company in Indonesia, returned to Cape Town. It is said that he then politely bade farewell to his patron, stripped himself of his Western garments, and re-joined his indigenous fellows, never to return.<sup>12</sup> Rousseau was so fond of this anecdote that he used an etching based on this story as a frontispiece for the first edition of *Discours*.

However, this encounter between Europeans and the Khoikhoi had a sequel that Rousseau would not hear about: a Khoikhoi woman, later to be named Sarah Baartman, was born in South Africa in 1789.<sup>13</sup> After her fiancé was murdered by

Dutch settlers, Sarah was sold into slavery and taken to Cape Town. In 1810, she was transferred to England after signing a contract an English ship doctor showed to her. Upon her arrival in London, Sarah was lodged in a showhouse in Piccadilly and put on display in a cage. Onlookers came from all over Europe to see ‘a barbarian with big bottoms’. Four years later, she was sold to France, and this time, in Paris, she was put in an animal shelter and made a spectacle in her near-naked condition. Sarah spoke English, Dutch, and French in addition to Khoikhoi. She could not stay away from alcohol.

Rousseau’s *Discours* was widely read in France at the time of the French Revolution. However, Rousseau’s admiration for the natural man seems to have been powerless before the popular interest in social evolutionist thinking that placed the European race at its pinnacle. At the time, Sarah attracted a great deal of interest from French biologists and became a living specimen that was supposed to represent the intermediate stage between primates and humans. After her death in 1816 at the age of 26, Sarah’s body was moulded in plaster and dissected, and her brain and female genitalia were put in formalin and displayed in public at le Musée de l’Homme in Paris until 1974.

To prevent such tragedies from occurring again, it is indispensable not only to remember the historical facts but also to restore the dignity of the victims in appropriate ways. Nelson Mandela, who was inaugurated as South Africa’s first black African president in May 1994, requested François Mitterrand to return Sarah’s remains to South Africa. Eventually, France agreed, and in August 2002, her body was appropriately buried by members of the local community. The South African government renamed the vast area that includes her burial site the municipality of the Sarah Baartman District.

## **The universe of the small population worlds**

Bantu people make up a majority of the African continent’s inhabitants today. They are linguistically defined as speakers of Bantu languages, including today’s Kiswahili, who expanded their living space through migration to frontiers surrounding their villages. Originally, they lived around present-day Cameroon, and by 1000 AD, they were spread out in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is three times the size of Europe. The expansion of the Bantu settlements in Africa occurred simultaneously with the expansion of the Roman and Islamic empires.

The Bantu farmers practised slash-and-burn agriculture and cultivated sorghum, millet, cassava, maize, and other crops suitable for local ecosystems. Where possible, cattle, goats, camels, and other animals were raised. They adapted to the continent’s diverse environment, carved out tropical rainforests and savannah bush, and gradually expanded their sphere of existence. They sometimes coexisted with or absorbed different groups of hunter-gatherers, the indigenous peoples of the region.<sup>14</sup>

As an organising principle of society, the political system of a society surrounded by an abundance of land tends to be decentralised. What would happen if there arose a severe conflict over political power and resources within a chiefdom

or kingdom? If there is an open frontier around the regime, the aggrieved parties need not quarrel with those in power. They could leave with their followers in tow and set up a new governing body elsewhere, near or far, and they could be joined by other groups. The behavioural logic of the state of nature that Rousseau laid out in *Discours* works in reality. As this pattern repeats itself, the polities will divide and merge, and their spheres of power will constantly be shifting.<sup>15</sup>

However, if we look at the mobile space as a whole, there may be social equilibrium. Think of an imaginary place in the tropics. People settle on land where they are less likely to be infected with diseases and more likely to establish their livelihoods. Then, the settlements may extend outwards, or new settlements may be created in a few remote locations. From a distance, large and small dots appear and disappear, and the outer edge of the space in which they appear expands little by little. If viewed from space, the movement of a group may look like the movement of a slime mould.<sup>16</sup>

One may run away, stay still, or join with other people. If, as Rousseau remarked, the original people go their separate ways to secure livelihoods but are bound together by affections, then there may be a spontaneous gathering of a large number of subjects under a respected leader. In Africa, big kingdoms and empires emerged time and again, often around nodal points of local or long-distance trade: for example, Ghana (from the 4th to the 11th century), Mali (from the 13th to the 15th century), and Songai (from the 15th to the 16th century) in West Africa; Congo (from the 15th to the 20th century) and Buganda (since the 17th century) in Central and East Africa; and Monomotapa (from the 14th to the 15th century) and Zulu (since the 19th century) in Southern Africa. Large cities were formed where environmental conditions were favourable. Some of these cities continued to the present, while others vanished in a few hundred years. Many polities have disappeared from the map for unknown reasons, possibly environmental degradation, instead of being invaded and occupied by other kingdoms.<sup>17</sup>

One exemplary historical site is Great Zimbabwe. This masonry architecture in the Southern African interior shows a stunning curvilinear beauty, which reminds East Asians of the *gusuku* (castles) of the Ryukyu Kingdom whose territory consisted of networked islands in the north-western Pacific. Those who travel to Zimbabwe after visiting the *gusuku* that are scattered in the Okinawa islands – or travel to Okinawa after visiting Zimbabwe – will be struck by a sense of *déjà vu*. Without the accumulation of craftsmanship, a high degree of division of labour and co-ordination work, and a sophisticated design ability, those buildings would not have been constructed. The ruins of Great Zimbabwe are located 300 kilometres inland, a direct distance from the Indian Ocean, where old Chinese pottery similar to those in the *gusuku* have been discovered. Great Zimbabwe was built between the 11th and 15th centuries – almost in the same period as its Okinawan counterparts were constructed – and then abandoned. It is speculated that one of the reasons for the dereliction of Great Zimbabwe is that the local ecosystem was no longer able to support the growing number of residents. It seems that the economic activity of dozens of thousands of inhabitants caused the forest to recede in the central part of Zimbabwe.<sup>18</sup>

The creation of densely populated spaces inside a small population world is not limited to Africa. In the maritime world of Southeast Asia, in which people were as mobile as in Africa, the presence of Java in today's Indonesia has been prominent. Supported by fertile volcanic soil, abundant water, and a relatively cold climate, a series of powerful dynasties was established on the island of Java. Built between the 8th and 9th centuries, Borobudur's masonry architecture represents the base structure of Buddhist Indian culture before the spread of Islam in the region. Even in economically advanced Java, however, a centralised state that would effectively control the entire island rarely emerged.<sup>19</sup>

## **Migration and multiculturalism**

The free movement of people across borders is generally not allowed in the modern world, where land and people are captured, counted, measured, and registered by a central authority. Travel is the act of moving freely. However, if the endpoint of the movement differs from the starting point, the person will be re-registered at the destination. Despite such restrictions, people still move around, just as fishermen in Southeast Asia crossed over to different islands, and farmers in Africa set fire to the bushes and forests on the other side of the mountains. Contemporary people on the move may do well at work in a foreign land and bring their families, international students may form new families and settle down in the country where they have studied, they may be disappointed and return to their home country or head for new land to start over, and so on. The directions vary, but as discussed in Chapter 3, the movement of people across borders is increasingly becoming a phenomenon within the South, not necessarily between the South and the North.

Under these circumstances, encounters between citizens and migrants occur in various places. To regulate the relationship between hosts and guests, many Western countries once adopted a policy principle called multiculturalism. Perhaps its most systematic advocate is the Canadian political scientist Will Kymlicka, though his prescription is not as tolerant as we might imagine from the word. Kymlicka has argued that people who voluntarily left their country of origin should be gradually integrated into the society and culture of their host country and therefore are not entitled to demand public education in their ethnic language. The host country is not obliged to inject public money into projects meant to consolidate the ethnic identity of those who abandoned their home nation at their own will.<sup>20</sup>

A high degree of autonomy should only be considered in the case of a large group that claims to be a national group within a federal framework, such as the French-speaking community in Canada. Some other cases, such as African Americans and Native Americans whose ancestors were forced to resettle in the Americas or subjected to genocide, would require moral prudence, but for those who have migrated of their own volition as well as their children who were born in the host nation, full integration into the host society should be the default option. The culture of each person's origin should be respected as a tool to make such integration easier and smoother.<sup>21</sup>

However, multiculturalism has been mixed up with extravagant liberalism. Multicultural conviviality, which theorists conceived to be a means of promoting the integration of minorities into broader liberal society, came under intense criticism in North America and Europe after the 9/11 attacks. The argument that has become influential expounds that multiculturalism entailing tolerance of different cultures has coddled minorities and nurtured religious fundamentalists who have attempted to destroy the democratic social order. The minority side did not try to defend a paternalistic multiculturalist order seriously either. At the beginning of the 21st century, multiculturalism was fiercely criticised by conservatives and sometimes by progressives, and its power as a social norm quickly withered.<sup>22</sup>

### **Aloof coexistence**

Multiculturalism as a policy principle may have become obsolete. Still, is it impossible to envision multiculturalism without seeking too hasty integration? Furthermore, can we not conceive of multicultural conviviality as a ‘state’ rather than a ‘goal’ in which cultural groups, large and small, coexist and respect each other? I came up with such an idea when I was living downtown in Tokyo. Judging by the words passers-by uttered, I surmised that more than half of the people walking around the shopping area were Japanese, though nearly half were Filipinos, Nepalese, Pakistanis, Chinese, Koreans, Europeans, and others. Aside from the exchange of pennies while shopping, there was no sign of active interaction between the locals and foreign residents. The same appeared true of the interaction among foreigners who hailed from a variety of places and settled in the same town. However, there was no sense of hostility among people, even if they were not interested in each other. As the boisterous samba floats paraded through the shopping street at a local festival, diverse people looked on curiously in places a little distance away from the scene. The feeling of having something resonating with each other while keeping a physical distance was unexpectedly pleasant for me (that was a decade before the outbreak of COVID-19).

In *Colonial Policy and Practice* (1948), British colonial officer J. S. Furnivall characterised Southeast Asian society as a plural society in which the majority locals (e.g., Malays) and minorities (e.g., Indians and Chinese) traded in the marketplace but did not attempt to nurture a national unity from the bottom up. ‘They mix but do not combine’, as is cited often.<sup>23</sup> There could be specific social ties at the base of the colonial social hierarchy that the British officer did not notice, though the convention of coexistence while living somewhat apart can still be seen in multi-ethnic urban societies in today’s Southeast Asia. Against a backdrop of historical complexities and tensions, Mahathir bin Mohamad once described Malaysia’s inter-group relations as follows.

The Malays and the Chinese may live as neighbours. They may meet each other in their daily business and even socially. But when they retire, they retire into their respective ethnic and cultural sanctum, neither of which has ever been truly breached by the other.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 3, there are a significant number of Chinese migrants living on the African continent today. Both Africans and Chinese often speak ill of each other in private circles, but the distance usually does not develop into confrontation. In the first place, Chinese shops have local customers, which is why their business can be established in Africa. Conversely, African merchants who travel to Chinese cities to purchase Chinese commodities are also becoming prominent. The Africans are often angry at the local Chinese's discriminatory behaviours, but they want to continue trading without regarding the Chinese as superior to them.

Whether the era of multiculturalism in the West is over or not, there are spaces in which 'aloof coexistence' prevails in Afrasian nations.<sup>25</sup> The tradition of governance that seeks to design optimum institutions based on a social contract of abstract individuals belongs to the West. Like it or not, no grand theory of coexistence has developed in the non-Western world. Governments sometimes threaten to expel those who do not comply with what is expected, but this does not mean that such threats would be real. People may flee before anything untoward happens. The state of coexistence that arises from such practice can be a fragile equilibrium. Decisions on whether to promote peaceful coexistence, take forceful measures, or run away from the temporary home are all haphazard. The future is left to chance.

Though it may sound ironic, can such a state of equilibrium not be presented as an ideal situation? In other words, as a thought experiment, is it not possible to propose a system of society in which people can freely enter an association and exit from it, assuming the existence of real persons with diverse orientations rather than hypothesised, abstract individuals? This would involve considering the shape of government that corresponds to the mobile world of the savage that Rousseau embraced.

### **The liberal archipelago**

People move and settle. If a conflict arises or is expected to arise, they may walk away. There is no institutional barrier that prevents people's exit and entry. Chandran Kukathas, a philosopher born in Malaysia as a citizen of Indian descent, portrayed a social order reflecting the organising principle of such a Rousseauian free society.

The premise of Kukathas' *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom* (2003) is to acknowledge human diversity as a fact rather than a value.<sup>26</sup> Due to the diversity of human beings, the liberal idea of non-interference in the affairs of others becomes essential. At the root of liberalism lies the principle of freedom of association, which entails freedom of dissociation and mutual tolerance between groups. According to Kukathas, freedom of association is necessitated by freedom of conscience. A person should not be forced to act the same way as others if her course of action in accordance with her conscience is supposed to be different from those of others. This means that people should be able to act differently from others when necessary, and this is why diverse people form

diverse associations. They are not forced to ‘cohere’ but should acknowledge their differences and try to ‘coexist’. Thus, a liberal society that guarantees freedom to its members manifests itself as an ‘archipelago’ made up of multiple competing and overlapping authorities.

For this mechanism to work adequately, it is necessary that the freedom to leave an organisation is guaranteed and that there exist other organisations that would be willing to accept individuals who have quit the original organisations. Kukathas argues that sovereignty is a matter of degree, as the government is just one of many associations. Assuming that all forms of migration control were removed in international society, the resulting state would be closer to the normative liberal society that Kukathas envisions.

International society is an archipelago – a sea with numerous islands. Each island is a separate domain, cut-off from others by waters which are indifferent to its circumstances or to its fate. The majority are inhabited by people most of whom are there by chance rather than by intention (though a few are dominated by recent immigrants). In almost all cases they live under the rule of an authority, though the character, style, and concerns of that authority vary from one island to the next. Some of these islands are lush and verdant, while others are barely habitable and in danger of submersion by rising seas; some are remote and all but inaccessible across treacherous waters, while others are almost physically connected by the archipelagic aprons which surround them. The people who populate these islands differ in aspiration and in temperament. Some are content where they are (even, inexplicably, those on the least hospitable outcrops of land), and would not dream of risking a venture onto the ocean; while others are restless and anxious to leave the most paradisaical surrounds for unknown opportunities across the water. Each is at liberty to leave, and the sea is thus dotted with vessels, some moving along established routes, others wandering into uncharted areas, none evincing purposes which are readily apparent (and some without any purpose at all).<sup>27</sup>

The free maritime world in ancient times may have looked like this. It is amusing to dream of the emergence of a totally free world that this metaphor portrays, provided that the economic disparity between countries narrows and that all individuals and groups embrace primordial human values such as ‘Thou shalt not kill’. You wander around the world as you travel in your country and eventually discover your new home somewhere.

The problem is that such freedom of movement, association, and dissociation does not prevail here and now. The Rohingya minority in Myanmar are expelled from the villages where they were born and raised. Palestinian citizens living in Gaza are confined to a congested strip and fall victim to relentless shelling by the Israeli military. At the same time as I witnessed the aloof coexistence in downtown Tokyo, there were terrifying xenophobic street campaigns against Koreans in other parts of Tokyo. Those who cannot move are driven out, and those who want to move are locked in. Moreover, insidious networks of human trafficking

form an underground rhizome across the world. It can be said that the denial of the right of voluntary movement underscores the critical importance of that right.

Bureaucratic centralised states were rare in pre-colonial Africa and Southeast Asia. These societies share the fluid and dispersive characteristics of the small population worlds shaped by millennia of history before their contact with European empires.<sup>28</sup> Today, this pattern seems to linger in the organising principles of regional institutions such as the African Union (AU) and the ASEAN. In the recent past, the EU substantially weakened its cohesion by calling for fiscal austerity measures against its small member states such as Greece and Portugal. Such a style of imposing discipline is unthinkable in Afrasian regional organisations, where large and small member states decide critical things by consensus. From the outside, decision-making may look too slow and sometimes inefficient, but the style of resolving internal conflicts in a collaborative framework has taken hold in multilateral organisations in Afrasia.<sup>29</sup>

The Western experiment with multiculturalism may have gone awry, but it is too early to abandon the ideal. Let us turn to the experiment of tolerance and coexistence in the non-Western world with as much practical and intellectual curiosity as we turn to the West.

### **From ‘Command and Control’ to ‘Co-ordinate and Cultivate’**

The notion of multiple sovereigns coexisting within a political territory will unsettle the minds of those who believe that a sovereign state must be unique, exclusive, indivisible, and absolute. Before the Second World War, in *The Concept of the Political* (1932), the German political scientist Carl Schmitt rejected the idea of political pluralism and argued in favour of resolute action taken by a single sovereign authority in cases of an exceptional state of emergency.<sup>30</sup>

In the early 21st century, the mechanism of decentralised decision-making with diverse people voluntarily forming groups, collaborating with each other, leaving them, and moving on in search of new connections is already gathering momentum in most parts of the world. Even in the United States, which has provoked a series of aggressive wars against the nations in the South since the Second World War, a modality of decentralised decision-making has gained normative status. In addition to the fact that the United States is a federal state that confers strong powers upon 50 states, its most advanced type of business model has plastic, fluid, and dynamic features similar to those of the small population worlds described in this chapter.

Thomas Malone, a scholar of business management at MIT, argued that human society transitioned from the hunter-gatherer stage characterised by isolation, dispersion, and high mobility to the agrarian and industrial stages with centralised authorities and is now moving back to a decentralised, networked society with a creative mixture of features from all stages.<sup>31</sup> A hierarchical form of organisation based on the principle of ‘command and control’ may be suitable for conventional militaries and infrastructure, but it does not fit into the information society. If we

are to move forward with surges of innovation in technology and organisation, it would be a prerequisite to furnish a decentralised system under which each person's creativity, initiative, and sense of responsibility are enhanced by involving everyone in decision-making. Knowledge workers work in ad hoc groups depending on the task, disband when they are done, and move on to the next group, thereby ensuring organisational flexibility and new combinations of skills and talents. The latest networked business initiative is therefore to regain the freedom that humans relinquished long ago. The fact that individuals can stay connected when they part with a hierarchical system is due to the development of technology from print media to the telegraph and the telephone to the Internet that has dramatically lowered the cost of communication.

What is required of future leaders is, as Malone indicated, to take the initiative to shift organisational principles from 'command and control' to 'co-ordinate and cultivate'. Rather than dictating to members, leaders should connect small units that work autonomously and nurture people's problem-solving skills. The system of 'command and control' will not disappear entirely, as militaries and infrastructure will remain with us. However, the centre of gravity for advanced industries is irreversibly shifting. 'Co-ordinate and cultivate' does not mean anarchy. In an organisation where leaders can contain conflict, utilise individual talents, release their creativity, and present magnetic values, a diverse group of people will come together to create self-sustaining order. The same logic worked in a small population world where subjects flocked to a chieftom or a kingdom governed by a good leader.

### **The practice of bypassing the state**

Things may work better if there is no government. Nigerian-American journalist Dayo Olopade uses the Yoruba term *kanju*, which literally means 'to rush or make haste', to capture the popular dynamics of the contemporary African economy.<sup>32</sup> The IT ecosystem in East Africa is known as the 'Silicon Savannah'. Africa boasts of a well-developed informal financial industry with the active participation of women whose repayment rates are noticeably high. Various IT methods are now actively used for remittances, and electronic money transfer systems such as M-PESA have already spread even to rural areas in Kenya, where people can withdraw cash at small retail shops just by sending short messages. The network is expanding beyond Africa.<sup>33</sup>

While India's film industry known as Bollywood has made global hits fly, Nigeria now boasts of Nollywood.<sup>34</sup> This West African film industry was born with the spread of the Video Home System (VHS) in the 1990s and has developed with Nigerian money and staff. The watershed event was the release of *Living in Bondage* (1992). The movies are mainly watched on smartphones but are also popular in theatres. As Figure 1.5 shows, the size of the Nigerian market is expected to reach 800 million people within a 100 years. The potential for the development of the film industry in Afrasia, which has already penetrated the ordinary people, will be huge.

Just one moment before a Hobbesian war of all against all begins, Africans fend off the onslaught of the sea beast Leviathan and embark on new ventures, making full use of networks of family and friends. In *La Pensée sauvage* (1962), the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss presented the notion of *bricolage*, which literally means ‘do-it-yourself’ or ‘a makeshift job’, i.e., the creative practice of assembling what are already available into useful tools and worldviews.<sup>35</sup> The work may not be a product of still, patient craftsmanship. The Nigerian practice of *kanju* is a vital and forceful practice of *bricolage* that enables people to survive adversity by moving forward and making dynamic use of social capital. In Afrasia, some states have degenerated into criminal associations where people are defrauded. Here arises the paradoxical situation in which an autopoietic order emerges from below against the parasitic state.

Malone’s advocacy of decentralised business organisations is not the same as the preaching of neoliberal doctrine. Malone criticises Milton Friedman’s market fundamentalism, argues that human beings do not work solely for the maximisation of self-interest as ‘people have many desires, some financial and some not’, and appreciates such attempts as the mutual aid of ‘guilds’ and the Mondragon Cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain.<sup>36</sup> Younger generations of Americans are no longer tabooing socialism. The practice of bottom-up, decentralised democratic socialism may gain unexpected traction across the world.

Although there are hot spots in Afrasia that may be regarded as places of ‘chaos’ due to the lack of effective governance, it is typically at the edge of chaos that a new order spontaneously emerges. Now that the artificial boxes of nation-states have come to cover every surface of the Earth, the free movement of people like in small population worlds has become unrealistic. However, a social order based on an assembly of fluid associations where people gather and dissolve seems to be gaining influence both in the North and in the South.<sup>37</sup> It is not states but free individuals that drive this change.

## Notes

- 1 John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1.
- 2 As for the circumstances of acute poverty in African history, see John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- 3 The entanglements are vividly recounted in Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann, 1958).
- 4 Fred Martineau et al., ‘Epistemologies of Ebola: Reflections on the Experience of the Ebola Response Anthropology Platform’, *Anthropological Quarterly* 90, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 475–494.
- 5 Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine, 1972); Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (London: Vintage Books, 2014), 49, 101.
- 6 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 148.
- 7 Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, 106.
- 8 Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, 109.

- 9 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Origin of Language*, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 11–12. The linkage between exit, passions and language is discussed in Albert O. Hirschman, ‘Exit, Voice, and the State’, *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (October 1978): 90–107.
- 10 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971).
- 11 See meticulous notes added by Rousseau and the editor in *A Discourse on Inequality*.
- 12 *A Discourse on Inequality*, 170. This slave owner was the famous Governor of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel. In a move in the opposite direction, Shaykh Yusuf, a cleric in Makassar, Indonesia, was exiled in the late 17th century to Cape Town, where he established the Islamic faith. Saarah Jappie, ‘“Many Makassars”: Tracing an African-Southeast Asian Narrative of Shaykh Yusuf of Makassar’, in Cornelissen and Mine, eds., *Migration and Agency*, 47–66.
- 13 Much has been written on her life. See, for example, a fiction written by an African-American writer. Barbara Chase-Riboud, *Hottentot Venus: A Novel* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).
- 14 Iliffe, *Africans*. Cassava and maize originate from Latin America, while sorghum and millet are native to Africa. For conflicting views on hunter-gatherer society in Southern Africa, see Alan Barnard, *Anthropology and the Bushman* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007).
- 15 The process of fission and replication may ensure freedom or militate against creative practice. People in frontiers may bring the model from the metropole and turn to it repetitively, so that the frontiers may ‘act as a culturally and ideologically conservative force’. Igor Kopytoff ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 14.
- 16 The Japanese biologist, Minakata Kumagusu, was attracted by the networked, centreless movement of slime mould. Tsurumi Kazuko, *Minakata Kumagusu no kosumoroji (Minakata Kumagusu’s Cosmology)* (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 1998).
- 17 The rise and fall of these urban settlements in Africa are discussed extensively in Graham Connah, *African Civilizations: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa: An Archaeological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Human organisations in the South seem to have resisted the emergence of states. Pierre Clastres, *La société contre l’État: Recherches d’anthropologie politique* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1974).
- 18 Great Zimbabwe and *gusuku* are registered as the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1986 and 2000 respectively.
- 19 Complex layers of history of Java and a larger Indonesia are described in Jean Gelman Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
- 20 This is a crude summary of his systematic argument. Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 21 A similar understanding was developed in Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- 22 See, for example, Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, eds., *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- 23 ‘It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit’. J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice:*

- A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1948), 304.
- 24 Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: D. Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1970), 5.
  - 25 This term ‘aloof coexistence’ was used in Cornelissen and Mine eds, *Migration and Agency*. As for the concept of habitat segregation (living together separately) in nature, see Imanishi Kinji, *A Japanese View of Nature: The World of Living Things*, trans. Pamela J. Asquith (London: Routledge, 2002).
  - 26 Chandran Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Kukathas and Philip Pettit provided a comprehensive review of the debate surrounding the Rawlsian theory of justice. Chandran Kukathas and Philip Pettit, *Rawls: A Theory of Justice and Its Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).
  - 27 Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago*, 28–29.
  - 28 These pre-colonial characteristics are captured in Kopytoff’s *The African Frontier*, as well as the classic on Southeast Asian history: Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680, Volume One: The Lands below the Winds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
  - 29 Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston, eds., *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Among the variables that influence institutional design, I give weight to history.
  - 30 Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976). Political pluralism was advocated by a host of scholars in various disciplines during the inter-war period. See, for example, Harold J. Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921).
  - 31 Thomas W. Malone, *The Future of Work: How the New Order of Business Will Shape Your Organization, Your Management Style, and Your Life* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004). Craig Murphy invoked Malone’s organizational insight to reconstruct the history of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Craig N. Murphy, *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better Way?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
  - 32 In English, ‘we might say it is to “hustle,” “strive,” “know how,” or “make do”’. ‘Resilience is inherently conservative – focused on bouncing back to a prior status quo. Kanju, by contrast, is generative – it’s about catapulting ahead’. Dayo Olopade, *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules and Making Change in Modern Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 21, 27.
  - 33 Bitange Ndemo and Tim Weiss, eds., *Digital Kenya: An Entrepreneurial Revolution in the Making* (London: Palgrave, 2017).
  - 34 Jonathan Hayness, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
  - 35 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).
  - 36 Malone, *The Future of Work*, 174.
  - 37 See also a reinterpretation of frontier traditions and conviviality in contemporary African contexts presented in Francis B. Nyamnjoh, ‘Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52, no. 3 (May 2017): 253–270.

## 6 Two scenarios

### Bifurcation path

In the previous chapter, I painted a somewhat optimistic picture of Afrasia's future from the perspective of the freedom and vigour of people on the move. However, depending on the choices to be made in the coming decades, conflict and mutual distrust may come to dominate Afrasia. While Afrasia is framed as a single community in my argument, this macro-region actually consists of two regions: Africa and Asia. The future of Afrasia can therefore be discussed in an inter-regional framework. Then, what will the relationship between Africa and Asia look like in the 22nd century? While several scenarios are conceivable, there are two crucial directions.<sup>1</sup>

The first is the path along which Afrasia splits internally into winners and losers. The rise of European capitalism was possible only with Europe's exploitation of silver in Latin America, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and then the colonisation of Afrasia. History may repeat itself. The beginning of the 21st century saw strong demand from China, Japan, and the emerging Asian economies for Africa's non-renewable natural resources including crude oil and rare metals. The export of mineral resources is advantageous in terms of earning foreign currency but is largely incapable of creating jobs. And, Northern countries suffering lower fertility rates beckon the Afrasian youth in.

Figure 6.1 shows the changing shares of fuel in total exports from Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa. Nigeria attained political independence in 1960 and has deepened its dependence on crude oil exports, which have accounted for more than 90 per cent of Nigeria's total exports since the 1970s. The Nigerian economy has been vitalised by generous oil revenues, thereby enlarging the space for *kanju*, as discussed in the previous chapter. In 2019, agriculture accounted for 22.1 per cent of Nigeria's GDP, mining and quarrying accounted for 8.9 per cent, manufacturing for 11.6 per cent, construction for 6.2 per cent, trade for 15.6 per cent, information and communication for 10.7 per cent, and real estate for 6.2 per cent. The expansion of the service industry in recent years has been remarkable.<sup>2</sup> However, in the same year, oil and liquefied natural gas still accounted for 76.6 per cent and 9.3 per cent of Nigeria's exports, respectively.<sup>3</sup> The diversification of the domestic industry has not been accompanied by a parallel multiplicity of export items.



Figure 6.1 Nigeria's Fuel Exports, 1962–2019

Source: World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/TX.VAL.FUEL.ZS.UN?locations=NG>

According to data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), FDI in Africa in 2020 was 67 billion dollars from the Netherlands, 66 billion dollars from Britain, 65 billion dollars from France, 44 billion dollars from China, and 43 billion dollars from the United States. While China's presence is becoming substantial, it is an exaggeration to say that the Chinese capital has been dominant in Africa. Egypt, the Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Nigeria were the main recipients of FDI in this order in 2020. Investment in countries like Ethiopia and Kenya with a strong manufacturing sector has been relatively stable, though the trends are affected by socio-political stability. On the other hand, when the prices of oil and other natural resources are on the downside, less FDI tends to be directed to countries such as Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>

In *Plagues and Peoples* (1976), the historian William H. McNeill used the keyword 'parasitism' to interpret human history.<sup>5</sup> A parasite sucks nutrients from the host while keeping it alive. At the stage of taking the life of the original host, the parasitic organism may have already relocated to a new host. McNeill argues that individual humans are exposed not only to microparasites such as harmful pathogens but also to macroparasites that are other humans. There was a saying in

feudal Japan that goes like this: ‘We [the lords] don’t let peasants live, nor do we kill them’; parasites that are too lethal are not very infectious, because they terminate the life of their hosts too quickly so that they cannot survive long enough to find their next prey. The system in which foreign rulers take over surplus agricultural products is a typical form of macroparasitism. Historically, the process by which Western powers monopolised natural and human resources in their colonies and used them to accumulate their own wealth was precisely a form of macroparasitism on a global scale. Contrary to what dependency theory teaches, in terms of the transfer of resources, it is the West that was dependent on the rest of the world at the zenith of colonialism.

Just as the human body acquires immunity against microparasites such as germs and viruses, human societies have developed similar immune systems to mitigate global macroparasitism. In the 1970s, when developing countries in the South were united under the banner of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), international schemes to stabilise the incomes of resource-exporting countries were discussed and implemented by the European Economic Community (EEC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and they worked to some extent.<sup>6</sup> Now that the nations of the South are divided, international organisations’ past experiments with global safeguards against price volatility and unequal exchange have been largely forgotten.

As a result, Afrasia’s crops and natural resources are about to become the subject of financial speculation. The act of buying and selling goods for the sole purpose of making a profit from short-term price changes is called speculation, but it is highly problematic to make food that is indispensable for human life the object of such activities. It is known that in 2008 and 2011, international prices for soybeans and wheat more than doubled in a short period. Without effective regulation, climate change and a growing population in Africa may attract more speculators to global food markets. On the other hand, the expansion of shale oil and gas production in the United States and the natural gas export from Russia is raising the possibility that the financial flow to oil-producing countries in the Middle East and Africa could dwindle.

If the global economy were to experience another financial crisis or a sudden collapse in commodity prices, even Asia’s already diversified economies will be forced to make a serious adjustment, while the formal economies of African countries that depend on the export of a limited range of resources could be devastated with no room for technical adjustment. If parasitism of living organs continues for a prolonged period, the host may lose physical power, and its life may be terminated due to a minor illness. Thus, we may anticipate a possible future bifurcation of Afrasia into surviving countries and those plunged into dire straits.

### **Convergence path**

Instead of the bifurcation direction, we can also consider the alternative path of convergence of Afrasia’s economic and social structures. The key trend in this regard is that Africa’s population will increase fivefold in the 21st century, or,

setting aside exact numbers, at least that we expect to witness massive population growth in Africa in the coming decades. As Figures 0.2 to 0.4 show, Asia and Africa in 2100 are expected to have about the same size of the population living in about the same size of the area. Accordingly, as Figures 2.5 and 2.6 indicate, the two regions' population density will become almost the same. The physical conditions of a small population world where people can move freely to an open frontier to avoid conflict will eventually be lost in all major parts of Afrasia.

On this point, the historian John Iliffe offered a pioneering argument in his book *The African Poor: A History* (1987).<sup>7</sup> In densely populated societies in Asia and Europe, it is people without access to land and other hereditary property who constituted the poor classes. In places where scarce factors of production came to be monopolised and inherited by powerful groups, the hierarchical order of the rich and poor began to be reproduced and passed down through generations. This is *structural poverty*. Contrastively, in societies where land was abundant, and therefore population was relatively scarce, the poor classes consisted not of those who had no property (in theory, all people have access to some portions of land open for cultivation and grazing) but of those who were unable to work by utilising such resources. The major pattern was that those who were ejected from mutual aid networks for some reason and were unable to make a living on their own – e.g., the disabled, elderly, and small children – fell into acute poverty, which could be intensified in the process of natural calamities such as famines, though those vulnerable people could have maintained minimum subsistence during regular times. This is called *conjunctural poverty*.

However, African society is also undergoing rapid change. As Iliffe noted at the end of his work, Southern Africa in the 20th century began to be haunted by structural poverty in the form of poor families being reproduced across generations, as vast tracts of land were owned by white settlers (and now by local African dignitaries as well).<sup>8</sup> We witness the emergence of structural poverty or family poverty caused by land scarcity in parts of Africa, similarly to Asia and Europe. The shape of African society in the future may therefore become closer to the shape of Indian society today.

Potentially, this may be not only a problem but also a disguised blessing. If we invest sufficiently in the health and education of the expanding young population, and if the imperatives of food production and inclusive rural development are not neglected, the scenario of Africa following an Asian-style labour-intensive path of industrialisation could become a feasible option despite rapid population growth, or rather, just because of it.<sup>9</sup> When Africa begins to produce higher value-added commodities on a large scale, some unwelcome characteristics of African governance, such as the weak capacity of state authorities to capture taxpayers, may also change. A country like densely populated Rwanda that seeks top-down economic growth may provide a realistic model for other African countries.

However, every institution has its own inertia. It is unlikely that people's norms and behavioural patterns, which have been consolidated over thousands of years in response to the characteristics of small population worlds, will change instantly with just a few decades of population expansion. An apprenticeship system in

which people acquire specific skills diligently over time in specific workshops is supposed to be essential to the development of the manufacturing industry. However, a society with a high degree of human mobility may be better suited to producing IT engineers rather than training factory workers on production lines. It is critical to note that ‘leapfrog’ processes often occur in the advancement of technologies.<sup>10</sup> It is absurd to say that one should not use mobile phones before society goes through the technological evolution from postal mail to telegrams to landline telephones (exactly in this sequence). Where villages are separated from each other and the cost of pulling power lines is high, mobile phones could be the right choice from the beginning in terms of appropriate technology. Africa’s growth industry may jump from agriculture to the IT industry.

### Open questions

Then, which is the realistic path for Africa and Asia: divergence or convergence? Depending on the time frame, developments along both lines will give concrete shape to the economy and society of future Afrasia. Malthus’s population theory assumes that as population increases, resources per capita become scarce and people become destitute. However, in *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* (1965), Ester Boserup presented possibilities for different sequences. She argued that in a society burdened with rapid population growth, people might try to increase production by opening up new land, shortening fallow periods, making intensive use of the land, and adopting new agricultural techniques. In this perspective, population growth is the independent variable, while innovation is the dependent variable.<sup>11</sup>

Albert O. Hirschman had presented Boserup’s argument in a more general way in *The Strategy of Economic Development* (1958). Those who are concerned that their standard of living will be lowered by a growing population may try to better organise their own society to keep the same level of wealth per person. Moreover, the effort to maintain a standard of living against adversity and the effort to improve it in normal times are qualitatively indistinguishable. A person who ascends a downward moving escalator in reverse may stay in the same place, but the one who has strengthened his legs in this way will be able to climb the stairs with more force; similarly, a person who has trained herself to swim against a river’s current will be able to swim farther and faster where there is no current. In the real world, people make efforts to maintain the level of their livelihoods only when crises (e.g., demographic or climate challenges) are perceived as ‘sudden shocks’. If a change is too slow, people may not want to take any specific action.<sup>12</sup>

It is not pre-ordained whether or not an adaptive virtuous cycle such as those depicted by Hirschman and Boserup will occur. If we are overwhelmed by the magnitude of a crisis we face, we may give up trying to cope with it and accept fate. Whichever route is eventually taken, it is essentially important to develop capacity and cultivate our problem-solving ability.

This is what makes Jared Diamond’s deterministic logic as straitjacketing as it is compelling. There may have been radically different, alternative developments

in world history. In *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not* (2011), the Indian-born economic historian Prasannan Parthasarathi argued, echoing Pomerantz's reasoning, that the institutional characteristics as well as the socio-economic levels of developed regions in Britain and India in the 17th and 18th centuries were remarkably similar. The principal factors that catapulted Britain into the Industrial Revolution were the fear of being overwhelmed by Indian cotton products as well as the environmental constraints posed by deforestation.<sup>13</sup> Britain's rapid economic growth beginning in the 18th century could be a consequence of its reaction to the urgent threats; the Industrial Revolution was a kind of overreaction to a possible scenario of Indian products sweeping Europe. In other words, the British economic miracle was realised as a result of trying to climb the escalator in reverse.

### Crises to be addressed

A host of issues need to be resolved utilising the collective wisdom of the Afrasian people. If only to fix the Malthusian problem of food shortages, improving agricultural productivity would suffice.

Figure 6.2 shows the proportion of the workers employed in the agricultural sector by country. In many places in tropical Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, the primary industries absorb more than 30 per cent of the workforce, which means that Afrasia is principally an agrarian region. However, given that agricultural modernisation tends to reduce employment in the countryside, if urban manufacturing and service industries do not develop simultaneously, young people have nowhere to go and may end up in slums around cities. Indeed, as Figure 6.3 shows, there is already a multitude of countries in Africa and the Middle East that are haunted by chronically high unemployment rates comparable to those in Southern Europe.

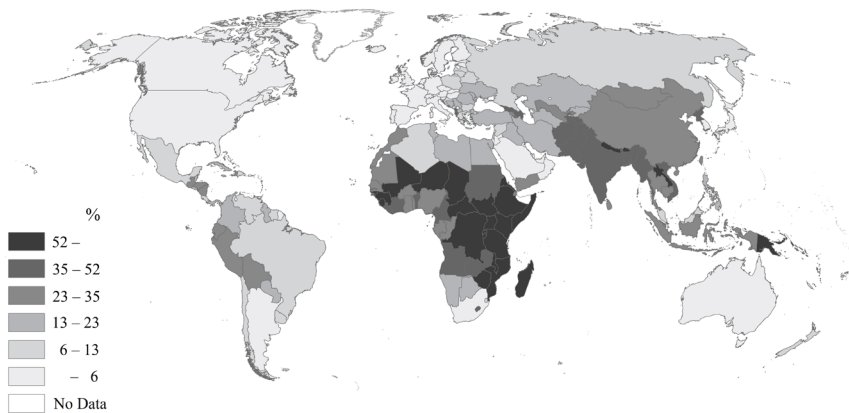
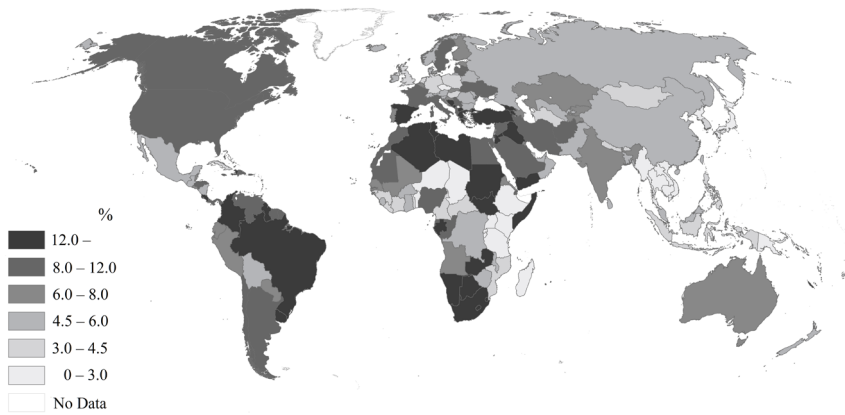


Figure 6.2 Employment in Agriculture, 2019

Source: World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS>



*Figure 6.3* Unemployment Rate, 2020

Source: World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sl.uem.totl.zs>

If the world's population grows by 1.7 times in the 21st century as presented in Figure 1.8, food production in Afrasia should be promoted through labour-absorbing rural development. However, this is where the massive threat of climate change comes in.

As clearly shown in Figure 6.4, agriculture in tropical Afrasia is expected to take the brunt of environmental damage caused by industrialisation in the rest of the world. There are several possible directions for future climate change. Figure 6.4 shows the likely change in the average production of major grain crops (i.e., wheat, rice, and maize) from the 1970–2000 baseline to 2080, which is based on the B2 greenhouse gas emissions scenario (B2A is a variant of B2) calculated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The B2 scenario is premised on one of the UNDESA population projections that the world's population will reach around 10 billion by the end of the 21st century, as well as on the moderate assumption of global political economy that the trend of regionalism will take precedence over globalisation.

There are four main IPCC scenarios for climate change including B2. Whichever way it goes, the prediction that the tropical regions of Afrasia will face a particularly severe harvest decline is common to all scenarios; the pattern shown in Figure 6.4 applies to all others. If agricultural technology is held constant and average temperatures continue to rise, sustainable livelihoods are likely to be threatened across Afrasia except for East and Southeast Asia. Before making an issue of the backwardness of tropical agriculture, temperate countries must take responsibility for the devastating effects of their industrialisation on the tropics.

In tackling the global food problem, we may want to seek a path that differs from the conventional solution of spreading high-calorie diets to 'starving'

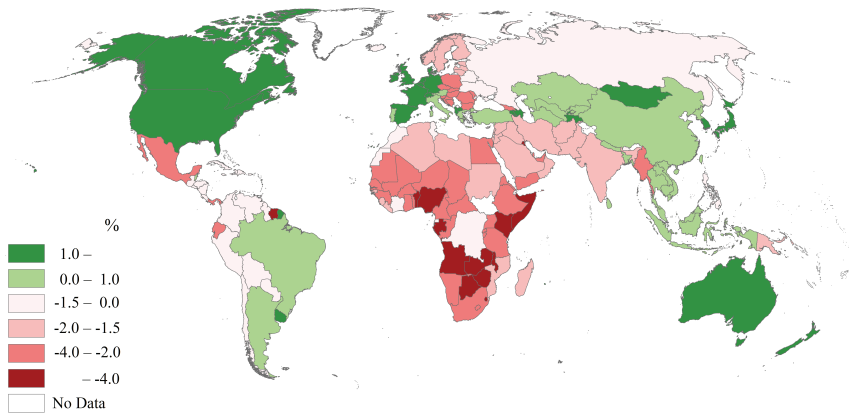


Figure 6.4 Climate Impact on Crop Production (B2A), 1970–2000 (Baseline) and 2080

Source: <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/crop-climate-effects-climate-global-food-production/>  
 A. Iglesias and C. Rosensweig, 'Effects of Climate Change on Global Food Production from SRES Emissions and Socioeconomic Scenarios', NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC), 2009; M.L. Parry et al., 'Effects of Climate Change on Global Food Production under SRES Emissions and Socio-economic Scenarios', *Global Environmental Change* 14, no. 1 (April 2004): 53–67.

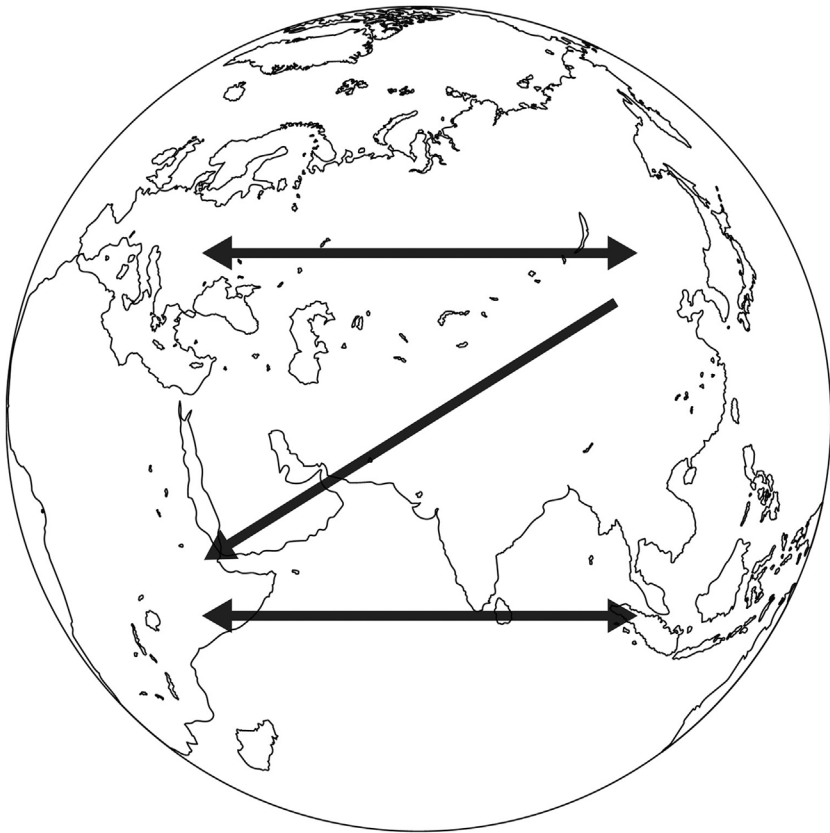
countries. A comprehensive study of the food consumed by people in 187 countries was conducted in 2010. Six African countries – Seychelles, Mauritius, Chad, Central Africa, Mali, and Cabo Verde – were listed among the top ten countries consuming the largest amount of ten nutritionally healthy items (beans, fish, milk, vegetables, fruits, etc.). Seven African countries – Burundi, Rwanda, Malawi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sierra Leone – were listed among the top ten countries consuming the least amount of seven nutritionally unhealthy items (red meat, processed meat, sugary drinks, fat, etc.).<sup>14</sup> Some but not all of these are countries in poverty. One might consider the possibility that in the future, the people of the world will shift towards a healthier, African-type diet. It is not just development failures that we see in contemporary Africa.

### Towards an equitable future

As we discussed in Chapter 4, Europe at the western end of the Eurasian continent and East Asia at its eastern end have entered an age of rebalancing. The BRI seeks to enhance Eurasia's horizontal connectivity and revitalise competitive economic activities across the continent, extending its influence over South and Central Asia, which lie halfway between the two ends. On the other hand, as we discussed in Chapter 5, Africa and Southeast Asia have retained characteristics of mobile small population worlds that are not necessarily compatible with the centralised, hierarchical systems of governance developed in the East and the West.

Figure 6.5 provides an overview of these discussions. While the ‘axis of Eurasian competition’ between the two power centres, the West and the East, is drawn on the upper side of the globe, the ‘axis of Afrasian resonance’ between the continental world of Africa and the maritime world of Southeast Asia is drawn on the lower side of the globe.

As part of the greater East Asian economy, Southeast Asia has been placed on a steady growth trajectory by the end of the 20th century. Then, what kinds of relationships are the East Asian and the South Asian growth centres expected to develop with their African partners? Asia should not seek hegemony over Africa, parasitise Africa, or deprive Africa of freedom; the question is whether Asians are prepared to carry out these principles. Industrialising African countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya have demanded that China and other Asian economies should not only buy natural resources but also develop local human resources and create jobs. In Figure 6.5, Afrasia’s global connectivity is represented in the form of a



*Figure 6.5* ‘Z’ Axis of Eurasia and Afrasia

Source: Author

‘Z’ by drawing a diagonal line from the top right to the bottom left to complete the relationships. This line can be called the ‘axis of responsibility’. In a team of climbers, the one who happens to have climbed the rock first will lend a helping hand to the one who climbs next. Comradely responsibility for transferring technology and providing development finance while respecting autonomy should be distinguished from paternalism.<sup>15</sup>

Morality grounded in global history does not allow powerful nations to dominate small nations and plunder the wealth of the latter again. No Afrasian with the slightest knowledge of the history of Western colonialism would condone a possible intensification of macroparasitism in the macro-region. Afrasia is not a place where some nations assert hegemony; rather, it is one where Africans and Asians come face to face and organise dialogue for the future. The foundational ethics of this dialogue lies in the principle that all peoples and individuals living in Afrasia should avoid repeating history and instead work together, coexist, and prosper. To confirm the importance of this principle, we will look back in Part III at how the intellectual leaders of Africa and Asia reacted to colonial macroparasitism in the 20th century.

## Notes

- 1 As for the future prospect of inter-regionalism, see Björn Hettne, ‘The New Regionalism Revisited’, in *Theories of New Regionalism*, ed. Fredrik Söderbaum and Timothy M. Shaw (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Heiner Hänggi, Ralf Roloff, and Jürgen Rüland, eds., *Interregionalism and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2006); Timothy M. Shaw, J. Andrew Grant, and Scarlett Cornelissen, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).
- 2 National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria), *Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report – Q1 2020*. <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary>
- 3 World Integrated Trade Solutions. <https://wits.worldbank.org/>
- 4 UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), *World Investment Report 2021* (Geneva: United Nations, 2021).
- 5 McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 23–34.
- 6 The institution could also function as a tool for patron/client relations. John Ravenhill, *Collective Clientelism: The Lomé Conventions and North-South Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
- 7 It may be somewhat difficult, however, for Afrasians to identify with the self-sacrifice of Albert Schweitzer which, according to Iliffe, ‘validated Western civilization for a generation of young Europeans’ (Iliffe, *The African Poor*, 258).
- 8 *The African Poor*, chap. 14. See also John Iliffe, *The Emergence of African Capitalism: The Anstey Memorial Lectures in the University of Kent at Canterbury 10–13 May 1982* (London: Macmillan, 1983).
- 9 Gareth Austin, ‘Labour-Intensity and Manufacturing in West Africa, c.1450-c.2000’, in *Labour-Intensive Industrialization in Global History*, ed. Gareth Austin and Sugihara Kaoru (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 201–230.
- 10 Albert O. Hirschman, *Development Projects Observed* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1967), 153.
- 11 Ester Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965).

- 12 Albert O. Hirschman, *The Strategy of Economic Development* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 176–182. For the sake of safety, please do not play on the escalator!
- 13 Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- 14 Imamura Fumiaki et al., ‘Dietary Quality among Men and Women in 187 Countries in 1990 and 2010: A Systematic Assessment’, *The Lancet Global Health* 3, no. 3 (2015): 132–142.
- 15 When discussing this part with graduate students in classroom, a Filipino student argued that such a responsibility should be distinguished clearly from so-called civilising mission, while a Nigerian student indicated that Africans should also think of taking responsibility for Asian development so that the arrow in the centre could be reciprocal. Discussion in my class continues. In the early 1980s, in the context of futures studies, the significance of Africa’s self-reliance was emphasised in Timothy M. Shaw, ed., *Alternative Futures for Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1982).

**Part III**

**The age of Afrasia**



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## 7 The genesis of pan-regionalism

### The Bandung Conference

In the future, Afrasia may end up with an intensification of Asia's macroparasitism on Africa. If Asia and Africa cooperate, mutual benefits can be promoted. Yet, were it not for the tangible benefit for the parties involved, a relationship driven only by ideology would not last long. On the other hand, if there is no shared value between actors, only short-term gains would prevail, and long-term relationships would lose ground. How can we envision a path to a trustful relationship that enables Afrasia to avoid a bifurcation scenario?

In history, there have been numerous occasions on which critical change in national and global regimes took place on the basis of moral decisions. For instance, Britain decided to abolish slavery in its colonies in 1833. In addition to the cost-benefit calculation such that the capitalist system would be more profitable than slavery, the criticism of slavery by the Christian churches played a key role.<sup>1</sup> The founding of the UN in 1945 and the emergence of the post-war world order were rooted in the international community's sincere regret for having allowed the rise of fascism.<sup>2</sup> The oil crisis of 1973 was motivated not only by the intentions of the resource-exporting countries to maximise revenue but also by developing countries' resentment of the ingrained disparity between the North and the South that lingered after political independence.<sup>3</sup> One of the driving forces behind recent international efforts concerning climate change is a shared sense of responsibility to pass on a more secure world to the next generation.<sup>4</sup> While ethics does not explain everything, its power and potential should not be underestimated.

The historic Asia-Africa Conference (known as the Bandung Conference) was held in Bandung, Indonesia, from 18 to 24 April 1955. The conference was an opportunity for the heads of the newly independent Asian and African states to come together as collective representatives of equal sovereign nations and discuss their common future. A total of 29 countries formally participated in the conference, consisting of 23 Asian nations and 6 African nations (Ghana, Liberia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Libya). Together, these countries already represented a half of the global population at the time. It should be noted that Africa's weak presence was because most nations in sub-Saharan Africa had not yet attained

independence in 1955. Brazil's participation from Latin America as an observer was appreciated by the Afrasian nations.

Despite their shared distance from the socialist bloc, the organisers of the conference, especially Indonesia, were at pains to incorporate Maoist China into the Bandung framework. The conference's host was President Sukarno, who was at the helm of independent Indonesia and had also been relying on the balance of power between the army and the communists. A passage from President Sukarno's keynote speech at the conference follows.

For many generations our peoples have been the voiceless ones in the world. We have been the unregarded, the peoples for whom decisions were made by others whose interests were paramount, the peoples who lived in poverty and humiliation. Then our nations demanded, nay fought for independence, and achieved independence, and with that independence came responsibility. We have heavy responsibilities to ourselves, and to the world, and to the yet unborn generations. But we do not regret them.<sup>5</sup>

China was represented by Zhou Enlai, India by Jawaharlal Nehru, and Egypt by Gamal Abdul Nasser. Although the second reunion was not convened for several decades afterwards, the original conference in 1955 affirmed the principle of equal sovereignty among the diverse nations in Afrasia and their reciprocal cooperation, opposed all forms of colonial intervention, and eventually gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement.<sup>6</sup> The Ten Principles of Peace adopted at the conference endorsed respect for the UN Charter and fundamental human rights, as well as the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In the 21st century, the spirit of Bandung that once receded into history textbooks is being reactivated. The second Bandung Conference of 106 states was held in 2005, and the third, the 60th Anniversary Conference Summit of 109 states, took place in April 2015. Now, the group of Bandung is deemed the largest regional organisation, even though it remains a loose, ad hoc alliance of nations with no permanent secretariat.

The historical symbolism of Bandung still stands out as the first instance of the framing of a broad Afrasian regional group based on a binding spirit of self-reliance. For the rest of this chapter, let us make a cursory overview of the cross-border pan-nationalist ethos propounded by great intellectuals in 20th-century Afrasia to highlight the keynote aspirations underlying the spirit of Bandung. These individuals advocated not only the liberation of a particular nation-state but also the emancipation of humankind by means of horizontal, broad-based solidarity of the people in the South.

### **The idea of pan-Asianism**

Let us begin with Asia. The great Indian thinker, Rabindranath Tagore, visited China in 1924 to give a series of lectures on his vision for the future of Asia. It appears that his Chinese counterparts were politically cautious and did not

necessarily welcome his visit. Before travelling to China, having witnessed the horrendous violence of the First World War, Tagore stated that 'the spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and in the centre of Western nationalism' and warned against the acceptance of such a spirit by India and Japan.<sup>7</sup> In one of his lectures during his visit to China, Tagore referred to an anecdote of British airmen at a crash-landing site being rescued by local people in a Mahsud village in Afghanistan, which had been attacked by the very same British aircraft. Then, comparing the bomber to an expensive 'toy' given to a child, he made a point.

Man's ideal has for its field of activity the whole human nature from its depth to its height. The light of this ideal is gentle because diffused, its life is subdued because all-embracing. It is serene because it is great; it is meek because it is comprehensive. But our passion is narrow; its limited field gives in an intensity of impulse. Such an aggressive force of greed has of late possessed the western mind. This has happened within a very short period, and has created a sudden deluge of things smothering all time and space over the earth.<sup>8</sup>

Tagore's message evokes the spirit of his contemporary, Mohandas Gandhi. In the same speech, Tagore warned his Chinese audience: 'I am sure you know that this soulless progeny of greed has already opened its elastic jaws wide over the fair limb of your country, wider perhaps than in any other part of the world'.<sup>9</sup>

The spirituality of Asian civilisations was asserted by the Japanese pan-Asianist, Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzo), a sworn friend of Tagore. Born in Yokohama, Okakura was a nationalist-cum-cosmopolitan art critic who worked for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the United States.<sup>10</sup> Few other Japanese nationalists could express opinions fluently in English. Okakura commenced the first chapter of his *The Ideals of the East* (1903) with a resounding statement.

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilisations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment that broad expanse of love for the Ultimate and Universal, which is the common thought-inheritance of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from those maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life.<sup>11</sup>

In this text, China and India are regarded as the core civilisations of Asia, while Okakura's contempt for European 'maritime peoples' sounds strange because his own Japanese people, as well as Southeast Asians, are also exemplary 'maritime' peoples with dynamic polytheistic cultures.

In the early 20th century, the idea of pan-Asianism was shared among many East Asian intellectuals including Li Dazhao, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1924, the same year that Tagore visited China, Sun Yat-sen,

the Chinese revolutionary, delivered a passionate lecture on pan-Asianism in Kobe, Japan.

Now, what is the problem that underlies Pan-Asianism, the Principle of Greater Asia, which we are discussing here to-day? Briefly, it is a cultural problem, a problem of comparison and conflict between the Oriental and Occidental culture and civilization. Oriental civilization is the rule of Right; Occidental civilization is the rule of Might. The rule of Right respects benevolence and virtue, while the rule of Might only respects force and utilitarianism. The rule of Right always influences people with justice and reason, while the rule of Might always oppresses people with brute force and military measures.<sup>12</sup>

Before and after this part of his speech, Sun Yat-sen praised the East Asian tributary system that centred on China. ‘Great Britain, on the other hand, is a powerful country, but Nepal has been influenced by Chinese civilization, which, in her eyes, is the true civilization, while that of Britain is nothing but the rule of Might’. Sun concluded this lecture with a message to the Japanese audience

Japan to-day has become acquainted with the Western civilization of the rule of Might, but retains the characteristics of the Oriental civilization of the rule of Right. Now the question remains whether Japan will be the hawk of the Western civilization of the rule of Might, or the tower of strength of the Orient. This is the choice which lies before the people of Japan.

The question was which side the Japanese were going to take – the Western Might or the Eastern Right. As the chimeral imperial power on the Far Eastern Front of the Second World War, Japan eventually plunged into a destructive war with its neighbours and the Western Allies. In contemporary times, this provocation of Sun can also be directed, by implication, towards all countries that are successfully industrialising in Afrasia.

### **The idea of pan-Africanism**

The history of ideas about regional unity is older in Africa than in Asia; setting aside a few isolated encounters, Western attempts at dominating Africa began in the 15th century. Given the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the depth and length of Western colonial rule in Africa, the discourse of pan-Africanism is more abundant and articulate than that of pan-Asianism, making meticulous citations almost redundant. In the foreign lands of the Americas and Europe, people from the African continent were able to communicate in the colonial languages despite their diverse origins. The First Pan-African Conference was organised by Henry Sylvester-Williams in London in 1900, then the First Pan-African Congress by W. E. B. Du Bois in Paris in 1919, followed by a series of gatherings that took place in various parts of Western Europe and North America in the 1920s.

The galaxy of advocates of pan-Africanism includes Marcus Garvey, C. L. R. James, and George Padmore.

Let us first take up the words of the Afro-Caribbean poet Aimé Césaire. Born in Martinique, Césaire was a leader of the literature movement *négritude* that radically combined surrealism with Marxism based on the anti-colonial ethos to give voice to black African intellectuals. Though he is sometimes misunderstood as a banal humanist due to an out-of-context translation of his work, Césaire eloquently denounced the evil of colonialism and Eurocentrism in 1955, the very year of the Bandung Conference.

I note . . . that colonial enterprise is to the modern world what Roman imperialism was to the ancient world: the prelude to Disaster and the forerunner of Catastrophe. Come, now! The Indians massacred, the Moslem world drained of itself, the Chinese world defiled and perverted for a good century; the Negro world disqualified; mighty voices stilled forever; homes scattered to the wind; all this wreckage, all this waste, humanity reduced to a monologue, and you think all that does not have its price? The truth is that this policy *cannot but bring about the ruin of Europe itself*, and that Europe, if it is not careful, will perish from the void it has created around itself. (Italics in original)<sup>13</sup>

Rereading this text today, the phrase ‘the ruin of Europe itself’ appears to have predicted the vicious cycle of military intervention and avenging violence we witnessed in the early 21st century. Although Césaire’s criticism of European arrogance is poignant, the beauty of his French is extraordinary.

While the Bandung Conference was attended by only six African states, 34 states became independent from 1956 to 1965 and 11 more from 1966 to 1975. The gravity of pan-Africanism has shifted from the diaspora world to the mother continent, and Caribbean pan-Africanist thinkers such as George Padmore and W. Arthur Lewis crossed the Atlantic and served as advisors to Kwame Nkrumah of independent Ghana. Compared to East Asia where the Cold War confrontation was so manifest in the Korean War and the Vietnam War, Africa seems to have been better positioned to tap into the frame of the Non-Alignment Movement to promote African unity. The president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, attempted to construct new villages based on *Ujamaa* (family-like solidarity) partly inspired by the philosophy of self-reliance in Maoist China. In his 1962 book *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, Nyerere described the spirit of Tanzania’s post-independence social revolution in the following way.

‘UJAMAA’, then, or ‘familyhood’, describes our Socialism. It is opposed to Capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the Exploitation of Man by Man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire Socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of Inevitable Conflict between Man and Man. We, in Africa, have no more need of being ‘converted’ to socialism than we have of being ‘taught’ democracy. Both are rooted in our own past – in the traditional society which produced us.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, collective action across villages had not been a widespread practice in rural Africa, including Tanzania, and in this sense, the *Ujamaa* community was an ‘imagined community’ rather than an extension of village reality. Although Nyerere’s reform was not very successful in the short term, the philosophy of *Ujamaa* as a general design for the public sphere based on communal intimacy laid the foundation for Tanzania’s post-independence political stability.<sup>15</sup>

The pan-African thought nurtured by Africans both in the diaspora world and on the African continent was synthesised by Steve Biko who advocated Black Consciousness in apartheid South Africa. Inspired by the writings of Frantz Fanon, Sékou Touré, Kenneth Kaunda, Robert Sobukwe, and other pan-Africanist thinkers as well as the Hegelian master–servant dialectic, Biko argued that African humanity would make a critical contribution to the world. In 1977, he was tortured and killed at the age of 30.

We reject the power-based society of the Westerner that seems to be ever concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension. We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great power of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.<sup>16</sup>

Although Biko’s ideas have been revisited much in South Africa after apartheid, his original texts still stand out for their density and urgency.

### **The germ of pan-Regionalist ideas**

As we read through the writings of 20th-century Afrasian thinkers including the seven intellectuals whose texts have been quoted in this chapter, the threefold common ethos can be gleaned. First, fierce criticism of Western values and behaviours was shared by all these thinkers. Vices such as the use of military offensives and domination as well as material greed were all associated with something intrinsically Western. These were not, and should not be, the property of Asian and African peoples and their civilisations. The strong anti-Western attitudes these individuals assumed may appear to be too bitter and confrontational today. As a historical fact, however, we should not forget how humiliating the experience of persisting subjugation and parasitism was at the time of the wakening of Afrasian intellectuals in the last century.

Second, the contribution of individual cultures to universal values was highly regarded. In other words, it was hoped that individual cultures would present a framework to visualise alternative forms of universal values. In contrast to the loftiness of the Western culture, African and Asian cultures that were manifest at the level of village convention, as well as the customs of ‘tea’, ‘family’, and more recently, ‘*ubuntu*’, were all presented in relational face-to-face contexts.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, such a culture did not merely confront the perceived vices of the West but was meant

to have a potentially universal meaning that would unfold the dream that the particular culture would ultimately contribute to the liberation of the entire human race. The quintessence of these thinkers' voices was to combine nationalism and humanism with the expectation that an assertion of particular values would ultimately enrich the universal human values.<sup>18</sup>

The third element commonly espoused by Afrasian thinkers was related to the expanse of space. They advocated unifying values of Asia or Africa that were expected to surpass parochial national interests, and in this sense, they were not so much nationalists as pan-nationalists (pan-Africanists or pan-Asianists). Although reactive nationalism began with the self-assertion of one's own values against hegemonic powers, the articulation of nationalism often reached beyond a mere expression of narrow territorial identification. Afrasian thinkers dreamt of the liberation of Africa beyond the liberation of Ghana and of the liberation of Asia beyond the liberation of India. The national interest could be best addressed by presenting agendas that transcend narrow national interests. It was hoped that the newly born Afrasian nations would enter the modern system of sovereign equality, while concurrently transcending the modern nation-state system.

It must be remembered that the pan-nationalist discourses presented in this chapter were subject to the constraints of their times. The seven persons whose narratives were quoted in this chapter are all men, but the pan-nationalists of the 21st century may have women in their midst, or otherwise, it may be only men who are animated by big, sometimes empty stories. Unfortunately, it is also evident that few small nations were represented in these narratives. Although the spirit of Bandung embraced both pan-Asianism and pan-Africanism, the group of Bandung was no more than a coalition of newly independent nation-states. The nickname of widely respected Nyerere was Mwalim (teacher). The political leaders of post-independent Afrasia were expected to fulfil pedagogical roles as benign teachers to guide their people in the separate classrooms of new sovereign nations.<sup>19</sup>

In the 21st century, the spirit of Bandung that once receded into history textbooks is being reactivated. In 2005 and 2015, the Afrasian nations gathered again in Bandung. Perhaps the reason for these reunions is that the dream is perceived to be unfinished and that the assemblage is still expected to play some positive role towards its accomplishment. Pan-nationalism takes the form of regionalism, and when multiple regionalisms meet with each other, pan-regionalism is born. Remember that there was a rare moment in Indonesia in the middle of the 20th century when African regionalism and Asian regionalism encountered, resonated, and discovered themselves in the image of the other. The germ of a broad community came into existence.

## Notes

- 1 See the classic: Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).
- 2 Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); John Gerard

- Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
- 3 The potential of the idea of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) is vividly described in Craig Murphy, *The Emergence of the NIEO Ideology* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984).
  - 4 For the ethical basis for fighting climate change, see Des Gasper, 'Climate Change: The Need for a Human Rights Agenda within a Framework of Shared Human Security', *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 983–1014.
  - 5 President Sukarno's opening address to the Bandung conference. Quoted in Kweku Ampiah, *The Political and Moral Imperatives of the Bandung Conference of 1955: The Reactions of the US, UK and Japan* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007), 234.
  - 6 *The Political and Moral Imperatives*. See also See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008); Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010); Luis Eslava, Michael Fakhri, and Vasuki Nesiah, eds., *Bandung, Global History, and International Law: Critical Pasts and Pending Futures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
  - 7 Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 33.
  - 8 Rabindranath, Tagore, *Talks in China: Lectures Delivered in April and May, 1924* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2002), 133.
  - 9 Tagore, *Talks in China*, 138.
  - 10 Brij Tankha, ed., *Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism: Shadows of the Past* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009).
  - 11 Okakura Kakuzo, *The Ideals of the East: With Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (London: J. Murray, 1903), 1.
  - 12 Sun Yat-sen, 'Pan-Asianism', 1924. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Sun\\_Yat-sen's\\_speech\\_on\\_Pan-Asianism](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Sun_Yat-sen's_speech_on_Pan-Asianism)
  - 13 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 75.
  - 14 Nyerere, Julius K. Nyerere, '*Ujamaa*': *The Basis of African Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Taganyika Standard, 1962).
  - 15 Nyerere is widely respected by Tanzanians, even though his bureaucracy failed to 'capture' the Tanzanian peasantry and to rally them to the national socialist cause of *Ujamaa*. Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (London: Heinemann, 1980). See also James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
  - 16 Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like: A Selection of His Writings* (London: Heinemann, 1978), 46–47.
  - 17 Recently, the concept of *ubuntu* as an indigenous value system common to sub-Saharan Africa has been discovered by philosophers. Its similarities with the Chinese Confucian philosophy are noted in Daniel A. Bell and Thaddeus Metz, 'Confucianism and Ubuntu: Reflections on a Dialogue between Chinese and African Traditions', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38, no. s1 (December 2011): 78–95.
  - 18 For the dialectic interaction between the 'particular' and the 'universal', see Mao Tse-Tung, *On Practice and Contradiction* (London: Verso, 2007).
  - 19 Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture', in *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, ed. Christopher J. Lee (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 45–68.

## 8 Religions in Afrasia

### Afrasia's node

The rationale for binding Afrasia together lies in a collective desire to avoid the recurrence of the colonial experience in any part of the world. Remembering world history from the past centuries, Afrasians resolve that no one should deprive others of freedom, parasitise others, or seek hegemony over others. As we think of the vision and principle over 100 years hereafter, we must draw lessons from the past 100 years. This is why we discussed the pan-nationalist discourses that swept across Asia and Africa in the 20th century in the previous chapter.

At the turn of the 21st century, the anti-Western sentiment was gaining force prominently in the Islamic world. In *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996), Samuel Huntington predicted that in the post-Cold War era, major conflicts would arise along fault lines between different civilisations; political tensions were expected to intensify between the culturally defined Western, Islamic, and Confucian worlds rather than between the ideologically defined West–East regimes.<sup>1</sup> In the phenomenon of a so-called self-fulfilling prophecy, once a prediction is made about a specific outcome, whether positive or negative, this may be realised because those who believe that the outcome will be eventually realised take actions aligned with such a goal.<sup>2</sup> For example, when customers panic when they hear rumours that their bank is about to go bankrupt, they withdraw their deposits, and the bank may go bankrupt regardless of whether the initial assumption was right or wrong. Similarly, one may become obsessed with the idea that the final religious war is inevitable, and such a notion then begins to be accepted by a significant number of people. Due to their behaviours, the trust between different faith communities is undermined, and as a result, the conflict between religious groups may really escalate and grow out of control.

The notion that others are coming against us is explained in terms of group psychology. During the Cold War period, the security dilemma attracted the keen attention of policy and military strategists: country A perceives country B as preparing to deploy a new set of missiles and starts preparing to set up its own missiles in self-defence; B interprets A as building up its ability to attack B and starts building up its missile system; seeing this, A attempts to develop weapons further, and B reciprocates. Thus, the cycle of mutual distrust and arms race becomes

intensified and even uncontrollable, and the probability of accidental discharge of missiles increases. In the Cold War period, the nuclear powers, being trapped in such a security dilemma and aware that either party could pull the trigger on an apocalyptic third world war, elaborated a series of analyses of these situations and made efforts towards confidence building, information sharing, and strategic dialogue on the flipside of embarking on an arms drive.

A variant of the security dilemma is observed in the relationship between the West and the Islamic world.<sup>3</sup> Mutual religious distrust involving local citizens is beginning to spread from Western society to other parts of the world. The underlying situation is that the Middle East and North Africa, the node of Afrasia, have been ripped apart by the repeated intervention of Western powers that continued even after the end of the Cold War confrontations.

As noted in Chapter 1, to use Toynbee's terminology, Afrasia referred to the zone stretching east to west that overlaps today's West Asia and North Africa. This region, memorised in history as the cradle of civilisation and the birthplace of the three great monotheistic religions, namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, has been ravaged by successive wars from the period of national independence until today. Since 1948, Israel and the neighbouring Arab nations have been at war. The civil war in Lebanon lasted from 1975 to 1995. The Iranian Revolution of 1978 wrecked bilateral relations between the United States and Iran. Furthermore, Iraq and Iran waged a war of attrition that cost them more than a million lives in the 1980s. Afghanistan – a strategic stop located in western South Asia – was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1979 and by the United States and its Western allies in 2001. Iraq was falsely accused of possessing weapons of mass destruction, and the Hussein regime collapsed in 2003. In 2011, the Qaddafi regime in Libya was toppled, and a fierce civil war began in Syria in the same year. All these wars produced large numbers of refugees, and the leaders of the Islamic State (IS) skilfully manipulated the political vacuum the successive confrontations created.

In this nodal place in Afrasia, Cold War-type interventions and proxy wars are far from over. Unless the world is at peace, Afrasia will not be at peace. If Afrasia succeeds in making indigenous peace prevail, the world will see hope.

### **Islam on the globe**

Peace in the Middle East and North Africa is key to peace in the whole of Afrasia. However, it should be noted that the Islamic world is much broader than Toynbee's narrowly defined Afrasia. After receiving revelations, Muhammad began to preach in 613, but only a handful of people believed in the truth of Islam and became Muslims during that initial period. However, its spread thereafter was dramatic. Beginning on the Arabian Peninsula and through territorial conquests and the conversion of local leaders, the Islamic faith expanded in West Asia and into North Africa in the 8th century, and then to the north-western part of South Asia and Central Asia, as well as to the Iberian Peninsula in Europe by the early 8th century. The area called Dar al-Islam (the House of Islam) expanded, and given its vast territorial expanse, a majority of residents eventually became Muslims.

By the 13th century, the teaching of Islam took root in West Africa, East Africa, and then in Southeast Asia, where trade, rather than territorial conquest, played a critical role. Muslim merchants were both businessmen and informal propagandists. Each commercial city became a base for conversion, and in a variety of places, Muslims, especially Sufis, preached the infallibility of the single God in a polytheistic environment and continued inviting the locals to their faith. The Islamic sphere reached major parts of Afrasia within 1,000 years in the course of the dynamic circulation of people and commodities. Those who embrace Islam may participate in prayer with full Muslim credentials wherever they are in the world. Compared to other world religions that have branched into so many sects with distinctive rituals, this universality of prayer is a major feature of Islam. Everywhere in the world, the language of worship is the same Arabic in which Muhammad received his divine revelations. Whatever language one may speak in everyday life, one's prayers will not reach God unless the person speaks Arabic. The fact that the Islamic world has been able to maintain its unity throughout the process of territorial expansion is due in large part to this singleness of the language of prayer.

In the 21st century, Muslims in the areas where the teaching of Islam was born are not the majority of the world's Muslim population. Let us take an overview of the distribution of Muslim people across different parts of the world. Here, we combine the Middle East and North Africa as one region (the narrowly defined 'Afrasia') and distinguish it from other parts of Afrasia. According to a US think tank, the Pew Research Institute, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world as of 2010 was Indonesia (209.12 million), followed by India (176.20 million), Pakistan (167.41 million), Bangladesh (134.43 million), Nigeria (77.30 million), Egypt (76.99 million), and Iran (73.57 million). Of these countries, Nigeria had the highest rate of growth in the Muslim population, which was expected to triple to 230 million from 2010 to 2050. Overall, the growth of the Muslim population in sub-Saharan Africa will be remarkable (Figures 8.1 and 8.2).

The same dataset showed that in 2010, Christians and Muslims accounted for 31.4 per cent and 23.2 per cent of the world's population, respectively, but by 2050, the two groups would be on a par in size at about 30 per cent each. Excluding non-religious people, Christians had a clear majority in the Americas and Europe, while Muslims had an overwhelming majority in the Middle East and North Africa. Between the two, Christians and Muslims formed two major groups in sub-Saharan Africa, while those religious and non-religious of all kinds coexist (in a somewhat aloof manner) in Asia and the Pacific (the combination of Asia and Oceania, excluding the Middle East). If spaces representing new dynamic models of coexistence between different faith communities should emerge, these are expected to be in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 8.3).

Islam took root in the Middle East and North Africa and contributed to strengthening both commercial and spiritual links across the wider regions in Afrasia. This connectivity has been underpinned by political actions and intellectual

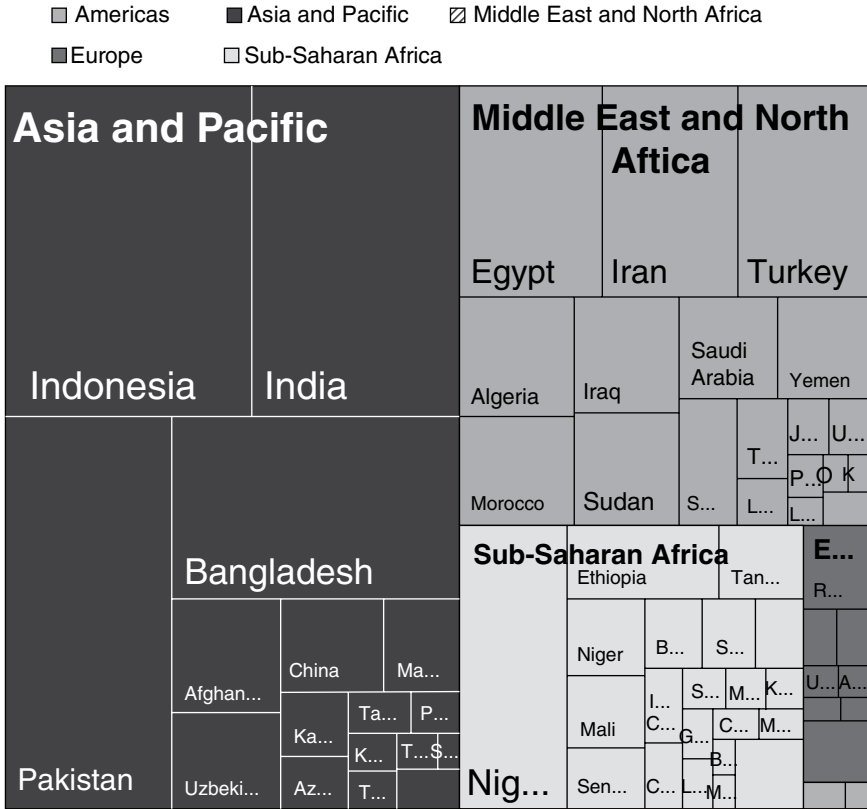


Figure 8.1 World Muslim Population, 2010  
 Note: Countries with more than 100,000 Muslim populations only.  
 Source: [www.globalreligiousfutures.org/](http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/)

endeavours, as well as religious activities to spread Islamic teachings. Let us retrace history and look at some of these historical attempts.

**Journeys to Afrasia from within**

When thinking about the unity and rehabilitation of the broad Islamic world, one cannot forget Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. Born in 1838 in the border region of Iran and Afghanistan, as a staunch pan-Islamist, Al-Afghani wanted to create a united front that would liberate European colonies in the node of Afrasia. An energetic traveller, he journeyed to countries such as India, Turkey, Egypt, Britain, and Russia and warned of the threats posed by the West. He urged both Sunnis and Shiites to unite and roll back Western encroachment effectively by winning non-Islamic

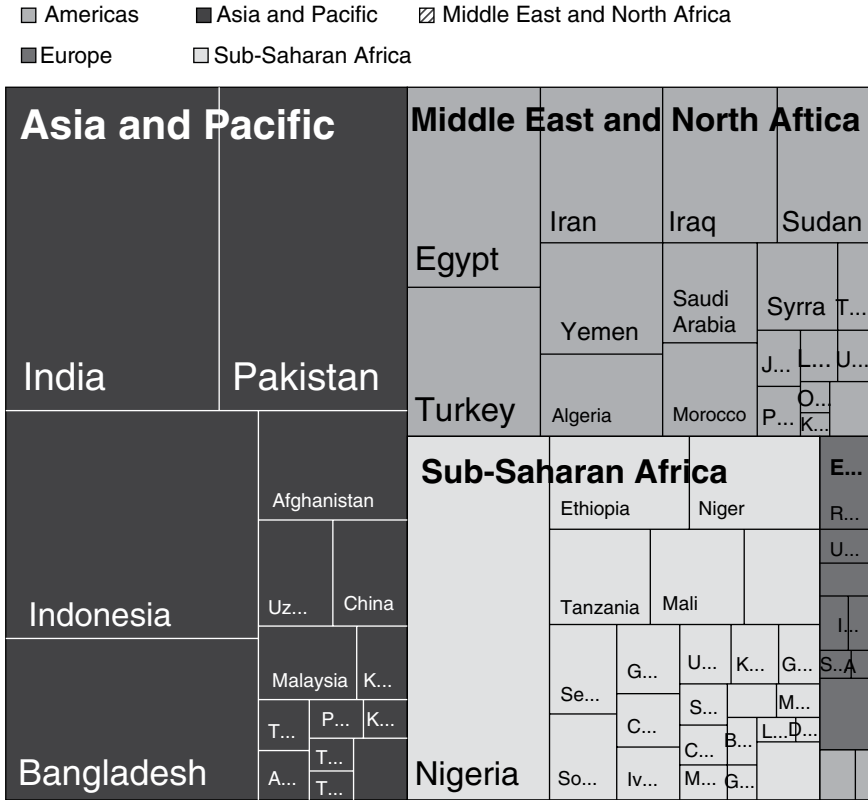


Figure 8.2 World Muslim Population, 2050  
 Note: Countries with more than 100,000 Muslim populations only.  
 Source: www.globalreligiousfutures.org/

nationalists to their side. Although Al-Afghani valued the rationality of science and broad-based political alliance, he did not call for secular nation-building but unity and social reform based on Islam.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Afghani was familiar with the writings of Ibn Khaldûn, the versatile great Muslim intellectual born in Tunis in 1332. With his experience living on the Iberian Peninsula and leading an academic life in Cairo, the world Ibn Khaldûn was accustomed to was first and foremost North Africa. In his time, the Mediterranean coast of North Africa was dotted with thriving commercial cities, while the desert interior of the region was occupied by nomads. Intimately acquainted with this geographic contrast, Ibn Khaldûn developed a forceful sociological discussion about the relationship between the urban and the rural in his acclaimed book *Muqaddimah* (1377).<sup>5</sup> As he observed, cities operated on the principle of economy, while the desert in their hinterland operated on the principle of politics, and

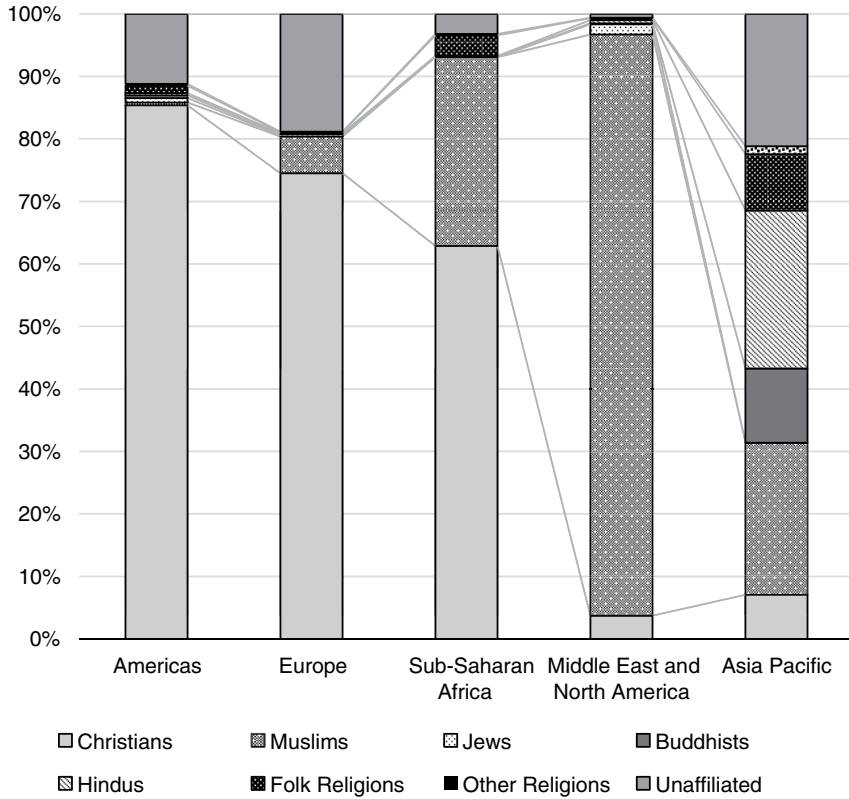


Figure 8.3 Religious Communities in the World, 2010

Source: [www.globalreligiousfutures.org/](http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/)

groups belonging to the latter and sharing distinctive social capital (*asabiyyah*) conquered the former periodically. In this context, the Islamic doctrine gave rise to social equilibrium in the region by justifying the existence of both nomadic politics and the economic activities of urbanites. In this way, Islam spread as a networked religion that governed the relations between human communities with contrastive characteristics.

Afrasia's connectivity was meticulously recorded by Ibn Battúta, a contemporary of Ibn Khaldún and an energetic traveller who journeyed all over the Islamic world and even outwards. Of Berber descent, Ibn Battúta was born in Morocco in 1304. He visited the Indian Ocean coasts of the Middle East, North Africa, and East Africa, sojourning in South Asia, and then ventured from Southeast Asia into China (though his writings about China might be based on hearsay). In his later years, Ibn Battúta even traversed the Sahara Desert and visited the interior of West

Africa. He followed the trade routes established by desert nomads and reached present-day Niger, Mali, and Mauritania.<sup>6</sup>

Like the Italian merchant Marco Polo, Afrasian travellers in those days traced existing trade routes. Their greatness lay not so much in the fact that they travelled around those places as in the vividly graphic ways in which they recorded what they saw and heard. Ibn Battúta's travelogues captured the rich connectivity of the vast Afrasian world. While it is clear thanks to their works that the Islamic world was at the economic and cultural centre of Afrasia in the 14th century, it is now established that hybrid spiritual worlds also thrived on the fringes of that network.

## Islam and Christianity in Africa

When Confucianism and Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 5th century, animism had formed the spiritual foundation of society. Unlike Confucianism, which the ruling class accepted as a system of the art of policymaking, Buddhism eventually gained a large number of followers among ordinary peasants as well as samurai, branching into a variety of unique sects by the 13th century. Animist traditions coalesced into Shintoism as a national religion, though its faith has long been fused with Buddhism. This type of fusion of indigenous and foreign religions is not unique to Japan. In the case of Islam, the Shiite doctrine was strongly influenced by Zoroastrianism in Persia. In Indonesia, Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced to the islands on top of the old maritime Malay culture, and Islam was superimposed on all these religious and cultural traditions. Although Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world today, the norms and practices of other religions were incorporated, consciously or unconsciously, into the everyday culture and worldview of today's Indonesians.

The indigenisation of the different world religions has progressed in a particularly unique way in Africa, where there has been a long process of acceptance of both Christianity and Islam. Drawing on the discussion held by the Kenyan-born peace scholar Ali Mazrui,<sup>7</sup> I briefly sketch the characteristics of Islam and Christianity in the African context.

Islam reached Egypt as early as the Hegira period in the 7th century and spread into the rest of North Africa. It expanded its influence further to West Africa through trade via camel caravans that traversed the Sahara Desert and to East Africa through trade via *dhow* vessels that sailed along the Indian Ocean coast. Timbuktu, located in the interior of West Africa in what is now the Republic of Mali, was a trading city that flourished as a centre of Islamic studies between the 14th and 16th centuries. Christianity also has a long history in Africa; the Coptic Orthodox Church was formed in Egypt in the 2nd century, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was established in the 4th century when Christianity was also accepted in the Roman Empire. Christianity in other parts of Africa was popularised through the Western churches' missionary activities that began in the 16th century and gained momentum in the 19th century.

Compared with Christianity, Islam in Africa tends to be more accommodative of indigenous practices, which are more pronounced in West Africa where local

Africans converted to Islam than in East Africa where Arab Muslim migrants were more conspicuous. Drums are used in ceremonies, and the worship of ancestors and female circumcision are tolerated, if not encouraged. The organisation of Islamic missionaries is flexible, decentralised, and not very hierarchical – there is no equivalent of the ‘Vatican’ for Muslims. However, Islam in Africa does not compromise on several core principles. As mentioned, Arabic is the common language of worship everywhere in the world, and the prohibition of alcohol is also more stringent than in Christianity. The rule of praying five times a day and going to Mecca once in a lifetime changed the sense of time and space for indigenous people in the vast region of Africa where Islam was embraced. The fact that such a social transformation preceded the Western colonisation of Africa has been largely unnoticed outside of Africa.

The position of Christianity in Africa contrasts with Islam in many ways. Priests conduct worship in the languages the locals spoke in daily life rather than the Aramaic or Hebrew that Jesus Christ spoke. The New Testament has been translated into numerous African languages as well as into English, French, and Portuguese. As Mazrui noted, this multiplicity of translations may have something to do with the fact that Christianity is an exile religion. Unlike Islam, Christianity could not establish itself as a force in the land of its birth; rather, it was mainstreamed in faraway Europe after a prolonged period of persecution. African Christianity is relatively tolerant of drinking and not sticking to a single language of prayer. However, it was less respectful of indigenous customs and has harshly attacked polygamy and female circumcision. The hierarchy of church organisation tends to be stricter than in Islam. In Africa, the influence of a new generation of Christianity such as Pentecostalism is also growing, and churches are actively using music and dance to attract and animate young congregations.

### **Going online**

Concerning the youth and religion, it is now crucial to think not only of festivities in the real world but also of the spread of religious discourses in virtual online spaces. While IS has effectively recruited its followers through the Internet, all emerging sects of traditional and non-traditional religions also tap fully into the cyberworld. While a plethora of works on the radicalisation of youth have been produced, this ambiguous term should be handled carefully, because cognitive radicalisation and behavioural radicalisation are utterly different phenomena.<sup>8</sup> If radicalisation of thought is denied, there will be no innovative ideas in human life.

Table 8.1 indicates how subscribers of mobile phones (cellular phones for voice communication and texting and broadband devices for the Internet) have expanded in the short period from 2010 to 2019. This is based on the dataset compiled by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN organisation. Cellular phone subscription has almost reached saturation; the figure for sub-Saharan Africa is no more than 80 per cent of the population (including rural villages) by 2019, but the spread has been impressive. Although there is still room for

Table 8.1 Mobile Phone Penetration Rate by Region

	<i>Cellular</i>		<i>Broadband</i>	
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2019</i>
Sub-Saharan Africa	44.3	80.1	1.7	32.1
Arab States (including North Africa)	87.5	99.0	7.8	62.0
Asia-Pacific	67.1	110.3	7.3	75.4
Former Soviet Union	137.3	146.5	25.7	86.5
Europe	114.7	119.2	28.7	97.4
Americas	94.2	112.7	25.4	99.1
%				

Note: The definition of regions is based on:  
[www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/definitions/regions.aspx](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/definitions/regions.aspx)

Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).  
[www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx)

the diffusion of broadband Internet connection, it appears that about one-third of Africans and about three-fourths of Asians are already using smartphones. Once people start using IT gadgets, they will not relinquish them, even if they lose their jobs. As Afrasia's cyber communication intensifies, it will become essential to understand what subjects people are discussing and in what ways. This leads to the theme of the next chapter.

### Indigenous ways of coexistence

The notion that Islam is more intolerant and sectarian than Christianity is not valid, especially as regards religious practice in Africa. In Islam, there is no internal contradiction among the three doctrines of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; they have long coexisted in a 'multicultural' conviviality in the node of Afrasia.<sup>9</sup> On the periphery of the Afrasian world, Islam did not enforce excessively strict principles, while sticking to several core practices. Then, what kind of transformation will the Islamic and Christian worlds undergo in future Afrasia? It is impossible to predict the state of the world religions one century from now, but the fact remains that historically, religious conflicts have been relatively rare in Africa.

In Tanzania, it has been an unspoken rule for Christians and Muslims to take turns as state presidents since 1964. Similar religious reciprocity also seems to have worked in the presidency of Nigeria implicitly. In apartheid South Africa, Christians, Muslims, and Jews took to the streets together in protest of racism. Turning to Southeast Asia, Malaysia's Bumiputra policy has gained widespread attention as a systematic affirmative action to improve the status of the majority Malay citizens. While Malays are overwhelmingly Muslim, the ethnic minorities of Malaysia include Buddhists, Taoists, Christians, and Hindus. The government's preferential treatment of the relatively poor Malays rooted in rural areas has not provoked a noticeable backlash from the relatively rich minorities. On the other

hand, in the Philippines where Christians are the majority, a Muslim-led autonomous government is being established in Mindanao.

In Afrasia, there is a wealth of experiments, empirical knowledge, and historical norms that would promote the coexistence of people of diverse religions and cultures. These modalities of coexistence have not been brought in from the outside but developed internally within local society. Instead of valuing diversity per se, Afrasian people have tried to adapt and work out differences between people who are born diverse. Peace cannot be enforced from the outside.

## Notes

- 1 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Huntington did not argue that a final war between civilisations would be inevitable, though his claims were often interpreted in that way.
- 2 Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1957).
- 3 For an application of the theorem to the post-Cold War ethnic conflict, see Paul Roe, *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- 4 The life and thought of Al-Afghani is vividly described in Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (London: Penguin, 2012).
- 5 Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).
- 6 Ibn Battûta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (London: Routledge, 2005).
- 7 Ali A. Mazrui, 'Religion and Political Culture in Africa', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (December 1985): 817–839. See also Ali A. Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986).
- 8 Peter R. Neumann, 'The Trouble with Radicalization', *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (July 2013): 873–893.
- 9 Peaceful coexistence of religions is a *modus vivendi* in the university where I work. A research centre called CISMOR at Doshisha, a Christian university adjacent to a Zen Buddhist temple, is home to a group of scholars of all three monotheistic religions. [www.cismor.jp/en/](http://www.cismor.jp/en/)

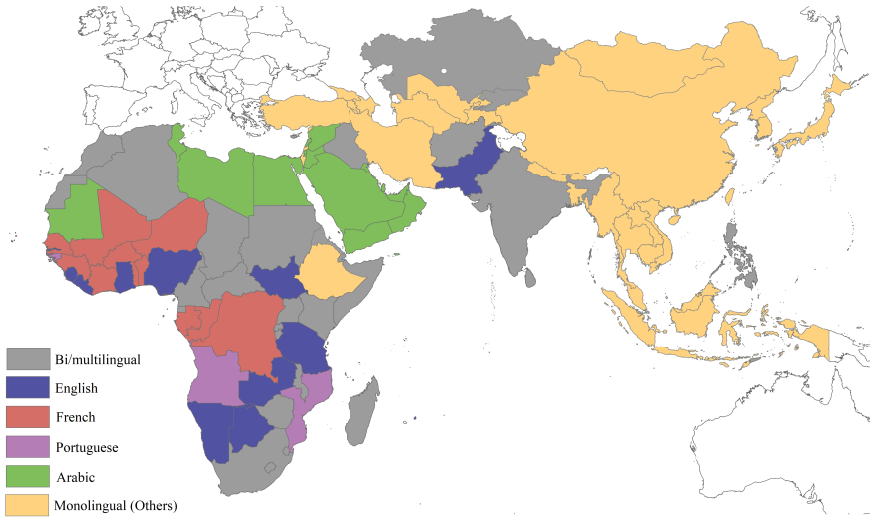
# 9 Communication in the South

## Languages in Afrasia

In the node of Afrasia, believers in the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – attempted to transcend the norms and conventions of the indigenous polytheistic world. To the eastwards, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism spread in South, East, and Southeast Asia, a large part of which eventually accepted Islam and Christianity as well. In the meantime, both Christianity and Islam transformed and took root on the African continent. It is not just religions that demonstrate the diverse mosaic of Afrasia. Regional organisations such as the ASEAN in Southeast Asia and the AU in Africa are composed of countries that espouse market economy principles, socialist ideals, parliamentary democracies, and dictatorships that enforce unity top-down. Some are kingdoms, while many others are republics, and all political systems coexist more or less aloof, thereby providing a unique stage for natural experiments to test the viability of different political regimes.

Effective communication is required for Afrasians with such diverse backgrounds to develop a sense of community. Before concluding this book, let us consider what tools the peoples in Afrasia should utilise to advance their communication. It is not easy to present the distribution of languages actually spoken in Afrasia accurately on a single map; there are many multilingual societies where people routinely switch between languages. Moreover, there are complex and often hierarchical power relations between these languages. In India, while Hindi and English are the two major official languages at the national level, there are also no less than 22 official languages at the state level. In such multilingual nations, all indigenous languages are widely spoken and written in everyday life, but in the public sphere, the languages of the former colonial powers tend to be used more often in reading and writing.

Some simplification is needed to better visualise the entangled language situations in Afrasia. Figure 9.1 divides the Afrasian nations into those with more than one official language and those with a single official language. The single official languages of the latter group are regrouped into the languages of the former colonial powers (i.e., English, French, and Portuguese), Arabic as an influential



*Figure 9.1* Official Languages of Afrasian Countries

Source: Government websites

lingua franca, and various national languages including Chinese, the most influential national language spoken by more than one billion people. Each country considers its unique historical contexts in deciding on the official language(s). While Asian nations tend to give official status to their national ethnic languages, the languages of former colonial powers are often accepted in sub-Saharan Africa, and Arabic is widely used in the Middle East and North Africa.

The presence of some major languages is obscured in Figure 9.1. For instance, the official languages of Pakistan and Tanzania are English, but the national language of the former is Urdu and that of the latter is Kiswahili. In these countries, although public documents are mostly written in English, national languages are used in primary and secondary education, and the majority of the population speaks these indigenous languages in everyday life.

People often travel even when they have little knowledge of the languages spoken in the places they are visiting; the basic language of commerce between Asian and African traders on the street may be gestures and numbers. However, once people's transactions go beyond a certain level, deeper communication becomes essential. What will be the appropriate tools of communication between Africans and Asians towards the 22nd century? To choose a tool, it is first necessary to specify what one intends to use it for. In the rest of this chapter, let us classify human language in terms of three functions: everyday communication, rigorous reasoning, and love.

## The language of communication

First, let us consider the language of communication. This is a language category that enables people to exchange information on the premise that different groups have different interests that may converge or diverge depending on the future course of interactions. Perhaps the primary objective of foreign language education is not mutual understanding in general but honing the skill of communication through which people from different backgrounds understand each other's intentions as accurately as possible.

Although the historical diffusion of English and other global languages had nothing to do with merits and fair competition, it is an established fact that English has become the greatest common denominator as a tool for functional, intercultural communication in the world. African intellectuals and engineers utilise English, French, Portuguese, or Arabic. I have had opportunities to discuss the future of Afro-Asian relations with researchers and friends from China, Korea, and India. On such occasions, the language of communication is mostly English even when there is no native English speaker among us.

Just as computers and IT gadgets rely on a small number of universal operating systems, having fewer languages of communication may be more efficient. One option would be for people to continue expressing their feelings in their own language in intimate spheres and opt for English as a language of communication in broader settings. As non-native speakers participate in English communication at large, this common language may become contaminated and enriched simultaneously. I have several editions of *A Dictionary of South African English* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press) at hand and am amazed at the variety of borrowed words from Afrikaans and various non-Western languages. Active intercultural communication always leads to the hybridisation of both major and minor languages.

Fundamentally, however, the language of communication does not have to be English as long as alternative languages can be used just as efficiently. Chinese is taught at the Confucius Institutes across Afrasia, and in recent years, a growing number of Africans speak fluent Chinese. As a by-product of global Chinese education, some Africans who learned Chinese characters have found it easy to learn Japanese. Even when we speak neither a European language nor Chinese, we can still communicate effectively if a good interpreter is available. In China, the Beijing Foreign Studies University teaches African languages such as Amharic, Hausa, Kiswahili, Zulu, and Afrikaans to Chinese students and trains them to be future interpreters. The day may come sooner than expected when the peoples of Africa and Asia will be able to communicate with each other without the medium of European languages.

The Ghanaian-born linguist Kwesi Prah called for the creation of pan-African languages. African society is not a Tower of Babel where countless tribes are at odds with each other, shouting in their own languages that they do not mutually understand. Instead, according to Prah, the languages spoken by 75 per cent of

Africans can be grouped into roughly 13 different languages (this looks similar to the language situation in Europe). Based on the premise of the diversity of African languages, his proposal is to standardise the existing indigenous languages as far as possible, prepare orthographies, and make them widely available in order to promote communication among Africans, thus avoiding persistent dependency on Western languages.<sup>1</sup> The proposal to standardise Chinese characters in East Asia may have a similar effect; China, Japan, and Taiwan now use somewhat different letters that are originally the same.

### **The language of reasoning**

As the world becomes one, we need language as an instrument to deepen the common knowledge of humanity and reach the universal truth beyond mere understanding between national groups and individuals. Yuval Noah Harari argued that the human condition lay in the emergence of language-mediated collective imagination induced by the Cognitive Revolution that occurred 70 to 30 millennia ago.<sup>2</sup> When thinking about human nature, it is not just communicative negotiation in which animals also engage in sophisticated ways but the elaboration of reasoning (to convince other humans) that matters. For this purpose, as it now stands, the most significant comparative advantage lies in the English language. Historically, however, languages such as Sanskrit, Hebrew, Latin, and Arabic have played (or are playing) roles as the languages of universality through the publication and dissemination of holy texts.

Today, languages used in academia fall into this category and can be called the language of reasoning. The use of English has become the norm at academic conferences worldwide, especially in natural sciences. In 2018, an initiative was taken by African scholars living in Japan to establish the Japan Society for Afrasian Studies in which research presentations are given in English. The language was chosen not to conform to the Western global standard but to provide a space for scholars and students from Africa and Asia to engage in scientific discussions on equal footing. In social science in East Asia (especially in China and Japan), there are not so many academic associations that use English as the working language.<sup>3</sup>

When an automatic translation system is put into practical use, neither the language of reasoning nor the language of communication will need to be English because if each person writes or speaks appropriately in the language in which she or he is currently immersed, the message will be automatically and hopefully correctly translated into the language of the audience. Although the advances in neural machine translation in recent years have been astounding, the challenge remains; a human needs to be able to write logical and unambiguous statements and propositions that translation software accepts and comprehends. The ultimate language of reasoning may be mathematical formulas.

There is an approach to mathematics education called ethnomathematics, which entails paying deep respect to indigenous ways of counting, measuring, and logical thinking so that children can learn the subject in concord with the contexts

of their everyday life.<sup>4</sup> Supposing that there had been no contact with the West, in what ways would the arts and sciences have developed in Afrasia? We may well imagine that Chinese painters would have been used to perspective in landscapes, Indonesian musicians would have developed 12-tone equal temperament, and Cameroonians would have produced African Pythagoras. Counterfactual thinking excites our imagination. The processes of such universal systems emerging would have differed greatly from place to place, and the resulting systems might have been somewhat different from today's global standards.

Efforts should be made to polish local languages so that they can be used as languages of reasoning. Prah envisions that science and mathematics should be taught in African languages at school because every non-Western language has the potential to become a language of reasoning. Still, it is essential to note that each reasoned argument should be right or wrong in itself, regardless of the choice of medium. Not only religious sects but also groups that espoused so-called scientific Marxism were antagonistic to each other and even murdered members of opposing factions. The primary source of progress in science is the division of schools and their uncompromised battle of words, not physical violence. Although the desire to reach a universal truth is very human, there can be more than one path leading to that goal. There is a need for rigorous and logical language practice that would leave no room for misunderstanding each other's intent, as well as for patience and willingness to accommodate the opinions of people coming from other islands in the archipelago.

### **The language of affection**

As Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, human beings maintain distance for survival and group together by affection, and this is where the language was born.<sup>5</sup> Keeping distance for survival presupposes that an individual is already self-reliant. However, mammalian parents and their children are bound together for survival, and separate human individuals may be united by love to survive together. What matters is the language of affection. This is not a language that is written and diffused in the public space, but a language that is spoken, or written as if it is spoken, in the intimate sphere.

The language of affection may be one's so-called mother tongue, as in what is voiced by the mother, the language of old stories told by grandparents, the language of children's play, or the whisperings of lovers. The same language could be one of hate. Although the language of affection and emotion is the most primordial means of communication, it may also bear other functions. It may be relatively easy to build national cohesion in a country where the language spoken at home among the majority and the national language coincide. When a nation is formed by bundling many different linguistic groups, its strength will be tested by how the cultures are bonded and bounded through the deliberate creation of national symbols. The language of affection may not only transmit individual emotions but also embrace collectivity and even God's divine love.

That Indonesia and Malaysia have made Malay their official languages has the effect of encouraging national political communication in a space close to the language of affection in their attempt at post-independence nation-building. In East Africa, Kiswahili, the language of affection for many Tanzanians, is promoted in public education. During the period 2006–2011, reading comprehension tests for primary school students were administered in 16 countries and locations in Southeast Africa, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Schoolchildren from mainland Tanzania, a low-income nation according to the development statistics, were ranked number one in reading comprehension ahead of Seychelles, a high-income country, and Mauritius, an upper-middle-income country.<sup>6</sup> In South Africa, a multilingual nation with 11 official languages, there is an almost intuitive resistance to teaching everything in English from the primary level. Many pedagogues pay attention to young learners' confidence nurtured by upgrading home languages to the formal teaching medium and agree that English should be introduced gradually in the upper grades as a *lingua franca*.<sup>7</sup>

As two modalities of interpersonal communication, cultural anthropologist Edward Hall distinguished between low context cultures and high context cultures. The former is a culture that sticks to the transmission of accurate and unambiguous meaning, while the latter is a culture that gives weight to a communicative capacity to convey unspoken meaning.<sup>8</sup> Assuming that European culture tends to be low context, while that of the non-European world tends to be high context, Hall reevaluated the latter's capacity of effective communication. However, attributing the function of reasoning exclusively to Western communication and the function of affection to the rest may leave us trapped in colonial stereotypes.

The Swahili word for frog is *chula*. On the way to school, I see a *chula* with my friends. At school, the science textbook shows the word *chula* beside its graphic illustration instead of the English word 'frog'. I go back home and talk to my grandmother about *chula*. The language of affection is important in and of itself, and it is also necessary to open children's minds seamlessly to the wider space of scientific knowledge.

### **The languages of 22nd-century Afrasia**

Drawing on a short essay by British philosopher David Hume titled 'Of Parties in General', Chandran Kukathas argued that people's three main motivations to form groups are 'interest', 'principle', and 'affection'.<sup>9</sup> Although the classification of the three languages presented in this chapter is based on my observations, they largely correspond to these three primary motives for group formation. For Hume, the party based on interest is of the most benign nature, compared to the party based on political and religious principles and the one based on affection towards family and ancestry.

The classification of languages in this chapter is made only in light of their functions. In practice, the same language often performs different functions in different situations. We have already discussed functional entanglements – especially

between the languages of reasoning and those of affection. In the United States, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and several other places, English fulfils all three functions for almost all citizens. In East and Southeast Asian nations that escaped direct Western colonial rule, the national ethnic languages also generally perform all these functions. On the other hand, there are many countries where people switch language depending on circumstances; a Senegalese engineer may speak Wolof (as the language of affection) at home, French (as the language of communication) at work, and English (as the language of reasoning) at international conferences, or French for reasoning and English for international communication, for example.

Even when a single language is used, its literary and colloquial versions may present themselves like different languages. The written Arabic language that spread throughout the world with the Qur'an and the colloquial Arabic spoken in Egypt do not sound like the same language. Arabic in Islam is both the language of spiritual communication with God and the language of reasoning that enables people to approach the truth. At the same time, the beauty of recitations is also the quintessence of the Qur'an. Similarly, when East Asians learn European languages, they are often drawn to the beauty of their musical sounds. The human body can be a musical instrument, and to the extent that words are uttered with that instrument, the system of those words may become the language of music, recitation, and beauty as the fourth functional category of human language. The culture of humanity would be impoverished if the only international language were English.

For most Afrasians, it is unlikely that English or French will become the language of affection in everyday life. We face contradictory multilingual situations in which the language practice is torn between the private and public spheres. Regarding the languages of communication and reasoning, it remains to be seen whether a single language will become dominant or whether several major languages stand abreast. At any rate, we might well consider the new field of linguistic geopolitics.

When Africans and Asians organise direct communication, they often use English as the language of communication and reasoning, while respecting the local language situations of the participants. When an American, whether white, black, red, or yellow, enters such a scene, people may look at each other and put a bit of a troubled expression on their faces, thinking, 'Well, her English sounds native'. The American may equally be embarrassed by such a reaction. Nevertheless, as the conversation progresses, everyone is focused on what is being discussed so that no one will care about who is who. Afrasia's communication does not exclude participants from outside the macro-region. In principle, however, dialogue between those living in Africa and those living in Asia would be prioritised. A framework for strategic dialogue between the EU and ASEAN exists, and it is unlikely that representatives of the United States or India will try to intervene and speak loudly in these discussions. Similarly, there is a framework for a partnership between the United States and Japan, and representatives of Brazil or Germany would not want to force their way in, though observers may be welcomed.

Racial labelling is not an issue in such fora. The representative of India can be an Indian born from an Italian family, and the representative of South Africa can be a descendant of a French Huguenot. Race, religion, and language have nothing to do with the qualification to participate in pan-Afrasian dialogues. Nevertheless, it must be those who identify the space of Afrasia as their own *home* who will take the lead in such communication.

## Notes

- 1 Kwesi Prah, 'The Language of Development and the Development of Language in Contemporary Africa', Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), Cape Town, 2011. [www.casas.co.za/Papers.aspx](http://www.casas.co.za/Papers.aspx)
- 2 Harari, *Sapiens*, part 1.
- 3 [www.afrasia.org/](http://www.afrasia.org/) See the official languages shown in Figure 9.1.
- 4 Ubiratan D'Ambrosio, *Ethnomathematics: Link between Traditions and Modernity* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006).
- 5 Rousseau, *On the Origin of Language*.
- 6 [www.sacmeq.org/](http://www.sacmeq.org/)
- 7 For the complexity regarding the power of language, see Neville Alexander, *Thoughts on the New South Africa* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2013).
- 8 Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976). Proxemics proposed by Hall as a science of spacing in different cultures may offer a promising research framework in the age of pandemic. Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).
- 9 David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Kukathas, *Liberal Archipelago*, 43.

# Conclusion

## Imagining a benign community

### The two meanings of democracy

By the end of the 21st century, the people living in Afrasia will comprise the overwhelming majority of global citizens. The trend of the former colonial powers and their citizens becoming a minority and the former subjects becoming a majority is underway. What does this mean for the future of global governance?

To answer this question, let us reconsider the meaning of democracy. Until now, the awardees of the Nobel Prize in economics have been nearly entirely dominated by male European economists. The first scholar who broke the glass ceiling was W. Arthur Lewis, a black Caribbean economist originally from Saint Lucia. While his writings on economic growth have attracted keen attention, *Politics of West Africa* (1965), which was inspired by his experience as Kwame Nkrumah's economic adviser, is almost forgotten. In this important political tract, Lewis discussed the choice of appropriate political systems for West African nations after independence. He argued that the word 'democracy' had two meanings.

Its primary meaning is that all who are affected by a decision should have the chance to participate in making that decision, either directly or through chosen representatives. Its secondary meaning is that the will of the majority shall prevail.<sup>1</sup>

In political decision-making, the majority vote weighs heavily (the secondary meaning of democracy). However, as Lewis noted, in broad institutions such as 'business, sport, the family, the church, the university and so on', consensus and compromise among all parties (the primary meaning of democracy) are more respected than simple voting. If leaders indulge in partisan politics to gain a majority, their real work would be neglected. A good leader is someone who can unite people and get them to work together 'as a team'.<sup>2</sup> For Lewis, the consensus-based 'primary' meaning of democracy was critically important in the age of political transition in Africa, when he closely witnessed the rise and fall of the charismatic leader, Nkrumah.

As a pan-Africanist who aspired to Africa's peace, unity, and prosperity, Lewis was concerned that African nation-states that attained independence in the 1960s

would uncritically transplant the political systems of their former masters such as the British single-seat constituency system, the French system of powerful presidency, or a combination of both. Specifically, introducing the British-style 'winner-takes-all' principle in Africa where diverse ethnic groups, large and small, coexisted, merged, and split could have devastating consequences. If an ethnic party that gained a majority monopolises control of a state's apparatus and distributes resources among the winner's inner circle, other groups defeated in the elections would lose everything. The boundaries between groups would become inflexible and politicised, and then there would be no choice but to attempt a coup. To avoid such a likely scenario, Lewis appealed to African politicians to experiment with proportional representation, grand coalition, and provincial devolution of political power.

We should listen to the minority opinions carefully. Only when necessary, a majority vote should prevail. At times, we face serious difficulty in reconciling the two meanings of democracy, but this is not solely a problem for Africa. Democracy in which the government is responsive to all citizens is an elusive ideal. In the real world, a country can only adopt a form of 'polyarchy' as an institution that is more or less an imperfect proxy of normative democracy.<sup>3</sup> In grounded practice, the two meanings of democracy are constantly tested in terms of appropriate combination and sequence. Returning to the main theme of this book, the world should respect what the majority Afrasians (80 per cent) prefer, and the Afrasians should reciprocate by listening to the concerns of the rest (20 per cent). This dual principle of democracy should also be applied to the relationship between the majority and the minority peoples within Afrasia.

### **Majority opinion prevails**

Still, the will of the majority prevails. Under universal suffrage, all adult citizens should be given the right to vote. The general principle of universal suffrage was enshrined in the constitution of revolutionary France in 1793 and has gradually been accepted by almost all nations after two centuries of twists and turns, making restrictions on the franchise in terms of wealth, gender, and race irrelevant and obsolete. No matter how foolish humankind is, certain irreversible progress has been achieved. Dominant political regimes have shifted from monarchies to democratic republics (or constitutional monarchies). No sensible person calls for the restoration of absolute monarchy or limited suffrage, let alone slavery, and it is unlikely that those outdated systems will ever be restored in the world. What would happen if a king gave women suffrage once and then tried to take it away?

The abolition of apartheid in South Africa at the end of the 20th century was also a part of the institutional evolution in global history. The share of whites in the South African population was about 20 per cent at the beginning of the 20th century, and this proportion shrank to 10 per cent by the end of the century. It was evident that a regime in which the white minority reigns over the black majority in an African country would be unsustainable in the long run. In April 1994, all

South Africans participated in the first one-person, one-vote national elections, elevating the former political prisoner Nelson Mandela to the presidency.

The power of the oppressed majority is unleashed. According to Mao Tse-Tung, after the First World War, the Soviet Union emerged with a population of 200 million. After the Second World War, a total of 900 million people found themselves living in the socialist camp. ‘If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists’.<sup>4</sup> The contemporary philosopher Slavoj Žižek has criticised Mao’s misunderstanding of the historical dialectic, while endorsing his politics of liberation war, in which the ‘anonymous downtrodden’ in the Global South choose one socialist regime after another to overthrow the global alliance of minority ruling classes.<sup>5</sup> Modern China appears to continue its people’s liberation war into the 21st century by taking the market forces into its arms. Although terms like ‘North-South problems’, the ‘Third World’, and ‘Afro-Asian solidarity’ may have lost their leverage to evoke people’s imagination, it appears that the power of the South is being gradually realised by the numerical presence of the majority of the South. It is not ideological correctness that determines victory or defeat, but the power of numbers – this is the very principle of majoritarian democracy based on vote counting. As we have seen in Chapter 1, in the coming decades, Indians will replace the Chinese as the majority of the world’s population, and then Africans will replace Indians. The gravity of the global tally will shift successively.

No matter where a person lives, everyone has inviolable rights and dignity. As an imperative of governance towards the age of Afrasia, every person’s single vote must have equal weight in any global institution that claims to be inclusive, because ‘all human beings are free by birth and equal in dignity and rights’.<sup>6</sup> In deciding the matters that will determine the future of the Earth, it is indispensable to know and respect the values, hopes, and fears of the individuals comprising the majority living in Afrasia. The will and value of the majority prevail.

### **Minority opinions respected**

The majority, however, should also listen to the voices of the minority before making critical decisions. One is obliged to listen, not just perform the procedure and pretend to listen. This is the primary meaning of democracy as noted by Lewis. The conclusion is open. In deliberations, some of the majority may adopt some minority opinions, while some of the minorities may accept some of the majority views. Some may even cross the boundary to the other side. Issues will be discussed long and hard, and when necessary, they will be voted on at the end of the decision. If the results have a slim margin, people continue the discussion. Can we foster a democratic culture on a global scale that celebrates diversity and enjoys the difference, intersection, and possible convergence of opinions?

Nelson Mandela represented the majority will and at the same time carefully listened to the voices of minority citizens. He forgave the white people who imprisoned him, as widely covered by the Western media, and actively engaged

with South Africans from different backgrounds. Respecting others as individuals in daily conversation, he was also very sensitive to the cultural contexts that shaped the personalities of his interlocutors.

In this book, I proposed that Africa and Asia should be collectively referred to as Afrasia. The rationale for lumping Africa and Asia together into a single macro-frame is based on the historical fact that both regions were under Western colonial rule until around the mid-20th century. Setting aside the demographic presence and geographic vastness of the macro-region, the colonial experience would be the single most important factor that combines Africa and Asia. A person whose dignity has been trampled on by others should know that one should not do the same to others. The identity of Afrasia is based on this shared sense of justice rooted in history. We should listen to the voices of others precisely because we had the experience of being deprived of a voice.

Donella Meadows, the systems engineer who drafted the text of *The Limits to Growth*, wrote a short story called ‘If the world were a village of 1,000 people. . .’, which has been translated into various languages. According to her, the Earth is a single system – a ‘village’ – and its components are all connected and interdependent.<sup>7</sup> This is a beautiful, compelling idea, but we may also imagine that Asian villages, African villages, American villages, and others constitute their own regional systems and that those systems become more or less loosely connected. In some villages, warriors are respected, while in others, artisans are highly regarded. Some villages may have an abundance of grain, while others export crafts. Those villages may unite to create a federal system covering the entire Earth. As Immanuel Kant argued, a ‘single universal monarchy’ that enforces universal laws will produce soulless despotism and eventually lead to a state of global anarchy. Kant, therefore, envisioned a ‘gradually expanding federation’ rather than a centralised global empire as a condition for eternal peace.<sup>8</sup>

Then, it is essential to control the relationships between the big villages and the small villages. Within Asia, several major powers such as China, India, and Japan have been viewed as real or potential threats by their neighbours. In Africa, countries such as Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa are similarly alarmed by their neighbours. We should affirm the principle that no one should behave arrogantly in Afrasia as Westerners did in the past. Not seeking hegemony over others, not parasitising others, and not depriving others of their freedom – these constitute the *raison d’être* of the Afrasian community. Therein lies the significance of sticking to the seemingly outdated critique of colonialism. Afrasians shall not repeat the mistake internally, let alone externally.

### **A benign community**

I wonder if Afrasia can become a real community – a group whose members are bound together by a sense of belonging. The strength of bonds differs depending on the nature of the community. All members of a small town or village become easily acquainted with each other, but most members of a nation-state do not even have an opportunity to see each other. Therefore, at the level of a larger political

community, there is a need for various information apparatuses that will bring people together. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) singled out the critical role of language and publication in nation-building. Anderson's work has been widely read as a classic study of nationalism, but its own case study was not about the established Western nation-states, but the process in which new Asian nation-states, Indonesia in particular, took shape in the 20th century.<sup>9</sup> A tempting shortcut to building a sense of national unity is to create an external enemy. After independence, Sukarno's Indonesia viewed its neighbour, Malaysia, as a pawn of the West, and even went so far as to withdraw from the UN in 1965 over this issue. Then, Suharto who usurped political power from Sukarno regarded the communists and China as the arch-enemy of his new Indonesian regime.

Can Afrasia become a benign community that makes no enemies both inside and outside? As emphasised, if there is any common basis for linking peoples living in Africa and Asia together, it is primarily their shared historical experience of being colonised by powers from Europe. This must be a potent factor that will bind the vast Afrasian space together. Some countries like Ethiopia, Liberia, Thailand, and Japan escaped colonial rule by the West, but these nations were also targets for Western colonial expansion at certain stages in history. Japan has transformed itself into an imperial monster in a kind of overreaction to the aggression of the West. In the future world, colonial relationships should never be repeated. Afrasia is an imagined community based on the historical notion of *justice*: no powerful nation should ever deprive a small nation of its freedom.

Afrasia can be a cultural community that will pledge not to replicate colonial behaviours, a no-war community that will not resolve conflict by military means, and a developmental community that will not plunder natural and human resources within and without the macro-region. It will be relatively easy to cultivate cooperation in the fields of culture, arts, and academia. There is also a strong consensus within the region that the world's nations should avoid resolving conflict through military interventions. What about development? Since 1993, Japan has matured a framework for development cooperation with Africa in the form of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), and parallel efforts have been made by China, India, and South Korea. In particular, the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has seen remarkable growth since its launch in 2000. When these projects mutually respect, collaborate with, and invite stakeholders from other parts of Asia, an Afrasian developmental community will be activated and begin to take a clearer shape.<sup>10</sup>

It is not just government policies that matter. There are also non-governmental initiatives in Japan, South Korea, and India, as well as in all parts of China to advance exchanges between these Asian nations and the African continent across all aspects of academia, culture, and business. Those involved must be interested in how people in other Asian countries collaborate with their African counterparts. Southeast Asians appear to be less aware of relationships with Africa as a region, but most are already parts of the broader Islamic and Christian communities. Furthermore, African migrants travel and settle around Asian countries. If all Asian actors organise a forum where they discuss their relationships with Africa and

co-ordinate their activities, a *de facto* Afrasian community will be created without having to draft a formal charter or organise a big founding conference. We do not have to venture into something artificial. We need only to connect the existing Afro-Asian exchange forums in Asian countries and invite guests from the outside. Some readers of this book may have thought that the conception of Afrasia, while interesting as a thought experiment, is not realistic. However, the Afrasian community already almost exists. Asians need only to exchange amongst themselves their experiences of interacting with Africans, and Africans are expected to reciprocate.

World regions bounded by common characteristics in terms of geography, climate, livelihood, culture, language, or religion have existed for centuries and millennia. Afrasia may be too large a regional unit, given its internal diversity. We admit that Afrasia as a macro-region is possibly an ephemeral space in which nurturing a natural identity across its members is no easy task. Nevertheless, we still dream of Afrasia. First, as emphasised in this book, the moral significance of parting with the colonial past remains with us. Only when global macroparasitism becomes a complete anachronism will the macro-region of Afrasia have a chance to wither away. Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 5, a sort of indigenous liberalism that developed in small population worlds is expected to provide a powerful alternative to the current world order. The autonomy of groups has been normatively respected in large parts of continental Africa and maritime Southeast Asia in the past centuries and millennia. This will make a sound basis for consolidating a pan-Afrasian value system.

When Asian regional giants declare that they do not seek hegemony over Africa, we take a practical step towards the realisation of Afrasian justice. In fact, that declaration already partially exists in the form of the anti-hegemony clause in the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, or the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's Republic of China, signed in 1978.

Article II: The Contracting Parties declare that neither of them should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region and that each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.<sup>11</sup>

All law-making, both domestic and international, involves multiple conflicting motivations born by the stakeholders who participated in the negotiations. In this treaty, when referring to hegemony, the expanding influence of the Soviet Union in the Asia-Pacific at the time was implicated by the Chinese side. Fearing to give provocation to Soviets, Japan intended to soften the expression by adding 'or in any other region' and creating Article IV that reads 'The present Treaty shall not affect the position of either Contracting Party regarding its relations with third countries'. As time passes on, the original intentions of the contracting parties disappear, and the documents are interpreted to the letter. In the absence of the Cold War circumstances, the Treaty has enormous potential for propagating the spirit of a benign and peaceful community of Afrasia. Any treaty binds on the contracting

parties; therefore, these two nation-states, China and Japan, are already legally obliged to act against hegemonic behaviours of any party in Asia and the rest of the world.

### **Afrasia and the European world**

So far, we have referred to Europe as a sort of teacher by negative example, but it is inappropriate to assail Europe as a single political entity or indiscriminately put down individual Europeans. One cannot equate as the same Briton the veteran Labourite who enjoys an after-work pint in the pub with the City's young financial elite who identifies with Cecil Rhodes, an architect of the British Empire.

On the flip side of the rise of Afrasia, Europe is becoming an ordinary member of the family of world nations instead of the family head. After the national referendum on Britain's membership in the EU in June 2016, a British friend of mine mockingly stated that 'Great Britain is becoming a small Britain', but there is no need to worry. Even if Europe's political and economic power wanes, its historical and cultural power will continue to attract the world. The more level the world becomes, the more the people of the world will appreciate the extraordinary beauty of European art, music, and architecture, as well as the rigorous ideas of European philosophy, with no prejudice. When Europeans acknowledge the negative legacy of their parasitic past and address the grievances of their citizens of descent from their former colonies, the large peninsula of the Eurasian continent will receive the deep respect it deserves from the rest of the world.

One of the world's most enthusiastic supporters of the formation of an Afrasian intellectual community is found at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, which is well known as the global hub of Asian and African area studies. If one observes post-Bandung history from a European perspective and attempts to devise a geo-cultural strategy for the next century, such a strategic collaboration will naturally be conceived. One need not fear the rise of Afrasia now that a powerful initiative is being taken from within Europe to play the role of a midwife in order to consolidate intellectual relationships between Africa and Asia.<sup>12</sup>

### **Afrasia and the Americas**

There is one crucial aspect that I have not explicitly discussed so far. If Afrasia is principally defined and contoured by the history of Europe's colonial aggression that lasted from the 15th to the 20th century, how are we to position the Americas in this framework – as the coloniser, the colonised, or something else? Is it justified to group the two Americas together?

It was the 'discovery' of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492 that changed the historical path of the American continent irreversibly. Most parts of Central and South America became colonies of Spain and Portugal; today's United States was a British colony; today's Canada was a colony of Britain and France; and Australia and New Zealand were British colonies. These areas were settled on a large scale by people of European origin, both poor and rich. As

discussed, the institutions developed in densely populated Europe were thus transplanted into the environments of small population worlds.

In the process, large portions of indigenous communities were annihilated in the Americas and Oceania. As McNeill described in *Plagues and Peoples*, the indigenous people of the Americas who were not immune to the germs the Europeans brought suffered horrifying diseases such as smallpox and lost their lives. Their populations dwindled by no less than 90 per cent, but the Spanish conquistadors remained healthy. This was an absolute catastrophe for the indigenous communities, with their values, customs, culture, religion, and the structure of the whole world collapsing.<sup>13</sup> Slaves were transported from Africa to fill this void.

Eventually, most colonies in the Americas achieved independence from the metropolises in Western Europe: the United States attained independence from Britain in 1776, Haiti from France in 1804, Mexico from Spain in 1821, and Brazil from Portugal in 1822. The most painful among these was Haiti's experience. Having embraced the human rights ideals espoused in the French Revolution, the Haitian slaves fought against the French settlers, abolished slavery, and attained independence under the leadership of Toussaint Louverture, a revolutionary. However, Louverture was captured by Napoleon's soldiers and died in prison in France.<sup>14</sup> The nations comprising the main part of the Americas eventually broke away from Europe's political dominance by the beginning of the 19th century, even though New Zealand, Australia, and Canada remained loyal to the British Crown for some period. After the massive wave of political independence subsided, Europe embarked on the venture of political conquest and empire-building throughout Africa and Asia during the second half of the 19th century. It was as if the parasite in the Americas turned to a new host: Afrasia.

It is due to this historical sequence that the framing of Afrasia becomes relevant. There is a time lag of one to two centuries between the independence of the Americas and the independence of Afrasia. The memory of Afrasia's independence since the middle of the 20th century is still alive. It was in 1946 that the Philippines gained independence from the United States. India achieved independence in 1947 and Ghana in 1957. South Africa's eradication of apartheid occurred as late as 1994.

Afrasia has been home to many historic kingdoms and empires. As such, colonial rule could be viewed as an utmost disgrace and humiliation, and many post-independence Asian and African countries turned towards greater national unity and cohesion with the agenda of persistent nation-building. As retold by Wang Zheng, Chinese national identity was constructed on the foundation of the historical memory of the recent past.<sup>15</sup> However, as we saw in Chapter 3, Afrasia now faces dynamic waves of migration and cultural encounters within itself. One of the key challenges for Afrasia must be to create a new modality for multicultural conviviality that goes beyond 'aloof coexistence' (Chapter 5).

The Americas face a different situation. Creole culture has blossomed in Latin America, as exemplified by the cultural vibrancy of Brazil and Cuba. The United States is also moving gradually towards a new balance in the coexistence of people with diverse backgrounds. President Barack Obama was the first African

American president of the United States; the majority of US voters wanted to commit their future to what Obama represents in American history. Around 200 years after independence, the Americas are about to present themselves as a hybrid space that has absorbed colonial relations into its inner life. As such, the Americas, both the South and the North, may be one step ahead of Afrasia. In searching for a non-parasitic symbiosis of people of various origins, the Americas are expected to provide a model for future Afrasia.

### **An attempt at triangulation**

Universities across the world offer a variety of programmes that combine multidisciplinary learning, foreign language education, study abroad, and fieldwork to produce future global leaders. Every student of such a programme must have heard of the famous slogan ‘think globally, act locally’. Nonetheless, one will be at a loss if one is abruptly told to think globally with no particular context. When you stand at the top of a hill with a 360-degree view of your surroundings, you may acquire all kinds of information but still may not be able to decide where to take your first step. Practically, when you prepare to take wings to the external world, you are advised to get immersed in the language and culture of a specific place first, rather than obtain general surface knowledge about the whole world or a broad region. Guided by curiosity, you may excel at music, art, cooking, or craft-making in a place you have never stepped foot before. You may eventually speak the local language almost as fluently as locals. Such an achievement should be much more boast-worthy than having entry stamps for over a 100 countries in your passport.

Every map is self-centred and inaccurate regarding the peripheral parts. In old maps, we find numerous phantom islands and mountains that do not exist but were painted in pseudo-authentic (somewhat amusing) ways.<sup>16</sup> It is wrong, however, to assume that there can ever be a scientifically objective map that will be correct in all respects, not least because people’s spatial cognition is always subjective. This typically applies to Figure 0.1 in which the shape of the Americas is absurdly distorted because the Arabian Sea was ‘chosen’ as the centre by the map drawer. Figure 10.1 is the *Gangnido* world map drawn by Korean cartographers in 1402;<sup>17</sup> this map places Mongolia at the centre and provides detailed information about China and the Korean peninsula. Japan is seen in the lower right corner but rotated 90 degrees clockwise. China and India are fused.

The left side is small but intriguing; the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea are identified (though indistinguishable from the land in colour). Furthermore, the shapes of the African continent and the Arabian Peninsula are surprisingly accurate, although it is not clear what the black area in the centre of Africa represents. Dozens of place names in Europe and North Africa are filled densely in tiny letters, probably based on the information brought by Muslim traders. This map is the oldest existing map that was drawn many decades before the age of Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama and yet presented clear images of Asia, Africa, and Europe (the entire ‘Old World’) in a single space. While recognising

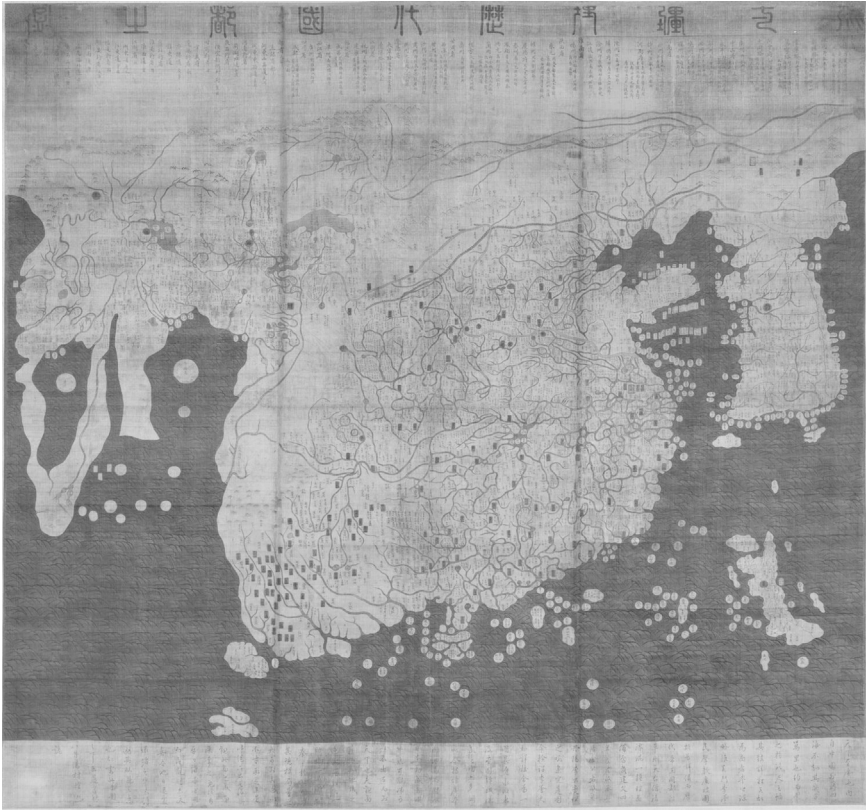


Figure 10.1 A 15th-Century Map of the World (Gangnido)

Source: Ryukoku University Library, Kyoto, Japan

our intrinsic short-sightedness, we draw maps to put together the information about the places towards which our interest is directed, places we dream of visiting at least once in the future.

When an Afrasian citizen accomplishes decolonisation of the mind, Western culture can also become an object of pure curiosity. Nevertheless, the objects towards which the interest of a free individual is directed are not limited to things that originated in the West. An Ethiopian learns Indonesian *batik*, a Chinese masters a South Indian cuisine, or a Korean is attracted by the Zimbabwean thumb piano. An increasing number of young Asian students conduct fieldwork and settle in villages across Africa, where they may be called daughters and sons by old villagers and eventually write excellent ethnography, reciprocated by Africans.<sup>18</sup> Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are growing in Afrasia, not for charity but for supporting endogenous development.

Then, given the deep interest in a particular place, would it be possible to expand one's worldview by connecting the dots here and there? At this point, to conclude the book, I would like to propose a method of cultural triangulation that is potentially applicable to any part of the world.

Triangulation is a method of measuring distance without using a scale; if the co-ordinates of points A and B are known, and both the angle from point A to point C and the one from point B to point C are known, then the position of point C is accurately identified. The cultural anthropologist Kawada Junzo metaphorically applied this geometric method to the field of area studies. What Kawada called cultural triangulation was an enlightening and straightforward method.<sup>19</sup> Kawada addressed the Japanese audience: When you think of Japan, why not use Senegal and France as reference points? When you think of France, why not see it through the lenses of Senegal and Japan? Likewise, when you think of Senegal, why not compare the country with France and Japan? Eventually, a reciprocal comparison between two points becomes a three-dimensional comparison, adding depth to the worldview of the observer. In this way, we can free ourselves from the binary perceptions of 'the West and us', 'Africa and us', or 'Asia and us' and take a step towards positioning ourselves more prudently and objectively in a global human society.

In Kawada's example, however, two out of the three points are developed nations, namely, France and Japan, both of which are on the dominant side of the modern world. I do not think a choice like Kawada's is the only way. One may well attempt to restore the balance by mainstreaming historically marginalised Afrasia. Tentatively, setting the place where you are now standing as one of the three points, you may choose the other two points from any part of Afrasia.

If one seeks to know more about Islam in Indonesia, one may gain insight by contrasting it with the experience in Nigeria. If one is interested in the development of Mohandas Gandhi's idea of *satyagraha*, one may wish to follow his experience in two countries, India and South Africa (and, of course, Britain when appropriate). After the demise of the Cold War, socialist Vietnam and Mozambique were thrown into the rough sea of the market economy, and a comparison of the paths taken by these two countries can be an exciting theme of policy study. In such attempts, one may or may not include a place in Europe or the Americas as a point of reference, since target points for comparison can be chosen freely as one considers appropriate. In any case, by consciously taking the Afrasian framework into account, the method of triangulation may be liberated from unconscious Western centrism.

People in Africa and Asia move around, meet, communicate, and learn from each other. Afrasia is the name given to such a space of discovery. We do not confine ourselves to a cocoon for fear of encounters. We do not flatter the powerful and lose our dignity. Instead, measuring our own positions against each other, we live together, either intimately or aloof, with our friends in a macro-region called Afrasia, which may eventually dissolve into a larger universe – I believe that such a collective endeavour will be unexpectedly delightful.

## Notes

- 1 W. Arthur Lewis, *Politics in West Africa* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965), 64.
- 2 Lewis, *Politics in West Africa*, 65.
- 3 Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).
- 4 Mao Tse-Tung, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People' (1957), in *On Practice and Contradiction*, ed. Mao Tse-Tung (London: Verso, 2007), 162.
- 5 Slavoj Žižek, 'Introduction', in *On Practice and Contradiction*, ed. Mao Tse-Tung (London: Verso, 2007).
- 6 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. [www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)
- 7 Donella Meadows, 'State of the Village Report' (May 31, 1990). <http://donellameadows.org/archives/state-of-the-village-report/>
- 8 Immanuel Kant and Hans Reiss, *Kant: Political Writings*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 113.
- 9 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
- 10 A good number of works discuss each of these initiatives. See, for example, Li Anshan, *FOCAC Twelve Years Later: Achievements, Challenges and the Way Forward* (Beijing: School of International Studies, Peking University, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2012); Ian Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Pedro Amakasu Raposo, *Japan's Foreign Aid Policy in Africa: Evaluating the TICAD Process* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Ajay Kumar Dubey and Aparajita Biswas, eds., *India and Africa's Partnership: A Vision for a New Future* (New Delhi: Springer, 2016); Yongkyu Chang, ed., *South Korea's Engagement with Africa: A History of the Relationship in Multiple Aspects* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). Iwata Takuo, ed., *New Asian Approaches to Africa: Rivalries and Collaborations* (Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press, 2020). A comprehensive overview of all these Asian initiatives vis-à-vis Africa is yet to be written.
- 11 The texts are written in Chinese and Japanese, both of which are authentic. Translation into English is available in the website of Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/treaty78.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/treaty78.html)
- 12 [www.ias.asia/programmes/africa-asia-new-axis-knowledge](http://www.ias.asia/programmes/africa-asia-new-axis-knowledge)
- 13 McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*. See also Bartolomé De Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, trans. Nigel Griffin (London: Penguin, 1992).
- 14 The life of Toussaint Louverture is vividly described in C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).
- 15 Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
- 16 Edward Brooke-Hitching, *The Phantom Atlas* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016).
- 17 The original edition reproduced in Figure 10.1 was painted on a silk cloth. It is not known how the map was brought from Korea to Japan.
- 18 Oussouby Sacko is a role model. Born in Mali, Sacko studied architecture in China, then conducted fieldwork in the downtown area of Kyoto, Japan, and was appointed to be President of Kyoto Seika University in 2018 (as the first African president of a Japanese university).
- 19 Junzo Kawada, *Nishi no kaze, minami no kaze: Bunmei ron no kumikae no tameni (The West Wind, The South Wind: Towards Recomposition of Civilisation Theories)* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1992).

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