Received: 15 April 2024 | Revised: 18 February 2025 | Accepted: 18 February 2025

DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12963

AJPS AMERICAN JOURNAL of POLITICAL SCIENCE

ARTICLE

An anatomy of worldmaking: Sukarno and anticolonialism from post-Bandung Indonesia

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Abstract

This article analyzes the anticolonial worldmaking of postcolonial Indonesia's first president Sukarno, during Guided Democracy (1959–1965). Using worldmaking as a conceptual interface, the article offers three interconnected interventions. First, Sukarno's range of anticolonial activity allows for a conceptual advance by revealing three dimensions of worldmaking: discursive, institutional, and dramaturgical. This typology works towards arresting worldmaking's conceptual overextension without sacrificing its generative character. Second, it integrates Southeast Asian trajectories of worldmaking into scholarly discussion of anticolonial political thought. Contrary to other anticolonial figures, Sukarno's worldmaking revolved around a postcolonial vision of global order *outside* the United Nations. By analyzing Sukarno's contextually specific vision of the relationship between international organizations and decolonization, this article underscores the importance of sensitivity to situated understandings of anticolonialism. Third, this article reorients Sukarno scholarship by inter alia resituating him within the Third World. The article closes by laying out some contradictions of Sukarno's anticolonial worldmaking project.

This article analyzes the anticolonial worldmaking of Indonesia's first President Sukarno, during "Guided Democracy" (1959–1965). It intervenes in the scholarly literature in three interconnected ways. First, it attempts a conceptual advance in the uses and understandings of worldmaking, which has conceptually anchored recent scholarship across a range of cognate fields, especially international relations (e.g., Berger, 2022; Cullum, 2024; Dilawri, 2023; Eijking, 2024; Jackson, 2023; Vaughan, 2024), but also moral philosophy (Táíwò, 2022), African history (Akyeampong, 2023), historical sociology (Wyrtzen, 2022), anthropology (Al-Bulushi, 2024), and international law (Aber, 2023). Such widespread usage can be traced to Adom Getachew's *Worldmaking After Empire* (2019). By reexamining the international political thought and activity of Black Atlantic anticolonial nationalists, Getachew challenges the assumed telos of national independence as the culmination of decolonization and instead "recast[s] anticolonial nationalism as *worldmaking*" (2019, 2, italics in original). For Getachew, worldmaking serves as an umbrella category denoting the reimagination and reordering of global politics.[1]

The influence of the concept may be attributed to how it manages to encompass a wide range of activities within its scope while also forcefully channeling our attention towards ambitious (and urgent) present-day imperatives. However, this concept has been appropriated loosely, where worldmaking is increasingly annexed to a diffuse set of referents. Consider the distance, for example, between worldmaking as love (Hartnett, 2022) and counterinsurgency (MacKay,

[1] Most deployments of the term worldmaking before Getachew trace back to Goodman (1978), who continues to be influential (see, e.g., Srinivasan 2019; Ilott 2023). Bell (2014) provides the passage point from Goodman's constructivism to global intellectual history and political theory. When this paper refers to worldmaking, it is restricted to the scholarship that references Getachew, though there has undoubtedly also been an uptick in interest in Goodman's work since Getachew's intervention (see also Onuf, 1989).

2023, pp. 17–19). Both appropriations of worldmaking are, on their own, valid and fascinating, and speak to the generative nature of the concept. Yet, because worldmaking's conceptual boundaries and internal constitution are typically left undertheorized, what allows these extensions to hang together is being progressively thinned out. In other words, there is a danger of conceptual overextension.[2] This constrains worldmaking's analytical purchase, as inter alia by collapsing the different ways that agents may perform worldmaking into a homogeneous category, we obscure the variegated practices of reconstructing global politics.

It is within this context that this article strives to extend Getachew's original intervention, staging a conceptual advance by pursuing an anatomy of worldmaking. This entails disaggregating worldmaking into its different dimensions, explicating a rich spectrum of activity that operates with distinct accompanying logics. This spectrum is intended to loosely reflect the state of the literature on worldmaking and show how worldmaking connects to a myriad of issues and lines of inquiry. By surfacing worldmaking's varying dimensions, this article offers a typology where the disaggregated dimensions of worldmaking are interconnected, but, nevertheless, each dimension can be taken in abstraction and *analytically* isolated, and from there approavvched through distinct modes of study.

To be clear, disaggregation here is not meant to imply that the dimensions illuminate separate practices or activities. They do not necessarily assert any autonomy of practices, and the logics or forms of analysis often bleed into each other and are often relational by working at different scales of the same phenomenon.[3] The dimensions of worldmaking are used to illuminate not *separate units*, but *distinct logics*, where different categories are adopted as lenses to illuminate different theoretical implications that are in operation under the larger category of worldmaking. Furthermore, the dimensions offered here are not meant to be exhaustive or closed to further refinement. Instead, they merely serve to demonstrate a particular exercise of how worldmaking might in this instance be fruitfully disaggregated. This framework therefore does not constrain the way that worldmaking has and will continue to spur interesting analyses about a variety of topics around a conceptual core of reimagining or reordering global politics. Yet, it also works towards delivering analytical coherence within the progressively diffuse manner to which worldmaking is applied by creating subheadings that illuminate the basic logics of these distinct dimensions of worldmaking.

This leads to the second intervention, which is to contribute to the vibrant scholarly discussion within the history of anticolonial political thought (e.g., Duong, 2021; Temin 2023; Adalet, 2025; Getachew & Mantena, 2021; Parasher, 2023). *Worldmaking After Empire* is now a touchstone and obligatory reference within this scholarly literature, where worldmaking represents a mode of anticolonialism ambitiously rescaled as a global project (Bose, 2023; Younis, 2022). Retaining this anticolonial intent, this article analyzes the anticolonial worldmaking projects of postcolonial Indonesia's first president Sukarno at the peak of his political influence from 1959 to 1965. This intervention moves towards rectifying regional imbalances within this literature: while scholars have sought to recover anticolonial political leaders as global political thinkers, efforts concentrate on Indian or Black Atlantic figures (e.g., Sultan, 2024; Wilder, 2015). Southeast Asia's absence is conspicuous, and its postcolonial experience is not integrated into the wider literature (Chua, 2008).[4]

Sukarno and Indonesia provide a prime example. Born in 1901, Sukarno is roundly considered Indonesia's founding father. Recognized for his charismatic oratory, he established his anticolonial credentials in the late-1920s, then served as Indonesia's first president upon proclaiming the nation's independence in 1945, though primarily as a figurehead president. He consolidated political power in 1959 when he formulated and installed a system he called "Guided Democracy." Despite playing a pivotal role in the world historical process of decolonization, and then later acting as one of the prime architects of the Third World—especially by hosting the Bandung Conference in 1955—Indonesia remains the world's "biggest invisible thing" (Pisani, 2014, p. 3), with a vast mismatch between the country's size and the muted mainstream academic attention.

This rectification of regional imbalances, in turn, provokes reflection on the different pathways of anticolonial praxis: by surfacing a contextually specific relationship between international organizations and decolonization, this article underscores the importance of sensitivity to situated understandings of anticolonialism. While Getachew (2019) recovers anticolonial thinkers seeking reform *through* or *within* the United Nations (UN),[5] Sukarno exhibits a counterpoint, his anticolonial praxis shifting from advocating reform from within the UN to attacking and eventually

[2] This point draws from the broad concerns observed by Sartori (1970) and Collier and Mahon (1993) but does not seek to fully adopt their naturalism (see Bevir and Kedar, 2008). "Overextension" is used rather than Sartori's "stretching" due to the latter's association with Fanon.

[3] This thereby draws from and engages the scholarship that has explored the different scales of worldmaking, e.g., Bose (2023), Adalet (2021), Younis (2022), and Lal (2015).

[4] The exception being K. Pham (2024), though he does not emphasize the Southeast Asian component. Indirectly related are CuUnjieng Aboitiz (2020) and Claudio (2017).

[5] As does Quinton-Brown (2024).

leaving it altogether to pursue alternative institutions. Postwar international institutions were increasingly understood not as a medium to facilitate decolonization, but as setting limits to anticolonialism. Underlying the three dimensions of Sukarno's worldmaking project was a postcolonial vision of global order *outside* these institutions, requiring attempts to simultaneously tear down their foundations and establish alternative institutions outside their purview. This was theoretically expressed within Sukarno's body of articulations as anticolonial revolution and its vehicles encompassing both a "destructive" and "constructive" dynamic, with Sukarno applying the language to revolution (Sukarno quoted in Weatherbee, 1966, p. 54), the state (Sukarno quoted in Mintz, 1965, p. 190), or Indonesia's general postcolonial trajectory (Sukarno, 1960a, p. 12). *Pace* Táíwò's (2022, pp. 69–103) use of worldmaking as a "constructive" philosophy, replete with the language of "building" and "making," Sukarno instead also raises a concurrent project of world*un*making, pursuing the dismantling of institutions and practices.[6]

These two interventions are grounded upon a third: shifting the lines of inquiry that have preoccupied the English-language scholarship of Sukarno or mid-twentieth century Indonesia more broadly. Prior scholarship has focused on Sukarno's pre-independence career (Dahm, 1969; Herring, 2002), primarily regarded his political thought as in various degrees instrumental, unsystematic or specious (Legge, 1972; Penders, 1974; van der Kroef, 1968), or predominantly attended to situating his contributions within Indonesia's internal sociopolitical structure (Fakih, 2020; Lin, 2023; McIntyre, 2005; Rush, 2014; Bourchier 2015).[7] This article instead foregrounds Sukarno's later tenure; treats Sukarno as a serious resource for political theory; and re-spatializes Sukarno's interventions within a broader Third World canvas. This entails resituating Sukarno within a shared "problem-space" (Scott, 2006) with other Third World actors like Kwame Nkrumah or Jawaharlal Nehru. The latter emerges in this article as a moderate interlocutor to the radicalizing Sukarno, their relationship representing a distillation of a wider fracture within the Third World (Bhardwaj, 2024; Byrne, 2016; Jansen, 1966; Lüthi, 2020). This also partially works towards bringing Sukarno out of a primarily Area Studies frame and towards wider disciplinary audiences.

These arguments are developed through a historical account of Sukarno-led Indonesia's worldmaking activities from 1959 to 1965. The second section introduces the three dimensions of worldmaking by briefly unpacking Indonesia's role in the Bandung Conference. This sets up the next three sections, which contextualize and then theorize these three dimensions: discursive, institutional, and dramaturgical. The third section observes the trajectory of Sukarno's *discursive* worldmaking, especially his theory of world order as fundamentally an antagonism between the Old Established Forces (OLDFO) and the New Emerging Forces (NEFO). The fourth section details Sukarno's *institutional* worldmaking around this binary axis, detailing the steps and implications of giving the NEFO institutional expression. The fifth section captures Sukarno's *dramaturgical* worldmaking through exhibitions of example-setting and architecture. This discloses worldmaking's cultural and affective registers. The sixth section diagnoses the contradictions of Sukarno's worldmaking project, identifying them as generated by an untimeliness of anticolonialism within the post-Bandung context. The last section concludes.

INDONESIA IN THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE

The Asian-African Conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. The "Bandung Conference" has served as the avatar of Third Worldism, becoming symbolic of its aims and identity and has since received much scholarly attention (e.g., Lee, 2010, 2023; Prashad, 2007; Q. N. Phạm & Shilliam, 2016; Phillips, 2016; Umar, 2019). Bringing together representatives of Asian and African nations for the first time, scholars emphasize how the conference articulated a matrix of related concepts—decolonization and anti-racism, among others—and built transnational solidarities, which served as the medium to reimagine the postcolonial international order. Bandung inaugurated a "cultural or spiritual movement"—the "Bandung Spirit"—which instills successor summits, especially Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summits, with the original spirit of the conference.[8]

Bandung has come to represent the apotheosis of Third Worldism, a moment in which broad consensus and unity emerged among the postcolonial and subaltern states. Playing host, Indonesia was seen as a leader of the postcolonial world, and Sukarno is referenced as one of the primary architects of Bandung's emancipatory vision. This period following the conference—what this article terms the "post-Bandung" moment—saw a fracturing of this coalition into radical and moderate wings and formed the background context to Sukarno's worldmaking attempts. Disaggregating Indonesia's role within the Bandung Conference briefly introduces three dimensions of

[6] See Chan (2024) for expropriation as a method for "dismantling" structures of colonial inheritance.
[7] Partial exceptions include Weatherbee (1966) and Nair (2023).
[8] Some scholars are more keen to point out the mythical elements of Bandung (see, e.g., Vitalis, 2013).

worldmaking, setting up subsequent sections which show how Sukarno takes each of these dimensions of worldmaking in different directions in the post-Bandung phase as well as the contradictions that emerge when his worldmaking is performed within a particular historical moment.

The first dimension of worldmaking on show in Bandung was *discursive*. The linguistic choices embedded within the multiple speeches at the conference can be analyzed as speech-acts intended to intervene in a global discourse, shifting or shaping the social or political circumstances in intended directions. Thinking through discursive interventions as a dimension of an overarching worldmaking project calls us to attend to the intellectual, linguistic, and political contexts of the speeches (Skinner, 2002). This is exemplified by Sukarno's opening speech at the conference, which set the defining themes and atmosphere of the conference. The speech is commonly read as part of narratives of the arc of decolonization, where scholars characterize it under the broad umbrella theme of the Third World's formation and solidarity (e.g., Westad, 2005, p. 100; Prashad, 2007, pp. 33–34). The speech as such serves a symbolic role of setting the tone of a high point of decolonization and becomes overwhelmed by a macro-historical force. This occludes the intricacies of the speech that allow glimpses into the dynamics of Third World and Cold War politics within the period, which can be discerned if the speech is taken not as autonomous from its context, nor as merely reproducing the context, but as *intervening* in the context: being rooted in the vocabulary of the time and place in order to achieve intelligibility, but at the same time shaping the grammar and trajectory of postcolonial international politics.

Sukarno's speech traverses several themes, but most pertinent for our purposes is his emphasis on the interrelation of the themes of peace and the *moral* as central to the postcolonial enterprise. Sukarno proclaims:

> The peoples of Asia and Africa wield little physical power…What can we do? We can do much! We can inject the voice of reason into world affairs. We can mobilise all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace…We, the peoples of Asia and Africa, 1,400,000,000 strong, far more than half the human population of the world, we can mobilise what I have called the *Moral Violence of Nations* in favour of peace. We can demonstrate to the minority of the world which lives on the other continents that we, the majority, are for peace, not for war, and that whatever strength we have will always be thrown on to the side of peace. (Sukarno in Kahin, 1956, pp. 45–46, italics in original)

For Sukarno, the Third World can play a determining role in world politics despite their relative lack of material capabilities by exercising moral argument, mobilizing their mass numbers to sway and overwhelm public opinion. This intersects with the theme of peace: invoking a Cold War backdrop, the Third World's raison d'être would be as a peaceful force in world affairs, suppressing war between the nuclear-powered superpowers. This dovetails the prominent slogans emerging out of the conference, especially "peaceful coexistence." The significance of these themes will be illustrated in the next section.

The second dimension: Indonesia's hosting and organizing activity of the Bandung Conference can be seen as worldmaking effort in an *institutional* form. This is the primary mode by which Getachew utilizes worldmaking, and here Bandung serves as the platform and infrastructural model for diplomatic intercourse between representatives of subaltern nations, from which the Third World was imagined as a unified subject. As Lewis (2024, p. 589) observes, these conferences represent a "unique form of 'public-making' at a global level," which facilitates the imagination and formalization of new solidarities, spurring both subject formation and mobilization towards developing new norms or rules to govern the international sphere. The Bandung Conference served as the template for subsequent Afro-Asian meetings that included participants from non-elite levels, including, for example, the Asian-African Women's conference in 1958—which subsequently became known as the "Women's Bandung."[9] These platforms, in other words, provide the institutional backbone from which the reimagination and reordering of global politics can occur.

Lastly, we may unpack worldmaking further through engagement with Shimazu's (2013) article to build the rudiments of *dramaturgical* worldmaking. Shimazu draws from theatre studies to propose a new "conceptual approach to understanding the symbolic dimension of international diplomacy," where "diplomacy as theatre" is introduced as an "interpretative framework to re-cast the conference as a theatrical performance, in which actors performed on the stage to audiences" (Shimazu, 2013, p. 225). The staging of the diplomatic conference as a form of theatre, where actors like Sukarno and Nehru are performers on the diplomatic stage, unlocked a wealth of symbolic meaning. Their speeches are taken as performances on stage, and the Bandung Conference itself

[9] Though, note that scholars have also worked to "provincialize" Bandung, unearthing other conferences that have preceded it as well as the hitherto underemphasized role that women have played in these other events (see, e.g., Lewis and Stolte, 2019; Leow, 2019; Armstrong, 2023).

as a drama. These performances are in turn symbolic representations of the actors' worldmaking aspirations and activity. Furthermore, Shimazu observes that thinking of diplomacy as theatre points towards the wider built environment and how it creates dramatic effects, or in other words how theatrical performances are *staged*. A part of the conference's dramatic spectacle was how the city of Bandung was arranged as a theatrical space to integrate the audiences to become performers themselves as well as the visual imagery that it produced. Together, thinking dramaturgically brings us to look beyond high politics or the logical-rational and unveils how visual or aural spectacles appealing more conspicuously to an affective register are recruited in worldmaking projects (see also Getachew, 2021).

This brief explication of the Bandung Conference hints at how these dimensions of worldmaking are mutually reinforcing or coordinated: Shimazu's observations about the deliberate arrangement of architecture to blur the line between audience and performers allow us to see how the institutional and dramaturgical are related; while institutional worldmaking sets up the material basis from which speechmaking, as discursive interventions, can produce maximum effect by setting up a platform to reach a wider, global audience. These categories are therefore not to asserting autonomous practices, but are relational, working at different scales of the same phenomenon. While not an exhaustive list of possible dimensions, they serve to demonstrate a range of analytically distinguishable worldmaking activity. Schematizing their basic logics in detail can thereby further reveal their different forms.

DISCURSIVE WORLDMAKING: REORDERING WORLD POLITICS

The dimensions of worldmaking exhibited at Bandung would be taken in different directions within Sukarno-led Indonesia's international activity in the following years. This section observes the trajectory of the discursive form of worldmaking as represented by Sukarno's catalog of key speeches on the international stage, most important being Sukarno's speech at the inaugural NAM summit in 1961 which introduces his theory of world order as an intractable conflict between the OLDFO and the NEFO. When contextualized, we can appreciate how Sukarno refashions nonalignment, discursively dismantling then reordering the world by imposing a binary structure of world politics, shifting from a vision of three worlds—the capitalist West, the communist East, and the Third World as moral, peaceful, unaligned mediators—to a North-South divide based upon militant and uncompromising anticolonial politics. This in effect erases the Third World as a category of actors in world politics and orients subaltern solidarities towards a more confrontational posture. It is by analytically approaching worldmaking as a discursive phenomenon that most render worldmaking intelligible by (con)textual exegesis.

To capture the significance of Sukarno's discursive intervention at the 1961 NAM summit in Belgrade, it must be contextualized and observed within the movement of Sukarno's articulations, starting from the aforementioned Bandung Conference speech. There, Sukarno characterized the Third World's primary weapon as the "Moral Violence of Nations." This was strikingly reinterpreted through a series of discursive interventions by Sukarno. The first movement is situated around the breaking point in Indonesian patience over the UN's ability to facilitate what Sukarno had deemed as decolonization: brokering a peaceful integration of West Irian into the Indonesian state. This breaking point may be dated to the breakdown of UN negotiations in 1957, leading to a radicalizing of Indonesian foreign policy by 1960 (Bunnell, 1966; Sukarno, 1960a). This precipitated a litany of speech-acts at prominent forums, for example, in Sukarno's August 1960 Independence Day speech, where he laments the impotency of moral-suasion—the "Moral Violence of Nations"—as compared to bargaining with the backing of military force (Sukarno, 1964a, pp. 75–121).

This was followed by Sukarno's wide-ranging speech at the UN General Assembly in September 1960, where he pronounces international organizations like the UN to have served as the platform for the perpetuation of colonial hierarchies (Sukarno, 1960b). Sukarno identified colonialism rather than the Cold War as the preeminent danger facing mankind, repeating his subtle riposte to Nehru at Bandung, who had approached colonialism with a sense of "closure" (Bhardwaj, 2024). Sukarno then went on to buttress his uncompromising anticolonial stance with a Marxist-inclined philosophy of history, which was to develop into a major theme in all his international speeches: characterizing colonialism as a relic of history, the actions of colonial powers were regarded as attempts to stem the tide of history away from a postcolonial future, and left "the future still-born." Against the backdrop of accelerating decolonization, Sukarno launched an appeal for a "surgical effort to remove the cancer of imperialism," pleading with "all Members of the United Nations: move with the tide of history…place the authority and the moral power of this organization of States behind those who struggle for freedom." A failure to do so would leave one needing to "justify [their] decision before the bar of history."

It was in this vein that Sukarno declared his worldmaking ambitions: "our task is not to defend this world, but to build the world anew. The future…will

judge us on the record of our successes at this task." To conclude, Sukarno proposed a new philosophy to govern the postcolonial world, suggesting a fresh UN charter based upon the principles of Indonesia's *Pancasila*, which "has a universal significance, and can be applied internationally."[10] Staking a claim for global leadership, this intervention sought to universalize the Indonesian revolution, reshaping the world according to its principles. Sukarno declared the Indonesian Revolution to possess a "universal voice" (1964a, pp. 216–217) found within the "social conscience of man," and interweaves his prophetic Marxist-inspired philosophy of history with this worldmaking gambit by proclaiming the Indonesian revolution as world historical not in that it influences world history, but in that it conforms to laws of revolution dictated by history (1964a, pp. 243–245). As such, Sukarno's worldmaking appealed to a higher, natural law: the law of history, and within it the centrality of revolution in driving history forward.

This sets the stage for Sukarno's speech at the NAM summit in Belgrade in September 1961, when the status of West Irian was still unresolved. Nonalignment as a political category has not been monolithic or stable throughout its history and has instead been consistently renegotiated at every NAM summit (Cavoški, 2022). As the inaugural summit, Belgrade was the site of heavy discursive worldmaking by different Third World leaders striving to set nonalignment in its formalized conception of preferred paths. Sukarno sought to rebuff figures, especially Nehru, who had articulated nonalignment in moderate or passive terms to connote either equidistance from the superpowers or disengagement from the Cold War (Abraham, 2004; Bhardwaj, 2024). Nehru had in Bandung described the Third World as the "unaligned area," encompassing the countries in the world between the "Two big colossuses [who] stand face to face with each other, afraid of each other" (Nehru in Kahin, 1956, pp. 66–70). Nehru's view sprung from within the Cold War lens, with his principal orientation of international order as a clash between the communist East and capitalist West, with the Third World caught in between as mediators (Rakove, 2015). Having for years insinuated that colonialism was an anachronism, Nehru's main prerogative at Bandung and NAM summits was counseling fellow Third World leaders to instead focus on the prospect of potential nuclear war between the superpowers, framing the central question for the Third World as "Are we going to throw our weight in the scales on the side of peace or war?" (Nehru in Kahin, 1956, p. 66).

Sukarno's speech at Belgrade repurposed the Nehruvian conception of nonalignment towards a more radical direction by associating nonalignment with the active pursuit of a higher transcendental purpose:

> Being nonaligned does not mean being a buffer-state between two giant blocs. Nonalignment is active devotion to the lofty causes of independence, abiding peace, social justice, the freedom to be free. It is the determination to serve the cause. It runs congruent with the social conscience of man. (Sukarno, 1961a)

While nonalignment was expressed as an "accumulated moral force" and thereby drew continuity with the process initiated in Bandung, Sukarno also delinked nonalignment from a necessary relationship to the Cold War and reframed it as a transcendental force. Sukarno insisted that the most pressing danger to subaltern states was not the Cold War, but new iterations of colonialism. By reinterpreting the background world politics that nonalignment was situated in, Sukarno reoriented nonalignment, and the Third World as its subject, towards different possibilities. Within the speech, Sukarno also pivoted away from "Moral Violence" in the service of "peaceful coexistence" of the Bandung variety by qualifying the moral with the threat of force. This produces an instability in the heart of the Third World, reopening the question of violence by reintroducing it as a tool to combat imperialism, and thereby ideologically satisfying a military buildup towards the reclamation of West Irian.

Most significantly, Sukarno's discursive reordering clears the ground for the discursive inauguration of an alternative world order: a binary antagonism between the NEFO and the OLDFO:

> There is a conflict which cuts deeper into the flesh of man and that is the conflict between the new emergent forces for freedom and justice and the old forces of domination, the one pushing its head relentlessly through the crust of the earth which has given it its lifeblood, the other striving desperately to retain all it can trying to hold back the course of history. (Sukarno, 1961a)

The NEFO/OLDFO binary broadly postulates that the preeminent division within world politics is conflict between the NEFOs, a progressive set of historic agents seeking to establish a revolutionary postcolonial world order based on "peace and justice"; and the OLDFOs, the forces attempting to halt this development and retain their domination of world politics. This characterization represented a contemporaneous effort to reorient the geospatial frame of world order from East-West to North-South, providing a discursive idiom to inscribe anticolonial agency into

[10] *Pancasila* is the official state ideology of Indonesia, formulated and unveiled by Sukarno in 1945. Briefly, it consists of five tenets: belief of one God; nationalism; internationalism; democracy; and social justice.

international affairs. Under this rubric, nonalignment was redescribed from denoting insularity from superpower competition to the active pursuit of anticolonial ends to transcend the status quo. While the primary referents of these categories have been postcolonial nation-states and the former colonial powers, Sukarno later clarifies that his categories are "not countries, not nations, not people, but forces in society. National boundaries are surpassed and there is not a single country in the world in which both forces have not existed the one beside the other" (Sukarno, 1964b, pp. 9–10). This allows for NEFO solidarities from groups across borders, which will have institutional implications, as explored in the next section.

The NEFO/OLDFO theory served as the overarching banner under which Sukarno further conceptualized world order from 1961 onwards. The consequence of the introduction of this antagonism by Sukarno is the production of a contradictory instability within the Third World—it oscillates between a moral and a militant force. Sukarno attempts to resolve this contradiction by associating the moral with violent resistance towards (neo-)colonialism, repudiating the previous framing of the Third World as the mediating force in favor of the anticolonial NEFO/OLDFO divide. Sukarno's discursive logic consequently builds its own momentum, and his speech at the end of 1961 discursively inaugurates "all-out" militant anticolonial struggle as a component of Indonesian international politics: "Don't think that our victories were the outcome of diplomatic manoeuvres. No….It was as a result of the struggle of the Indonesian people in the all-out action" (Sukarno, 1961b).

This radicalization continues to the 1964 NAM summit in Cairo. With Nehru having by this point passed on, Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, playing host, attempted to set the tone in his opening speech by explicitly invoking Nehru's warnings about nuclear war between the superpowers and then expressing his hope that the Cairo conference would be remembered for cultivating international cooperation (Rakove, 2015, pp. 998–999). Sukarno responded by doubling down on his earlier position, arguing that "peaceful coexistence" could not exist between the NEFO and OLDFO, and that nonalignment should be interpreted as anti-imperialist struggle (Sukarno, 1964c). This landed him in an acrimonious situation with Nasser and Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, reflecting the by now consolidated fracture of the Third World between moderate and radical wings (Cavoški, 2022, pp. 84–88; Lüthi, 2020); though Sukarno's radicalization found a kindred spirit in Nkrumah, who around this period similarly abandoned earlier commitments to nonviolence to accept the necessity of anticolonial violence (Pineda, 2024, pp. 442–443).

Overall, discursive worldmaking opened new possibilities, setting the basis for a reimagination of postcolonial nations—previously the Third World, now the New Emerging Forces—and escalating militarism in the pursuit of anticolonial objectives.

INSTITUTIONAL WORLDMAKING: PLATFORMING NEW EMERGING FORCES

Indonesia undertook considerable organizational burden within the Third World by hosting and coorganizing of the Bandung Conference, cosponsoring the NAM summit, and organizing various smaller Afro-Asian related conferences. These activities provided the material medium of worldmaking, convening actors to forge solidarities and provide the collective basis of transnational worldmaking activities. These platforms provide spaces away from existing organizations which either constrain or are otherwise ambiguous in their ability to facilitate a more egalitarian international order.

It is under the NEFO/OLDFO banner that the most revealing attempts at institutional worldmaking ensued, specifically the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) and the Conference of the New Emerging Forces (CONEFO). The NEFO/OLDFO theory sought to discursively reorder the international, this intervention laying the basis of *institutional* worldmaking, where organizations are established around the NEFO/OLDFO binary. Identification around the NEFO category opened up alternative forms of legitimacy for global actors, and the building of trans-territorial solidarities worked towards the construction of a militant anticolonial subject. While discursive worldmaking is wedded to (con)textual analysis, the institutional form is more adequately disclosed by a cross of political theory and diplomatic history, where the abstractions introduced by discursive formulations are actualized into political institutions.

The road to GANEFO and CONEFO was embedded within a period of heightened radical anticolonial activity (Leifer, 1983). In 1962, Indonesia's resolved the status of West Irian by integrating it into its territory. With the conclusion of this episode, the attention of the Indonesian leadership briefly turned towards the pressing lack of economic development, until the formation of the neighboring federation of Malaysia in September 1963 (Fibiger, 2023, pp. 39–40). The formation of Malaysia, in brief, saw the British-facilitated merger of Malaya with smaller territories, including Singapore. It was presented as the means to grant independence to these smaller entities then still under British colonial rule. Decolonization was sought *through* merger into a federal arrangement (see, e.g., Jerris, 2024; Mukoyama, 2024).

This new phenomenon posed an ideological challenge to Sukarno's worldmaking project in at least two

ways. First, the form of decolonization contradicted Sukarno's presentation of decolonization as a necessarily violent, destructive process, where compromise with colonial powers was politically naïve. The formation of Malaysia represented a relatively peaceful path to decolonization *qua* independence through diplomatic negotiation with the British, exactly contrary to Sukarno's worldview. This ideologically exposed Sukarno's conception of the nature of colonial power.

Second and more subtle was the form of political arrangement designed to bring about peaceful decolonization, particularly federalism. While other postcolonial states had sought or experimented with such arrangements during decolonization's "federal moment" (Collins, 2013; see also Cooper, 2014; Getachew, 2019), Indonesia's direct experience with federalism instead foreclosed it as a politically viable arrangement. The Dutch—Indonesia's colonizers—had used federalism as a method to retain limited penetration into their former colony, resulting in the short-lived United States of Indonesia which included Dutch puppet states and a "Commonwealth-like union with the Netherlands" (Fibiger, 2023, p. 26). Crucially, West Irian remained under Dutch control. Federalism was overthrown in 1950 with the declaration of a unitary state republic, but the experience tainted the political form within the Indonesian imagination as the apotheosis of colonial control. Regional rebellions in 1958 calling for decentralization were also forcefully put down and rejected as challenging the sanctity of the unitary state (Feith, 1964). Indonesia's neighbors adopting a federal political arrangement after negotiations with colonial powers represented an ideological provocation to the visions of decolonization narrated by Sukarno which undergirded his worldmaking activities.

Sukarno's response was re-radicalization, denouncing Malaysia's independence as illegitimate, declaring that while Indonesia was "born in fire…There are nations who, without any effort on their part, were given independence by the imperialists as a present" (Sukarno quoted in Liow, 2005, p. 99). He then utilized the grammar of the NEFO/OLDFO binary to denounce the formation of Malaysia as a neocolonial plot, mobilizing the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 and refashioning the imagination of the Bandung project as accompanying idioms to frame his diplomatic attack (Government of Indonesia, 1964, p. 132). Neocolonialism has been associated with Nkrumah (1965), but the concept was shared and widely used in the period, with Sukarno being one of its major and earliest proponents. Having laid the groundwork during his speech in Bandung, and then explicitly used the term at the first NAM summit, Sukarno here employed the neocolonial label to delegitimize the instance of British-facilitated nonviolent decolonization, subsuming Malaysia into the NEFO/OLDFO rubric. The concept of neocolonialism served to narrow the scope of "legitimate" decolonization, demarcating between acceptable and nonacceptable forms of decolonization to sustain the ideological sanctity of Indonesian anticolonialism.

This generated the basis of the launching of *Konfrontasi* (confrontation), a low-intensity war initiated by Sukarno's speeches to "crush Malaysia."[11] *Konfrontasi* further divided the Third World and constrained the level of diplomatic support for Indonesia's initiative. Western powers made development aid schemes contingent on a deradicalization of Indonesia's foreign policy, and a flurry of diplomatic maneuvering by Singaporean leaders prompted Third World leaders to deepen their skepticism about Sukarno—including Nkrumah, who likened Sukarno to Hitler (Ngoei, 2019, p. 143). As with West Irian, the UN refused Indonesia's demand to delegitimate the creation of Malaysia. This intransigence led Sukarno to withdraw Indonesia from the UN, achieving the dubious milestone of being the first country to leave the organization which Sukarno deemed was clearly serving the interests of colonialism and the OLDFOS (Government of Indonesia, 1965).

This was accompanied by a critique of hegemonic understandings of "independence": instead of recognition within international society as part of the UN, "the crowning of independence [was] to stand on one's own feet," as "self-reliance" away from neocolonial relations (Sukarno in Government of Indonesia, 1965, pp. 30–32; Sukarno, 1965). Visions of economic sovereignty were commonplace throughout the Third World, for example in Nyerere's later account where "self-reliance is the basis upon which to build international relations" (Bose, 2023, pp. 3–4; see also Amin, 1990). Such assertions conjured autarkic images that challenged the international economic regime of trade imbalances inherited from the colonial order. This sequence, however, sharply worsened Indonesia's already soaring inflation, leaving the Indonesian economy increasingly dilapidated (Fibiger, 2023, p. 40; Simpson, 2008).

Especially given the United States' commitment to the war in Vietnam, Indonesia's disengagement from international society raised questions about the legitimacy of the UN (Taylor, 1965, p. 211). This was the culmination of the sequence that started with Sukarno's UNGA speech in 1960, where he articulated dissatisfaction with the shape of the UN. While in 1960 Sukarno articulated a desire to "retool" the UN from within, by 1965, with the NEFO/OLDFO theory in flow, Sukarno's logic pushed him towards disengagement from the international organization altogether. Withdrawal from other international organizations fol-

[11] On different dimensions of *Konfrontasi*, see, e.g., Mackie (1974), Poulgrain (2014), and Garbagni (2023).

lowed, including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

It is within this process that the institutionalization of the NEFO/OLDFO discursive abstractions occurs, emerging as the GANEFO and CONEFO. The GANEFO's immediate origins lie in the 1962 Asian Games: held in Jakarta, the Games ostensibly connoted postwar Asia's assertion of independence (Pauker, 1965; Webster, 2016). Its ethos drew from the language and ideals of the already well-established Olympic Games, stressing the ability of sports to bring people together in a respectful nonconfrontational and nonpolitical manner. This form of international sports was championed by Nehru, who evoked themes of international cooperation to characterize prior iterations of the Asian Games; and also used the games to claim leadership of Asian states (Webster, 2016, p. 400). Controversy erupted when Indonesia refused to provide visas to participants from Taiwan and Israel out of solidarity with other Third World actors, symbolically excluding them from the community of independent nation-states. Sukarno thereby committed the "cardinal sin…of politicizing the Olympics," a major affront to the "nonpolitical" foundations of the Asian Games (Webster, 2016, p. 401). This led to a riot outside the Indian embassy in Jakarta, and eventually Indonesia's suspension from the International Olympic Committee (IOC)—the first country to receive such treatment.

Indonesia pushed back, with Sukarno pointing towards the hypocrisy of the IOC, arguing that the inclusion of Taiwan and Israel would have themselves been "political" acts. From there, he explicitly foregrounded the omnipresence of the political, reversing the IOC's "de-politicizing" gesture by instead vowing to imbue international sporting events as explicitly political, inscribing antagonism into the previously "nonpolitical" sport competitions (Sukarno, 1963). Wearing the expulsion as a "badge of pride," the episode led to the organizing and hosting of the first GANEFO in 1963, an alternative international sporting event based upon principles markedly distinct from the Asian Games or Olympics.

Taking place amid *Konfrontasi*, GANEFO was a component of Indonesia's strategy of recruiting Third World support in its campaign against Malaysia. Claiming Third World leadership, Indonesia through GANEFO contested the legitimacy of the norms underpinning the international organizations which both symbolized and constituted the international order. The significance of GANEFO's organizing principles was on display as participants extended beyond Third World nation-states: around a third of participants were local or unofficial delegations, including "progressive" forces from the Netherlands. Representation was not based upon the legitimation processes formalized within the UN but upon anticolonial credentials. This stemmed directly from the theorization of the NEFO/OLDFO divide as rooted in "forces" rather than nation-states directly, conjuring a re-spatialization of anticolonial politics against the hegemony of the nation-state as the sole representative vehicle of spatially bounded communities. The participation of a Palestinian team, with their flag, routinely paraded, emphasized that anticolonial forces could exercise their agency to impose different standards of legitimacy for integration into international organizations. Furthermore, the sporting philosophy of the games differed from the Olympics, emphasizing "fraternal" solidarity among anticolonial forces over "cut-throat" competition and hierarchy, with 48 out of the 50 participating teams receiving medals (Pauker, 1965, p. 183). The event included extensive cultural performances alongside the sporting event, which all paraded the anticolonial solidarity which bounded the participants together.

These altogether worked towards actualizing and institutionalizing the NEFO as a coherent bloc within international politics and provided a route for anticolonial politics to acquire institutional force. While scholars justly highlight Sukarno's use of sports as a means of nation-building, we can recast this episode as an expression of worldmaking. Seeing the success of GANEFO, Indonesian authorities proceeded with further institutionalization two days after GANEFO officially closed, convening talks to pitch the establishment of CONEFO.

While leaving the UN foreclosed the route of negotiating the international system from within its key institution, it liberated Indonesia to imagine and pursue new possibilities. Emerging within the logic of his NEFO/OLDFO theorization and building on the institutional foundations of the GANEFO, Sukarno announced, on the same day as his decision to leave the UN, concrete plans for a conference among the NEFO: the CONEFO, an alternative to the UN. Endorsed by China, the buildup to the conference also revealingly elicited speculation about the eventual creation of a "UNEFO"—a United Nations of New Emerging Forces (Taylor, 1965, p. 208). The discursive intervention of the NEFO/OLDFO theory set the basis for an institutional intervention, materializing in social reality—both processes falling within the broad ambit of worldmaking but within distinct analytical categories.

The CONEFO served as the platform for the formation of the "Jakarta–Phnom Penh–Hanoi–Beijing–Pyongyang axis" of radical Asian nations, which further threatened the existing international system. The institutionalization of NEFOs within international politics allowed Sukarno's theory of the NEFO/OLDFO divide to impose itself as social

reality, reordering the world away from the logic of the Cold War. Sukarno's political downfall meant that CONEFO plans abruptly ended, but the project nevertheless offers glimpses of the worldmaking potential of institutionalizing anticolonialism.

DRAMATURGICAL WORLDMAKING: EXAMPLE-SETTING AND ARCHITECTURE

Extending Shimazu's analysis of the Bandung Conference where diplomacy and theatre can be creatively understood to converge, we may develop a *dramaturgical* analysis of Sukarno's worldmaking activities. Dramaturgy here functions as a broad term to encapsulate a range of representational and aesthetic activity described through theatrical metaphors or analogies (Goffman, 1990; see also Friedland, 2002), which can then be related to a wider worldmaking program. These activities are fruitfully approached by tapping on elements of theatre studies, (international) social theory, and area studies.

Anticolonial worldmaking in Indonesia took the form of political theatre, where diplomatic summits like the NAM summit and the UN can be understood as more than sites of encounter but also as theatres for performance. Sukarno's biography evokes this dramaturgical approach: a flamboyant character nourished since birth with traditional epic *wayang* (shadow puppet) performances (Dahm, 1969, pp. 23–28), he fed off recognition from the audience of the Indonesian masses (McIntyre, 2005, pp. 25–92). Thinking through Sukarno as a leading actor compels us to think through a different mode of political praxis, bringing the aesthetic and non-textual forms of politics into contact with worldmaking, from there adopting the categories and logics of dramaturgical analysis as a lens. Extending scholarship on how Sukarno's astute use of symbols taps into Indonesian or Javanese culture (Anderson, 1990; Geertz, 1968), we may also emphasize how the local and international can intersect within this particular worldmaking form, engaging different scales of worldmaking.

Two modes of dramaturgical worldmaking are explored: example-setting and architecture. The key episodes of dramatic example-setting surround Indonesia's aforementioned decisions to disengage from international organizations. The disengagement from the UN, contemporaneously associated with Sukarno's statement that the United States should "go to hell" with their aid (Taylor, 1965, p. 206), presented itself in real-time not merely as an institutional process but also as a dramatic spectacle. We may build on Shimazu's observations about how the lines between audience and actors can by dramatic setting be redrawn, where audiences can be drawn in to become actors in their own right (Shimazu, 2013, pp. 233–234). This encourages an interpretation of Sukarno's disengagement from international institutions as constitutive of a symbolic performance which attempts to recruit other "audience" members—fellow members of the Third World—to reconstitute themselves as "actors." The dramatizing of Indonesia's UN exit exhibits a particular form of critique, laying bare how the inadequacies of international organizations were incompatible with a desire to transcend colonial logics from within.

Beyond critique, the double-move of unilaterally quitting the UN and simultaneously establishing a rival institution (CONEFO), following the creation of GANEFO promptly after being kicked out of the IOC, can be interpreted through the lens of international social theory as setting an example to other states. It reveals how the choice of confronting international institutions includes "exit" over merely "voice" (Hirschman, 1972). Beyond undoing the unequal integrative structures from within, Indonesia's examples are designed for emulation directed to the end of undermining international institutions, showing the audience of other postcolonial states how a more destructive route of attacking them from the outside may unfold. This should be understood against the backdrop of unfolding decolonization expanding the number of sovereign nation-states within the international system, and thereby a historical moment where the overarching institutional structures which govern the international system are renegotiated. This represents, on the one hand, a moment of emancipatory political possibility, taken up, for example, through the move to institute anticolonialism via the UN Resolution 1514 (Getachew, 2019, pp. 71–106). On the other hand, it was also a site of closure, as international institutions were configured to reproduce hierarchies of inherited colonial traditions within the global political economy and international law (Anghie, 2012). Third World nation-states thereby at this moment occupied an ambiguous position of participating in international organizations, yet simultaneously advancing critiques that surface the limitations of these organizations in facilitating a broader egalitarian worldmaking agenda.

Dramatic example-setting intervenes within this context to demonstrate how other states, also harboring discontent with the UN and other institutions, can move towards disengagement as a form of worldmaking. Beyond identifying the colonial residues within international organizations, Indonesia's dramatic martyrdom constitutes a public performance that demonstrates alternative possibilities, where alternative institutions can be developed. Dramatic example-setting attempts to excite the audience into actors, expanding agency within international society

in step with its expansion, but without compromise or co-optation into the international system.

Building off recent scholarship reopening discussion of architecture's role in political theory (Bell & Zacka, 2020), we may also discern multiple ways that the built environment underpins the dramaturgical dimensions of worldmaking. Architecture is utilized to platform worldmaking performances—actors are impotent without the precondition of a stage or setting—and also in itself represents a repository of symbols. Scholars have previously highlighted the use of architecture as a significant vector of nation-building within postcolonial Indonesia (e.g., Kusno, 2000; Sopandi, 2009), but we may also, as with sports, recast architecture beyond this nation-building form and instead as worldmaking.

Sukarno trained as an architect and profoundly grasped the relationship between the built environment and politics, integrating architectural forms and symbolism within his worldmaking activities. The purposeful design of spaces to "stage" performances that challenged the international order was pursued in every major international event that took place in Indonesia, an initiative not unusual for Third World statesmen. The Bandung Conference was preceded by 4 months of intensive renovation and occasioned a litany of effects like drawing the audience into close contact with world leaders to create an ambience of mass participation (Shimazu, 2013). The narrative of moving beyond colonialism was also expressed symbolically, as the renaming of old colonial structures transformed buildings tainted with colonial histories into architecture symbolizing postcolonial founding.

Historically, the Bandung Conference was the turning point for Sukarno to greatly accelerate his political theatrics, and when his use of architecture expanded into a major motif. Before the conference, the consolidation of Indonesian political sovereignty as codified through the UN together with the national consensus towards nation-building altogether represented a dispiriting period for Sukarno's ambitions and desire for the limelight. Sukarno was politically disempowered as he was outmaneuvered into the position of merely a figurehead President. His stages were limited, as his "administrator" contemporaries took decolonization as finished business and turned their attention to the task of technocratic state-building (Feith, 1964). This robbed Sukarno of the exhilaration that had characterized the turbulent years leading up to and just after independence—with demand for revolution and revolutionaries in short supply, Sukarno was an actor without a role.

Four years after Bandung, Sukarno successfully recaptured power and reverted the country back to its original founding constitution. This represented a symbolically significant moment given how its preamble proclaims Indonesia's historic anticolonial role, accompanying a pledge to "participate in the implementation of a world order founded on freedom, abiding peace and social justice."[12] Sukarno characterized this new political arrangement as "Guided Democracy," though Geertz (1968, p. 86) avers that Sukarno had more precisely recreated a "modern version of the theater state," a reincarnation of precolonial Indonesia's ritual-based order. With Guided Democracy, Sukarno (1964a, pp. 260–262) reopened the discourse of "romanticism" and the drama of revolutionary agency. The years after 1959 saw him overturn the UN-sponsored Outline Master Plan and take on the role of master architect of the complete remodeling of the capital city Jakarta (Kusno, 2000, p. 54).

This venture was in 1962 (as part of their hosting of the Asian Games) subsumed under a new "lighthouse" or "beacon policy," where Indonesia was to be built in a fashion to symbolize itself as the major coordinating and leadership pole in the continuing anticolonial revolution. The beacon policy conspicuously elevated the use of architecture from nation-building to worldmaking, seeking to transform the city of Jakarta itself from a site of domestic politics into a part of the world stage, a venue, and a symbol of worldmaking. With this, it also sought to gain Sukarno exposure to the developing "global village" as a potential audience, turning the domestic into the international. Both the Asian Games and GANEFO occasioned the unveiling of new architecture, including giant sports stadiums, national monuments, and a special "GANEFO headquarters" that would symbolize Indonesia as the beacon of anticolonialism. The naming of these buildings with the language of anticolonialism, as well as its modernist style, was sought to convey history's movement towards an imminent future of postcolonial national greatness (McGregor, 2003).

As part of the beacon strategy, Jakarta was also redesigned to include large, open urban spaces hospitable for mass rallies which facilitated the conspicuous turn to a populist politics (Kusno, 2000, pp. 101–103). These mass crowds represented an aesthetic resource (see Frank, 2021) for anticolonial worldmaking, with Sukarno recruiting the figure of the masses onto the world stage through speechmaking. This use of architecture to frame his speechmaking also reemphasizes the analytical distinction between discursive and dramaturgical worldmaking, by showing how Sukarno's practice of speechmaking contains two (at least) elements: an articulation of discourse and a performative spectacle. Previously, under the banner of discursive worldmaking, speeches were analyzed as textual interventions encompassing clusters of linguistic symbols. Their substance could be

[12] Translation from the Museum of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia.

read off a transcript, and their architectural setting would be duly pushed into the background. However, foregrounding the use of architecture enables us to see how Sukarno's speeches were not just texts, but forms of theatre that drew participation from the large crowds assembled by architectural setting. Consider the following, as recounted by a former State Department analyst:

> It is an illuminating, and somewhat chastening experience to watch one of Sukarno's vast audiences under the spell of his oratorical powers. He quite literally holds his audience in the palms of his hand. He tells them: "Together we will say 'Mederka' (independence)," or perhaps the word of the day is "Manipol" or "Nasakom." Then he raises his hand. There is utter silence from the throng of several hundreds of thousands of people massed on the field before the speaker's platform. Then he sweeps his hand down swiftly, and in unison the crowd shouts "Mederka!" They repeat this again and again, at the tempo selected by the President. (Mintz, 1965, p. 207n24)

Sukarno, in this description, resembles a charismatic performer, and the discursive choices embedded within the speech take the back stage. When situated within an architectural format of large open urban spaces, speeches can thereby emerge as a form of theatre: with enormous crowds surrounding Sukarno, the relationship represents that of an audience and the central performer. Sukarno's mannerisms now emerge as connoting meaning, as he appears otherworldly on the stage, his speechmaking now with added affective import of appearing as a visual or aural spectacle. Architecture empowers him to enthrall audiences and draw their participation, mobilizing the sea of faces into a singular collective subject and then rescaling them into an agent of anticolonial worldmaking. Focusing on the built environment thereby enables us to go beyond approaching speeches as texts to approaching speeches as theatre, recognizing a dramaturgical logic in operation.

CONTRADICTIONS OF ANTICOLONIAL WORLDMAKING?

Sukarno's worldmaking project crumbled with a countercoup and the United States-assisted mass murder of at least half a million (Bevins, 2020; Robinson, 2018; Roosa, 2023). This occurred from the interplay of external and immanent contradictions of anticolonialism from the postcolony. This article offers observations on some of the contradictions of Sukarno's anticolonial worldmaking project, in order to emphasize the need to attend to some historical specificities when drawing lessons for the contemporary moment. They point to the ambiguities of the "post-Bandung" moment, where the Bandung Conference opened possible futures while foreclosing others, marking "the transformation of anti-colonialism from a type of insurgent politics to a method of statecraft" (Lee, 2023, p. 694). When historically situated within the crystallization of the post-Bandung moment, Sukarno's worldmaking activities reveal themselves as hamstrung by an untimeliness, where a mode of anticolonialism was practiced outside the period where its conditions were most suitable. This pursuit of revolutionary change after the horizon of possibilities had receded unfolded within three categories: history, space, and violence.

A rupture within Sukarno's philosophy of *history* is located between the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation" (Koselleck, 2004). Encountering modernity on its own terms at the point of independence, Sukarno's Indonesia confronted an accelerating rhythm of time. This was first embraced by articulating revolution as an unstable, dialectical process of continuous change, where the Indonesian Revolution was "compressing many revolutions" (Sukarno, 1960b). Sukarno attempted to impose a coherent structure on post-Bandung time by articulating an anticolonial iteration of a Marxist philosophy of history, positing a peaceful future of postcolonial arrival: "a *Pax Humanica*, a Pax of all the human creatures who inhabit this earth" (Sukarno, 1964a, p. 43).

This prophetic philosophy of history generated an acute sense of expectation for the future, one that anticipates imminent closure or arrival. Moving from a "not yet" (Chakrabarty, 2007) logic to a "coming soon," Indonesians, along with others of the Third World, made claims to the fruits of modernity, in Sukarno's words a "revolution of rising demands" of material abundance (1960b). Yet, their demands were displaced into the future as expectations rather than corporeal experience, as Sukarno's philosophy of history confined them to experience material deprivation and to "live in the imagination of the highest greatness" (Sukarno quoted in McGregor, 2003, p. 108). The widening gap between the "space of experience" of material deprivation and the "horizon of expectation" of abundance created an untimeliness which relegated Sukarno's philosophy of history to a deep escapism that avoided arresting the heightening contradictions.

The second contradiction lies within the ascribed *space* of decolonization, within and between fidelity to the nation-state as the vehicle of postcolonial liberation, and the demand for worldwide emancipation as

expressed through the institution of the UN (Prashad, 2007, p. xvi). Upon the achievement of independence, anticolonial worldmaking from the postcolonial state reproduced contradictions inherent in the colonial construction of sovereignty and the nation-state (Anghie, 2012; Sajed, 2023). This compelled Sukarno to pursue a unitary Indonesian nation-state with firm boundaries and managed differences.

Contradictions emerged in the forced integration of West Irian. West Iranian independence struck Sukarno as a compromise of Indonesian sovereignty: without its incorporation into the Indonesian nation, Sukarno's anticolonial mission fell short of the standard of the homogenizing wholeness associated with the nation-state. This was especially so given that the dispersal of sovereignty, symbolized by federalism, had been associated with colonial rule, thereby cementing a vested vision of a unitary nation-state. Despite his efforts to finesse his NEFO/OLDFO theory by discursively investing in forces rather than states, the nation-state form loomed large within the post-Bandung political horizon (see, e.g., Byrne, 2016) and guided Sukarno's own imagination. Sukarno's binary division, in its elegant simplicity, not only could not accommodate cases like West Irian (as found throughout the Third World) but in effect served to close discussion on these issues and ultimately reproduced them. This paradoxically mandated, within the structure of an anticolonial vocabulary, a project that some scholars identify as Indonesian colonialism (e.g., Kluge, 2022; Swan, 2018; Tudor, 2023, pp. 162–213).

To reshape the underlying international order, Sukarno pursued UN reform, initially endogenously through "Moral Violence" then later exogenously through dramatic example-setting and militarism. Yet, without prior restructuring of the international political economy, the material limitations of these worldmaking strategies were laid bare. Militarism, in particular, could not be funded by heavy taxation within the Indonesian postcolonial condition where the industrial production base was underdeveloped. The material basis of this anticolonialism from the postcolonial state instead required compromise with the colonial through the infusion of Cold War aid, precipitating both material dependence and a psychological infantilization which Sukarno resented (e.g., Sukarno & Adams, 1966, p. 296). Therefore, when Sukarno told the United States to "go to hell with your aid," he removed the material basis from which to confront them, crippling his own project. Aid from the Soviet Union was also curtailed when the Soviets lost patience with Sukarno's unwillingness to channel the aid towards industrialization over the military (Friedman, 2022, p. 61).

Deploying militarism to force change unveils the third contradiction within the heart of the Third World: the question of *violence*, a key problematic at the foundation of twentieth-century thought (Arendt, 2023; Fanon, 1963; Kapila, 2021; K. Pham, 2022). The instability lies between "Moral Violence" and militarism: the violent employment of professional state armies can be conceptually understood as a feature of the post-Bandung context after an initial wave of decolonization led to independent statehood in Indonesia and other areas in Africa and Asia. The use of an organized state military is qualitatively distinguishable from the violence of anticolonial insurgency, the former used by the state, and the latter a means to acquire statehood. While (neo)colonial powers regarded both anticolonial violence and militarism as illegitimate, within the Third World, anticolonial violence for the sake of national independence is in principle supported, while militant anticolonialism from the postcolony holds ambiguous legitimacy.

Indonesia's entanglements with this contradiction surfaced conspicuously during *Konfrontasi*, as the campaign to dispel neocolonialism through military means obtained scattered support from Third World contemporaries. Beyond a manifestation of a specific case and the contingencies of successful diplomatic counteractivity, *Konfrontasi* is symptomatic of a larger contradiction within the post-Bandung context. As we have seen, at Bandung, peace between nation-states emerges as a key theme, and violence is transformed into the "Moral Violence" of public opinion. The post-Bandung context inherited these peaceful norms, imposing standards of ethical legitimacy, where the turn to militarism via attempts to deploy the moral in the service of violence ultimately emerged as untimely.

CONCLUSION

This article has sought to make three interventions. First, it conceptually advances uses of worldmaking by disaggregating Sukarno's rich range of worldmaking activity in three dimensions: discursive, institutional, and dramaturgical. This unveils a framework to help arrest worldmaking's ongoing conceptual overextension, without sacrificing its generative capacity by introducing stipulations. Second, it contributes to ongoing discussion on the history of anticolonial political thought. Motivating the three dimensions of Sukarno's worldmaking is a postcolonial vision of global order outside the United Nations. This Southeast Asian trajectory of worldmaking runs contrary to other, more extensively studied anticolonial figures, and serves as a reminder of the importance of sensitivity towards situated understandings of anticolonialism. The paper's reflections on the contradictions of Sukarno's worldmaking project also

speak to how reckoning with the qualified successes or outright failures of decolonization projects requires being attuned to the historical specificities of the anticolonial endeavor. Third, it reorients English-language scholarship on Sukarno, unearthing a richness in his thought that undergirds a multifaceted intervention into various scholarly fields. The typology of worldmaking, in other words, both hinges on and highlights the originality of Sukarno's range of anticolonial praxis. Sukarno remains a valuable figure to think with, given that so many of his questions are now ours.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article benefited from research and travel funding support from the Ax:son Johnson Institute for Statecraft and Diplomacy, Fitzwilliam College at the University of Cambridge, Nanyang Technological University, and the Singapore Social Science Research Council. I would express my gratitude to these bodies as well as the anonymous reviewers, editors at the *American Journal of Political Science*, and everyone who read and commented on different versions of this paper, including Alan Chong, Alina Utrata, Ayşe Zarakol, Benjamin Tan, Connor O'Brien, Duncan Bell, Iza Hussin, Michael Leger, Patrick Quinton-Brown, Thomas Pepinsky, Wichuta Teeratanabodee, Windu Jusuf, and Yi Ning Chang. I would finally like to express my appreciation to the librarians at the Yusof-Ishak Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; and the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

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How to cite this article: Quah, Say Jye. 2025. "*An anatomy of worldmaking: Sukarno and anticolonialism from post-Bandung Indonesia.*" *American Journal of Political Science* 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12963