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**V!23**  
REVISTA V!RUS  
V!RUS JOURNAL

issn 2175-974x  
dezembro . december 2021



ÁGORA  
AGORA

DESSINCRONIZANDO O OCIDENTE: NOVOS VETORES DE DESENVOLVIMENTO DO SUL  
DESYNCHRONIZING THE WEST: NEW VECTORS OF DEVELOPMENT FROM THE SOUTH  
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PT | EN | PDF

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How to quote this text: Maia, M. R.; Rena, N. S. A., 2021. Desynchronizing the West: new vectors of development from the South. *V!RUS*, 23, December. [online] Available at: <<http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/virus23/?sec=4&item=2&lang=en>>. [Accessed dd Month yyyy].

ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON AUGUST, 15, 2021

### Abstract

This article presents a cosmopolitical vision of a shared future in South-South international relations, considering different speeds and vectors of territorial development. As a political bet, we adopted a methodology that starts from a multiplicity of views, mainly using references from the Global South. In the first part of the text, we seek to briefly present the civilization-state China from the perspectives of its current leader, Xi Jinping (2020, 2021), the Brazilian diplomat Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães (2020), and American diplomat Henry Kissinger (2012). We also use as a reference contemporary thinkers such as the Chinese Hu Angang (2017, 2020), Brazilian authors such as Elias Jabbour (2020), and the Argentine thinker Javier Vadell (2021). We follow this analysis of international relations, with Chinese characteristics and South-South cooperation, using

contributions from the Minister-Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Brazil, Qu Yuhui (2021). In the second part of the text, we carry out a reflection based on the concept of cosmotechnics, developed by the Chinese philosopher Yuk Hui (2020), who observes technology to recover our ability to shape the future. We conclude by pointing out challenges for the Global South involving South-South cooperation, where 5G has been a fundamental node to leverage development and, at the same time, reinforce the sovereignty of the countries involved.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, Development, Cosmotechnics, Chinese characteristics, Technodiversity

## 1 Introduction

Since 2020, when we created the study group "Geopolítica e Território" (Geopolitics and Territory) to carry out studies on territorial development with characteristics focused on infrastructure, mobility and logistics, as well as digital infrastructure, the new Chinese mode of urbanization has become the main reference for our investigation. When we started a bibliographical review that connected national themes to development themes along the Chinese lines, we realized that little material had been produced in this sense, since the dizzying economic, political and urban development of China is very recent.

Therefore, part of the methodology adopted for the writing of this first article that we carried out on the subject is composed of a review of a basic bibliography, involving the main Brazilian authors who approach development with Chinese characteristics, which include, with emphasis, everyday thinkers and interlocutors for our study group, as is the case of the duo Elias Jabbour (2020) and Javier Vadell (2021). To complement this bibliographical review, which has been produced in real time since the global geopolitical game is happening at an ultra fast pace, we decided to include the production of academic activities such as webinars<sup>1</sup> and disciplines that have been helping us to raise primary sources of information on geopolitics involving China and Eurasia as a whole. We have built a large database based on research carried out by undergraduate students who have been supporting us with real and everyday cases involving territorial development in China and along the Silk Road throughout Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

Another factor that makes up our research methodology has been to monitor in real time several Brazilian and Chinese sources of information, from the most popular podcasts such as "*Pagode Chinês*"<sup>2</sup>, to academic and institutional seminars organized by "Ceasia"<sup>3</sup> or by "*Observa China*"<sup>4</sup>. From there, we establish dialogues and build, based on the exchange of information, a series of research axes that unfold between the works of our undergraduate, master's and doctoral students. Finally, we created a Research Group called "Geopolítica e Planejamento Territorial" (Geopolitics and Territorial Planning) to consolidate this field of investigation and organize our research by axes and groups of researchers with related themes. Since then, we already have two doctoral researches that started this year, addressing the themes (i) of Chinese urban development, (ii) the Silk Road and its (iii) relationship with Latin America, which end up being the center of analytical and political categories to be considered in our studies.

For some time now, we have been interested in Chinese peculiarities, ranging from the production of thought-provoking contemporary architecture to a speed never seen before in the construction of buildings and entire cities. Paying attention to high technology applied to the urban environment, transport systems and intelligent controls for public services. Seduced by the Silk Road, we weave paths that connect the West to the East and arrive at the Middle Kingdom. We are fascinated, like Marco Polo, to discover another civilization. Since then, we have sought to understand its history, but mainly its founding aspects: cultural, philosophical and technological. We arrived in 21st century China and asked ourselves: "Why, looking at China, cannot humanity live in times of great hope?" (Jabbour, 2020, p. 33, our translation). "We are faced with a new model called 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', which took China along a *sui generis* trajectory that overlaps territorial, demographic and social characteristics, never relinquishing sovereignty in its process of ascension." (Vadell, 2021, p. 11, our translation).

In this paper, we seek to understand Chinese characteristics as a concrete alternative for the development of the Global South in "a world with a shared future" (Xi, 2021, our translation). Therefore, it is an introductory text carried out by four hands, which reveals an initial stage of a new path of investigation that we are trying to build, learning and creating bifurcations in the global time axis. Based on the ideas of the thinker Yuk Hui (2020), we sought to draw a line of scape from a synchronous imperial time, as it interests us, as part of the Global South, to assume our place as belonging to a group of developing countries<sup>5</sup>.

## 2 About the Civilization–State China

The Chinese nation is a great nation. With a history spanning over 5,000 years, China has made indelible contributions to the progress of human civilization. After the Opium War of 1840, however, China was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and suffered greater ravages than ever before. The country suffered intense humiliation<sup>6</sup>, the people were subjected to great pain, and Chinese civilization was plunged into darkness. Since that time, national rejuvenation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation. (Xi, 2021, our translation).

The great Chinese dream is the revitalization of its culture, state and civilization through territorial unity. Since 1978, China has undergone an accelerated modernization process thanks to "the radical, but gradual and experimental reorientation, commanded by Deng Xiaoping, of the economic policy of the People's Republic of China based on external opening, the attraction of multinational capital and the economy market." (Guimarães<sup>7</sup>, 2020, *online*, our translation). This accelerated process has placed this civilization-State at the center of geopolitics and made it a world reference in technology, industrial innovation and sustainable development. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), China has achieved its first century goal of becoming a moderately prosperous society, bringing a historic resolution to the problem of absolute poverty at the completion of its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). In these five years, China has lifted more than fifty-five million people out of poverty and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has surpassed the one hundred trillion yuan mark (CGTN, 2020) *online*<sup>8</sup> and China became the first developing country to achieve the goal of poverty reduction as set out in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. In light of this achievement, the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, praised China as the country that contributed the most to the reduction of global poverty (Cambuhy, 2020).

According to the World Bank, China has rescued more than 850 million people from poverty since economic reforms began in 1978 (Prazeres, 2020).

Chinese growth began in the 1980s, but began to impact the world throughout the 1990s, consolidating at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, when it became the second economy in the world. [...] After Mao Tse-Tung's death, Deng Xiaoping assumed power in 1978. The pragmatism that followed is condensed in the spirit of the period's slogan: "It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as he takes the mouse". The reforms that followed were centered on establishing a policy of economic development, changing the course of socialism in China and outlining a new project to develop the country through economic liberalization, while preserving the socialist orientation and leadership of the Communist Party. The goal was to transform China from a poor country (at the time with more than 60% of the population living on less than \$1 a day) into a rich and powerful nation in the 21st century. (Moreno, 2015, p.13-14, our translation).

Hu Angang (2011), Chinese academic, founder and director of the think tank CAS (Center for China Studies), at Tsinghua University in Beijing, is one of the intellectuals responsible for shaping the CCP's domestic policy and international relations. Hu Angang, in his texts, develops two themes to present China as a new type of superpower: its optimism and its exceptionalism. According to Kissinger (2012, p.17), Chinese exceptionalism is cultural, as China does not proselytize and does not claim that its contemporary institutions are relevant outside it. By contrast, American exceptionalism is missionary. According to his doctrine, the United States has an obligation to disseminate its values to the world. In the Chinese version of exceptionalism, China does not export its ideas but lets others pursue them.

For Hu Angang (2011), thanks to achievements in education, innovation and clean energy, China emerges as a mature, responsible and attractive superpower. This new type of superpower is not intended to compete with the hegemonic empires of the West to become a unilateral leader of the world. According to Hu Angang (2011), China seeks multilateralism and wants to cooperate with other superpowers in global economic, political, energy and environmental challenges. Since the 12th Five-Year Plan, China has been pursuing clean and energy-efficient development, as it already knew that in order to maintain its growth rate and the good of the population, these policies would be fundamental. Today, when observing the productive, urban and environmental development of China, we identify the positive results of this policy goal elaborated ten years ago (Hu, 2011). The results obtained at the end of the 13th five-year plan are consequences of political decisions taken in previous plans, that is, they are related to an accumulation of objectives. The 14th Five-Year Plan advances with several goals, including (CGTN, 2020):

+ Uphold the central role of innovation in its modernization drive and implement an innovation-driven strategy.

+ Build a modern industrial system and upgrade the economic structure. It will continue to support the real economy, improve manufacturing power and modernize the industrial and supply chain to improve high-quality growth and core competitiveness.

+ Prioritize the development of agriculture and rural areas and fully advancing rural vitalization.

+ Advance coordinated regional development and a new type of urbanization.

+ Promote the cultural sector and improve its cultural soft power<sup>9</sup>.

+ Accelerate green and low-carbon development, continuously improve the environment and quality and stability of ecosystems and raise the efficiency of resource utilization.

+ It will continue to widen the opening-up and leverage the advantages of its huge market to promote international cooperation and achieve win-win results.

China is a civilization that emerged over five thousand years ago within a process of sedentarization of nomadic tribes. For more than three thousand years there have been commercial exchanges in its territory. Historical perspective reveals that, until the end of the 18th century, China and India were the largest economies in the world, before the transformations of the Industrial Revolution in Europe (Unzer, 2019, p. 1). The productive technology in agriculture emerged about two thousand years ago with the invention of the ox plow and the construction of channels for navigation, control of floods and irrigation of crops. Its great wall protected and unified its rural-productive territory, and a system of navigable canals united north and south, allowing for secure commercial exchanges within its unified territory (Jabbour, 2021).

According to Elias Jabbour (2021), China, at its origin, is developmental. It is a civilization born between two great rivers, fed by Himalayan thaw, frequently hit by floods, among other natural tragedies, and attempted invasions. Its leadership in the global context, since then, has been able to intervene in reality, elaborating and executing projects that pacified and unified its territory, affirming its millenary civilization process. Jabbour (2021) further highlights the unification of language and the invention of paper money in a single monetary system. Despite political and territorial unification, China has always been tolerant of the religious diversity present in its territory. Religion has never been confused with the civilizing process as it happened in the West. Confucianism, as a philosophy and not a religion, had a founding role in this pacifying and tolerant civilizing process. (Jabbour, 2021).

China is also known as the Middle Kingdom, or the Central Country, that is, the Chinese "[...] used to being civilizational references with the nations in East Asia, began to consider foreign states either as tributaries, or as distant and barbaric." (Unzer, 2019, p.5, our translation). According to their founding principles, they are historically accustomed to a condition of being "in between" (in the Middle Kingdom) – mediating territorial relations. China arises around its founding myth, the Yellow Emperor, being responsible for restoring Chinese territory. Therefore, restoring and not creating, recognizing that Chinese civilization does not have a beginning. "It appears in history less as a conventional nation-state than a permanent natural phenomenon" (Kissinger, 2012, p. 5).

After each collapse, the Chinese state reconstituted itself as if by some immutable law of nature. At each stage, a new uniting figure emerged, following essentially the precedent of the Yellow Emperor, to subdue his rivals and reunify China (and sometimes enlarge its bounds). [...] Each period of disunity was viewed as an aberration. Each new dynasty reached back to the previous dynasty's principles of governance in order to reestablish continuity. The fundamental precepts of Chinese culture endured, tested by the strain of periodic calamity. [...] After 221 B.C., China maintained the ideal of empire and unity but followed the practice of fracturing, then reuniting, in cycles sometimes lasting several hundred years. (Kissinger, 2012, p. 6).

China, in its historical process, has always sought the principles of unity and pacification of its territory. A dynasty use to be inaugurated when territorial unity and peace were re-established. Consequently, the absence of these two principles (of unity and peace) brought a dynasty to an end and chaos ensued. Almost all empires were created by force, but Confucianism, which constitutes the exceptional aspect of Chinese

culture, brought the prerogative that its sovereigns should have the capacity to shape the future, which would be the supreme art of government. In other words, the empire persists if repression gives way to consensus (Kissinger, 2012, p. 13). Another exceptionality, especially if compared to Western Christian logic, is that Confucianism has its philosophy based on the search for the redemption of the State through correct individual behavior, a thought that affirms a code of social conduct, not a path to life after the death.

Today, China conditions the future of its civilization to the future of the planet and humanity. If its origin is confused with the origin of humanity and nature, the end of humanity and the planet would also be its end. The current Chinese ruler Xi Jinping (2021) deals, in his recent speech for the centenary of the CCP, about a world where the future is shared, taking on the task of rebuilding this future and recognizing that global problems affect China's development. In this way, we can understand what motivates the defense of vaccines against Covid-19 as a global public good, as well as the high-risk investments made in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) agreements in economically and politically unstable countries.

According to Brazilian diplomat Samuel Guimarães (2020), "while the hegemonic Western empire bets on a policy of disconnection: it undermines multilateralism and seeks to reaffirm military power, China seeks appeasement: internal stability and win-win trade partnerships where trade exterior and the 5G are immediate focus." (Guimarães, 2020, our translation). It is important to highlight that Samuel Guimarães, since the beginning of his career, sought to resist the interference of what we call "Empire" (Hardt and Negri, 2000). This position is highlighted when, as the chief minister of the Lula Government's Strategic Affairs Secretariat, he assumes extremely important contributions in relation to the political articulation for the consolidation of Mercosur.

China has presented itself as an alternative to the civilizatory process we know in the West, and this has generated a feeling of discomfort in the Empire configured by a network of Western elites. Its influence expands in the Global South as it presents itself as an economic, cultural and productive alternative. The Chinese's win-win geopolitics is not about a process of internationalization towards a new form of globalization, but about an intercivilizatory process seeking a world where the future is shared in South-South relations.

### **3 International relations with Chinese characteristics and South-South cooperation**

Since 1979, do you know how many times China has been at war with anybody? None. And we have stayed at war. The U.S. has only enjoyed 16 years of peace in its 242-year history, making the country the most warlike nation in the history of the world. How many miles of high-speed railroad do we have in this country? While China has some 18,000 miles of high-speed rail, the U.S. has wasted, I think, \$3 trillion on military spending. China has not wasted a single penny on war, and that's why they're ahead of us. In almost every way. (Carter, 2019)<sup>10</sup>

According to Guimarães (2020), the United States and China seem to be moving towards a political and psychological separation because, "everything indicates that coexistence will be neither decoupling nor appeasement, since their economies are today, and will be for the foreseeable future, linked." (Guimarães, 2020, our translation).

During the Cold War, countries on planet earth were classified according to their allies into three worlds<sup>11</sup>: The First World was formed by the United States and allies, the Second World by the Soviet Union and allies, and the Third World, formed by non-aligned (Non-Aligned Movement - NAM) or by neutral countries<sup>12</sup>.

It is precisely from this period that the theorization around the "middle zones", which later unfolds into the theory of the "three worlds", the basis of "multipolarity" principles in international relations, which now occupies the center of Chinese foreign policy, founded on peaceful development. By the way, this concept goes back to the beginning of the 1950s when, with regard to "bilateral relations about the Tibet region", Prime Minister Zhou Enlai proposed to the Indian delegation The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence [...] (Silva, 2020, p. 150, our translation).

In its inaugural conference<sup>13</sup> (1955), the NAM presented the "Ten Principles of Bandung"<sup>14</sup> that guided the policies of non-alignment and the central criteria for belonging to the Movement. Of these principles, we highlight respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of another country, refrain from using collective defense pacts in the service of the particular

interests of any great powers, exerting pressure on other countries, carrying out acts or threats of aggression, among other principles that reveal a response to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), formed 10 years earlier, in 1945.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) opposed colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism and its policy of non-alignment with Northern countries – was a diplomatic and geopolitical posture of equidistance of the Great Powers, thus giving rise to the South-South cooperation movement. The term has its origin by identifying that most NAM member countries (and neutral countries) are in the Global South, which should not be confused with the Southern hemisphere. By approaching and identifying agendas of common interest, these countries established good agreements of cooperation among themselves – South-South cooperation. Since then, this South-South cooperation has been consolidated via cooperation between emerging (or developing) countries such as the BRICS, IBSA and Mercosur. It is observed, historically, that the main Chinese characteristics in its international relations involve the win-win logic, the emphasis on the importance of multilateralism, which converges to the defense of non-alignment.

Clearly continuing the principles of the NAM, the current Minister Counselor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China Qu Yuhui, in his lecture at the I International Congress "Law and International Political Economy"<sup>15</sup> (2021), presented the current vision of International Relations of China, addressing its main challenges and policies. In this vision, a diplomacy that is millenary, albeit traditional, stands out. However, it is observed that Chinese diplomacy is dynamic enough to be inserted in a complex and changing geopolitical context. According to Qu Yuhui (2021), since 2013, the Xi Jinping government has defended the construction of a model of international relations based on three pillars: respect, justice and cooperation. Updating Xi's ideas published in 2014 in the book *The Governance of China* (Xi, 2014), we bring here in this article China's current positions regarding its proposals for international relations.

For Xi, the first pillar is respect in a diverse world with an International Community made up of more than 200 countries. It is not possible (and also not desirable) for all countries to adopt the same development model and the same policy. A unified answer cannot be established for all countries in the world. There is no superiority or inferiority in developmental paths. There are common goals, common values. Peaceful development, justice, freedom and democracy are values common to the entire international community, however, it is necessary to recognize that each country has its particularity in order to elaborate its own development model.

The second pillar is justice. Qu Yuhui (2021) states that it is necessary to seek true multilateralism. In other words, there are many discussions on the issue of multilateralism, but it is highlighted that: (i) there is only one system in the world; (ii) the international order is based on international law, on international law with the UN at its core; (iii) a law-based international order is the difference between Chinese diplomacy and the diplomacy of some Western countries.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that most Western countries defend an international order based on rules and that China, on the other hand, defends that all countries must elaborate fair and objective international laws. In other words, the rules, defended by some countries, raise questions about who will define them. The multilateralism defended by China is based on international law and not on rules defined by a very small number of countries.

The third and last pillar is cooperation. If there are differences in interests between countries, as well as differences in the interpretation of the world, we need to cooperate and dialogue to give a precise response to new global challenges. It is in this spirit that China is advocating for building a community with a shared future. Initiatives such as One Belt One Road are examples of concrete international policies adopted by China at this challenging time. It is in this sense that we propose to pay attention to the issue of the different speeds and vectors of development for the Global South.

#### **4 Other temporal vectors: the asynchronous Global South**

Yuk Hui<sup>16</sup>, a computer engineering graduate from the University of Hong Kong and a philosophy graduate from Goldsmiths College London, is a leading contemporary thinker in the philosophy of technology debate. In his book *Tecnodiversidade*, published in 2020 in Brazil by Ubu publishing house, the author presents us with a different perspective for the future of humanity, and proposes cosmotechnics as a cosmopolitics opposing the technocentric and universal vision of the West. According to the author's definition, "[...] cosmotechnics is the unification of the cosmos and morals through technical activities, whether they are the creation of products or works of art. There are not just one or two techniques, but many cosmotechnics." (Yuk, 2020, p. 39, our translation).

The main difficulty of all cosmopolitics is in the reconciliation between the universal and the particular. The universal tends to contemplate particulars from above, just as Kant observed the French Revolution – like a spectator watching a violent play from the box of the theater. Universality is the vision of a spectator, never that of an actor. (Yuk, 2020, p. 26, our translation).

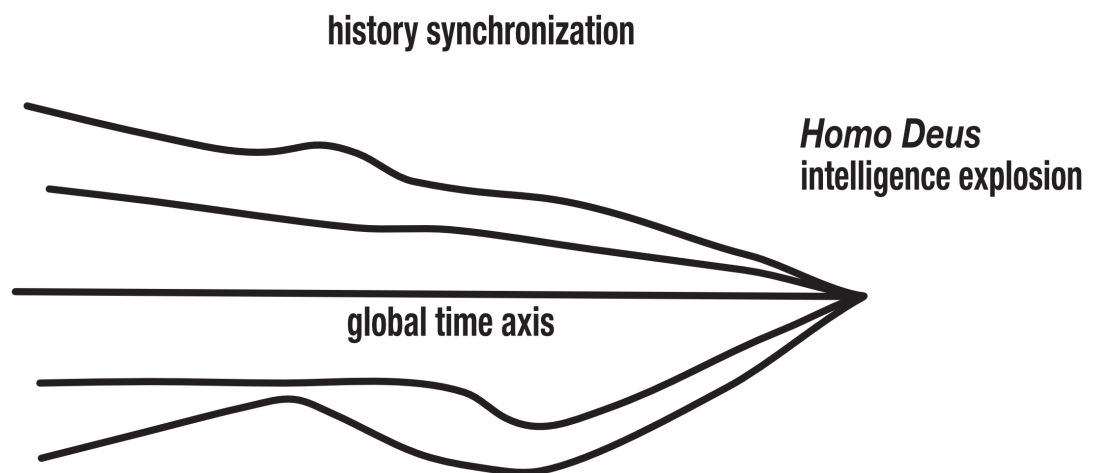
Yuk draws our attention to the universalization process that is one-sided and "[...] reduces non-Western thinking to mere pastime". However, currently, military-industrial technologies from the Global South are catching up to the West" (Yuk, 2020, p. 63, our translation) reversing the universalization process.

The unilateral globalization that has come to an end is giving way to a competition of technological accelerations and the temptations of war, technological uniqueness and transhumanist dreams (or delusions). The Anthropocene is a global time axis and synchronization based on this vision of technological progress towards singularity. Reposition the question of technology is to refuse this homogeneous technological future that is presented to us as the only alternative. (Yuk, 2020, p. 46, our translation).

And, in this sense, for the author:

We need to get back to the word "acceleration" itself, as it's all too easy to be misled into a thoughtless identification between acceleration and velocity. If we remember from high school physics classes where  $a = \frac{v - v_0}{t}$ , then acceleration is equal to the change in velocity (from  $v$  to  $v_0$ ) divided by time.  $V$  represents velocity, not scalar. While the scalar quantity has only modulus, the vector quantity also contains sense and direction. (Yuk, 2020, p.87-88, our translation).

The West is rapidly moving towards unification, with the predominance everywhere of a single technical system or, according to Yuk Hui, towards a synchronization in its modernization process. A synchronization of technique and nature driven by colonization into a single story — a "global time axis" — as illustrated by Figure 1.



**Fig. 1:** Global time axis and history synchronization. Source: Yuk, 2020, p. 76.

"The Earth and the cosmos were transformed into an immense technological system – the apex of the epistemological and methodological rupture that we call modernity" (Yuk, 2020, p. 24, our translation). The

Anthropocene crisis brings humanity to technological singularity<sup>17</sup>, once again, a point of convergence on the global time axis. Technological singularity, a punctual hypothesis in human history, is when the conscious and intelligent machine surpasses the thinking capacity of all human minds combined - intelligence explosion or the apocalyptic *Homo Deus*<sup>18</sup>. This technocentric western apocalyptic scenario points to a dark future, to a controlled society and to a super-computer-Estate where mass unemployment is caused by the replacement of man by intelligent machines.

In the face of recent dystopian developments in technology, this universal idea of technology must urgently be discarded. To understand technology beyond this universal, Yuk Hui invokes the search for a new cosmology, which would allow the construction of an "outside" look, that puts the technique in its proper place, that is, just one more among the elements of existence. This idea of "cosmotronics" is liberating. (Lemos, 2020, p. 10, our translation).

When the West (re)meets China, this "outside" look allows us to realize that our dystopian visions of the future are not universal. The view that technology assumes a position of dominating humanity is a singular Western view that is not universal. For Yuk, "[...] we don't need to show who is more advanced than the other, but explore the different systems of technological thinking" (Yuk, 2020, p. 126, our translation). There are a multiplicity of views on technology — technodiversity. China, a millenary civilization, emerges in the 21st century with a different speed, in another sense, in another direction asynchronous to the West.

Why not consider another form of acceleration that does not push speed to its extremes, but that changes the direction of movement, that gives technology a new frame of reference and a new orientation with respect to time and technological development? If we do, can we also imagine a fork in the future, which, instead of moving towards the apocalypse, multiplies and moves away from it? (Yuk, 2020, p. 88, our translation).

Throughout the 20th century, China built another orientation towards the speed of its accelerationism, a process with mistakes and successes, observing the West from afar and experimenting with its millenary philosophy and technology. The rise of China in recent years is clear, but it is even more important to note its peculiar movement of close and open to the West, gaining strength in this constant movement. This process of closing itself at times, protecting itself from the universalization process, allowed it to insert Chinese characteristics with political, social, economic, technological and cultural strategies, distinct from the West, creating its own modernization process.

The strategy adopted during the period of reforms in the 1980s until the 2000s was based on the saying of Deng Xiaoping: "watch carefully, keep your profile low, wait for your moment, while you get something that has been accomplished". As Li Xing reminds us, the idiom is "Tao Guang Yang Hui", which means "hide the brightness and grow in the dark", which in other terms would be to maintain a low profile during the process of reforms and growth, a strategic choice of wait for the moment when China is ready to assert itself in the global sphere and be prepared to take on the challenge. (Vadell, 2021, p. 10, our translation).

Thus, after a century of humiliations, China took advantage of favorable geopolitical moments to cautiously open up. The Great Wall, the Grand Canal and the millenary irrigation systems of the Yellow River are examples of technological-infrastructure strategies that protected, pacified and unified its territory, creating conditions for Chinese civilization to strengthen and develop. Metaphorically, we speak today of the "Great Firewall of China", beyond the metaphor, it is an ancient civilizational strategy that is repeated, connecting itself to the West with Chinese characteristics. With its Internet isolated from the world, China can create its own versions of apps. Thus, at the time of its opening, it had already achieved equal conditions to position itself globally. It is noticed that there are other possible speeds and directions for its development.

Perhaps we should assign to thought the opposite task to that offered to it by Enlightenment philosophy: to fragment the world according to what is different, instead of universalizing it through it; inducing the same through the different, instead of deducing the different from the same. A new world-historical thought needs to emerge in the face of the melting of the world. (Yuk, 2020, p. 72, our translation)



The 5G technology, new generation of mobile communication, allows the development of Cyber-physical Systems<sup>19</sup>, Internet of Things and Cloud Computing. With low latency, its communication is reliable and therefore able to safely operate machine-to-machine communication. (Jaramillo et al., 2017). 5G is essential to the sophisticated and complex operations of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This revolution is, necessarily, also a revolution in the field of Artificial Intelligence and new industrial-productive systems. (Sastre et al., 2018, p. 40). The set of these disruptive technologies will enable significant advances in architecture, urbanism, infrastructure and landscaping projects. Smart cities, eco cities, efficient transport systems, optimization in the production and use of energy and water, public safety and digital governance are among the advances already identified. It is essential to highlight that this technological advance is fueled by data produced by human beings, something that Yuk (2020) calls digital urbanism.

Digital urbanism, which is in the process of development and will be the main theme of the digital economy, is driven by the recursive use of data. Data in Latin means something already given, already received, like the sensory data that determines the fall of the tick or the red color of the apple in front of me; since the mid-twentieth century, data has acquired a new meaning – that is, computational information – which is no longer “given” from outside, but produced and modulated by human beings. (Yuk, 2020, p. 116, our translation)

Digital urbanism is strategic for the development and future of any nation-state, therefore, it is also part of a geopolitical and strategic dispute for South-South cooperation. This dispute, according to President Dilma Rousseff (2020), speaking during a webinar – "Geopolítica e Disputas Territoriais" – organized by the authors of this article, is clearly perceived in the Chinese Huawei's embargo on 5G by the Five Eyes<sup>20</sup> alliance. For this, Western companies argued that Chinese products allow for a lewdness in the data of other countries. Still, according to Rousseff, this narrative becomes without effect if we consider that in the short term we will have a quantum cryptography<sup>21</sup> that will prevent any illegal appropriation of data.

Rousseff, who was the target of NSA<sup>22</sup> espionage, encouraged the construction of the BRICS submarine cable<sup>23</sup> connecting the Global South, without the need to use communication hubs in Europe or the United States. The importance of technological regulation by the State is something that Rousseff (2020) defends: "We will have to regulate and we will have to make this movement 'outwards' and 'inwards' in relation to the State and I think we have to understand that it is It's a crime to ban 5G from Brazil! The Chinese 5G! Because the other doesn't exist yet." (Rousseff, 2020, our translation)

Yuk (2020), as well as Rousseff (2020), invites us to look "from the outside", putting the technique in its proper place. It is believed that it is necessary to seek a cosmotechnical vision to understand what are the possible paths to development, as well as looking "inside" with the State as a regulator.

In this sense, we can see that the notion of 'control society' described by Gilles Deleuze is very far from the discourse of a surveillance society - which, in turn, actually reveals itself as a society whose governmentality is based on self-assertion and self-regulation of automatic systems. (Yuk, 2020, p. 116-117, our translation)

If technique and morality are together, it is possible to have control without necessarily adopting a surveillance State. We are committed to replacing technologies with cosmotechnics. In this sense, the surveillance technologies commanded by the big Big Techs conglomerates in the West, which promote a society of control for the benefit of a few, could be replaced by a society where cosmotechnic governance promotes the common, collective good, guaranteed by the State.

## **6 Final considerations**

In this sense, China is a South reference for the South, as it has an alternative for economic development that puts technology in its proper place, adopting a cosmotechnical vision that identifies possible futures, with the State as a fundamental actor in this movement. Through cosmotechnics, it is possible to hope for the future and understand that from the Global South, the control society can be a society whose governance is based on self-assertion and self-regulation in favor of economic and social justice, assuming diversity towards cooperation between the countries.

We conclude that China is an excellent reference regarding a form of global collaboration that points out the failures and inefficiencies of international multilateral institutions without trying to destroy or replace them. It seeks to reform them and is willing to cooperate. In defense of true multilateral international relations, it

encourages respect and justice, playing an important role in South-South cooperation. We believe that taking on a win-win policy, via the cooperation between countries in the Global South, will inevitably be good for Brazil and the countries of the Global South, as the policies of submission to the North adopted by many countries in recent years have led to an unsustainable situation of social inequality brought about by an ethically perverse capitalist accumulation. It is noteworthy that this unprecedented accumulation includes the performance of main actors belonging to rentier capitalism allied to the Big Techs.

It is urgent to desynchronize the imperial West's mode of development! Here's our bet.

## 7 Acknowledgment

We would like to thank PROEX from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Southeast Brazil, for funding our scholarship students at "Plataformas Tecnopolíticas" and "Geopolítica e Cidades" projects, linked to the IndLab's University Extension Program. We also thank all researchers, undergraduate and graduate students who have been working with us in the development of geopolitical and territorial studies within the "Geopolítica e Planejamento Territorial" (GeoPT) research group.

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<sup>1</sup> A highlight was the organization in 2020 of the webinar called "*Geopolítica e Disputas Territoriais*" (Geopolitics and Territorial Disputes), which debated the following topics that interest us in our research: "New Multipolar and Multilateral World" and "Fall of US power" with the guests José Luis Fiori (UFRJ) and Elias Jabour (UERJ); "The Rise of China's Power and Expansion of China's Territorial Influence in Southeast Asia and the World", the "Territorial Dimension of Chinese Development" and "The Consolidation of Eurasia - BRICS and The New Silk Roads" with the guests Fábio Tozi (UFMG), Pepe Escobar (Asian Times); "The urban becoming in China" with the guests Tiago Schultz (UFBA), Pasqualino Magnavita (UFBA); "Expansion of the Silk Road in the world and the Cotton Road in Latin America", "Mercosur, Unasur and Celac and Latin American integration", "Expansion of the territorial influence of China, Soft Power, ZEE" with the guests Mônica Bruckmann (UFF) and Gilberto Libânio (UFMG); "Civil Society and Philanthropy in the context of the dispute between: Progressive Empire, Neocon Imperialism and New Southernism including Eurasia" with the guest Dejan Mihailovic (Mexico/Serbia); "Technological Revolution 4.0 and Surveillance Capitalism in a new multipolar world" with the guest president Dilma Rousseff. This webinar was carried out by the graduate programs held at *Escola de Arquitetura da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* - Belo Horizonte, Southeast Brazil. Available at <http://geopoliticaedisputasterritoriais.gebiotecnopolitica.net/> [Accessed 14 Aug. 2021]

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://open.spotify.com/show/1ZxCoY7LXFKNHEBIrDpWft>. [Accessed 14 Aug. 2021]

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://ceasiaufpe.com.br/>. [Accessed 14 Aug. 2021]

<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://observachina.com>. [Accessed 14 Aug. 2021]

<sup>5</sup> We intend to continue the debates that dispute concepts of national development, sovereignty and South-South cooperation, escaping from the anti-development movement of cultural and environmental Marxism, which has been justified by the Anthropocene and technological singularity, which creates discourses that, in our view, prevent us from thinking of development as something positive for the economy and for society as a whole.

6 The century of humiliation, also known as the hundred years of national humiliation, is the term used in China to describe the period of intervention and subjugation of the Qing dynasty and the Republic of China by Western powers and Japan from 1839 to 1949. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century\\_of\\_humiliation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century_of_humiliation) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

7 Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães was General Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from January 9, 2003 to October 20, 2009. He was sworn in as Chief Minister of the Secretariat for Strategic Affairs of the Presidency of the Republic (SAE). He left office on December 31, 2010, at the end of the Lula administration. Available at [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel\\_Pinheiro\\_Guimar%C3%AAs\\_Neto](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Pinheiro_Guimar%C3%AAs_Neto). [Access 15 Aug. 2021].

8 China and the World in the New Era. Whitepaper, published September 27, 2019 by The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. Available at [http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201909/27/content\\_WS5d8d80f9c6d0bcf8c4c142ef.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201909/27/content_WS5d8d80f9c6d0bcf8c4c142ef.html) [Accessed: 5 Aug. 2021] These data are also presented by the CGTN, which is a Chinese state-owned company controlled by the CCP. The data presented by CGTN are data from an official report of the Chinese Government. The facts presented by CGTN were confirmed in an article by the Brazilian researcher Melissa Cambuhy (Cambuhy, 2020), as well as by the columnist at the newspaper Folha de São Paulo, Tatiana Prazeres (Prazeres, 2020), who was a senior advisor to the General Directorate of the WTO, who, in turn, quotes the UN secretary general, António Guterres. We emphasize that the data used in this article try to escape from Western sources and bring speeches and information from actors belonging to the Global South.

9 Soft Power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced. (NYE, 2004).

10 Available at <https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-jimmy-carter-china-war-infrastructure-economy-trade-war-church-1396086/> [Accessed 14 Aug. 2021]

11 French demographer, anthropologist and historian Alfred Sauvy, in an article published in the French magazine L'Observateur, August 14, 1952, coined the term third world (*tiers monde*), referring to countries that were playing little role on the international scene. His usage was a reference to the Third Estate (*tiers état*), the commoners of France who, before and during the French Revolution, opposed the clergy and nobles, who composed the First Estate and Second Estate, respectively (hence the use of the older form tiers rather than the modern *troisième* for "third"). Sauvy wrote, "This third world ignored, exploited, despised like the third estate also wants to be something." In the context of the Cold War, he conveyed the concept of political non-alignment with either the capitalist or communist bloc. Simplistic interpretations quickly led to the term merely designating these unaligned countries. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third\\_World](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_World) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

12 Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Mexico were some of the neutral countries that, despite not being members of the NAM, are considered observers of the movement.

13 The Bandung Conference "proposed the creation of a "decolonization court" to judge those responsible for the practice of imperialist policies, understood as crimes against humanity, but the idea was vetoed by the central countries. Bandung gave rise to a policy of non-alignment - a diplomatic and geopolitical posture of equidistance by the Great Powers - through which dozens of nations would try not to be turned into the pawns of the Cold War titans. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandung\\_Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandung_Conference). [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

14 The current requirements are that the candidate country has displayed practices in accordance with the ten "Bandung principles" of 1955: (1) Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; (2) Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; (3) Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations, large and small; (4) Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country; (5) Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations; (6) Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country; (7) Recognition of the movements for national independence; (8) Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations; (9) Promotion of mutual interests and co-operation; (10) Respect for justice and international obligations. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned\\_Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

15 Qu Yuhui is Minister Counselor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Brazil. Closing Table of the I International Congress "Law and International Political Economy". International Relations with Chinese characteristics and South-South cooperation. June 18, 2021. [Authors transcript] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCoMWHbGXmI> [Accessed 5 Aug. 2021]

16 Research Network for Philosophy and Technology. Yuk Hui, Biography. In: Philosophy and Technology. Available at <http://philosophyandtechnology.network/yuk-hui/> [Accessed 21 Oct. 2021]

17 Technological singularity — or simply the singularity — is a hypothetical point in time at which technological growth becomes uncontrollable and irreversible, resulting in unforeseeable changes to human civilization. According to the most popular version of the singularity hypothesis, called intelligence explosion, an upgradable intelligent agent will eventually enter a "runaway reaction" of self-improvement cycles, each new and more intelligent generation appearing more and more rapidly, causing an "explosion" in intelligence and resulting in a powerful superintelligence that qualitatively far surpasses all human intelligence. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological\\_singularity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_singularity) [Accessed 21 Oct. 2021]

18 *Homo Deus* is the title of Yuval Noah Harari's book that deals with the domination of humanity by Artificial Intelligence.

19 A cyber-physical system (CPS) or intelligent system is a computer system in which a mechanism is controlled or monitored by computer-based algorithms. In cyber-physical systems, physical and software components are deeply intertwined, able to operate on different spatial and temporal scales, exhibit multiple and distinct behavioral modalities, and interact with each other in ways that change with context. CPS involves transdisciplinary approaches, merging theory of cybernetics, mechatronics, design and process science. The process control is often referred to as embedded systems. In embedded systems, the emphasis tends to be more on the computational elements, and less on an intense link between the computational and physical elements. CPS is also similar to the Internet of Things (IoT), sharing the same basic architecture; nevertheless, CPS presents a higher combination and coordination between physical and computational elements. In: Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyber-physical\\_system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyber-physical_system) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

20 The Five Eyes (FVEY) is an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries are parties to the multilateral UKUSA Agreement, a treaty for joint cooperation in signals intelligence. In: Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_Eyes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Eyes) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

21 Quantum cryptography. In: Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum\\_cryptography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum_cryptography) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2021]

22 National Security Agency. <https://www.nsa.gov>

23 Brazil-Europe Internet cable to cost \$185 million. The BRICS Post. Available at <http://www.thebricspost.com/brazil-europe-Internet-cable-to-cost-185-million/> [Accessed 14 Aug. 2021]