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САДРЖАЈ

Editor's Word

The eleventh issue of the journal Asian Issues, which is in front of you, is the product of the shared aspiration and eagerness of researchers in the Institute for Asian Studies. The aim is to bring Asia—which is becoming increasingly important and decisive globally—closer to our academic and general public. Asian Issues is also open to the international public as a connection between our work and similar research in Asia and globally.

The editorial board's program orientation is based on studying Asia, which could lead to a better understanding of many of its models of political and economic organisation, different cultures, ethnic, religious and other identities of its peoples, as well as numerous mechanisms that connect Asian states and societies through various frameworks of co-operation – in trade, environmental protection, culture, political and others, including security. The economic rise of some of the biggest Asian states, their ever more intense cooperation, by the strength of their separate and combined size, but also by their cultural and political influence - change regional, inter-regional and global institutions, processes, relations and manners, and by doing that, they influence our lives.

Our view on Asia is view "within" as we try to study, understand, accept and present Asia to the interested parties by measuring its achievements, reality and potential by Asian merits, with having a starting point in Asian culture, tradition, interests and need of the region's communities, as we believe that is the proper way to understand this, by many parameters, the most dynamic world region.

Dragana Mitrović

Реч уредника

Часопис „Азијске свеске”, чија је једанаеста свеска пред вама, резултат је заједничких хтења и ентузијазма истраживача окупљених у Институту за азијске студије, чији је циљ да регион Азије, све важнији и снажнији у глобалним размерама, приближи нашој академској и широј јавности. Часопис је окренут и ка међународној јавности као спона наших истраживања и оних из исте области истраживања у Азији и широм света.

Програмско опредељење Уредништва темељи се на изучавању Азије са циљем бољег разумевања богатства њених облика политичког и економског уређења, различитих културних, етничких, верских идентитета народа који је насељавају, као и бројних механизама којима су државе и друштва Азије међусобно повезани у разноврсне облике сарадње - од трговинске, еколошке, културне, политичке и бројних других, све до безбедносне. Економски успон неких од највећих азијских држава, њихова све интензивнија сарадња, снагом своје појединачне и удружене величине, али и културног и политичког утицаја, мењају регионалне, интер-регионалне, али и глобалне институције, процесе, односе и начине и тиме утичу и на животе сваког од нас.

Наш поглед на Азију је поглед „изнутра”, јер настојимо да Азију проучавамо, разумемо, прихватимо и представимо заинтересованим мерећи њена достигнућа, њену стварност и потенцијале азијским мерилима, полазећи од тамошње културе, традиције, интереса и потреба локалних заједница верујући да је то најбољи начин за разумевање овог, по многим параметрима, најдинамичнијег светског региона.

Драгана Митровић

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Maarten Manse*

Communicating Terms: Treaty-Making, Translation, and Diplomatic Interaction in 17th to 19th Century Java

Abstract

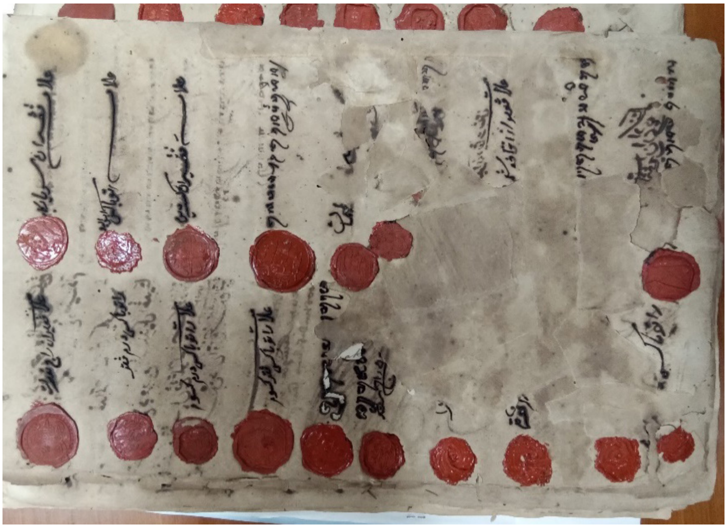
Communication has played a central role throughout the long history of commercial, political, and diplomatic interactions between foreign powers and Southeast Asian rulers. These communication strategies were not limited to written or spoken words; they also included gift-giving, alliance formation, and threats or acts of violence. The continuous process of making treaties was crucial to diplomatic communication tactics. I do not view treaties simply as imposed legal documents but as objects of communication and diplomacy. In early modern Southeast Asia, treaties were not fixed endpoints of colonial conquest but milestones in ongoing negotiations. They could always be reopened, reinterpreted, and used as a foundation for further negotiations. Additionally, the terms and ideas within these treaties should not be seen solely as linguistic expressions of (colonial) power but as part of broader political and contingent processes of cross-cultural interaction and communication.

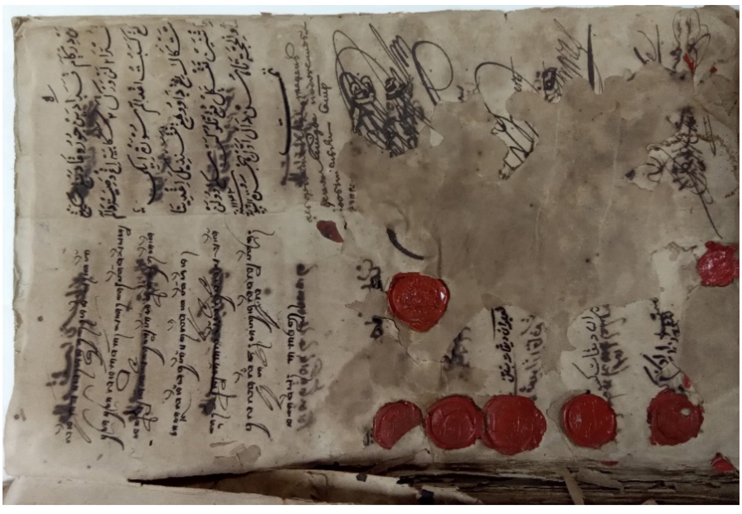
Keywords: communication, treaty-making, diplomacy, Southeast Asia, cross-cultural interaction

1. Introduction

In this paper, we examine key provisions, phrases, and terms in several bilateral treaties between the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) and the Javanese Sultanate of Banten from the late 18th to the mid-18th century. The relationship between the Company and the Banten Sultanate offers insights into treaty-making practices that illuminate the significance and impact of treaties, their composition and enforcement, and their role in shaping intercultural diplomatic relations. Treaties concluded between Southeast Asian and European powers were usually bi- or trilingual (contrary to intra-European treaties, which were usually written in Latin and later French), with languages of the European and of the Indonesian treaty party appearing side-by-side, and sometimes accompanied by a regional lingue franca, such as Malay (in *Jawi* script; e.g., fig. 1). The treaty documents were often crafted to appear as though they expressed the same agreements, but a careful analysis of the contents and meaning of the different versions often reveals significant differences, sometimes leading to new controversies and conflict between the treaty parties (Andaya 1978; Amirell & Manse 2024).[1]

Figure 1. Signatures and seals of various princes at the Banten court are attached to a treaty between the VOC and the Sultan of Banten of 1731. Making signs to all the princes was likely a means of ensuring that the different factions at court were unified in recognising the terms of the treaty. Source: ANRI, Arsip Banten 70, "Verdrag en overeenkomst [...] Sultan van Banten, 21-8-1731.





1 Comes to mind translation problems in case of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand (Laurie 2022), or the problem of the meaning of the word 'ceded' in Malay in the treaties between the EIC and Brunei of the 1840s with the Bruneians insisting that no territory was not given up in the sense as understood by the British (Amirell & Manse 2024).

While previous research has primarily relied on transcriptions, copies, or published editions of treaties, the original documents housed in the Indonesian national archives, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI) in Jakarta, offer new opportunities for comparison and can reveal potential omissions, discrepancies, and errors. This allows us to move beyond colonial biases regarding how diplomatic interactions and the empire's legal terms were communicated and enforced, highlighting the crucial role of interpreters, translators, and clerks in the diplomatic process. I hypothesise that the way Indonesia, both as a colonial and later a national state, was constructed and united through these treaties largely depended on the terms, phrases, and ideas devised by such interpreters, and on how these terms were copied and gradually incorporated into a broader colonial 'diplomatic-political vocabulary' that endures in international law today. Understanding this vocabulary and its historical origins in earlier treaties will therefore deepen our comprehension of Indonesia's political foundations.

2. Treaties, intercultural diplomacy and international law in Asia

From the early 17th to the mid-20th century, international treaties played a vital role in imperialist practices. These treaties served as essential instruments for European colonial powers to provide legal and moral justifications for their authority and control over various regions. Southeast Asia, in particular, experienced the impacts of Western imperialism and saw extensive treaty negotiations between indigenous rulers and colonial forces (Somers 2001; Weststeijn 2014). Scholars have recently begun to unravel specific aspects of treaty-making, providing new insights into the establishment and execution of colonial rule. This research has primarily focused on North America, China, and Sub-Saharan Africa, where treaties have been central to Indigenous nations' claims for justice and land rights (e.g., Calloway 2013). However, the study of treaty-making in Asia has remained relatively understudied. The existing focus on Asia's treaty history has primarily centred on international law and the examination of so-called unequal treaties.

This focus can be traced back to the late 16th century when newly arriving British and Dutch merchants began competing with already established European powers, the Spanish and Portuguese, mainly in the Moluccas, but later also in Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula. An important aspect of their competitive strategy was to enforce extortionate treaties, a European political practice, upon local rulers. The VOC in particular excelled at drafting increasingly complex treaties to 'invite' and coerce these indigenous rulers into granting exclusive trading rights to the VOC. As a result, the VOC concluded many hundreds, if not thousands, of treaties across Southeast Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, covering commercial, political, and security matters (Alexandrowicz 1967; Van Ittersum 2006; Borschberg 2011). The negotiation of these treaties in Southeast Asia took various forms, ranging from peaceful deliberation to coercion through threats or following violent conflict. Scholars differ in their views on whether these treaties can be seen as equal and mutually beneficial or as unequal, favouring the European parties involved (Belmessous 2014; Van Ittersum 2018). In particular, during the 19th and 20th centuries, the influence of non-European treaty-making practices in Asia declined as the economic, political, and military supremacy of European colonial powers grew. Thus, treaties with Asian polities began to be seen as "unequal", highlighting the power imbalances and colonial context in which they were negotiated, and distinguishing them from standard international treaties concluded among sovereign states in the West (Wang 2005; Belmessous 2022). Treaties concluded with nations perceived as "backward" or "uncivilised" began to be treated as a separate category (Gong 1989). In the case of China, these unequal treaties are seen as characterised by a lack of reciprocity, limited or undermined autonomy or sovereignty for the Asian parties, concessions in various aspects, extraterritorial rights for Europeans, and territorial transfers (Wang 2005).

It is important to avoid oversimplification by categorising all treaties between European and maritime Southeast Asian parties as 'unequal' or 'colonial.' Treaty-making in the region during the colonial period was complex and varied considerably in form, purpose, and content, not only among different colonial powers but also within each colony or region and across different periods. Colonial rule involved a nuanced interplay of local agreements and relationships between colonial and indigenous actors, contradicting simplistic narratives promoted by European imperial propaganda. Therefore, it is vital to refrain from imposing a false sense of homogeneity on the diverse range of treaties that were concluded in Southeast Asia during this period. (Amirell 2023).

Treaty-making, as advocated by the Dutch and other Europeans, was not the sole method of diplomatic and international relations in Southeast Asia. Before Europeans arrived, tributary relationships were common, where hegemonic powers received tribute in exchange for protection and trading privileges from minor rulers and polities. Such arrangements persisted into the nineteenth century and existed alongside treaty-making and other forms of diplomacy promoted by Europeans, and later by Americans and Japanese. During the early modern period, Europeans also occasionally adopted Southeast Asian diplomatic customs, resulting in a unique fusion of diverse Asian cultural practices—such as diplomatic protocols, ceremonies, rituals, soundscapes, tributes, gifts, and displays of hospitality—and European diplomatic, administrative, and legal practices. (Laarhoven 1989; Andaya 1993; Hägerdal 2012, 2024).

An analysis of the different linguistic versions of the treaties must thus aim to understand the political use of language and how key concepts, including legal terms, are rendered across these versions. The linguistic differences contributed to the asymmetry of power between European and Southeast Asian actors and polities.

Furthermore, during the 19th century, the increasing dominance of European legal terminology and the rise of positivism in international law, along with subsequent scholarly preference for European versions of texts, have had a lasting impact on the development and persistence of unequal relationships in Eurasia during and after the age of European imperialism. By examining the original documents and the contexts in which they were written, we aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of how treaties were interpreted in different ways by Asian and European treaty parties in both languages. After gaining independence in the mid-20th century, the treaties concluded during the colonial period were largely regarded as obsolete. However, certain treaties remain *historically significant* for defining national borders and settling territorial and maritime disputes. For example, the divergent political systems of neighbouring Malaysia and Indonesia can be traced to treaties signed by the British and Dutch with indigenous rulers in their respective colonies. Malaysia's status as a federated state with a rotating monarchy and Indonesia's position as a unitary republic reflect the outcomes of historical treaties that delineated the governance structures within these territories. Thus, treaties concluded in the 18th and 19th centuries continue to shape the geopolitical landscape of present-day Southeast Asian states. Understanding the historical significance of these treaties is crucial to addressing contemporary issues arising from their provisions.

3. Dutch treaty-making in early-modern Indonesia

In Indonesia, the Dutch colonial strategy to expand its influence combined violence and extensive treaty-making to establish the right of conquest as an oblique instrument of expansion and an ostensibly legitimate mechanism for exercising control over territories and peoples overseas (Borschberg 2015; Weststeijn 2014; Van Ittersum). Rather than directly asserting authority, the Dutch relied on treaties to secure exclusive trading privileges and outmanoeuvre rival powers to establish, indirectly, extensive schemes of contracts and treaties with indigenous ruling elites to obtain exclusive trading privileges and outcompete other parties, making it "an empire by treaty par excellence" (Weststeijn 2014, 19). These treaties were a crucial part of their diplomatic and political strategies, establishing mutual obligations and consent through fear and malevolence. Indigenous critics used the treaties as a platform to expose the true nature of Dutch ambitions beyond claims of benevolent imperialism (Koster 2005). Although non-Europeans were usually disadvantaged in their encounters with colonial powers, they were not predominantly passive, reactionary, or ignorant (Amsell, Harrison, and Windler 2018; Clulow 2016). Importantly, non-European parties actively engaged in and resisted the use of treaty-making to assert their interests and challenge the colonial agenda.

From the late 16th century onwards, as Dutch merchants arrived in Java and the Moluccas, they engaged in treaty negotiations with indigenous polities. These treaties offered commercial privileges in exchange for military protection, especially in Bantam (Java) and the spice-rich Central Moluccas. Although written agreements were uncommon in precolonial Southeast Asia as a means of settling and formalising agreements, in the Moluccas, local indigenous rulers often established relationships with the Dutch; they accepted treaties as the formal mechanism through which these relationships were built to secure the Dutch as allies against other European powers or neighbouring states. The Dutch merchants integrated themselves into existing diplomatic networks. The treaties were signed on behalf of the States General of the United Dutch Republic, which was authorised by the VOC's charter. These treaties created a defensive alliance against the Portuguese and established trading agreements that granted the Dutch access to valuable spices.

Treaties, however, were rarely signed without a fortress being built in the background; treaty- and war-making went hand in hand (Borschberg 2011:253). To the Dutch, the treaties served a dual purpose: to bind indigenous rulers to their interests and to provide a legitimate excuse to engage in warfare if a ruler broke his promise. 'Just war', as famously argued by Grotius, was merely a response to a breach of agreements, based on the idea that pacta sunt servanda (Borschberg 2011; Van Ittersum 2006). For instance, the Dutch colonial administrative centre, the city of Batavia, was claimed as a legitimate possession following its conquest in a just war, after the ruler of Jayakarta violated existing treaties (Somers 2001, 117, n97).

In the 17th century, indigenous rulers in the Moluccas and Java increasingly found themselves caught in a web of reciprocal responsibilities of military protection and access to valuable resources and commodities. The Dutch asserted increasing authority over the internal affairs of their indigenous partners' principalities and sultanates/kingdoms through treaties that proclaimed "eternal friendship." If local rulers or other factions at the court decided to break off and ignore the contracts, this could escalate into open war against the Dutch, and they were often brutally subdued and brought back under the control of the VOC.

To illustrate, this is what happened to the Sultanate of Ternate in 1683, after Sultan Kaicili Amsterdam breached the terms of the treaty Ternate had concluded with the Dutch. After being defeated, Ternate was restored as a feudal vassal state under the VOC's authority (Andaya 1993). The Sultan was, "out of pure benevolence of the VOC", awarded back the "kingdom in loan" to continue ruling it "according to the ancient Ternaten methods [...] though under the VOC's supervision." Here, we see the beginnings of colonial indirect rule in its earliest form taking shape. As such, VOC treaties of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided the premise for the indirect administration of justice, monetary policy, and taxation in the nineteenth-century colonial empire. These treaties would, in the 20th century, translate into the promise of a full-fledged state, but under the structural pretence of governance that was outsourced to contracted indigenous rulers (Manse 2022).

The Dutch used their treaties to claim absolute right to rule based on either 'just war' or 'benevolent motivations' with terms of supposedly equal but at least 'rightful' and unbreakable political partnership. However, indigenous rulers constructed their own self-legitimising explanations of the treaties. For example, the Sultan of Johor presented the treaty following the Dutch siege of Malacca in 1641 as evidence of indigenous superiority over the Dutch, who were apparently impotent without local support against the Portuguese (Koster 2005, 67; Weststeijn 2014, 37). However, it became increasingly difficult to explain the treaties and contracts as well as the gradual loss of autonomy they implied in such a way that did not delegitimise the local rulers' positions by undermining their supposed omnipotence and sanctified positions as the personified centres of cultural and political authority (Tambiah 1985; Wolters 1999). It was through treaty-*making* that many rulers and princes secured their interests and positions within their sultanates/kingdoms amid the new realities of colonial power.

4. Negotiating sovereignty in Banten

Colonial civil servants in the 18th and 19th centuries placed great emphasis on treaties and contracts with indigenous rulers and carefully preserved copies of these documents in various administrative offices, both in the colonies and in the metropoles. Moreover, collections of treaties were specifically compiled and printed for the convenience of colonial administrators during the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, it is important to acknowledge that although the original treaties were typically drafted in multiple languages, including those of both the Asian and European treaty parties, as well as Malay, the lingua franca of maritime Southeast Asia, it was predominantly the European versions that were consistently copied and (re)printed. This bias in favour of European texts remains evident today in colonial archives and in published and digitised collections of treaties.

Language encompasses diverse interests, value systems, and socio-political views, shaping the transmission of ideas, agreements, and treaties. Translation, far from being a neutral act, bears political interests and intertwines with the circulation of knowledge and power dynamics, influencing how texts are understood, interpreted, and reproduced across cultural and linguistic boundaries. In multilingual societies such as those in Southeast Asia, translation introduces new meanings and concepts, expresses interpersonal and cultural relationships, and reorganises information. This complexity is heightened by the divergence between Western theoretical notions of translation and the practical, culturally-integrative approaches in Java and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, where treaty texts were adapted for understanding in diverse cultural contexts rather than being directly translated.

This practice had significant effects on how treaties were interpreted and understood locally. The historiographical analysis is further complicated by the variety of scripts used in Southeast Asia. European versions of treaties were written in Latin script, while Asian versions employed other scripts such as Jawi (derived from Arabic) for Malay or Javanese. Colonial officials often transmitted only the European versions to Europe, which were sometimes mere representations rather than exact copies of the originals. These European texts tend to be longer and more detailed, indicating that different versions are not direct translations but separate renditions with potentially different cultural meanings in European and indigenous contexts. These linguistic challenges, along with the generally wider availability of European treaty texts, have led many historians to prefer European versions, often ignoring the originals with the Asian texts included. As a result, legal and historical studies have mainly focused on European copies of the treaties, overlooking the specific differences found in the originals (Amirell & Manse 2024).

Therefore, to gain a thorough and accurate understanding of these treaties, it is imperative for historians to consult the original treaty documents, which are often preserved in Asian archives. By carefully comparing the translations and various versions of the texts, we often find significant differences that reveal differing interpretations of the agreements by the treaty parties themselves. Studying these original documents allows for a more detailed analysis of the treaties and helps illuminate the diverse perspectives and understandings held by the involved parties. This method is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the historical context and the power dynamics and negotiations inherent in treaty-making during the colonial period.

The treaties between the Dutch and the Sultanate of Banten serve as an enlightening example. After Dutch involvement in the so-called Trunojoyo rebellion in East Java in the 1670s tainted the reputation of the VOC as a favourable trading partner in the eyes of the Sultanate's nobles, a split within the Banten court occurred. One faction supported the Dutch, while the other opposed them. In 1680, Sultan Tirtayasa (1631-1692) abdicated in favour of his son, but he later regained the throne due to dissatisfaction with his son's concessions to the Dutch. This led to a siege of the capital, and the Dutch, at the request of the crown prince, intervened and captured Tirtayasa in 1683. The subsequent treaty, signed in 1684, granted exclusive trading rights to the Dutch and expelled other European powers, effectively establishing Dutch control over the lucrative Bantenese pepper trade. However, while the treaty offered a potential source of support and stability for the new Sultan (Sultan Haji), it also created tensions within the court. The Dutch began exerting influence over Banten's traditions and rituals, which threatened the Sultans' absolute power (Talens 1993). The presence of an alternative source of authority, such as the VOC, could undermine the Sultan's legitimacy. Although the Dutch portrayed themselves as benevolent patrons of the realm, their involvement in royal affairs compelled

Bantenese nobles to devise new strategies for self-legitimisation, often rooted in the displays of power provided by the VOC. This process gradually increased the influence of some factions at the Banten court through the treaty-making process.

The significance of such faction politics was further highlighted when, in the 1740s, Ratu Syarifah married the son of Sultan Haji and orchestrated a series of intrigues to gain more influence. She incited a revolt against her husband in 1746, with Dutch support, and succeeded in having him exiled. Syarifah persuaded the Dutch of her husband's mental unsuitability for the throne, which led to his exile and her appointment as female regent with full authority at court. These actions sparked controversy and discontent among the nobles and common people, culminating in a two-year rebellion.

The VOC eventually suppressed the rebellion and installed a new regime through a treaty. This treaty, like the one imposed on Ternate in 1683, subjected Banten to terms that increasingly resembled a vassal relationship with the Company. Despite protests from many Bantenese nobles who regarded Syarifah as an illegitimate ruler, the Dutch maintained their influence in West Java through their intervention.

The Dutch conveniently presented their actions as a response to what they called a "throne pretender" and praised the installation of Syarifah as a means to liberate Banten from the tyranny of her supposedly insane predecessor. They claimed supremacy and sovereignty over Banten; chunks of the province of Lampung were awarded to the Dutch through war and conquest. Hence, the 1752 treaty displays radical new terms that we do not find in previous contracts between the VOC and the Sultanate of Banten. Whereas the 1684 treaty still talks of "friendly bonds [...] between two neighbouring rulers", the new 1752 treaty purports that the realm of Banten now ultimately belonged to the VOC, which returned it to the Sultan "on loan" in exchange for military support and a reduction of the Sultan's debts to the VOC.[2]

In Banten, the first Indonesian polity with which the Dutch actually concluded a treaty during their initial exploratory voyage into Southeast Asian waters, the relationship with the Dutch had gradually become an object of increasing distrust. That very first treaty, signed in 1596, referred to "commitment and friendship," in the interest of mutually beneficial trade, but was entirely dictated by Banten. One hundred and fifty years later, the roles had completely reversed. It may not have been entirely clear to the Dutch with whom they had established a friendship in 1596, and we might wonder to what extent this had changed by 1752. While the Dutch were by then much better established in Java as a significant trading and political power, their influence on court politics, as demonstrated by their misjudgement of

2 ANRI Arsip Banten 64, 'Poincten en Articulen [...] wegens de Generale Nederlandse [...] compagnie, mitsgaders Paducca Siri Sultan Adbul Caha Nasar en syne naeste raden', 17-4-1684, and ANRI, Arsip Banten 75, 'Perjanjian antara Sultan Abu Moghali Mohamad Wasi Halimin dengan VOC. Terdapat juga perjanijan terpisah mengenai penyerahan Lampun, penggantian sulatan dan daftar kekayaan.' 1752.

Syarifah, may still have been relatively limited. This lack of knowledge among the Dutch allowed various princes of the Banten court to attempt to intervene in the treaties through the treaty-making process. Specific terms were actively revised in the Malay text to suit the parties' interests. This includes the word "expectation" (*verwachting* in Dutch), which in the Malay text is translated as *harapan*, which may also be translated as 'hope' or 'desire.' Following the Malay version of the text, this allowed some of the princes to claim the VOC could only "hope for" rather than "expect" military aid against its enemies.[3]

The same can be argued regarding the term 'sovereignty.' We might think that the concept of 'sovereignty' is scarcely reflected in the Islamic or Southeast Asian categories of political philosophy embraced in Banten. It is translated as '*kedaulatan*' (literally 'statehood' or 'to live long', 'prosperity') in the Malay text (in Jawi script) and echoes throughout the document; its implications, such as the VOC's ultimate authority over territories and borders—particularly in the construction of fortresses or the appointment of new 'sovereigns'—are widely discussed. Banten's new Sultans were each appointed in accordance with the 1752 treaty and served as vassals to the VOC under the same terms signed by Arif Zainulasyiqin. Following the treaty, Banten effectively had two political centres—the Sultan's court and the nearby VOC factory—between which various nobles eagerly navigated.

Notably, the 1752 treaty implicitly recognised another aspect of the Sultan-Company relationship: it allowed the Sultan to retain his principal sources of income, including the brokerage between the cultivators and the Company in transactions involving the sultanate's most important export, pepper. As a result, the Sultan of Banten was incontrovertibly able to increase his income under the overlordship of the Company, in contrast to the rulers of Central Java, who could not do so. He also preserved his legal authority across his territories, the *nagara kesultanan,* and the personal rice fields (*sawah kesultanan*) that he leased to external nobles not affiliated with the court (Kern 1906). This is why, until around 1770, the Sultan wielded relatively stable power.

At the same time, except for the new Sultan, other members of the courtly elite also played an important role in the treaty-making process, seeking to preserve their own interests. The courtly and landed aristocracy and the surrounding elite (*ponggawa*) enjoyed relatively high degrees of autonomy, and their lands (not the *negara kesultanan*) were only nominally subjugated to the Sultan, at least in the nineteenth century (Kern 1906; Kartodirdjo 1966; Ota 2003b). These aristocrats were granted titles and positions not on a hereditary basis, but as compensation or reward for services, loyalty or achievements. Quite a substantial number of the *ponggawa* resided at the court on a semi-permanent basis. They levied taxes and corvée labour and were crucial intermediaries for the Sultan and his family in at-

3 For example ANRI Arsip Banten 68 Perbaikan perjanjian (tanggal 17 April 1684 dan remissie tanggal 28 April 1684) dan pembaharuan perjanjian tanggal 3 Maret 1691.'

tracting revenue and administering the realm (Ota 2003b, 65-7).

This meant that treaties with the Sultan always had to be deliberated and discussed with and among the *ponggawa* to ensure adherence to their terms. Treaties in general had a relatively weak foundation in Indonesia and the wider maritime Southeast Asian region; they were under the constant threat of palace revolts and coups, as well as princes breaking away with their followers from the central court, a situation to which Banten was considered particularly prone. Interestingly, the Banten treaties were signed by the entire court (see fig. 1), which appears to be unique; in other polities, usually only the supreme ruler and the three to five most important viceroys and princes signed the treaties. Perhaps this was done in Banten to align the princes at the court and to ensure that none could claim these treaties bore no implications for them. This is an important feature of the original treaties, which we would miss if we relied solely on copies of the treaties kept in the Dutch National Archives or on the printed *Corpus Diplomaticum*, which do not include these signatures and seals.

It is beyond doubt that many of the princes sought to influence the terms of the treaty. Some of the princes sought to delineate and limit their obligations and to maximise their payments during the treaty negotiations.[4] One of them sought to increase his salary by claiming administrative control over lands that were later discovered to belong to another prince who was not present at the court at the time of the treaty.[5] The Sultan's influence over such practices appeared to be weak (Ota 2003b, 73). Occasionally, the VOC commander at the Dutch fortress in Banten complained in his correspondence with Sultan Arif Zainulasyiqin about the occasional "unruliness" and "lack of discipline" of certain (unnamed) princes in the administration of their designated districts and of the supposed "disinterest in expanding and stimulating pepper cultivation among their peoples [...] as prescribed by the treaty."[6]

Thus, Dutch 'sovereignty' seemed to have been exercised only in name through the concocted contract with the Sultan, while Dutch influence over the court remained limited. Up until well into the 19th century, layers beneath the *punggawa*—the district and village administrators (*demang* and *lurah*)—continued to operate independently of the terms to which the Sultan and some of the princes had bound themselves (Kern 1906; Kartodirdjo, 1966; Ota 2003b). This situation and the relationship among the Dutch, the Sultan, and the Banten court's 'unruly princes' resulted from the crisis experienced at the court before the rebellion of 1750-1752. The Treaty of 1752 served as a catalyst that purportedly strengthened Dutch control over the court. However, in reality, it provided only a form of authority that remained as unpredictable, temporary, and divided as before. During the rebellion, some members of the aristocratic elite chose to cooperate with the Company for economic reasons; many even switched allegiance when the Company gained the

4 Nationaal Archief (NA), VOC inv. Nr. 3124: fol. 51-52, 18 Feb. 1764.

5 Ibid.

6 ANRI VOC Hoge Regeering, 3592, Letter to Sultan of Banten, 28-9-1758 and 2-11-1763

upper hand (Ota 2003). Therefore, loyalty was driven by opportunity and was never fully secured by contracts and treaties. While the power of the courtly elite increased inversely with the decline of the Sultan's cultural authority (Ota 2003a), treaties with Banten only fostered closer relations with the Sultans under the guise of a form of sovereignty that was never truly exercised.

5. Conclusion

Treaty-making was central to colonial empire-building. In Java, the use of specific terminology gradually subjected indigenous rulers across the archipelago to seemingly standardised terms of vassalage. Simultaneously, the text of the treaties appears to have been used by courtly elites as a platform to exert influence over the increasingly inflexible 'agreements' they had concluded with the Dutch, in an attempt to secure the best terms for themselves. More often than not, it seemed that, rather than engaging with a kingdom or polity as a whole, the Dutch negotiated treaties with a specific courtly faction within that polity, aiming to maximise benefits from the treaty as a new source of power or an opportunity to distribute power and influence. Ultimately, in the case of the Banten Sultanate, the terms of the contract and treaty-making shaped the nature of colonial authority the Dutch sought to establish.

Further research is necessary to explore whether Banten was unique in this perspective or if it reflected a broader pattern in (insular) Southeast Asia. Given the widespread use of treaty-making as a diplomatic strategy by the Dutch in building their empire in Indonesia during the 18th and 19th centuries, it is plausible that in other polities treaties and treaty-making served a similar purpose of establishing colonial rule while also negotiating the terms of colonial authority.

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Мартен Манс

Оквири комуникације: закључивање уговора, превођење и дипломатско општење на Јави од 17. до 19. века

Апстракт

Комуникација је имала кључну улогу током дуге историје трговачких, политичких и дипломатских контаката страних сила и владара у југоисточној Азији. Ове стратегије комуникације нису се односиле само на писане или изговорене речи, већ су укључивале и поклоне, стварање савеза, претње или насилне методе. Непрекидни процес закључивања уговора био је кључна дипломатска тактика. Уговори нису само обавезујућа правна документа, већ и предмети комуникације и дипломатског општења. На самом почетку модерне југоисточне Азије, уговори нису били само исход колонијалних освајања, већ и почетна тачка непрекидних преговора. Увек су могли да се поново "отворе", поново тумаче, и користе као основ даљих преговора. Додатно, услови и идеје у овим уговорима никако нису само лингвистички изрази (колонијалне) моћи, већ део ширих политичких и дипломатских процеса међукултурне комуникације и интеракције.

Кључне речи: *комуникација, закључивање уговора, дипломатија, југоисточна Азија међукултурна интеракција*

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What are the institutional forms of cooperation between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) with BRICS+ member states?

Abstract

In this paper, we will examine the reasons why states join alliances, specific associations, and groups, as well as contemporary global changes. We will then focus on the formation and organisation of BRICS, or BRICS+. Particular attention will be given to both current and future institutional cooperation between Serbia, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and BRICS member countries, with an emphasis on parliamentary collaboration. As a sovereign nation, Serbia may apply for observer status as a partner state within BRICS+. Conversely, the paper will explore alternative possibilities for cooperation for the Republic of Srpska, which lacks internationally recognised statehood but exists as an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina and envisions its future within BRICS+. By presenting the history of BRICS parliamentary forums and analysing specific examples of relationships and communication, we will demonstrate how this cooperation is gradually developing and what it could mean for the Republic of Srpska and Serbia.

Keywords: *BRICS, BRICS+, Parliamentary Forum, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Serbia, partner state, member state, observer partner state*

1. Introductory notes

Looking back through history, we can conclude that states, ready to give up part of their sovereignty, have entered alliances with various goals, primarily to ensure their security. Today, we are still witnesses of the existence of a military alliance, NATO, which as such began to operate beyond its initial framework and regulate relations far from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Among other things, this kind of hegemony of NATO created the need to organize a new platform and unite states into the BRICS group in order to achieve common goals, such as the creation of a multipolar world and balance in it.

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Today, individual states, especially smaller ones (such as the Balkan states), are looking for ways to preserve their security not from enemies, but from their “friends” who pressure and blackmail them into becoming a member state of the NATO alliance, because otherwise they will suffer various sanctions, obstructions on the economic and political level, and more serious international interventions are not excluded. BRICS is a group that differs from other alliances in many respects. Its goal is to provide an opportunity for everyone (especially the countries of the Global South) to find their place and role in the new world order, and to survive despite the imposed hegemony of the so-called “Collective West”. At the same time, the countries of the Global South have developed enough to be able to ensure participation in international financial organizations, such as: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.

As the author states, the BRICS countries, being rational, instead of clashing head-on with the US and its allies, have opted for a strategy of connecting with each other by creating a common platform and gradually establishing a balance in world politics.[1]

The reason why the BRICS countries are thinking in the direction of de-dollarization is precisely because the dollar has been used as a means of sanctioning countries, that is, a means on the basis of which obedience has been ensured.[2] BRICS is a platform that has managed to unite in one place the countries of the South, developing countries, new emerging economies, OPEC leaders and large countries such as Brazil, the largest country in Latin America, South Africa, the leading African economy, China and India as the most dynamic world economies, and Russia as one of the most important military, geopolitical and economic powers in the world. [3]

BRICS has attracted the attention of many countries in the world, because it is based on different principles, some of which are particularly attractive to countries that show interest in being part of this grouping, namely: respect for the independence, sovereignty of other countries, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations, and these principles were represented in *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* from 1976.[4]

1 Д. Пророковић, „Улога БРИКС-а у успостављању равнотеже снага у међународним односима“, Српска политичка мисао, број 2/24, 2024, 39-60, p. 43.

2 Б. С. Димитријевић., М. Целатовић и И. Љ. Ђорђевић, „The relationship between Serbia and Brics within the creation of a multipolar world and reforms of international economic institutions“, Зборник радова са конференције „Global security and international relations after the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis“, Међународни односи - Међународна економска интеграција (БРИКС) – Србија, Institute of International Politics and Economics : Faculty of Security, University; Rome : Sapienza University, Department of Political Science; Clarksville: Austin Peay State University, 2024, 592-617, p. 594.

3 Ibidem.

4 М. Младеновић, „Судар два концепта или „сукоб цивилизација“, Зборник радова „Хибридна агресија НАТО и ЕУ на Руску Федерацију“, (ур.) Петко Радовић, Београд: Евроазијски безбедносни форум, 2023, p. 33-34.

2. BRICS+: Global positioning and institutionalisation of cooperation

BRICS is a recent cooperative framework that has brought together countries with diverse historical, political, and economic models, without imposing on them the obligation to unify, but affirming the principle of cooperation despite differences. The power of BRICS lies in the differences.

Regarding BRICS+, we can confidently say that this group is attracting considerable global interest. However, the member states are acting strategically and thoughtfully when expanding membership. A particularly positive aspect of BRICS+ is its openness to cooperation with non-formal members, which helps build a broader network of partnerships worldwide. This will be discussed further in the text, specifically with respect to the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia. BRICS is an acronym for the interstate association of five populous countries, which have experienced rapid economic growth in recent decades. They operate on the principle of equality and mutual respect, enjoy their rights, and fulfil their obligations. The foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, and China met for the first time in 2006, thereby initiating the BRICS (then BRIC) cooperation. The four countries held their first meeting in Yekaterinburg (Russia), in 2009. A year later, as chair, China invited South Africa to become a member. Guided by their goals and principles, as well as global opportunities, the leaders of the BRICS countries made a historic decision at the Johannesburg summit to include other countries beyond the core five. BRICS has further strengthened its role as a driver of sustainable global development and a multipolar international project. Today, a total of 3.5 billion people live in the BRICS countries, which is about 45 percent of the total world population.

The cooperation among these countries began from nothing and, over time, has become strong and diverse. The BRICS member nations aim to develop consistent, active, open, and transparent dialogue and collaboration that serve not only their shared interests but also the creation of a harmonious world where lasting peace and overall prosperity are secured. The members emphasise the importance of finding common ground while respecting differences, which is exactly what makes BRICS strong. The fact that BRICS is on the right track is also clearly demonstrated by the increasing number of meetings among members, a denser and more complex network of cooperation, and a significant rise in the number of dialogues, statements, and concrete projects each year. This confirms that the vitality and dynamism of this cooperation continue to grow, as more countries seek to engage with BRICS, whether through membership, partnership, or observer status. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia are also included in this trend. From its inception, the BRICS project has been founded on principles of multipolarity, economic interdependence, the primacy of international law in promoting peace and stability, and collective problem-solving. Additionally, expanding linguistic, cultural, and informational cooperation is among the group’s key objectives. At the 2023 summit in South Africa, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov explained that

BRICS operates on a basis of equality, respect, consensus, non-interference, and a strong commitment to the UN Charter and its principles. BRICS encompasses various forms of cooperation, such as summit meetings attended by heads of state or government, business forums for entrepreneurs, investors, and experts, the BRICS Business Council, Civil Society Forum, Academic Forums connecting scientists and researchers, and forums of foreign ministers and parliamentarians.

This paper examines institutional cooperation among BRICS member states and their partners, with particular focus on parliamentary collaboration. The concept of a parliamentary forum emerged within BRICS in 2011, initiated by Brazil, to acknowledge the need for a permanent consultative platform for the exchange of experience, legislative development, and the implementation of agreements. This proposal was revived at the 2013 summit in South Africa. Although efforts to establish such a forum have been ongoing since 2013, it remains unformed. However, the country holding the presidency hosts an annual Parliamentary Forum, starting with the inaugural gathering in Moscow in 2015. These forums, held on a rotational basis, have taken place ten times, some online in recent years (2020, 2022). Topics discussed are diverse, covering security and finance to culture and education. The idea of parliamentary cooperation has led to other initiatives, such as the BRICS Women Parliamentarians Forum (2016, Jaipur) and the BRICS Young Parliamentarians Forum (2017 and 2020). Most recently, on 11 – 12 July 2024, the 10th-anniversary forum was held in St. Petersburg, with the theme "The Role of Parliaments in Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security." This event saw the participation of parliamentary delegations from the expanded BRICS membership for the first time, alongside outreach meetings with invited heads of parliaments from the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and with Tuliya Exon, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, whom President Vladimir Putin welcomed. Putin highlighted the importance of this cooperation format, noting that although BRICS has no permanent parliament yet, work is ongoing towards that goal, with success likely soon. The venue, St. Petersburg, also hosted the first session of the State Duma. About 400 representatives from 16 countries attended.

Currently, BRICS is gradually strengthening its position as a crucial pillar of the contemporary international order. It aims to defend national sovereignty and cultural identity in a world increasingly embracing multipolarity, with rising centres of power in Asia, Africa, and South America. The old Eurocentric worldview and the concept of a unipolar world are fading; the idea that one side solely makes decisions on global security and order is becoming outdated. The voice of the so-called Global South, once suppressed under the dominance of the Collective West, is now asserting itself. Western media often dismisses BRICS as a "club of empty talk," but this critique lacks a solid basis. It overlooks the achievements of BRICS' "soft approach to cooperation," which functions without a constitution, a permanent secretariat, or rigid goals. This flexibility maintains the sovereignty and equality of its members. BRICS seeks to strengthen ties among current members and prospective entrants, deepen multilateral cooperation, and connect stakeholders on equal terms, without hierarchy or subordination. This vision aims to create an alliance capable of rivalling the military, economic, and political blocs in Europe and North America. Both Serbia and the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) are seeking this opportunity. They try not to officially choose a side on the global stage. Such behaviour on the international stage causes a division between East and West. In line with its foreign policy, the country develops its own strategies (primarily military, national security, political, etc.). Integration into Western structures would mean adopting their ideological, cultural, political, economic, and other models, which hardly aligns with the Serbian population's centuries-old culture, tradition, and Orthodox Christianity.

Serbia, as a country located in the heart of the Balkans, strives to foster cooperation with all relevant actors and aspires to be a partner to both the European Union and the BRICS, even though these two blocs are often seen as opposing on many issues. As an independent country, it has extensive experience in multilateral platforms. For example, Serbia is a member of the UN and has held observer status in the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) since 2013. It is a member of the OSCE and CEFTA (the Central European Free Trade Agreement). It holds partner status in the Eurasian Economic Union, among other memberships. Since 2012, it has been a candidate for EU membership, with which it also has the most significant trade volume. In alliance with these organisations, Serbia directly cooperates with the BRICS member states. In this way, Serbia gains experience in diplomatic negotiations, conducts dialogue, builds relationships at the international level, and can use this, among other things, through cooperation with the BRICS+ parliamentary forum. Serbia, as the most economically powerful country in the so-called Western Balkans, a militarily neutral state, and open to collaboration and dialogue, can pursue cooperation with BRICS+.

In September 2024, Serbia signed an Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), including Indonesia as a member and Vietnam as a partner in BRICS. In 2024, Belgrade attended the BRICS summit in Kazan for the first time. The BRICS parliamentary forums stand out as an important opportunity for Serbia. On November 1, 2024, an informal group for cooperation and accession to BRICS was established in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. The group was designed as a platform for dialogue and the exchange of information on the importance of cooperation with BRICS and on achieving partnership with the organisation or full membership.[5]

When it comes to Serbia's cooperation with BRICS+, it should be noted that it had

5 D. Milosevic, „An informal Parliamentary group for cooperation and joining BRICS was established in the Parliament: In the group, the government and the opposition", WebTribune, November 2, 2024, available at: https://webtribune.rs/u-skupstini-osnovana-neformalna-parlamentarna-grupa-za-saradnju-i-pridruzivanje-briks-u-grupi-vlast-i-opozicija/

its representatives at the BRICS Summit in Kazan, where the Serbian delegation was led by the then Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vulin, instead of the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, who was prevented from responding to the invitation. In addition to Vulin, the Serbian delegation consisted of: Minister of Defence Bratislav Gašić, Minister of Economy Arijana Mesarović, and Minister without Portfolio Nenad Popović.[6] Aleksandar Vulin previously participated in the Security Forum (April 2024) and the Eastern Economic Forum (September 2024), where he met with the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin. Serbia also cooperates with BRICS member states on a bilateral level, primarily in the areas of economics and trade. Serbia hosted the 2019 Parliamentary Forum meeting while Belgrade hosted the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), during which this forum was held. At that meeting, parliamentarians from BRICS countries discussed the role of legislatures in promoting health cooperation within BRICS, aiming to achieve universal access to quality healthcare by 2030. This hosting demonstrates Serbia's willingness to serve as a platform for international dialogue and cooperation, even though it is not officially a BRICS member.

The agenda of the BRICS parliamentary forums is closely related to both Serbia and the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina). For example, multilateralism, the use of national currencies in international trade, combating inequality, respect for national sovereignty, and equality are highlighted, and BRICS is a game of equals. However, it is necessary to distinguish between Serbia, a state, and the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which currently operates internationally as an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such activities by the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) would constitute paradiplomacy, which, in the simplest terms, refers to the activities of sub-state actors.

The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) within Bosnia and Herzegovina has its own policy, which aims primarily to strengthen ties with Russia and China, without open conflict with the West. Serbia and the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) have an interest in supporting the concept of a world without dominance by any single power, as this affords them greater room for manoeuvre, cooperation, and the preservation of sovereignty. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), although not internationally recognised as a state, is building direct relations with individual BRICS members (especially Russia and China). BRICS+ can serve as a springboard for the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) to act on the international stage under its own name and in accordance with its interests. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) can enter an alliance with BRICS only with the consent of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or possibly after the adoption of a new Constitution of the Republic of Srpska, which will be discussed in more detail.

6 RT Balkan - Vučić confirmed: Four ministers are going to Kazan, October 21, 2024, available at: https://lat.rt.rs/srbija-i-balkan/114014-vucic-briks-kazanj/

The President of the Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik, stated in an interview with *"Российская газета"* (February 2024) that the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) hoped to obtain observer status in the BRICS in the future. Dodik believes that BRICS will develop and will enable not only states but also autonomous regions (auth. Note: such as the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina)) to obtain such status. Representative offices are among the instruments used by sub-state actors to act legitimately on the international stage. Out of 8 representative offices around the world, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) has one in Russia (with headquarters in Moscow, as well as an office in St. Petersburg). A decision has also been made to establish a representative office in China (Shanghai). In this way, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is making major steps towards cooperation with BRICS through bilateral relations, expressing its commitment to deepening cooperation with foreign countries in accordance with the constitutional position and powers of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Last year's BRICS Summit in Kazan (October 22–24, 2024) certainly stands out as an essential moment in the foreign policy activities of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Republic of Srpska delegation consisted of President Milorad Dodik, Minister of Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education Željko Budimir, Head of the Presidency of the Republic of Srpska in Russia Duško Perović, and Advisor to the President of the Republic of Srpska Branislav Okuka.[7] It is also essential to highlight the bilateral meeting between the two presidents, Milorad Dodik and Vladimir Putin, on the sidelines of the summit. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) also participated under its flag at the BRICS sports games held in Kazan in June 2024, to which athletes from 82 countries were invited.

It is also important to mention two other participations of representatives of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in forums in Russia during 2024 - namely the Security Forum held in St. Petersburg in April and the International Economic Forum also held in St. Petersburg in June, and that the President of the Republic of Srpska participated as a speaker at both forums, and that during the second forum, President Dodik met with President Putin.[8]

In addition, there is notable intensive cooperation and the signing of significant agreements between the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and two very important BRICS members: the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, including the signing of an Agreement on Strategic Cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy Sources with the Chinese companies Zhongbo Group and China Power for the purpose of building a wind power plant and a photo-

7 RTRS - The President of Srpska arrived in Kazan; He will participate in the BRICS Summit, October 20, 2024, available at: https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=575093

8 President of Russia - Official web site, Meeting with President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik, October 25, 2024, available at: http://www.en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75393#:~:text=October%2025%2C%202024%2C%20Kazan,happening%20at%20the

voltaic power plant. On the other hand, cooperation with Russia is visible through scientific and educational activities, so it is worth mentioning the Agreement signed between the Rector of the Ural Federal University, Viktor Anatolyevich Koksharov, and the Rector of the University of Banja Luka, Radoslav Gajanin, in September 2023, as well as through the study program at the Faculty of Security Sciences in Banja Luka, which organizes master's studies in the Russian language, but also through the cooperation of the University of East Sarajevo with the State Social and Humanitarian University from Russia, since 2020, as well as several other forms of collaboration in this area, student exchanges between the University of East Sarajevo and Lobochevski University in Nizhny Novgorod, etc.

4. Possible forms of cooperation between the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia with BRICS+ member states

If we are discussing forms of institutional cooperation with BRICS+ member states, we should begin with collaboration with the BRICS Parliamentary Assembly, which Serbia can pursue as an independent and internationally recognised state. Serbia can already apply to become an *observer partner state* or a *partner state. At* the same time, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) occupies a distinct position. It can achieve this only with the consent of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or by waiting for the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which would enable it. It should be noted that no provision in the currently valid regulations of the Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina prohibit the Republic of Srpska from strengthening cooperation with BRICS. Still, the obstacle is the complex relations and different interests of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which prevent consensus from being reached in foreign policy activities.

It is evident that BRICS is opening up to *partner* and *observer partner states* from 2024, as there is a great interest in cooperation with this group, and on the other hand, it is necessary for a certain amount of time to pass for the newly admitted member states to integrate. Serbia can view BRICS as an important alternative to the EU, given that BRICS countries are experiencing dynamic economic growth. Therefore, Serbia could work with the BRICS countries to deepen trade, energy, and agricultural cooperation, thereby creating a substantial potential market for Serbian exports and a basis for increased foreign direct investment and capital inflows, particularly for infrastructure investments.[9]

Cooperation in geopolitical terms is significant since the BRICS countries do not

9 Б. С. Димитријевић., М. Џелатовић и И. Љ. Ђорђевић, „The relationship between Serbia and Brics within the creation of a multipolar world and reforms of international economic institutions", Зборник радова са конференције „Global security and international relations after the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis", Међународни односи - Међународна економска интеграција (БРИКС) – Србија, Institute of International Politics and Economics: Faculty of Security, University; Rome : Sapienza University, Department of Political Science; Clarksville: Austin Peay State University, 2024, 592-617, p. 605-607.

require the fulfilment of certain preconditions. We should not forget the position of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China as permanent members of the UN Security Council, which contributed to preserving the territorial integrity of Kosovo and Metohija within Serbia by not recognising Kosovo's independence. The result of this cooperation would gradually reduce dependence on Western investment and influence, thereby creating greater resilience in the event of an economic crisis or the sudden imposition of sanctions over Kosovo. [10]

On the other hand, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is not internationally recognised as a sovereign state, but exists as an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Annexe IV of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the *Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, No. 25/2009 - Amendment I)[11] stipulates in Article 3 that foreign policy and foreign trade policy are the competence of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The issue of foreign policy represents a fundamental stumbling block and turmoil in relations between the two entities: The Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina aspires to membership in NATO and the EU, while the Republic of Srpska is working towards possible cooperation with BRICS, because it sees its future there. At first glance, it seems unsolvable, but if we read further Article 3 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will see that it says that *each entity may also enter into agreements with states and international organisations with the consent of the Parliamentary Assembly*, which is the joint legislative body at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, there are also potential obstacles from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which holds a negative attitude toward BRICS.

When we look at the current Constitution of the Republic of Srpska[12], Article 3 stipulates that the Republic of Srpska *will have all state functions and powers shall belong to the Republic, except those which, according to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been placed within the exclusive competence of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina,* and Article 68, paragraph 1, item 15 stipulates that the Republic of Srpska *will regulate and ensure international cooperation, other than cooperation transferred to the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

It is also important to note that Amendment XXXIV granted the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, as the highest legislative body in the Republic of Srpska, the right to 1) determine proposals for border changes and suggest the country's entry

10 Ibid., p. 606-607.

11 The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, (Annex IV of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 25/2009 - Amendment I), available at: https://www.ustavnisud.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_engl.pdf.

12 The Constitution of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska No. 21/92 – consolidated version, 28/94, 8/96, 13/96, 15/96, 16/96, 21/96, 21/02, 26/02, 30/02, 31/02, 69/02, 31/03, 98/03, 115/05, 117/05, 48/11), available at: https://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/sites/default/files/upload/dokumenti/ustav/eng/USTAV-RS_English.pdf.

into confederations or similar associations with other states, and to verify the outcomes of referendums on these issues through decisions, and 2) establish the principles of foreign policy and ratify international treaties and agreements. This would have provided an opportunity for cooperation with BRICS. However, Amendment LIX was later adopted, which no longer permits this. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is currently in the process of adopting a new Constitution, which has undergone numerous public and expert debates and whose draft has been adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska.[13] The draft Constitution, Article 9, paragraph 1, of the Constitution of the Republic of Srpska, combines the previous provision that was repealed and what is stated in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which reads: *The Republic of Srpska may establish special parallel relations, join in complex state communities of federal or confederal structure with neighbouring and other states or groups of states.* Restoring this provision creates an opportunity for cooperation with the BRICS.

Since this is a matter worth consideration, it would be advisable for the Parliamentary Assembly, or rather a Parliamentary Forum, to establish a committee through the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska to address the issue of cooperation with the BRICS and BRICS+ countries, or via the Ministry for European Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Srpska. Creating a committee within the National Assembly to handle this matter makes sense, as Serbia also established an informal Parliamentary Group for Cooperation and Accession to BRICS. It is logical that this issue should be handled by the Ministry, which is responsible for international cooperation. Currently, there are several Representations within this Ministry, but new ones should be established, or possibly a single one dedicated solely to these matters could be created to enhance cooperation with this group. Regarding the BRICS member states, or BRICS+, it has already been mentioned that there is only a Representation in Russia at present. Opening new Representations will require careful planning, budget allocations, and personnel committed to developing cooperation with the member states. Consequently, careful consideration is needed to determine the locations for new Representations, and perhaps a single Representation could serve multiple states.

Given the limitations of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which cannot act as a fully independent state but possesses a degree of autonomy, it may engage in bilateral cooperation with BRICS+ member states. One of the most likely avenues for such collaboration is through the BRICS+ Association of Cities and Municipalities, established in Kazan in June 2024. On this occasion, numerous representatives from BRICS+ countries attended, and a shared aspiration for the sustainable development of cities was articulated to establish their roles as strategic players on the global stage. The primary aim of this association is to promote dialogue and cooperation across areas such as economy, culture, education, ecology,

13 RTRS - The National Assembly adopted the Draft Constitution of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), March 13, 2025, available at: https://www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=592783.

waste management, and tourism—issues that form part of the daily responsibilities at the local level. Additionally, cooperation with countries that currently hold *partner* or *observer partner status* should not be overlooked, as these countries share the same commitment and regard their place within the BRICS+ framework as the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

In addition, it is necessary to focus on the *IMBRIX* Forum, which represents the International Forum of Cities of the BRICS Member States, held annually and bringing together, in addition to the member states, other partner states. The main goal of this Forum is to promote the integration of positive global experiences, the implementation of state tasks on the ground, the development of social and economic well-being of municipal territories, and the introduction of information, digital and innovative technologies into the daily activities of large cities in developing countries.[14]

Cooperation with the regions of BRICS+ member states is among the most promising, alongside collaboration between cities, as there are no restrictions in this area and certain forms of cooperation and bilateral agreements are already in place. For instance, in June 2024, the Protocol on Cooperation between the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Tatarstan was signed in St. Petersburg, and it was supplemented in October by the Protocol's Activity Plan. Additionally, in October 2024, the Minister of Scientific and Technological Development and Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska visited Kazan Federal University, with which cooperation had already been established. Another example of such collaboration is the Letter of Intent on Cooperation signed between Laktasi and the Chinese city of Tianshui in September 2024, which lays the foundation for collaboration across industry, agriculture, trade, education, sports, culture, and tourism. It is important to note another meeting within the BRICS framework, which is taking place with the participation of member states. This meeting is highly significant at the international level: the Meeting of Public Prosecutors' Offices of the BRICS countries. Although we cannot participate, it is essential to adhere to the agreed agenda, as the focus is on discussing strategies for joint action against transnational crime. The topics to be addressed this year include artificial intelligence and justice, strategies for legal security, ethics, and international cooperation. All these topics are of interest not only to the BRICS member states but also to the entire world.

We will mention a few additional essential events and organisations below that may serve as future avenues for cooperation; we will begin with the *International Park Forum. The International Park Forum* was held in April 2024 and aimed to promote projects in ecology and urban planning. Attention should also be paid to the *International Economic Forum*, which addresses issues such as international cooperation, economic development, education and research, and cultural and diplomatic exchange. The main goal of this forum is to unite developing countries to shape global governance, encourage innovation, and create sustainable devel-

14 International Municipal Brics Forum, available at: https://imbricsfoundation.ru/enimbrics

opment pathways for over 45% of the world's population. During the International Forum, the following are organised: thematic workshops, expert panel discussions, and cultural exchange programs.[15]

Furthermore, cooperation among youth organisations is possible; however, the exchange of teachers and students is particularly feasible and enhances collaboration within educational and scientific initiatives. Opportunities also exist to develop cultural cooperation and infrastructure through the construction and enhancement of renewable energy sources, and the establishment of technology parks, alongside hosting various innovation-related conferences. The importance of environmental protection through renewable energy sources is evident today. Particular attention should be given to the BRICS Urban Future Forum, scheduled for Moscow in September 2025, and the IMBRIX forum in St. Petersburg in October 2025. It is also worth mentioning the BRICS Business Council, whose primary aim is to integrate new members. Still, we should not overlook the Council's areas of interest (agribusiness, digital economy and artificial intelligence, energy, green economy and climate, infrastructure, trade and investment). We should seek ways to cooperate in these equally important areas. There is also a Women's Business Alliance within BRICS, dedicated to increasing women's economic participation and encouraging cooperation among women-led businesses. The same applies to the BRICS+ Deans' Forum, which will convene representatives of member states and partners in Rio de Janeiro in June 2025. The webpage lists the participants involved in organising the Forum, and it would be worthwhile to contact the organisers. There is also a space for cooperation within the BRICS Civil Council, which relates to civil society and will, during 2025, address many issues, such as health, ecology, finance, and education, with special mention of non-Western strategies for education in BRICS countries and security within cyberspace, artificial intelligence, as well as a critical issue—digital sovereignty.

On the official BRICS website, one can see the cooperation plans for Brazil's 2025 presidency, and it is clear that collaboration is scheduled in the specified areas. Therefore, it is necessary to identify a modality and opportunity for the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) to cooperate with Brazil through alternative means, since it cannot apply as an observer partner within BRICS+. We should also recognise that Brazil seeks reforms to global governance while simultaneously prioritising global health cooperation, trade, investment, finance, climate change, the management of artificial intelligence, and the enhancement of peace, security, and BRICS cohesion. Cooperation between the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Brazil can be reflected in collaboration within the Association of Cities and Municipalities, scientific and cultural exchanges, environmental protection, and tourism. We should seek opportunities to participate in Brazilian forums, particularly the BRICS Summit. It is also advisable to intensify efforts to establish

15 BRICS International Forum, available at: https://www.bricsforum.in/ and Be Part of the BRICS International Forum Community, available at: https://www.bricsforum.in/joinus

cooperation with the Global South, since, despite its small territory, the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) should not overlook its history as part of a state that helped establish the Non-Aligned Movement. Many countries in Africa, South America, and South Asia hold membership or observer status in this Movement. Conversely, the Global South might be interested in the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia because we are located in Europe, in a strategic transit position, and, although small, we demonstrate the courage to defend our beliefs, traditional values, religion, and freedom. Much has been done to damage the reputation of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia. Still, cooperation with BRICS countries is beginning to change this perception, since we share common values with BRICS or BRICS+.

5. Conclusion

Analysing existing cooperation with BRICS and BRICS+ member states, we conclude that the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia demonstrate interest in cooperation with this group; however, numerous limitations remain. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) wants to achieve deeper cooperation with the BRICS, however, this cooperation is limited, because the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) does not have international subjectivity and is not in a position to act as an independent state, therefore it turns to individual cooperation with the BRICS member states, to the extent that the Constitution of the Republic of Srpska allows it and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not defend it. This cooperation is primarily visible through the signed agreements with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China through scientific and educational, cultural, and infrastructural cooperation and in the field of energy in the form of renewable sources. On the other hand, Serbia, as a country with rich experience in international cooperation, takes a neutral stance and decides not to choose sides, but tries to diplomatically cooperate with both the West and the East through various projects. In light of global changes and the efforts of countries of the Global South to redefine the current international order, Serbia, owing to its prior policy, has an open path to various forms of cooperation. We can already speak of the recognised interest of the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia in a multipolar approach to the international community. The Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia have the opportunity already in 2025, during the Brazilian presidency of BRICS+, to continue the forms of cooperation that they began in 2024, during the presidency of the Russian Federation, and to try to achieve new forms of cooperation during their presence at various forums aimed at signing future cooperation agreements. Such a policy of balancing among the highest centres of power entails certain risks and pressures that the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Serbia must address.

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Бојана Кнежевић

Јелица Вукосав

Који су институционални облици сарадње Републике Србије и Републике Српске (Босна и Херцеговина) са државама чланицама БРИКС+?

Апстракт

У овом раду ћемо поменути разлоге због којих државе постају део савеза, односно одређених удружења и група, и које су актуелне промене у свету, а затим ћемо пажњу усмерити на оснивање и организацију БРИКС-а, односно БРИКС+. Посебна пажња биће посвећена како садашњој, тако и будућој институционалној сарадњи Србије и Републике Српске (Босна и Херцеговина) са државама чланицама БРИКС-а, са акцентом на парламентарну сарадњу. Србија, као суверена држава, има могућност да подносе захтјев за добијање статуса посматрача у БРИКС+. С друге стране, рад ће се фокусирати и на алтернативне видове сарадње Републике Српске (Босна и Херцеговина), која нема статус међународно признате државе, већ постоји као ентитет у оквиру Босне и Херцеговине, и која своју будућност види у оквиру БРИКС+. Представљајући историју парламентарних форума БРИКС-а, као и анализирајући конкретне примере односа и комуникације, показаћемо како се ова сарадња постепено развија и шта она може значити за Републику Српску (Босна и Херцеговина) и Србију.

Кључне речи: БРИКС, БРИКС+, Парламентарни форум, Република Српска (Босна и Херцеговина), Србија, држава партнер, држава чланица, држава посматрач

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Antonius Diksa Kuntara*

The Development of Catholic Mission Stations in Central Java, 1809-1942

Abstract

Historical studies indicate that the Catholic presence in the Nusantara archipelago first emerged in the 16th century, particularly in Maluku. However, Catholicism was disrupted when the Dutch seized Banda in 1622, after it had been established in Batavia as the centre of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) administration in 1619. Nearly two hundred years later, in 1799, the VOC was dissolved, losing all authority, and the colony was handed over to the Dutch colonial government in 1800. Consequently, Catholicism was once again permitted in the archipelago, albeit with certain restrictions. The arrival of two Dutch Catholic missionaries in Java marked a revival of the faith. Initially, they were permitted to serve only Dutch Catholics, mainly civilians and military personnel. However, almost a century later, the Catholic Church began to evangelise the local Javanese. This later period was characterised by active strategies and efforts involving many parties, demonstrating various aspects of how Catholicism developed in Central Java.

Keywords: Catholicism, Central Java, Van Lith, Liber Baptismi, Indonesia

1. Introduction

Historical studies reveal the presence of the Catholic Church in the Nusantara archipelago: in Baros on the northern coast of Sumatra[1] in the seventh century, and in Maluku from 1512 to 1677, when Catholic missionaries arrived with Portuguese and Spanish trade fleets[2]. However, following the Dutch trading company, the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC), assuming control of the Banda Islands in Maluku in 1622, banned Catholicism. Only about two centuries later when the VOC era ended and was replaced by the colonial government in the Dutch East Indies, did Catholicism start to revive in the Nusantara archipelago. This change in the Dutch colony mirrored the political developments occurring in the Netherlands, which had been under French military control since 1795. The Dutch government implemented the French principles of "equality" and "freedom" in its Dutch East

1 Y. Bakker, "Umat Katolik Perintis di Indonesia + 645 - + 1500", in Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia Volume 1, 1974, pp. 19, 27, 35. Bakker referenced this based on a report by an earlier historian, Syaikh Abu Salih al-Armini, translated by B.T.A. Evetts, MA in 1895 and reprinted in 1969 in London. Indonesian historian Prof. Dr Sucipto Wirjosuparto confirmed the existence of this 7th-century community in 1970, building upon the earlier research by historian Rachmat Subagya, "Gereja Kristen Tertua di Indonesia,' BASIS, (Yogyakarta, 1969), p. 18: 261-265.

2 Fl. Hasto Rosariyanto, , Van Lith, Pembuka Pendidikan Guru di Jawa, 2009, p.2.

Indies colony, which is now Indonesia.

A decree by King Louis in the Netherlands on 4 March 1807 granted the request of Fr. Jacobus Nelissen and Fr. Lambertus Prinsen, two Roman Catholic priests, to be permitted to go to Batavia as missionaries and to include a third person as a co-helper in the mission. On 8 May 8, Pope Pius VII, with the King's permission, designated Batavia as an Apostolic Prefecture covering the entire Dutch East Indies. However, as the mission developed, Central Java became its central focus. Questions regarding when it began, how the process unfolded, and who was involved in establishing this mission centre are important to explore. This study examines the emergence and early development of Central Java from 1809 to 1940, concluding when the Catholic hierarchy in the region was upgraded to an Apostolic Vicariate led by a bishop based in Semarang. Following the division outlined in the history of the Semarang Catholic Church, this research is divided into two periods: the Dutch Church Period (1808–1882) and the Missionary Church Period (1882–1940).

2. The Dutch Church Period (1808–1882)

On 4 April 1808, two diocesan priests from the Netherlands, Fr. Jacobus Nelissen and Fr. Lambertus Prinsen, arrived in Batavia (modern-day Jakarta). These two priests had travelled for approximately six months from Amsterdam via New York to Java. Since 30 May 1619, the VOC government had controlled its trading activities in Asia from its centre in Batavia. After the VOC was dissolved in 1799, the colony was taken over by the Dutch government, and Batavia became the seat of the Governor-General. On 27 December 1808, with the official governing decree or Besluit from Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels, Fr. Prinsen, one of the two priests, moved to Semarang in Central Java. There, on 29 January 1809, a meeting of the Catholic community was held immediately, and a Council of Church and The Poor, or the "Church Council," was formed. This Church Council marked the official establishment of the Catholic Church Semarang Station (Stasi), which was named St. Joseph. Lacking a designated place for worship activities, the Catholic community, with the permission of the Governor-General, used the Gereformeerde Church for Holy Mass. It was only in 1815 that Fr. Prinsen relinquished his house to serve as a used as a place of worship.

Fr. Prinsen then continued his journey to Surabaya and established a mission station there. With this new station, Fr. Prinsen's service covered an area of 42,000 square kilometres from Tuban - Bojonegoro to Banyumas - Tegal. Thus, in 1815, the number of Catholics was 1,057, consisting of 643 full members who received all the sacraments and 414 non-full members who did not. In 1818, Fr. Prinsen was appointed Apostolic Prefect in Batavia to succeed Fr. Nelissen, who had recently passed away. However, Fr. Prinsen remained based in Semarang. When the cholera epidemic struck in 1821, priests became involved in public health services.

Additionally, with the outbreak of the Diponegoro War (1825-1830), Fr. Prinsen was tasked with providing spiritual support to the army. Some relief was provided in 1827 when Fr. J.H. Scholten joined the Semarang station; the Apostolic Prefect subsequently appointed him to offer spiritual services to the soldiers. When Fr. Prinsen moved to Batavia, he handed over the Semarang station to another priest, Father Mourik. Later, when Fr. Prinsen returned to the Netherlands, Fr. Scholten succeeded him as the Apostolic Prefect of Batavia; however, the colonial government did not approve the appointment.

3. The Apostolic Vicariate of Batavia and the New Mission Station

Despite the good efforts of the early Catholic missionaries, relations between the Dutch colonial government and the Catholic Church faced difficulties. On 20 September 1842, Batavia was made an Apostolic Vicariate led by Mgr. J. Groof, who had previously served in Suriname. He arrived in Batavia on 21 April 1845 but was unable to take up his duties. Only priests appointed by the government or those holding a permit to practice, called het radicaal, were allowed to conduct public religious ceremonies. The issue was that Mgr. Groof was accompanied by five other pastors, but not by the radical from the colonial government. Mgr. Groof's attempt to "cleanse" the Catholic Church of all deficiencies displeased both the colonial authorities and the priests he rebuked. Fr. Grube in Semarang, a government-sanctioned priest, opposed this. For this "subordination', Mgr. Groof removed Fr. Grube from his position in Semarang, and the Church council sealed the church. In response, the colonial government issued a decree stating that Fr. Grube remained in office, and the church was reopened in February. However, attendance was low, indicating that the Catholics in Semarang obeyed church authority more than the colonial government. This conflict culminated in February 1846 with the deportation of Mgr. Groof from the Dutch East Indies back to the Netherlands.

Mgr. Groof received considerable sympathy from Catholics in the Netherlands. They sought support from the government, and King Willem II issued a decree justifying him. As a result, the priests who had rebelled against Mgr. Groof were dismissed from their positions and recalled to the Netherlands. This decision left Fr. Staal at the Padang Station as the only priest working throughout the entire Dutch East Indies until Fr. J.P.H. Sanders arrived on 17 October 1847 at the Semarang Station. He served there until Fr. H.V. Grinten arrived in February 1848. Later, Mgr. Groof was remembered as "the fighter of the local church rights" in the Dutch East Indies because he had strongly criticised the Cultuur Stelsel policy, which had caused significant suffering among the local peoples.

In the second half of the 19th century, the mission station was expanded from serving only St. Joseph of Gedangan in Semarang to include two new ones, namely:

1. Ambarawa Station in 1859, whose service area extended to Salatiga, Surakarta, Madiun, and Pacitan.
2. Yogyakarta Station in 1865 with its service area reaching Kedu, Bagelen and Banyumas.

With the opening of these two new stations, the service area of St. Joseph Church in Semarang now covers only the north coast of Central Java and Purwodadi.

4. Construction of the Church Building in Semarang

Construction of their own church in Semarang began in 1824, when they purchased a house on North Paradeplein, Block L.A., No. 5. The governor granted a partial loan of 6,000 guilders, which was to be repaid by 1827[3]. After renovations, the building was ready for worship on the main floor on August 1, 1824, while priests resided on the upper floor. During a visit to Semarang on March 13, 1848, Mgr. Vrancken expressed his wish that the missionaries make an effort to establish a church building in Semarang where Catholics could worship.

Hence, an effort was made by the Church Council to purchase a piece of land located on the east side of the Orphan's house in Gedangan. Architect van Bakel led the construction work, and on October 1, 1870, Fr. J. Lijnen with Fr. P.J. den Ouden laid the first stone. Fundraising included collecting donations, selling some church lands, and obtaining loans. In early 1875, when the church building was almost finished, the shortfall was covered by selling the old church and organising a lottery. Mgr. J. Lijnen inaugurated the new church building, which reportedly cost 110,000 guilders.

It would take more than 20 years to complete the construction of St. Joseph Church. In 1880, a new Gothic-style altar was installed, in 1882, a communion pew and a steeple decorated with a clock were installed, and finally, in 1903, a picture glass window, a gas lamp, a confessional room, an organ and pictures of the Stations of the Cross were installed. All of this made St. Joseph, the oldest Roman Catholic church in Semarang, the most beautiful church in the entire Dutch East Indies at that time. From this new church building in Gedangan the Catholic Mission at Semarang Station controlled all of Central Java from Madiun in East Java to Cianjur and Indramayu in West Java.[4]

3 Panitija Pusat Jubileum, Satu Setengah Abad, p.16-17.

4 Panitiya 180th Gereja St.Joseph, Buku Kenangan 180 Tahun Paroki St. Yusup Semarang, 1988, p. 3.

5. Liber Baptismi and the Journey of Fr. Lambertus Prinsen (1809 – 1833)

A baptismal certificate is a valid proof that someone embraces Catholicism and is kept at the local church or at the "mission station". In the *Liber Baptismi* of Semarang Station, the first baptism was recorded for Robertin Jauffret on March 9, 1809. Although priests in Semarang were permitted to serve only Dutch Catholics, the official registry also recorded local names, such as Philippus Tudjulazar, who was baptised at the age of 25; Petrus Tjhie, a Chinese man, in 1817; and Alexander Raden Soesman, who had a Javanese name.

The Book of *Liber Baptismi* also revealed that Fr. Lambertus Prinsen had undertaken long-term missions to the hinterland of Central Java; he provided priestly service even in parts of Eastern Java and West Java. His journey can be summarised as follows: [5]

1812 Salatiga, Boyolali, Solo (Surakarta), Klaten, Yogyakarta

1813 Rembang, Jepara, Tegal, PeMagelang, Pekalongan, Magelang

1823 Tomo, Palimanan, Cirebon, Ungaran, Kudus, Ampel (continued by Fr. Mauriks)[6]

1829 Bawen, Bandungan, Wonosobo, Tegalwara, Cianjur, Indramayu, Kamar, Kedungkebo, Nanggulan, Wates, Kanigoro, Getasan

1831 Semangle, Bedogunting (continued by Fr. Grube)

1833 Pati, Banyumas, Nusakambangan, Kebumen, Bagelen.

The journey of the priests at that time was arduous and long. For example, Fr. Mauriks went to Indramayu and Cianjur in 1829 and returned to Semarang by taking a buggy through an unpaved road. The whole trip took about six months, from after Easter in April to October. During the priest's visits to the hinterland, Catholics in Semarang worshipped under the laity's leadership. This was also done during 1845-1847, when Bishop Grooff and all the priests were expelled from the Dutch East Indies by Governor-General Rochussen, who was "interfering too much in the internal affairs of the Catholic Church"[7].

5.1. New mission stations

The Book of *Liber Baptismi* also revealed that in addition to Semarang, four other mission stations administered baptismal certificates: Yogyakarta (1812), Purbayan

5 Based on the analysis and conclusion in "Satu Setengah Abad Stasi Semarang", 1958, p. 20.

6 "Buku Kenangan 180 Tahun Paroki St.Yusup Semarang" (1988) mentioned that the trip was conducted in 1825. It is possible that this duty trip was conducted during the period of 1823-1825.

7 Panitiya 180th Gereja St.Joseph, Buku Kenangan, p. 3.

Solo (1859), Boro Kulon Progo (1864) and Magelang (1865). The *Liber Baptismi* documented the pattern of Catholicism's spread and the specific journeys undertaken by Catholic priests to visit Dutch civil servants and military personnel for the colonial government.

6. The Missionary Church Period (1882 – 1942)

In 1882, three notable changes took place. Firstly, St. Joseph Church in Semarang was elevated from a station to a parish. Secondly, leadership shifted from the diocesan priest to the Jesuit order. Thirdly, the focus of service expanded from solely serving Dutch Catholics to also including the indigenous population. This third change marked a significant departure from the previous Dutch missionary approach. The Catholic mission in Java initially faced substantial pessimism. Culturally, as the Javanese had already adopted Islam, many believed it was pointless to pursue Catholic activities on the island. Moreover, since the sixteenth century, the VOC had controlled the Dutch East Indies and prohibited Catholicism, making it very challenging to introduce or propagate the Catholic faith among the Javanese. According to historian G. Moedjanto, the success of the Protestant Church mission (the Zending) in Java during the nineteenth century was also uncertain, as it "has not borne much fruit". Consequently, the Catholic mission in Java encountered 'double barriers': the majority of the population was already Muslim, and there was strong competition for converts from the Protestant Church mission, which was heavily supported by colonial authorities. The following events illustrate the commencement of the Catholic mission in Central Java.

6.1. Starting Point: Semarang

In 1882, after Mgr J. Lijnen at St. Joseph in Semarang, who had greatly contributed to its development, passed away, Fr J. Keijzer continued to lead this parish. In response to the call to evangelise the local populace with a limited number of priests in the area, he complained in 1889 that "If 10 new priests came this year, they would all have to fill the immediate posts [and this] left no one to work among the Javanese." Due to this shortage of priests, much of the evangelisation work then involved the laity.

In 1894 Mattheus Teffer a Protestant religious teacher who had worked as a *zendeling* or missionary in Nusa Tenggara visited Fr. Keijzer in Semarang. At that time, he worked for the garrison and the poor at a Protestant congregation in Ambarawa and Bedono Central Java, but had created a conflict with the local missionary. When Mattheus had an eye problem requiring a long stay in Semarang, Fr. Keijzer assisted him by allowing him to stay at the Gedangan rectory. In November 1895, Mattheus expressed his intention to join the Catholic Church. After having studied the catechism, he was baptized as a Catholic on Easter 1896 which coincided with his 69th birthday[8]. Through him, some of the Protestant congregation in Ambarawa also came to know Fr. Keijzer and "will be accepted as Catholics after attending sufficient religious lessons (the catechism)."[9]

In January 1895, a new companion, Fr. W. Hellings, arrived from Kasiuwi, Maluku, to start studying Javanese in Semarang. As his learning quickly advanced, by the end of that year the "Pocket Book of Prayers for the Roman-Catholics" was published[10]. Also, in 1895 Johannes Vreede joined the Catholic mission. This Javanese with a Dutch name was a former fired Protestant catechist who understood the Bible and had all kinds of local connections. Johannes and his brother, Martinus Martoredjo, actively catechized in Bedono and Semarang, Central Java. Together the two brothers led as many as 340 Javanese to convert to Catholicism, 47 of whom were previously Protestants.

In October, 1896, two missionaries arrived in Semarang and started to learn Javanese. Petrus Hoevernaars came from the Netherlands with the motivation to fulfill his ideals of working in the mission land. His colleague, Franciscus Van Lith, came "for the sake of religious observance". Van Lith thought that evangelization would not bear fruit in Java and was more interested in working to evangelize in mainland Europe, but he came to Java due to his vow of obedience. In the same year, two small schools were opened in Mlaten and Nglamper in Semarang. Then, in 1897 four pupils from Minahasa in Sulawesi and 10 students from Central Java attended a catechist course that was started in Semarang at Gedangan.

Additionally, Andreas Manasse, a lay Protestant catechist came back to his birth city of Semarang. He had met Fr. C. Wenneker, SJ in 1894 in Surabaya where he studied the Bible and was baptized before his return home. His parents and several siblings also converted to Catholicism, and he became a lay catechist, known as "the very diligent and honest," in Semarang and later in Muntilan.

The Catholic mission also developed in Muntilan concurrently. In 1895 Fr. Voogel in Magelang appointed a catechist named Josaphat Mertodimejo. That year ended with the baptism of twelve Javanese in Magelang and eighteen in Muntilan. On certain days Fr. Voogel also came to Muntilan to offer Holy Mass in several villages. In other places several colleagues of the catechist Vreede were also reported to serve as catechists. Additionally, in August 1896, another missionary, Fr. Stiphout, stayed in a rented house near Muntilan's Chinatown, where he supervised a newly established small school and guided the believers.

6.2. Shallow Comprehension of the New Faith

On this way to his assignment in Muntilan, Fr. Van Lith, the reluctant Dutch mission-

8 Weitjens, "Sejarah Gereja Katolik di Wilayah Keuskupan Agung Semarang", 1974, p.844.

9 Moedjanto et al, Garis-garis Besar, p.18.

10 The book is written in Javanese entitled: "Kitab Sembahjang Tjilik Kanggo Para Wong Room-Katolika"

ary, stopped in Ambarawa and Bedono where he found that the people's understanding of the Catholic Faith as very shallow. He observed the same weak understanding among the Muntilan Catholics. Fr. Van Lith then conveyed his assessment to Fr. Stiphout in Magelang. It was concluded that the cause was the catechist's lack of qualifications. Fr. Stiphout then radically suggested to fire or transfer catechist Josaphat Mertodimedjo, but Fr. Van Lith wanted to scrutinize further what really had happened. Fr. Van Lith then moved the presbytery from the Chinatown area to Semampir, a Javanese village. Later, this location became the mission centre in Muntilan.

The Dutch missionary priests realised that the root of these faith problems lay in their limited proficiency in Javanese and their understanding of local culture. Consequently, they decided to concentrate their efforts on studying the Javanese language and culture and to establish direct contact with various levels of society in Muntilan and the surrounding areas. They began engaging directly with farmers and endeavoured to assist them with their difficulties. As many farmers were in debt, Fr. Van Lith helped by redeeming their mortgaged fields; the landowners would then settle their debts by handing over half of the harvest to the priest. In these interactions with villagers, the missionaries collaborated with or received assistance from catechists who had greater knowledge of Javanese. Some of these catechists were also involved in lending and borrowing transactions, as well as in the procurement of rice fields.

An unpleasant incident involving lay catechists occurred in October 1897 when Fr. Van Lith was purchasing land for the cemetery garden in Muntilan. It involved the catechist Josaphat Mertodimedjo. Apparently, a legal issue or fraudulent practice led to the dismissal of the catechist. After an investigation, Fr. Van Lith also dismissed another catechist in Kiringan, near Magelang, for having two wives. As Fr. Van Lith found other catechists of similar poor quality, only a few of high quality remained, such as Andreas Manasse, who would then assist the mission centre in Muntilan for many years.

On December 20, 1898, Fr. Van Lith, Fr. Hoevenaars, Fr. L. Hebrans and Fr. E. Engbers On 20 December 1898, Fr. Van Lith, Fr. Hoevenaars, Fr. L. Hebrans, and Fr. E. Engbers met in Magelang to discuss the progress of evangelising the local population and the formation of the Java Mission. The four priests decided not to initiate the Java Mission in Semarang but considered Kedu the most suitable area. They planned to establish a new station in Magelang next to Muntilan because the area was purely agricultural and neighbouring Yogyakarta and Surakarta, the centres of Javanese culture—formation of the Java Mission. The four priests decided not to initiate the Java Mission in Semarang and considered Kedu the most suitable area. They planned to establish a new station in Magelang, adjacent to Muntilan, because the area was predominantly agricultural and close to Yogyakarta and Surakarta, the centres of Javanese culture.

7. Java Mission Strategy

Fr. Hoevenaars and Fr. Van Lith explored various methods to evangelise the local population. They sought to establish direct contact with Javanese society near the regions of Mataram Kingdom, the Surakarta Sultanate, and the Yogyakarta Sultanate; these cultural centres were close to their mission posts. At first, the colonial government of the Dutch East Indies prohibited Catholic missionaries from operating within the kingdom's territory. Later, a Dutch permit allowed European missionaries to work only among European residents. Because of this restriction, evangelisation among the Javanese relied on the Javanese themselves. Another obstacle was language proficiency. As the Dutch missionaries had yet to master the Javanese language, they depended on translators or native speakers to communicate and introduce the Catholic faith. In the earlier period, converts with Indonesian or Chinese names listed in baptismal records had likely interacted naturally with Dutch Catholics at mission centres or posts, eventually developing into mission stations. During the missionary church era (1882-1942), engaging with the Javanese and indigenous populations required extra effort.

Fr. Van Lith and Fr. Hoevenaars, two central figures, adopted a direct approach to Javanese society. Both priests brought different motivations from the Netherlands and employed different strategies in the field. As each was confident in his own approach, which sometimes conflicted with the other's, the mission leader at the centre (Superior Misi) had to select a single strategy to be implemented across all of Java. Consequently, the Mission Superior asked both to write down their views, opinions, and approaches related to the strategies they used. Generally, they both utilised formal and informal education and supported rural entrepreneurship. Other religious orders, such as the OSF Sisters, FIC Brothers, or CB Sisters, provided charitable services, including hospitals, orphanages, or nursing homes. While both priests had similar objectives, their methods varied.

According to records, Fr. Hoevenaars had baptised more converts than Fr. Van Lith. However, this included several controversial incidents; for example, the blessing of students visiting Mendut church by sprinkling holy water on them was seen as 'baptism' that parents later protested. Consequently, on 2 July 1906, Fr. Hoevenaars received a letter of protest from Governor-General Van Heutz regarding the 'imprudent' practice of baptism. Additionally, Fr. Hoevenaars faced criticism from Resident J. Ament in Yogyakarta for conducting mission activities within the Yogyakarta and Surakarta palaces.

The conflict between the two priests over their differing methods persisted for a long time. For instance, each used a different version of the Lord's Prayer. Since 1901, Fr. Van Lith, based in Muntilan, had his own translation that differed from the one used by Fr. Hoevenaars in Mendut, a place only about ten kilometres away. The Mission Superior was managing differing methods and approaches used in the

Java Mission but had not yet resolved this ongoing dispute over procedures when he was replaced. When Fr. Engbers was appointed the new Mission Superior, he did not consult the two priests but instead asked other missionaries for their opinions on the mission strategy of these two. After considering all the information, the Mission Superior decided to adopt Fr. Van Lith's plan and to relocate Fr. Hoevenaars to Bandung starting in May 1905.

7.1. Key point: Sendangsono

The Mission Superior's decision to select Fr. Van Lith's strategy cannot be separated from the baptism of 174 people at Sendangsono in 1904. This was a significant achievement for Fr. Van Lith, although he had never thought it could happen. It also rejuvenated him, as his efforts did not seem to bear fruit. The baptismal event in Sendangsono could not have occurred without the involvement of an ad hoc indigenous catechist named Barnabas Sarikromo.

At that time, Barnabas whose name was Sariman had a wound on his leg. He could not heal himself, although he was known as an "*orang pintar*" or a gifted people who was able to cure based on the spiritual guidance (*wangsit*) he received. Then he received the spiritual guidance.

At that time, Barnabas, whose name was Sariman, had a wound on his leg. He could not heal himself, although he was known as an "orang pintar", or a gifted person who was able to cure through the spiritual guidance (wangsit) he received. Then he received spiritual guidance that, to recover, he had to walk northeast from his house in Kalibawang, Kulon Progo. He then walked in the indicated direction, arrived in Muntilan, and stopped at the St. Anthony Muntilan Church complex. At this church, he met Brother Kersten, SJ, who offered that Sariman stay and be treated there. His approximately two-month stay allowed him to interact with Fr. Van Lith. Kalibawang, Kulon Progo. He then proceeded in the indicated direction, arrived in Muntilan, and stopped at the St. Anthony Muntilan Church complex. At this church he met Brother Kersten, SJ who offered that Sariman stay and be treated there. His approximately two-month stay allowed him to interact with Fr. Van Lith.

During his daily treatments, Sariman overheard the Holy Mass from the church. Because the services were recited in Latin, he did not understand the prayers unless someone explained them. However, an interest in praying in that way developed within him. Thus, he made a promise (Javanese: *nadar*) that if his leg wound were healed, he would dedicate the rest of his life to God. After about two months of treatment, his leg healed completely, and he was able to walk normally. Although he also intended to be baptised, Fr. Van Lith could not grant his wish until he studied the Catholic faith (catechism) for about a year. Sariman agreed, but first he returned to Kalibawang, where everyone was astonished that he had recovered. Sariman recounted all his experiences in Muntilan — how he had met Brother Kersten, lived and was treated at the church complex, and had regular contact with Fr. Van Lith. Sariman stated that his trip to Muntilan had healed him both physically and spiritually; he had found the right way of life.

Together with Sariman, three other individuals studied the Catholic catechism in Muntilan. They were Lukas Surotirto (Barnabas' father-in-law), Markus Sukadrana, and Yokanan Surowijaya. After completing the catechism, Fr. Van Lith baptised the four at the Muntilan Church on 20 May 1904. In the Liber Babtismi of the Muntilan mission station, it is recorded that their godfather was Andreas Martaadmadja. This Andreas was most likely the lay catechist who assisted Fr. Van Lith in providing religious instruction to these four individuals.

After these four were baptised, a village official from Kalibawang approached Fr. Van Lith in Muntilan to report that other villagers intended to be baptised. Consequently, the villagers studied the catechism in their own village of Kalibawang, rather than in Muntilan. The first four individuals to serve as catechists were the first to be baptised and were most likely assisted by Andreas Martaadmadja, who resided in Muntilan. At certain times, Fr. Van Lith also visited Kalibawang to deliver catechism instruction and provide support. After completing their lessons, as many as 174 people were baptised into the Catholic Church on 14 December 1904, not at the Muntilan church but at Kalibawang, in the complex of Sendangsono spring. This place in Central Java is now well known and is nicknamed "Bethlehem van Java".

7.2. New mission stations

The Book of Liber Babtismi recorded baptisms and provides information on the development of new mission stations. During this period, from the original five stations, others were established. From the Semarang station, nine new stations arose: Karangpanas Semarang (1915), Randusari Semarang (1928), Salatiga (1928), Atmodirono Semarang (1932), Girisonta (1932), Ungaran (1933), Pati (1934), Demak (1936), and Kudus (1939). From the Yogyakarta station (Kidul Loji), 14 new stations emerged: Bintaran (1896), Medari (1917), Ganjuran (1930), Sedayu (1930), Klepu (1930), Wonosari (1930), Wates (1930), Somohitan (1930), Kotabaru (1933), Pakem (1934), Bantul (1934), Gamping (1934), Pugeran (1934), and Mlati (1936). From the Surakarta (Purbayan) station, three additional stations appeared: Ambarawa (1896), Klaten (1923), and Purwosari Surakarta (1940). Furthermore, from the Magelang station, three new stations were established: Muntilan (1894), Borobudur (1899), and Temanggung (1937). The only station that did not generate any new stations was Boro (1894).

8. Conclusion

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Catholic community in Java was established with the arrival of two Dutch missionaries. During this early period, the role of the laity was limited to being members of the Church Council and acting as worship leaders to conduct religious services when the priest was away on hinterland journeys. Although the religious permit granted by the colonial government restricted services solely to Dutch Catholics, the Book of Liber Baptismi listed the names of Javanese, other indigenous Indonesians, and Chinese individuals. These persons were most likely workers at the Catholic mission stations or those who interacted with the missions.

During the Dutch Church Period (1809-1882), the Book of Liber Baptisimi specifically detailed the routes of the journeys undertaken by Fr. Lambertus Prinsen, the first missionary in Semarang, from which four new mission posts were established. These posts later developed into stations and subsequently parishes responsible for issuing baptismal certificates. In addition to the main mission post in Gedangan, Semarang, established in 1809, four more were founded in the 19th century: Yogyakarta (1812), Purbayan, Surakarta (1859), Boro Kulon, Progo (1864), and Magelang (1865).

During the second period of the Missionary Church (1882-1940), Dutch missionaries recognised the importance of lay catechists and developed a solid understanding of Javanese language and culture. This led to the mission centre relocating southward to Muntilan in the Magelang area, which was close to centres of Javanese culture, the Mataram Kingdoms of Surakarta and Yogyakarta. During this era, lay catechists increasingly participated in the Java Mission. By speaking the common language, they served as translators and interpreters of the new faith for the Javanese. They primarily served as the "middleman" between European missionaries and the Javanese. They also supplied information that helped missionaries make key decisions. However, the motives of some were questioned, as in October 1897, when a catechist was involved in a fraudulent purchase of cemetery land. Consequently, Fr. Van Lith, appointed as the "mission conductor" by the Mission Leader (Superior Misi), spearheaded the creation of schools to educate local people and prepare those interested in becoming qualified lay catechists. In Muntilan, this included Kweekschool A, Kweekschool B, and later Xavier College.

The Liber Baptismi recorded baptismal certificates, which showed the geographic spread and growth of stations. Over approximately 150 years, the initial five stations in the first period (1809-1882) expanded to 34 mission stations in the second period (1882-1940). With these developments, the Java Mission can be considered successful. The growth was varied and can be classified into four groups: (1) stagnant (Boro), (2) moderate (Magelang and Surakarta), (3) expanding (Semarang), and (4) highly expanding (Yogyakarta). Further study of the developmental dynamics within each group would provide a more comprehensive picture of how the Dutch mission in Java began and evolved from 1808 to 1940.

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Антониус Дикса Кунтара

Развој постаја мисија Римокатоличке цркве на Централној Јави, 1809-1942.

Апстракт

Историјске студије указују да је присуство Римокатоличке цркве на Нусантара архипелагу забележено први пут у 16. веку, нарочито у Малукуу. Но, католичанство је прекинуто када су Холанђани преузели контролу над Бандом 1633. године, након што су успоставили седиште администрације Холандске источноиндијске компаније у Батавији 1619. Готово двестотине година касније, 1799., ова компанија је развлашћена и угашена, док је колонијална управа Холандије 1800. преузела управљање. Ово је праћено и дозволом католичког присуства у архипелагу, иако уз ограничења. Долазак двојице холандских католичких мисионара на Јаву довело је до оживљавања католичанства као вере. У почетку, било им је дозвољено да њихову паству чине само холандски цивили и војно особље. Но, стотину година касније, Римокатоличка црква почиње са покрштавањем аутохтоног локалног становништва са Јаве. Ова период карактеришу и активне стратегије и напори са много страна, осветљавајући различите начине на које је католичанство развијано на Централној Јави.

Кључне речи: *Католичанство, Централна Јава, Ван Лит, "Liber Baptismi", Индонезија*

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Mai Thi My Vi*

A Historical Perspective on Traditional Herbal Medicine in Vietnam and Indonesia**

Abstract:

Traditional herbal medicine has played a key role in healthcare, especially for low-income populations in Southeast Asia. This article examines the historical and contemporary significance of Vietnamese herbal medicine and Indonesian Jamu, highlighting their resurgence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though urban areas saw a decline due to Western medicine, these traditional remedies remain vital in rural regions. During the pandemic, with limited access to effective treatments, herbal medicine re-emerged as a supplementary option. In Vietnam, it is combined with Western methods to treat COVID-19, valued for its affordability and low side effects. Jamu was also used to alleviate early symptoms in rural Indonesia. The article compares their local and international influence, noting that while both are respected in rural areas, Indonesian Jamu has gained broader international recognition.

Keywords: *Traditional herbal medicine, jamu, Vietnamese herbal medicine, Indonesia, COVID-19*

1. Introduction

Traditional medicine is a branch of medicine with a long tradition in people's social life in Asian countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam. The development of traditional medicine is also associated with the ups and downs of social history in these two countries. By analysing the traditional medicine policies of the authorities during the colonial period, the independence period, and the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak, we can gain deeper insights into traditional medicine.

During the colonial period, colonial governments despised and banned traditional

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medicine, as in Vietnam. However, most of the working class and people in rural and mountainous areas continued to rely on it. During the period of independence, both Vietnam and Indonesia clearly recognised the importance of traditional medicine in building a national healthcare system. They implemented many initiatives and plans to promote progress and popularise traditional medicine among the people.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional medicine demonstrated its potential to treat the virus. People in both countries tend to rely on traditional medicine as a preventative measure without specific pharmaceutical intervention for a given disease. Therefore, both governments supported research into plant-derived pharmaceuticals targeting COVID-19. Recognising the potential and role of traditional medicine in society has motivated future research and policies to promote its development as an effective treatment in both Indonesia and Vietnam.

1.1 Vietnam and Indonesia

Vietnam and Indonesia are both countries in Southeast Asia. Vietnam is located on the Southeast Asian mainland, while Indonesia is a vast nation comprising numerous islands in the Southeast Asian archipelago.

Indonesia is a country situated in the Indian and Pacific Oceans near mainland Southeast Asia. With more than 13,000 islands, it is the world's largest archipelago. Indonesia is the most populous nation in Southeast Asia and ranks as the fourth most populous country globally. The country's 280 million people belong to approximately 1,300 ethnic groups and speak more than 700 languages. The Indonesian language itself incorporates words from English, Arabic, Dutch, Portuguese, Malay, and several Chinese dialects. Indonesia is home to a wide variety of major world religions as well as numerous indigenous religions. The majority of the population is of Malay descent, speaks Malayo-Polynesian languages, and the country has the world's largest Muslim population.

Vietnam is a country situated in the eastern part of mainland Southeast Asia. It borders China to the north, the South China Sea to the east and south, the Gulf of Thailand (or Gulf of Siam) to the southwest, and Cambodia and Laos to the west. Vietnam's population is around 99.5 million, making it the 15th most populous country worldwide and the third most populous in Southeast Asia, after Indonesia and the Philippines. Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country comprising 54 recognised ethnic groups, of which 53 are classified as ethnic minorities. Each ethnic minority group has its unique language, culture, and traditions. In addition to Vietnamese, the predominant language, other ethnic groups speak their own languages. Most Vietnamese people hold diverse folk beliefs. Although Vietnam is officially an atheist state, practising a religion is not prohibited. The Vietnamese people have cultural traditions closely linked to their spiritual beliefs, including the veneration of ancestors and adherence to Buddhism, Christianity, Cao Daiism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Islam.

Despite differences in many aspects, including political systems, religions, and languages, Indonesia and Vietnam share numerous similarities in history and culture. Both countries were colonies of Western powers in the 19th century - the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Vietnam. Vietnam and Indonesia were among the first in Southeast Asia to declare independence from Japan, and they were highly revolutionary during the period of occupation. Both nations underwent violent and radical decolonisation, some of the most intense in comparison to other Southeast Asian countries. Concerning traditional medicine, which was crucial to the healthcare systems of both nations throughout the colonial era, it remains very much alive and well in modern culture.

1.2 Traditional herbal medicine in the people's lives in Southeast Asia

People in rural parts of developing countries have traditionally used various herbal medicinal plants in their daily lives. At the 30th meeting of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1977, the benefits of herbal therapy[1] were re-evaluated. During this summit, the WHO discussed promoting the integration of traditional medicine into the overall national healthcare delivery system[2].

In Vietnam and Indonesia, traditional herbal medicine has played an essential role in the healthcare system in the past and continues to hold significant importance in modern society. After Vietnam and Indonesia gained independence, traditional herbal medicine maintained its vital role in non-industrial areas despite modernisation. Traditional herbal medicine is still frequently utilised as a supplementary treatment under challenging circumstances when neither a cure nor a vaccine is available. In particular, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, people used herbal medicine as a form of self-prevention before a vaccine was accessible.

Regarding the use of traditional herbal medicine, Vietnamese patients often combine it with Western medicine to treat various conditions because it has few adverse effects, is readily accessible, and is relatively inexpensive. Indonesians, particularly those with low incomes and those residing in rural places, still use traditional medicines for routine treatments due to the high prices of Western medicines and the difficulty in accessing modern pharmaceutical medications. Indonesians have long used traditional medicines, with one of the most notable being *jamu* (herbal medicine), which is embedded in the lives of people in rural Javanese communities. They believe that taking *jamu* can help alleviate specific early disease symptoms.

1 According to the WHO definition: "Herbal medicines include herbs, herbal raw materials, herbal preparations and finished herbal products containing active ingredients of plants, or other plant materials or combination. "
Source: https://www.who.int/health-topics/traditional-complementary-and-integrative-medicine#tab=tab_1

2 WHO Meeting on the Promotion and Development of Traditional Medicine, The promotion and development of traditional medicine: report of a WHO meeting, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1978, pp. 7-8.

2. Traditional herbal medicine in Indonesia and Vietnam before the colonial period

2.1 Jamu in Indonesia

Indonesia is home to numerous flora species. There are 40,000 tropical plant species worldwide, of which 30,000 are believed to exist in Indonesia. However, only 286 plants in Indonesia are officially recognised as traditional medicinal plants by Materia Medica (Materia medica) at the Indonesian Department of Health[3]. *Jamu*, a well-known traditional Indonesian herbal remedy to prevent and alleviate diseases, originates from a local word from the Indonesian island of Java, where most of the country's citizens reside[4]. The term "*jamu*" can be traced to the Kromo Javanese word "*jampi,*" which denotes "sacred recipes."[5] According to a 2013 report by Purwaningsih's Basic Health Research, more than 50% of the Indonesian population uses *jamu*[6]. *Jamu* has been incorporated into the national language, Bahasa Indonesian, as a word for tonics made from medicinal herbs.

Typically, herbal ingredients such as foliage, bark, roots, and flowers are used to prepare *jamu,* then made into edible salves, and beverages. *Jamu* remedies cannot be derived from animal, as they are entirely plant-based. *Jamu* used for massage comes in various essential oil forms and is quite extensive. Some treatments of *jamu* are superficial but combine numerous constituents. Indonesians continue to use *jamu* for treatment, and nearly every prevalent ailment has its own specific formulation. *Jamu* is separated into commercial and non-commercial categories. *Jamu Gendong* is produced in small-scale industrial facilities at home and preserved in liquid or other forms[7]. Local apothecaries use medicinal plants that have not been commercialised to process prescriptions[8].

Although herbal remedies and health-promoting practices have a long history in Java and Indonesia, only a few credible, dated written sources exist. The palace libraries of Yogyakarta and Surakarta house three essential manuscripts on traditional healing: the literary works of Usada (which explain the meaning of the term *ilmu pengobatan*, meaning remedy or medicine, or Husada in old Javanese) (Book of Healing), Serat Kawruh bab Jampi-jump (A Treatise on All Manner of Cures), and Serat Centhini (Book of Centhini). In addition to these sources in the royal palace libraries on traditional medicine in Indonesia, temple reliefs also depict *jamu*.

3 Beers, S.-J., Jamu: The Ancient Indonesian Art of Herbal Healing, Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd, Hong Kong, 2001, p. 57.

4 Antons, C. and Antons-Sutanto, R., "Traditional medicine and intellectual property rights: a case study of the Indonesian Jamu Industry", in Traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and intellectual property law in the Asia-Pacific region, Kluwer Law International, Alphen aan den Rijn, 2009, p. 314.

5 Shadily, H. and Echols, I., Kamus Indonesia Inggris (An Indonesian-English Dictionary), Gramedia, Jakarta, 2002, p. 961.

6 Khiyaaroh, A. and Triratnawati, A., "Jamu: Javanese doping during the Covid-19 pandemic", Indonesian Journal of Medical Anthropology, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2021, p. 92.

7 Antons, C. and Antons-Sutanto, R., p. 328.

8 Roosita, K., et al., "Medicinal plants used by the villagers of a Sundanese community in West Java, Indonesia", Journal of Ethnopharmacology, Vol. 115, No. 1, 2008, p. 72.

The Borobudur temple, located in Central Java, features numerous relief engravings that suggest that the use of herbs and spices for medicinal purposes has existed for thousands of years. There is a relief engraving at Borobudur that depicts a person taking *jamu* from a container.

In Indonesia, traditional medicine and health information are passed down orally from generation to generation. In Java, *jamu* has traditionally been passed down from mother to daughter. Javanese women are skilled in various medicinal treatments, including massage, salves, and oils. The women are predominantly responsible for possessing, supplying, and disseminating knowledge about various home remedies for preventing and treating illness.[9]

2.2 Traditional herbal medicine in Vietnam

In Vietnam, the current Vietnamese medical system integrates Vietnamese, Chinese, and Western medicine. Because feudal China governed Vietnam for approximately a thousand years, Chinese thought, culture, and medicine have had a significant influence on the Vietnamese. Yin and Yang (known as 'Âm' and 'Dương' in Vietnamese) are the two fundamentally opposing forces on which Chinese medicine is based. Good health depends on balancing Yin and Yang and maintaining harmony between humans and the natural world.

Chinese medicine is fundamentally different from Vietnamese medicine. In Vietnam, the medical system is divided into two types; *thuoc bac,* Northern medicine or Chinese-influenced medicine, and *thuoc nam*, Southern medicine or indigenous Vietnamese medicine. These do not refer to geographical locations in Vietnam. The "north" refers to a collection of traditional pharmaceuticals based on the Chinese pharmacopoeia, while the "south" alludes to traditional Vietnamese folk medicine[10]. During the Northern Domination (China's rule over Vietnam from 111 B.C. - 980 A.D), Chinese medicine *(thuoc bac)*, based on the theoretical and intellectual foundations of the Chinese medical system, influenced Vietnam. Later, *thuoc bac* evolved to reflect the climate and vegetation diversity of Vietnam. Significantly different from *thuoc bac* is the empirical nature of *thuoc nam*. The two types of medicine are both based on natural medicinal herbs; however, they are sufficiently distinct culturally for the Vietnamese[11]. *Thuoc nam* refers to the remedies and medicinal botanicals used by herbalists with apprenticeship training throughout Vietnam. Tue Tinh, a Vietnamese physician who flourished in the 14th century (1330–1389), wrote "Nam Duoc Than Hieu." The first medical treatise on Vietnamese medicine

9 In Java, the knowledge of jamu was conveyed through a symbolic ritual practiced during the wedding ceremonies. The bride's mother presented her daughter with a box containing seeds, rhizomes, dry branches of medicinal plants, and spices to cultivate in her garden. This custom represented the ancient perception that women were responsible for maintaining the health of their families. In the past, making jamu was a task for women (Antons & Antons-Sutanto, 2009).

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid, p. 1108.

had the subheading "Southern's miraculous medicines." He authored several monographs on dosages and treatment methods in Chinese medicine, tailored to the unique flora and climate of Vietnam. These writings evolved into what is now known as traditional Vietnamese medicine. Until Western medicine became prevalent in Vietnam in the nineteenth century, the distinction between Northern and Southern medicine was less pronounced than that between East and West. Consequently, both *thuoc bac* and *thuoc nam* were referred to as "Eastern medicine." The same had happened with earlier Chinese teachings on medicine, initial beneficiaries of "Western medicine" were the elites of the big cities, while the working class or residents of rural and remote areas rarely had access to modern medicine.

Since Vietnam became a member of the World Health Organization in 1977, the government of Vietnam has referred to traditional medicine as *Y hoc truyen thong* to differentiate it from Western medicine or modern medicine which is known as *Y hoc hien dai*. Whether this medication is classified as Southern, Northern, Eastern, or ethnic, its fundamental constituents remain the same. The term widely recognized and deemed appropriate for traditional Vietnamese medicine is *Y hoc co truyen Vietnam*[12].

3. Traditional herbal medicine throughout the colonial era

3.1 Indonesian traditional medicine

The Dutch East Indies government during the colonial era in Indonesia showed keen interest in *jamu* as traditional medicine and its practice. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, European physicians displayed varying perspectives regarding the use of *jamu*. The Dutch East Indies researchers heavily depended on local sources of information.

The colonial government sought to establish connections with regional intermediaries to facilitate European researchers' understanding of indigenous medicine. These intermediaries were women of Indo-European descent who could synthesise medical knowledge that combined European and indigenous elements.

The Dutch Indies administration was interested in *jamu* because it recognised the importance of medical care in reducing the high mortality rates among military personnel and colonial settlements. Doctors of European origin in the Dutch East Indies occasionally showed uncertainty regarding the superiority of Western medicine. They often encountered strange ailments, especially those of tropical origin, for which they lacked the knowledge to provide proper treatment. Some studies have found that traditional herbal medicine, used by indigenous populations to treat common tropical diseases, can provide significant relief and even complete

12 Wahlberg, A., "Herbs, laboratories, and revolution: on the making of a national medicine in Vietnam", East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2014, pp. 53-54.

recovery. Consequently, European botanists were keenly interested in plants, fruits, and herbs used in indigenous medicinal practices.

European physicians acquired knowledge of medicine in Indonesia through various methods. Some European physicians married local women who acted as intermediaries between the two cultures, gaining access to indigenous medical practices. Others learned from their patients and well-trained women of Indo-European descent. Dutch doctors provided treatment information based on common practices for specific diseases and sometimes advised patients to seek guidance from traditional healers. Western diagnostic tools were used to confirm diagnoses, yet Western physicians also referenced Chinese practitioners for treatment methods that could significantly improve the cure of certain illnesses, such as diphtheria. Many European doctors also adopted local medical treatments. The presence of patients with unique preferences helped promote the dissemination of indigenous medical knowledge.

After expressing their interest in traditional Javanese medicine, Europeans often complained that people's use of medicine was mainly based on habit rather than knowledge or insight. The pastors and pharmacies served as key intermediary places in the medicine market. From the 1880s onwards, the pharmacy market was dominated by Chinese traders, who also acted as major intermediaries in colonial society. Chinese merchants were able to effectively commercialise ordinary people's knowledge of herbal medicine during this colonial period. Chinese individuals, categorised as "Foreign Orientals", were legally separate from the indigenous population and subject to the full terms of the Dutch Commercial Code. They sold herbs, plants, and spices sourced from regional gardeners and herb gatherers, utilising an extensive commercial network across Asia. Another issue was that vendors often sold contaminated and adulterated medicine. They marketed products with cheaper substitutes and gave false or exaggerated information about their goods.

Mrs. J.M.C. Kloppenburg-Versteegh (1862–1948), an Indo-Dutch herbalist, authored a plant atlas and recipe book in 1905 based on native medicinal herbs to address the lack of knowledge about local flora. This book was widely used by Indo-Europeans and Europeans in Java when Western professional healthcare was scarce. Mrs. J.M.C. Kloppenburg-Versteegh gathered herbal knowledge from local people, which was often dismissed and criticised as folklore and superstition by Europeans. She included Latin terminology in her herbal guide. Doctors and botanists supported Mrs. Kloppenburg-Versteegh by providing Latin names for the plants, identifying the species she used, and adding some legitimacy to her work, which helped her manual become a standard reference in botanical literature.

The Dutch Indies colonial government established two medical schools in Indonesia. The first was established in Batavia in 1851 and was later renamed STOVIA (School ter Opleiding van Indische Artsen), a training institution for physicians in the Dutch

East Indies[13]. In 1913, the Nederlandsch-Indische Artsen School (NIAS) was established in Surabaya. NIAS had a policy of admitting students from Indo-European and Chinese backgrounds, whereas STOVIA admitted only Indonesian students[14]. Most Indonesian physicians showed little interest in *jamu*, as they were more committed to Western medicine[15].

The interest in Western medicine began to shift in the late colonial period when Dr. Abdul Rasjid became president of Vereeniging van Indische Artsen in 1938. He was also a member of Volksraad (the colonial parliament of the Dutch East Indies). The Rockefeller Foundation's public health projects influenced Dr. Abdul Rasjid and R.A. Mochtar, who led the Rockefeller project in Purwokerto and believed that Indonesian physicians were responsible for advancing public health. Therefore, Dr Abdul Rasjid and R.A. Mochtar promoted *jamu* and public health initiatives to prevent disease rather than relying on costly Western medicines.

During the Japanese occupation (1942 -1945), the scarcity of medications necessitated a heavy reliance on traditional herbal medicine. Subsequently, there was a marked increase in the use of *jamu* due to economic exigencies that made importing Western pharmaceuticals prohibitively expensive. Nonetheless, for the typical Indonesian citizen, *jamu* continues to play a pivotal role in Indonesian culture and remains widely popular. Indonesians with lower socioeconomic status depend on *jamu* to maintain their health and manage illnesses.

The modern history of Indonesia has witnessed a challenge and disparagement of traditional medicine. At the turn of the 20th century, Indonesian practitioners preferred the scientific principles and practices of Western medicine. However, in response to the nationalist movement that emerged in the 1920s and the medical shortages during World War II, Indonesian medical practitioners began to integrate traditional medicine into their practices.

During the French colonial period, following their conquest of Vietnam in the late 1880s, the French authorities articulated a "civilising mission" ideology to justify their rule. Medicine was used as a tool for this purpose, leading to the construction of advanced Western-style medical institutes in Vietnam to study the pathophysiology and treatment of Far Eastern illnesses affecting both the French and indigenous people. In the early 20th century, Vietnam's colonial rulers abolished the Nguyen Dynasty's medical system and implemented a Western-style system, significantly reducing the practice of traditional Vietnamese medicine. However, the medical facilities and staff provided by the French colonial government were unable to meet the healthcare needs of the majority of the population. In 1942, Vietnam had an estimated total of only 90 European doctors, 54 Indochinese doctors, 92 Europe-

13 Ibid, p. 185.

14 Ibid.

15 Pols, 2010, Ibid.

an nurses, and 1,462 indigenous nurses serving a population of 23 million. Consequently, on average, one Western-trained doctor was responsible for 157,000 people, while one nurse cared for 15,000.

Despite increasing restrictions on traditional medicine by the colonial authorities, some Western scientists in the 1920s recognised the effectiveness of treatments using local plants. French interest in traditional Vietnamese medicine began in the 1850s, but it was not until the 1920s that the French became more aware of its practices. Western medical practitioners in Vietnam faced numerous practical limitations, including inadequate budgets, facilities, personnel, and medicines, as well as limited scientific understanding of tropical diseases and their local manifestations. French doctors and pharmacists in Indochina had to import medicines and chemicals from France; pharmaceutical supplies relied heavily on shipping, which occasionally resulted in counterfeit medicines, and the tropical climate complicated the preservation of drugs. The essential ingredients were often expensive and scarce. Pharmacists and clinicians in various provincial health reports frequently cited the lack of supplies as the most pressing issue. Local patients learned that French pharmacists required a doctor's prescription to purchase Western medicines. Additionally, French doctors introduced unfamiliar and expensive products to patients, prompting many Vietnamese to seek traditional medicine directly from dispensing specialists without consulting a doctor. These challenges spurred French doctors to advocate for the development of a local primary healthcare sector and the utilisation of effective indigenous treatments.

Furthermore, the French encountered socio-cultural obstacles when attempting to introduce Western medicine to Vietnam. The Vietnamese believed Western medicine was not suited to their weaker physical constitutions and often refused preventive measures or surgery. As a result, many patients turned to community-based traditional medicine. The only exceptions were Vietnamese patients in hospitals, who received free care and prescribed medicines. During the colonial period, Vietnamese people had limited access to Western medicine and little knowledge of it, and primarily relied on traditional practices.

4. Traditional medicine after the 1950s

During the 1950s, several newly independent countries in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, faced significant challenges in establishing modern national health care systems and dismantling colonial-era medical infrastructure, resulting in poor health outcomes. In this era, the perception of traditional medicine shifted from being stigmatised as a form of healthcare to being utilised as a post-colonial instrument that actively maintained and enhanced public health. This change occurred due to a shift in perspective on traditional medicine. Following their independence, Vietnam and Indonesia urgently needed supplementary medical resources. In response, they endeavoured to promote the use of conventional remedies in their respective countries.

The *jamu*, recognised as an integral component of the traditional culture of Indonesia, has evolved into an important national symbol through the use of the Indonesian language. One of the main factors contributing to this phenomenon is its association with Indonesian customs[16]. During the colonial period in Vietnam, the French colonial administration considered traditional medicine outdated and sought to eliminate it. Nevertheless, to address the scarcity of medical resources, the nation's federal government initiated an effort to reintroduce it into circulation. During the 1950s, authorities responsible for the healthcare sector began developing nation-building strategies in collaboration with traditional medicine.

4.1 In Indonesia - The transformation of jamu from non-standardised herbal remedies to standardised pharmaceutical products.

Traditional medicine has played a significant role in shaping Indonesia's national identity. It reflects the country's rich cultural heritage and acts as a symbol of national pride and unity among its diverse population.

After independence, the Indonesian government constructed the term "asli" or "indigenous Indonesian," which represented a significant shift in the post-colonial discourse in Indonesia, aimed at reversing the marginalisation of the indigenous people of the island archipelago alongside the European colonisers and other foreign minorities, namely the Chinese, Indians, and Arabs, who were permanent residents of the colony[17]. Hence, Indonesian culture, based on the national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," which translates to "Unity in Diversity" is intricately linked to the notion of national identity[18]. *Jamu* was prohibited from being taught in formal educational and medical institutions during the period of the Dutch Indies.

Afterwards, because of economic efficiency and the emergence of evidence-based treatments on *jamu* by Western doctors, traditional medicine received increased attention and was taught in medical education programs throughout Indonesia. Because the cost of healthcare services increased significantly with the Asian crisis in the 1990s, Western medicines became too expensive for many Indonesians, especially those experiencing poverty and living in remote areas. The use of traditional Indonesian herbal remedies for common ailments has become more prevalent among the population. In the Indonesian national healthcare system, traditional healthcare was not integrated with Western medicine.

16 Afdhal, A. F. and Welsch, R. L., "The Rise of the Modern Jamu Industry in Indonesia: A Preliminary Overview", in van der Geest, S. and Whyte, S.R. (eds.), The Context of Medicines in Developing Countries, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1988, p. 149.

17 Antons, C & Antons-Sutanto R., p. 316.

18 Maruf, I. R., "The Protection of Indonesian Indigenous Heritage in the International Conventions and Their Implication toward Indonesian Law", Journal Sampurasun: Interdisciplinary Studies for Cultural Heritage, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2015, p. 2.

In addition, Indonesian analysts called on the government to endorse the investigation and promotion of indigenous traditional medicine and recognise the increasingly important roles of *jamu* in the national healthcare system. Many studies have been carried out to support the transformation of *jamu* from non-standardised herbal remedies to standardised pharmaceutical products. Additionally, several other initiatives have gathered information on indigenous biological resources and their potential therapeutic applications. The Indonesian Ministry of Health (Kementerian Kesehatan) aims to create a unified database of traditional medicinal knowledge and oversee the regulation of database access. However, this goal of integrating various types of medicine into a common healthcare system remains challenging.

The Indonesian Ministry of Health, commenced a project in 2010 aimed at the scientific advancement of *jamu*. This research was conducted by the Center for Research and Development of Medicinal Plants and Traditional Medicine in Tawangmangu, Java[19]. The Ministry of Health conducted a project named Riset Tumbuhan Obat dan *Jamu* (Research of Medicinal Plants and Jamu), known as RISTOJA in 2012, 2015, and 2017. The objective of RISTOJA was to examine traditional medical practices across a significant portion of Indonesia and to collect medicinal recipes from various tribes and ethnic communities, based on previous investigations of these groups. This initiative aimed to expand the database of scientific knowledge on *jamu,* which is regarded as a valuable national resource. For the first time since gaining independence, the Indonesian authorities expressed interest in exploring the impact and utilisation of traditional medicines within their national boundaries. However, it remained challenging to determine how the benefits and income from culturally derived traditional knowledge should be distributed among ethnic and regional communities, where the skill originated, and whether any one ethnic community can claim a particular aspect of Indonesian culture as a "cultural property right."[20]

Traditional knowledge about medicinal practices and biodiversity is more difficult to substantiate than material culture because it is often shared with surrounding ethnic groups. The *jamu* industry illustrates the uncertainty surrounding "cultural property rights" because the information used is limited to a single group, yet is claimed by the state, a single ethnic group, and many ethnic groups. Traditional medicine, with its diverse knowledge and cultural expressions, can be disseminated through folkloric presentations, medicinal plant cultivation, and the protection of natural environments, such as tropical rainforests.

The "Scientific Jamu" policy

When Indonesia's nationalism grew, the imagined hybrid "Scientific Jamu" emerged. The term *jamu* evolved to strongly correlate with socio-historical changes. According to a new law that went into effect in 1963, all traditional medicine in In-

19 Hung, T. J., "Scientization of Jamu in Indonesia: Reacting to Fake Jamu, Pressures of Nationalism, and the Preservation of Local Wisdom", Nusantara: An International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2020, p. 107

20 Antons, C & Antons-Sutanto R., p. 317.

donesia had to be called *jamu*[21]. This expression was for a Java-centric law which was in effect throughout the Sukarno era. There was a reluctance for people who lived in remote islands to identify their differing traditional medicines as *jamu,* which is considered a broad term encompassing all customary medicinal practices originating only from Java. The Indonesian government aimed to mitigate such conflicts at the national level by officially recognizing *jamu* as a significant national heritage and resource[22].

The purpose of the "Scientific *Jamu*" policy was to enhance the scientific rigour of *jamu* and position it as a leading Indonesian brand. However, this policy has resulted in significant tensions among the two governments, local medical practitioners, community-based agencies, and socio-ecological communities, each with distinct perspectives on traditional medicine. Also, nationalism in Indonesia was rising due to a conflict with Malaysia over cultural heritage. The traditional medicinal knowledge of Indonesia is shared by ethnic Malays in neighbouring countries, including Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore, owing to common languages, cultures, historical linkages, and migration. Malay people in Malaysia used Indonesian and *jamu* products, and patent applications for Eurycoma longifolia, known as Tongkat Ali in Malay and Pasak Bumi in Indonesian, led to a dispute in 2002. In addition, pharmaceutical companies and traditional Indonesian medicine practitioners cooperated to research and patent phytopharmaceutical and pharmaceutical products derived from plant bioactive components used in *jamu*. On May 27, 2008, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono declared JamuBrand Indonesia as a form of government attention and supported the use of herbal medicine as traditional medicine. The Indonesian government formally petitioned UNESCO to recognise *jamu* (not herbal medicine) as an intangible cultural heritage[23]. JamuBrand is widely recognised as a distinctive identifier for this herbal medicine, which has gained recognition in Indonesia, Malaysia, China, and India[24]. The government aims to prudently manage the opportunities presented by this burgeoning industry while considering the welfare of its numerous holders of traditional knowledge and the sustained availability and unrestricted accessibility of traditional remedies and plant materials utilised in their manufacture.

4.2 Revival of traditional medicine in Vietnam

In Vietnam, traditional medicine experienced a revival following President Ho Chi Minh's 1955 request to investigate ways to combine the effects of traditional remedies with those of Western medicine. Traditional Vietnamese medicine evolved from being called a "colonial evil" that needed to be eliminated to becoming a post-co-

21 Afdhal, A. F. and Welsch, R. L., p. 151.

22 Hung, p. 5.

23 Maruf, p.1.

24 Prabawani, B., "Jamu brand Indonesia: consumer preferences and segmentation", Archives of Business Research, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2017, p. 80.

lonial resource of choice to protect and improve the healthcare of the population[25]. Traditional medicine was modernised for the nation's benefit and benefited from the "significantly symbolic" capital accumulated during the nation's post-colonial isolation. Traditional medicine practitioners were honoured as soldiers fighting in Vietnam's highlands and forests, which contributed to promoting cooperation and connection between medical physicians, traditionalists, and scientists[26]. Medicinal herb was widely used in Vietnam and it was an integral part of peasant life. However, the modernization of herbal medicine was necessary to update and develop the reputation of traditional medicines so that they could coexist on an equal basis with Western medicine in a national healthcare setting.

Alongside Vietnam's initiatives to promote formal education from the 1950s, the government launched numerous programmes to teach Vietnamese people about herbal medicines and supported the cultivation of medicinal plants. Nonetheless, herbal plants could treat some of Vietnam's most common ailments, especially in remote areas. Like other developing countries, traditional health programmes focus on education and training to enhance knowledge about how traditional medicine benefits users.

5. Traditional herbal medicine in the COVID-19 pandemic

In March 2020, COVID-19, a pneumonia-like disease caused by a novel coronavirus strain, was declared a pandemic[27]. COVID-19 is classified as mild, moderate, severe, or critical in conventional medicine. This global health crisis, spreading at an unprecedented speed, has challenged national healthcare systems and governments. Because there was no viable treatment immediately available, traditional medicine was increasingly used to combat COVID-19 in Vietnam, Indonesia, and other Asian countries.

5.1 Using jamu in Indonesia

The use of conventional medicine expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic, causing an imbalance in the supply and demand for medicines related to these new viruses. As herbal remedies, particularly jamu, gained popularity, the use of traditional medicines surged during the COVID-19 outbreak, with 41.4% of people using them in 2020. A significant portion of the rural population in Java turned to jamu to strengthen their immune systems in response to COVID-19, driven by both customary practices and affordability. The choice of jamu is largely influenced by

25 Wahlberg, 2006, p. 124.

26 Wahlberg, A., 2014, p. 45.

27 World Health Organization, "Listings of WHO's response to COVID-19", World Health Organization, Geneva, 2020, Availabble at: https://www.who.int/news/item/29-06-2020-covidtimeline [accessed 12 May 2023].

the three key factors known as the 3M (Mudah, Murah, Manjur), which reflect its accessibility to rural Javanese communities. Despite modernisation efforts in rural Java, the preference for jamu remains strong. Using jamu is a deeply rooted tradition closely tied to the lives of rural Javanese people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges but also created opportunities for researchers to identify effective treatments, including those derived from herbal remedies. The assertion regarding the effectiveness of available herbal medicines for managing COVID-19 primarily concerns their capacity to sustain and enhance the human immune system. The Indonesian populace has extensively experienced the efficacy of *jamu* in daily life through empirical means. Although numerous studies and scientific investigations into the biological properties of the plants commonly utilised in jamu have been conducted, the government utilised available domestic medical resources to address the COVID-19 pandemic. However, herbal products, especially those that claim to boost the human immune system and are associated with COVID-19 prevention or therapy, require careful review and inspection. It is essential to acknowledge that there is no official registration process for herbal medicines in Indonesia.

The integration of jamu, a traditional herbal medicine in Indonesia, into mainstream medical practice requires substantial development and progress. Further research is needed to assess the effectiveness and safety of jamu products in fighting COVID-19 in humans and to clarify their underlying molecular mechanisms. Additionally, it is crucial to communicate the correct usage of authorised and endorsed homemade jamu products to the public.

5.2 Using herbal medicine in Vietnam during the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 spread in Vietnam in the second half of 2021. Hospitals were swiftly overwhelmed by severe cases. The Ministry of Health of Vietnam issued an official dispatch No. 1306/BYT-YDCT on improving traditional medicine's ability to prevent and treat SARS-CoV-2-induced acute respiratory distress syndrome in early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began in Vietnam. This official dispatch promoted COVID-19 prevention and treatment using traditional medicine. Traditional medicine hospitals, medicinal herb and traditional medication facilities, and provincial and city health departments received this communication. This official dispatch included instructions for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 infections using conventional medicine. Because the Ministry of Health provided traditional treatments for COVID-19 at each stage, doctors could treat patients according to their condition[28].

Creating novel traditional medicines requires multiple trials and extensive regula-

28 Ministry of Health, "On strengthening the prevention and control of acute respiratory diseases caused by SARS-Cov-2 using medicines and traditional medicine methods", Socialist Republic of Vietnam, No. 1306/BYT-YDCT, Hanoi, 17 March 2020. Available at: https://emohbackup.moh.gov.vn/publish/home?documentId=7902

tory procedures. It is unclear how traditional medications will influence COVID-19 viral loads and immunological responses. Studies suggest that COVID-19 patients should receive both Western medicine and traditional Vietnamese treatments. The Vietnamese government also aims to prevent and treat COVID-19 using a combination of traditional and Western therapies. In September 2021, the Government Office issued Notice No. 234/TB-VPCP, summarising Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's meeting with medical scientists on September 1. That meeting highlighted research into integrating traditional and modern medicine in epidemic prevention and control, particularly in the treatment and development of medicinal herbs.

Using herbal medicine in the community

The attitudes of the Vietnamese public toward herbal medicine are crucial to combating the COVID-19 outbreak. Herbal medications have been shown to prevent and treat SARS and cold and flu-like symptoms, such as weariness, sore throats, sneezing, and muscle discomfort[29]. Because COVID-19 symptoms are similar to those of the common cold and flu, more people will likely be aware of them and seek immediate treatment. Herbal medicines can treat several common diseases and are often used in rural areas, where they are more readily available. Several studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that Vietnamese people use herbal medicine to treat common diseases and avoid travelling to crowded hospitals for traditional medical appointments[30].

Vietnamese herbal medicine use has increased rapidly, primarily to treat cold and flu symptoms[31]. Ginger, honey, garlic, and perilla were the most preferred herbal remedies[32]. These herbs are widely available and helpful in rural and suburban Vietnam. The Vietnam Ministry of Health's Essential Drug List also listed these herbal remedies. Thus, doctors can legally prescribe these herbs. Many Vietnamese use herbal medicine through first- or second-hand experience, although the efficacy is disputed.

6. The Traditional Herbal Medicine in Vietnam and Indonesia: Similarities and Differences

6.1 The similarities between the Indonesian and Vietnamese experiences

Before and during the colonial period, traditional herbal medicine was a vital part of both the Vietnamese and Indonesian healthcare systems. After the 1950s, traditional herbal medicine was reintroduced into modern practice. As Vietnam modernised, traditional medicine did not simply vanish; instead, it became a "hybrid."

29 Nguyen, P. H., et al., "Use of and attitudes towards herbal medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study in Vietnam", European Journal of Integrative Medicine, Vol. 44, 2021, p. 2.https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eujim.2021.101328

30 Ibid.

31 Tran, V. D., et al., "Perspectives on COVID-19 prevention and treatment using herbal medicine in Vietnam: A cross-sectional study", Annali di Igiene Medicina Preventiva e di Comunita, Vol. 34, No. 5, 2021, p.4. DOI: 10.7416/ai.2021.2484

32 Ibid, p. 7.

In Indonesia and Vietnam, the governments have implemented several strategies to improve the use of herbal medicine that have proven effective. Many of these approaches involve traditional medical practitioners, rural hospitals, some trained campaigners, and rural communities to re-educate the public using herbal treatments and cultivating medicinal plants.

In Vietnam, traditional medicine is now used in most hospitals nationwide. The Ministry of Health also unveiled a long-term plan to boost the proportion of prescriptions for herbal medicine-based treatments to 30% by 2025. The *jamu*, an indigenous medicine, has evolved into a significant emblem of national identity within the cultural context of Indonesia. Additionally, the concept of a hybridised form of traditional medicine, known as "Scientific Jamu," emerged. The definition of *jamu* has undergone significant evolution, which reflects a strong correlation with the socio-historical changes that have taken place in Indonesia.

6.2 The differences between the two countires

Although there are similarities in the history and traditions of herbal medicine, Vietnam and Indonesia differ in the potential and influence of traditional medicine. First, the potential for traditional medicine in Indonesia is much greater than in Vietnam. Because, as the second most biodiverse country in the world, Indonesia has a diverse and abundant source of herbal medicine; Second, as Indonesia adopted *jamu* as a national cultural symbol, *jamu* herbal medicines became widely available in various retail outlets, including supermarkets, stores, and pharmacies[33]; and third, the international impact of Indonesian traditional medicine.

Because the Indonesian archipelago is strategically located at the crossroads of global trade routes, a diverse range of ingredients and many plants were exchanged and transported into and out of the country. Chinese and Arabian traders traded with the Indonesian archipelago. In the late nineteenth century, Chinese merchants dominated the international trade in plants, spices, and herbs and brought traditional Chinese medicine to the islands. When Arab traders arrived in the archipelago, they introduced Ayurvedic medicine, Arabian therapeutics, and ancient Greek medicine. The introduction of various forms of medicine from around the world has complicated indigenous traditional medicine, as it varies from place to place and is in a perpetual state of flux[34].

The advantage of trading herbal medicines at the crossroads declined following the introduction of Islam to the Indonesian archipelago. Additionally, the last Hindu monarchy in East Java fled to Bali and brought traditional Indonesian medicine to the island. Although *Jamu*'s wisdom eventually spread to several nearby islands, the

33 Hung, 2020, p. 108.

34 Pols, H., "Jamu: The Indigenous Medical Arts of the Indonesian Archipelago", in The Bright Dark Ages, Brill, 2016, p. 178.

spread of Islam in the archipelago diminished people's ability to derive therapeutic benefits from plants. The influence of Islam is visible in Arabic manuscripts, such as the Kitab Tibb and other Melayu manuscripts[35].

Recently, the Indonesian policy of "Scientist Jamu" has facilitated the scientific process of *jamu* being recognised as a prominent Indonesian brand. This scientific examination of *jamu* to promote the "JamuBrand" brand gave rise to the dispute on the ownership of cultural heritage with Malaysia. Nevertheless, the two countries' dispute over the ownership of the jamu cultural heritage continues to drive the development of jamu products and their recognition worldwide.

7. Conclusion

Overall, in Indonesia and Vietnam, the social, historical, and political spheres are closely intertwined with the practice of traditional medicine. The historical evolution of traditional herbal medicine in both countries reveals how the initial manifestation of indigenous knowledge was employed to address urgent healthcare needs. Following independence, Vietnam and Indonesia recognised the significance of traditional herbal medicine in establishing national healthcare systems and promoted numerous initiatives and schemes to foster the advancement and proliferation of traditional medicine among the populace.

Despite similar historical developments in traditional medicine in Indonesia and Vietnam, there are differences in the evolution of traditional medicine between the two countries. Due to the archipelago's crossroads location and its greater variety and abundance of herbs than in Vietnam, trade with other countries facilitated exchanges of botanical products and knowledge. Initially, Islam prevented the development of traditional medicines. Recently, traditional medicine has again spread within Indonesia and globally as the *Jamu wellness culture* was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2023 (18.COM)[36].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional medicine again demonstrated its utility and prompted investment in research into its potential. Because individuals in Vietnam and Indonesia tended to rely on traditional medicine as a preventative measure without a specific pharmaceutical intervention for a given ailment, the governments of the two countries supported research about COVID-19-targeted pharmaceuticals derived from botanical sources.

Indonesia and Vietnam promoted research on the potential of the conventional drug processing sector for the sustained availability and unrestricted accessibility of traditional remedies and plant material. The COVID-19 pandemic increased

35 Antons-Sutanto, R.,, p. 318.

36 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, Jamu wellness culture, available at: https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/jamu-wellness-culture-01972 [Accessed on 21/3/2024].

research on traditional medicines and the need to monitor the production of traditional medicine products. Future research, to be conducted by policymakers and pharmaceutical traders in Vietnam and Indonesia, is expected to focus on rigorous studies of the effectiveness of traditional medicine.

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Маи Ти Ми Ви

Историјски поглед на традиционалну биљну медицине у Вијетнаму и Индонезији

Апстракт

Традиционална биљна медицина дуго је играла значајну улогу у здравственој заштити, посебно за становништво са ниским приходима у југоисточној Азији. Овај чланак анализира историјски и савремени значај биљних лекова у Вијетнаму и индонежанског џаму, са нагласком на поновни значај који добијају током пандемије КОВИД-19. Иако западна медицина почиње да доминира у градовима, традиционални лекови остају доминантни у сеоским областима. Током пандемије КОВИД-19, када ефикасни третмани и вакцине нису били доступни, традиционална биљна медицина се поново појавила као додатно решење. У Вијетнаму је током пандемије коришћена заједно са западним приступима због своје приступачности, и минималних штетних ефеката. Џаму, традиционални биљни лек Индонезије, коришћен је за ублажавање раних симптома пандемије, посебно у руралним јаванским заједницама где је његова употреба дубоко укорењена. Овај рад пореди локални и међународни утицај закључујући да оба начина лечења имају добре резултате у сеоским срединама, индонежански џаму је признатији у међународном оквиру.

Кључне речи: традиционална биљна медицина, џаму, вијетнамска биљна медицина, Индонезија, Вијетнам, КОВИД-19

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Development of Tourism in Serbia and the Republika Srpska through Cooperation with BRICS+

Abstract

In the modern world, tourism serves not only as a means of economic development but also as an important cultural and diplomatic tool. Although tourism in Serbia and the Republic of Srpska remains relatively underdeveloped, with infrastructure challenges, marketing gaps, and institutional shortcomings, partnering with BRICS+ countries could significantly boost the region's tourism sector. As BRICS+ nations, including China, India, Russia, Brazil, and South Africa, become influential drivers of outbound tourism, the Balkan countries should strengthen their economic links with BRICS+, particularly in tourism. The region's challenges can be addressed by developing its tourism potential, creating multilingual digital platforms within BRICS+ countries, continuing the policy of visa liberalisation, and participating in BRICS+ economic initiatives. By attracting targeted investments, engaging in cultural diplomacy, and developing niche tourism sectors such as eco, medical, and rural tourism—areas increasingly popular among tourists from BRICS+ countries—Serbia and the Republic of Srpska can position themselves not only as emerging destinations but also as key nodes in the future BRICS+ tourism network.

Key words: Balkans, Republic of Srpska, Serbia, BRICS+, international cooperation, economy, tourism, cultural diplomacy, visa liberalisation

1. Introduction

In the modern economy, tourism is one of the fastest-growing and most significant sources of income in the service industry. Establishing and maintaining tourism infrastructure and disseminating information about the country's attractions are crucial tasks for developing a post-industrial economy.

Moreover, tourism serves as a means of cultural diplomacy. In the context of globalisation, developing this sector is essential for promoting a positive image of the country on the international stage.

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Tourism is an important area of the economy for the Balkan countries, particularly Serbia. Currently, tourism infrastructure accounts for 2% of Serbia's GDP, while 4.8% of the country's population is employed in the tourism sector. From 2017 to 2023, this economic sector experienced significant growth with only a slight decline in 2020[1].

BRICS+ countries are potential locomotives for the development of modern tourism. Their population makes up 45% of the world's population[2], and they drive significant growth in the global economy.[3] Rising prosperity among BRICS+ citizens stimulates an increase in international tourism, primarily between member countries. In the First two post-COVID years, sector growth was 116% and 112%, respectively[4].

Tourism ties between Balkan countries and BRICS+ are extensive. Serbia has traditionally had strong relations with Russia, which significantly influenced its tourism industry. In 2024, Russian citizens ranked second in terms of tourists visiting Serbia, and China, another BRICS+ member, ranked fourth[5].

The level of development of tourist relations between BRICS+ countries and the Republic of Srpska remains modest; however, prospects for cooperation appear broad due to potential growth factors. Mutual interest from both sides in developing economic cooperation also indicates a need for closer collaboration in tourism. The Republic of Srpska and Serbia have sufficient resources and opportunities to address weaknesses and strengthen their national tourism industries.

2. Tourist Potential in Serbia and the Republic of Srpska

Due to various factors, Serbia and the Republic of Srpska are among the most attractive tourist centres for BRICS+ countries. To facilitate analysis, this chapter is divided into two parts dedicated to Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, respectively.

2.1. Touristic potential of Serbia

Serbia boasts a rich list of cultural sites recognised with various statuses. UNESCO recognises medieval Serbian monuments for their artistic and architectural significance, including Studenica Monastery, the ancient city of Rasa, and medieval sites within the Kosovo Autonomous Province. The uniqueness of medieval Serbian art lies in its blend of Western European Gothic and Romanesque traditions with East-

1 Chamber of commerce and industry of Serbia: Association of tourism, Annual Bulletin 2023, Beograd, 2023, p. 22

2 Spencer Feingord, BRICS: Here's what to know about the international bloc, World Economic Forum, Nov 20, 2024, available at: https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/11/brics-summit-geopolitics-bloc-international/

3 Alexandre Tanzi, IMF Sees Growth Shift Toward BRICS and Away From G-7 in New Outlook, World Economic Forum, October 23, 2024, available at:: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-10-23/imf-sees-growth-shift-toward-brics-away-from-g7-in-new-outlook

4 TV BRICS, BRICS countries' tourism: revival after the pandemic, June 21, 2024, available at: https://tvbrics.com/en/news/brics-countries-tourism-revival-after-the-pandemic/

5 Valentina Bajic, Foreign tourist visits to Serbia rise 11.7% in 2024, Seenews, Jan 31, 2025, available at: https://seenews.com/news/foreign-tourist-visits-to-serbia-rise-11-7-percent-in-2024-1270170

ern European Byzantine influences.

Additionally, Serbia has a rich Roman heritage. Ancient Serbia was one of the centres of the Roman Empire. Numerous architectural complexes from that period, such as the Emperor's Palace in Sremska Mitrovica or Gamzigrad-Romuliana Palace (a UNESCO World Heritage site), may attract tourists from BRICS+ countries who lack access to such extensive Roman civilisation heritage domestically.

The influence of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires on Serbian cultural heritage is also noteworthy. These cultures, representing two contrasting poles, enriched Serbian cultural space with new meanings. While their influence is not unambiguously positive, this cultural mixture can be leveraged to benefit modern tourism.

Finally, impressive natural monuments add diversity to Serbia's attractions - from unique European sites like "Deliblato Sands" to scenic Dinaric Alps. Natural landmarks coexist with cultural monuments, enriching visitors' experiences. Low prices remain a significant advantage for Serbia's tourism industry compared to other Balkan EU countries[6]. Furthermore, visa-free entry for citizens from influential BRICS+ nations such as Russia and China facilitates t, contributing to a substantial tourist flow into Serbia. Direct flights from BRICS+ countries to Belgrade and regional centres, and relatively short distances to significant attractions, further ease travel.

The existing advantages of the Serbian tourism industry have allowed it to achieve some success. Over the past 10 years, the flow of foreign tourists has more than doubled, from 1,028,732 in 2014[7] to 2,384,735 in 2024[8]. As of 2024, tourism infrastructure accounts for 2% of Serbia's GDP, while 4.8% of the country's population is employed in the tourism sector.[9]. Nevertheless, these figures lag significantly behind global averages, as according to reports by the World Travel & Tourism Council, the tourism industry accounts for as much as 10% of global GDP.[10]

2.2. Touristic potential of the Republic of Srpska

Tourism development in the Republic of Srpska faces challenges primarily due to its peripheral location relative to Sarajevo - the capital city - and weak logistical connections between regions complicate access for tourists from BRICS+. Cultural heritage sites include UNESCO-recognised historical complexes like Višegrad, where Ottoman legacy blends with modern Serbian culture, and is surrounded by scenic Dinaric mountains and Visegrad Lake.

6 Eurostat, Comparative price levels of consumer goods and services, December 17, 2024, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Comparative_price_levels_of_consumer_goods_and_services

7 Izvestaj o poslovanju turističke organizacije Srbije od 1 januara do 31 decembra 2014 godine, Turisticka organizacija Srbije, Feb 2015, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20150915221850/http://www.srbija.travel/download/dokumenta/Izvestaj_o_poslovanju_2014.pdf

8 Republika Srbija, Republicki zavod za statistiku, Saopstenje: Statistika ugostiteljstva i turizma, Jan 31, 2025.

9 Chamber of commerce and industry of Serbia: Association of tourism, Annual Bulletin 2023, Beograd, 2023, p. 22

10 WTTC 2024, The World Travel & Tourism Council, available at: https://wttc.org/

Medieval Serbian cultural heritage is also present, although not UNESCO-listed, monasteries such as Tvrdoš, Lovnica, and Dobricevo are significant due to their historical and artistic value. Natural attractions could become regional symbols; existing infrastructure around natural sites includes modern sanatoriums at hot springs like Banja Vrućica, Banja Guber, Višegradska Banja, among others. The Republic of Srpska hosts some of the Dinaric Alps' highest peaks - Zelengora, Ožren, and Kozara - as well as cultural heritage sites linked to key WWII battles contributing to Yugoslavia's liberation.

War damage from conflicts like those in Bosnia-Herzegovina led to neglect or destruction of many tourist facilities - for example, the bobsled track on Mount Trebević, built for the 1984 Winter Olympics, now lies abandoned due to wartime destruction. However, high visitor interest due to Sarajevo's proximity underscores opportunities for restoration. A positive example is Jahorina Mountain, which was built as an Olympic ski resort for the 1984 Winter Games and is still popular today. It demonstrates potential pathways for developing mountain tourism infrastructure.

Although tourist numbers in the Republic of Srpska are much lower than in Serbia, they are showing significant growth. Between 2022 and 2024, the annual number of foreign tourists in the country more than doubled, from 222,147 in 2022[11] to 493,257. At the same time, tourism's share of the Republika Srpska's GDP remains modest, at 1.3% in 2023.[12]

Serbia and the Republic of Srpska possess considerable tourist potential. Serbia's active development benefits from numerous positive factors, making it an attractive destination within BRICS+. The Republic of Srpska offers rich cultural and natural resources but has yet to realise its regional tourism potential fully; nonetheless, there are many promising examples indicating possibilities for overcoming current shortcomings.

3. BRICS+ as a Source of Tourism Growth

In recent years, BRICS+ countries have become not just participants in the global tourism market but its active architects. The growth of the middle class, the development of digital services, the liberalisation of visa regimes, and the reorientation of foreign policy amid global crises are transforming outbound tourism from these countries into a powerful driver of mobility.

India is one of the most vivid examples of a new tourism giant. In 2023, the number of outbound tourists from India will exceed 27 million people. Interestingly, where-

11 Zorana Agić, Svetlana Dušanić-Gačić, Mirjana Milovanović, „A Decade of Tourism Changes in The Republic of Srpska", Zbornik Radova MES, No. 9, 2023, p. 196

12 Republic of Srpska Sets New Tourism Record!, SeeSrpska, January 27 2025, available at: https://seesrpska.com/en/rad/srpska-ima-novi-turisticki-rekord-27-1-2025

as in the past Indian tourists mainly chose nearby destinations - Dubai, Thailand, Singapore - they are now increasingly travelling to Europe and North America. For example, in 2024, France entered the top-5 most visited countries among wealthy Indians thanks to the active advertising campaign "Explore France", launched specifically for South Asia. There is also a steady interest in new niches such as ecotourism, cruises, and wine tours.

Despite some inertia after the pandemic, China is actively returning to the tourism scene. For instance, in 2024, Chinese tourists again became the largest buyers in London and Paris department stores, and thanks to the fall of the yen exchange rate, there was a real boom in Chinese trips to Kyoto and Osaka in Japan.

Russia showed a record growth in outbound tourism in 2024 - over 8 million Russians travelled abroad in just the first four months of this year. Countries within the BRICS+ partnership circle - Turkey, UAE, Iran, Egypt, and increasingly China - are beautiful to Russians. Examples include Shanghai, where in April 2024 the first Visit Russia tourist centre will open, and the exhibition "Discover Russia" in New Delhi. These initiatives not only promote Russia's image abroad but also increase bilateral tourist flows.

South Africa actively promotes itself as a gateway to the African continent. The number of tourists from India and China visiting Cape Town and Durban has significantly increased thanks to improved infrastructure and reduced visa barriers. Cultural tourism has gained particular popularity: gastronomic festivals, wine routes in Stellenbosch, and historical tours tracing anti-apartheid struggles have become major attractions. In 2024, South Africa hosted over 600,000 tourists from BRICS countries - nearly 30% more than the previous year.

Joint initiatives by BRICS+ countries play a significant role in coordinating these processes. In April 2024, Moscow hosted the first BRICS International Tourism Forum, where agreements were signed on developing joint routes from Russia's Golden Ring to South Africa's wine valleys. A road map for digitalising tourism was also presented, including creating a unified multilingual tourist portal and implementing BRICS Pass, a pilot project for an electronic visa corridor.

The BRICS Cities Tourism Club was also launched; it already includes Moscow, Shanghai, Mumbai, Cape Town, and São Paulo. The club aims to create sustainable and recognisable city brands and share experiences in urban navigation, creative economy, and event tourism.

Finally, an example of an initiative targeting new audiences is BRICS Digital Nomads - young professionals working remotely. For instance, the UAE and Brazil have already introduced special visa regimes for remote workers from partner countries. India and South Africa are developing co-working centres and "smart hostels" for international youth communities.

Thus, today, BRICS+ is not just a group of economically growing states but an active centre transforming tourist flows, where tourism becomes not only an economic resource but also a diplomatic, cultural, and technological one. Concrete steps within this framework suggest that we are witnessing the formation of a new tourist architecture - more multipolar, sustainable, and open to intercultural dialogue.

Against this backdrop of growing interest from BRICS+ countries in new and less explored destinations, Serbia and the Republic of Srpska have a unique opportunity to strengthen their positions on the international tourism map. Their proximity to the European Union, rich cultural heritage, competitive prices, and increasing focus on Eastern markets make these countries attractive for travellers from China, India, Russia, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and other BRICS+ nations. However, fully realising their potential requires leveraging existing advantages and actively addressing infrastructural and image barriers.

Serbia has made notable progress, with a key achievement being the opening of direct flights by Air Serbia from Belgrade to Shanghai and Guangzhou at the end of 2023, thereby expanding transportation accessibility and opening a new window onto Asian markets. As early as January 2024, Belgrade received its first organised Chinese tourist group on the "Balkan Classic" route - including not only the capital but also lesser-known gems like Drvengrad ethnographic village built by Emir Kusturica, Ostrog Monastery, Perucac Lake, and Visegrad with Mehmed Paša Bridge.

Additional growth factors include visa-free travel with China, Russia (since 2023), India, and several Arab states, which significantly increase tourist flows: Serbia introduced visa-free entry for citizens of 92 countries (almost all BRICS+), which led to a 13% increase in overnight stays by foreign tourists that year - to 5.6 million nights - with Turkey (Russia and Germany) leading among visitors but Asian markets showing the highest growth.

Serbia's marketing strategy is also evolving: national tourism organisations actively participate in international exhibitions - from Shanghai to Mumbai - promoting not only Belgrade and Novi Sad but also Zlatibor, Tara National Park (Tara), Rtanjska Monastery - focusing on natural beauty and wellness potential; gastronomic and wine tourism are gaining popularity especially among Indian and Chinese travellers. Digital promotion channels, including influencers from BRICS countries, are effectively utilised.

Regarding Republic of Srpska (an autonomous entity within Bosnia & Herzegovina), its potential remains untapped mainly but promising: endowed with outstanding natural resources - mountain ranges; clean rivers; thermal springs; cultural monuments attracting travellers seeking authentic slow travel experiences - the region develops as a regional tourist hub with places like Banja Luka gaining prominence; sites like Andrićgrad (a town inspired by Ivo Andrić), Šator Lake or Tvrdoš Monastery are becoming more recognised.

However, transport accessibility remains limited, including a lack of direct flights, weak international branding, insufficient presence on global platforms, and fragmented participation in trade fairs, which further hinders growth. Entering BRICS+ markets requires coordinated actions such as participation in major tourism forums, joint product development with Serbia, and active promotion through digital channels in local languages. In summary, Serbia and the Republic of Srpska face a unique the window of opportunity today, through innovative openness policies, authenticity, and cultural proximity, they can secure sustainable positions on BRICS+ tourism maps, not just as new destinations but as centres for cultural dialogue, regional cooperation, and long-term growth.

4. Opportunities for Cooperation

As dialogue between BRICS nations deepens and formats for cultural/economic interaction expand, the tourism sector becomes an important platform for strengthening ties. For Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, this offers a chance to go beyond European-centric tourism models and establish themselves as vital parts of global cultural-economic exchanges.

Their strategic geographic location, rich heritage, affordable prices, and flexible visa policies make them natural partners within BRICS+. Targeted strategies can turn potential interest into sustainable flows of tourists and cultural exchanges.

One promising area is joint promotion of tourism & building strong regional brands: instead of positioning solely as part of Europe - Serbia & Republic of Srpska can act as “bridges” between East & West: joint video campaigns with influencers from China, India, Brazil; influencer trips along Belgrade-Zlatibor-Visegrad routes; promotion via WeChat, Yandex, local TikTok channels - all can revitalise Balkan image among BRICS audiences[13].

Developing cultural and educational exchanges is equally important: festivals celebrating national cuisine, arts, film held across Belgrade and Banja Luka; joint exhibitions and residencies; internships at museums or archaeological sites - all foster long-term regional ties and enhance regional image, for example, through hosting a BRICS Cultural Heritage Forum in Novi Sad involving artists, architects, tradition bearers working on collaborative projects.

Special attention should be given to niche tourism sectors such as ecological (eco), rural (agro), medical & pilgrimage tourism - all increasingly attractive for travelers from densely populated Asian & Middle Eastern cities: regions like Tara or Kopaonik could become eco-tourist hotspots; wine regions like Trijebinje or Fruska Gora appeal to gourmets; medical tourism (dentistry, recovery, optometry) already de-

13 Tourism Organization of Republika Srpska, Official Portal, 2024, available at: https://www.seesrpska.com/en/zivot/turisticka-ponuda-srpske-na-sajmovima-u-budimpesti-i-beogradu-13-2-2025

veloping especially in Belgrade & Banja Luka can be promoted further - in UAE, Iran, India markets.

Rural tourism deserves particular focus: ethno-villages with traditional cuisine, craft workshops, and participation in farming or grape harvests all fit well into the “slow travel” concept popular among middle-class BRICS youth.[14]

Participation in international forums and fairs remains crucial. Active involvement boosts regional visibility through BRICS Tourism Fair participation, the creation of Balkan pavilion at major events, and standard-setting efforts, thereby strengthening regional credibility. Signing bilateral agreements with ministries from India, China, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia can facilitate data exchange and joint marketing via platforms like Incredible India or Visit Saudi[15].

Ultimately, developing tourism isn’t just logistics or statistics - it’s about building strong links between cultures & people - and Serbia & the Republic of Srpska should focus on authenticity, proximity, shared cultural space - to become not just “another destination” but true hubs for intercultural dialogue & regional cooperation, fostering sustainable growth.

5. Institutional Support and Capacity Development

In the context of the global shift towards multipolarity, BRICS countries are becoming centres of economic and tourism growth. For Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, this presents a concrete and strategically important opportunity to integrate into the developing BRICS+ tourism space by strengthening institutional ties, enhancing human resources, and developing digital services aimed at a new segment of international tourism.

Current figures already favour active participation in this cooperation. In 2024, Serbia recorded 4.43 million tourist arrivals, including 2.38 million foreign visitors, and 6.10 million overnight stays by foreigners, representing a 9.2% increase compared to 2023. Tourism revenues in the first quarter of 2024 amounted to almost €600 million, a 12% increase year-on-year, and more than 70% higher than in 2019. [16]The Chinese market in particular shows strong potential, with a 70% annual growth rate and accounting for 6.5% of all foreign arrivals. These figures confirm that Serbia and the Republic of Srpska are already benefiting from the rise in BRICS outbound tourism and must adapt their institutional frameworks accordingly.

14 Economic Annals – University of Belgrade, Ethno Event as a Tool for Developing Rural Tourism: Case Study of “Country Wedding” at Gostoljublje, available at: https://www.ea.bg.ac.rs/index.php/EA/article/view/2323

15 SRNA, Participation of Republika Srpska in BRICS Summit: Opportunities for New Partnerships, June 2025, available at: https://www.srna.rs/en/novost/1247006

16 Valentina Bajic, ***Foreign tourist visits to Serbia rise 11.7% in 2024***, SeeNews, January 31, 2025, available at: https://seenews.com/news/foreign-tourist-visits-to-serbia-rise-11-7-percent-in-2024-1270170

On a broader scale, BRICS countries themselves represent enormous outbound tourism markets. In 2024, China generated approximately 65.7 million international tourist trips, maintaining its position as one of the world's largest tourism exporters[17]. Russia recorded more than 11.5 million outbound tourist journeys, a 25% increase compared to 2023, reflecting the resilience of Russian outbound demand.[18] India surpassed 27 million outbound tourists in 2023 and sustained double-digit growth in 2024, with Europe increasingly attractive to Indian travellers[19]. South Africa registered 8.92 million tourist border crossings in 2024, while Brazil received over 6 million international visitors annually, supported by strong intra-BRICS mobility. [20]Globally, the tourism sector is recovering rapidly: international tourist flows are projected to reach 1.5 billion in 2024, a 17% increase over 2023 and already exceeding pre-pandemic levels. These dynamics confirm that Serbia and the Republic of Srpska have the potential to secure a significant share of future BRICS+ travel demand.

The priority is strengthening inter-agency cooperation. The Ministries of Tourism, Economy, and Foreign Affairs, as well as national and regional tourism organisations of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, can create a joint platform for coordination with relevant structures in BRICS countries. The BRICS Tourism Working Group has been successfully operating since 2015, bringing together government agencies, investment bodies, and the private sector to implement joint initiatives.[21] It is recommended to join such formats as an observer or associate partner; this will allow for prompt promotion of national interests, development of joint marketing strategies, and participation in grant and investment allocations, including those from the New Development Bank (NDB)[22].

The second priority is human resource development. Sustainable tourism development requires modernising facilities and training specialists capable of effectively working with guests from Brazil, China, India, and South Africa. It is proposed that specialised professional training centres based at universities in Belgrade and Banja Luka be established, focused on the standards and features of BRICS countries' tourism. These centres could collaborate with the BRICS Academic Forum and be partially financed through NDB grant programs. An inspiring example is China, where over 12,000 hospitality industry employees were trained in 2022–2023 under the "People-to-People Exchange Mechanism," focusing on intercultural fea-

17 World Population Review, ***Most visited countries 2024,*** 2024, available at: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/most-visited-countries

18 Interfax, ***Over 11.5 mln Russian tourists traveled abroad in 2024, up 25%***, December 23, 2024, available at: https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/109646/

19 World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), ***Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Report 2024 – Global trends,*** 2024, available at: https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact

20 Statistics South Africa, ***Tourism in South Africa – Annual data release 2024,*** 2025, available at: https://www.statssa.gov.za

21 Srinivas, Junuguru. Future of the BRICS and the Role of Russia and China. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-1115-6

22 Valamontes, Antonios. BRICS Economic War with the Collective West: Implications for Greece and the Balkans. Demokritos Geopolitical Report, Vol. 1, No. 19, October 2024, available at: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13932631

tures of BRICS nations.[23] This experience should be adapted and implemented in the Balkan context, including language studies, etiquette, and guest preferences from partner countries.

Equally important is digital support. Today's tourists expect quick access to information, bookings, and navigation - preferably in their native language. The "Incredible India" platform demonstrates the effectiveness of a national tourist hub tailored for a global user. [24]Serbia and the Republic of Srpska should develop a similar platform - "Discover Serbia & Republic of Srpska" - supporting five languages (English, Chinese, Portuguese, Hindi, Russian) with features such as online booking, route planning, visa information, and recommendations for attractions, restaurants, and cultural events. This project can be implemented in partnership with BRICS technology companies - Tencent, Infosys, Yandex - and involve national ministries to ensure technical support and institutional trust. Institutional resilience is impossible without joint efforts between government and business. Therefore, promoting the idea of creating bilateral and multilateral business clusters in tourism involving companies from BRICS+ countries is necessary. A potential project could be "Balkan Tourism Investment Cluster under BRICS+" - a platform uniting government agencies, private sector players, and international investors to finance hotel complexes, eco-tourism zones, and cultural routes. The example of South Africa's NDB financing the modernisation of 620 km of tourist routes and the construction of 15 new eco-tourism sites demonstrates the feasibility of such investments within BRICS.

Finally, to strengthen institutional presence and facilitate experience exchange, it is recommended that the annual "BRICS+ Balkan Tourism Forum" be held in Belgrade or Banja Luka - a platform for discussing strategies, sharing best practices, and presenting investment projects. Since similar forums in Brazil and China have led to the implementation of over 20 major tourism initiatives, such a step could significantly enhance Serbia's and the Republic of Srpska's international profile as tourist destinations.

6. Conclusion

Developing tourism within BRICS+ is an attractive idea and a strategically sound direction that can become a powerful driver of economic growth, cultural integration, and international positioning for Serbia and the Republic of Srpska. Already today, we observe trends confirming the relevance and prospects of this vector: in 2023 alone, global tourism's contribution to world GDP exceeded 10%, with forecasts by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) indicating growth to 12.2% by 2033, creating over 430 million jobs. In BRICS countries, tourism's contribution remains steadily rising: China has 11.3% of GDP; India has 9.2%; Brazil has around 8.5%. Serbia and the Republic of Srpska have already demonstrated significant progress

23 Ricceri, Marco, and Gianluca Tornini, eds. Dossier: BRICS-SIOI Rome Seminar. Eurispes & SIOI, 2023.

24 Incredible India 2023, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, «Incredible India» campaign, launched 2002; platform info: https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/

- tourism revenues increased by 127% compared to 2019; moreover, arrivals from China, India, and increasingly from Russia, are growing yearly.

Create a regional BRICS+ Balkans tourism platform supported by both the government and the private sector that consolidates tour operator offerings, investor proposals, and governmental agencies within a single digital institutional space. A successful example is China's "Tourism Alliance for the Belt and Road," which covers over 50 countries. Actively participate in BRICS+ forums and exhibitions dedicated to tourism; organise a "Balkan Tourism & Investment Forum" in Belgrade or Banja Luka with delegations from BRICS countries. Similar events in Brazil or South Africa have attracted real investments. For instance, after the BRICS Tourism Forum 2023 in Cape Town, agreements worth over $450 million were signed. Focus on sustainable niche tourism, including eco-, agri, and medical tourism, as key attractive directions for guests from BRICS nations. Considering that standard medical procedures cost two to three times less in Serbia than in China or India, this segment becomes particularly promising; the Republic of Srpska can offer treatment packages combined with rehabilitation programs at its resorts (Banja Vrućica or Slatina), integrated with natural routes and cultural programs.

Develop visually appealing multilingual digital solutions: create a "Discover Serbia & Republic of Srpska" platform available in Chinese, Portuguese, Hindi, Russian, and English—with mobile app integration with WeChat, Pay TM, Yandex, and other popular platforms across BRICS.

Promote through cultural diplomacy: Participate in joint film festivals, gastronomic weeks, and days dedicated to BRICS cultures. Experiences like India's "BRICS Cultural Week" or Russia's "BRICS Cinema Days" can be adapted for the Balkan context—for example, hosting a "BRICS Cultural Fest in the Balkans.

Establish mechanisms for bilateral investment cooperation, including through the NDB and Local Currency Bond Fund mechanisms, which began financing tourism infrastructure projects in Brazil and South Africa in 2024.[25] Potential projects include cultural site reconstruction, eco-hotel construction, and new routes (e.g., "Tesla Trail," "Orthodox Ring of the Balkans").

Tourism within BRICS+ for Serbia and the Republic of Srpska is not just a part of their economies—it's a tool for cultural dialogue, a channel for international investments, and a way to reopen regions for billions of potential travellers from Global South countries. With precise strategic planning, institutional support, and modern digital practices, this path could become one of the most successful chapters in the region's new economic history.

25 NDB 2024, New Development Bank, available at: http://www.ndb.int/

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Развој туризма у Србији и Републици Српкој кроз сарадњу са форматом БРИКС плус

Апстракт

У савременом свету, туризам служи не само као начин да се постигне економски развој, већ и као суштински битна културна и дипломатска алатка. Иако туризам у Србији и Републици Српској није изразито развијен, због инфраструктурних ограничења, маркетиншког дефицита и институционалних недостатака, сарадња са БРИКС плус земљама може значајно унапредити туризам у региону. Пошто су БРИКС плус и земље оснивачи препознатљиве по великом броју туриста који путују у иностранство, балканске земље би требало да ојачају своје економске везе, почев од туризма. Њихов туристички потенцијал требало би да буде развијан кроз вишејезичке дигиталне платформе са земљама БРИКС плус, наставак либерализације визне политике и учествовање у економским иницијативама формата БРИКС плус. Привлачећи циљане инвестиције, јачање културне дипломатије и развој посебних туристичких формата, као што су еколошки, медицински или сеоски туризам, који су јако популарни у оквиру БРИКС плус туристичке популације, Србија и Српска могу се позиционирати као дестинација у успону или чак и као чвориште у туристичкој мрежи поменутог формата.

Кључне речи: *Балкан, Република Србија, Република Српска, BRICS+, међународна сарадња, економија, туризам, културна дипломатија, визна либерализација*

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