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Beyond Economic Growth: BRICS as an Emerging Power and the Search for a Multipolar World Order

¹ Ogbajie Mercy Uzoma, ² Ogbajie Delight Chibuzor, ³ Rosemary Eberechi Obi, ⁴ Bello Kehinde Oluwafemi, ⁵ Chukwujama Ginika Mary-Cynthia, ⁶ Chinyere Blessing Offorah, ⁷ Odubiyi Michael Adams, ⁸ Aneke Arinzechukwu Anthony, ⁹ Okemiri Chidinma, ¹⁰ Moses Temitope Samuel, ¹¹ Salami Elizabeth Oiza, ¹² Maishera Grace Ifraimu, ¹³ Michael Abayomi Oshobu, ¹⁴ Ayanda Opeyemi Janet, ¹⁵ Eze Thelma Oluchukwu, ¹⁶ Onuchukwu Esther Chidimma, ¹⁷ Ezeafulukwe Onyinye Cynthia, ¹⁸ Adebayo Oluwatosin

^{1, 10} Department of Theory and History of International Relations, People's Friendship University of Russia, RUDN, Moscow, Russia

² Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

³ Department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

⁴ Department of Population and Development, National Research Institute, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

⁵ Department of Economics (Education), University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

⁶ Department of Politics Economics Philosophy, National Research Institute, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

⁷ Department of International Marketing, People's Friendship University of Russia, RUDN, Moscow, Russia

⁸ Sociology and Anthropology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria

⁹ Department of Economics/Sociology and Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Enugu State, Nigeria

¹¹ Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Nigeria

¹² Department of Business Administration, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

¹³ Department of Accounting, Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola, Nigeria

¹⁴ Department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria

¹⁵ Department of Linguistics, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

¹⁶ Department of Economics, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria

^{17, 18} Department of Population and Development, National Research Institute Higher School of Economics, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: **Ogbajie Mercy Uzoma**

Abstract

The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) coalition has transcended traditional economic growth and emerged as a formidable force pushing the emergence of a new world order. The BRICS nation coalition has rocked the current international order and predicted a shift towards a more inclusive and multipolar structure that goes beyond the narrow goal of economic growth. This review examines the geographical, diplomatic, and strategic decisions that led to the formation of the BRICS, analysing the

various pathways pursued by the coalition's members. This essay underscores the BRICS nation's calculated initiatives to leave a mark on the world stage by evaluating cooperative activities, regional impact, and geopolitical plans. Through this review, we aim to discuss the positive and negative aspects of the collective objective of establishing a multipolar world, as well as the potential ramifications for international relations and global government.

Keywords: BRICS, Multipolar Order, Economics, Emerging Powers, Global Competition

Introduction

The formation of the BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—has spurred much debate in global geopolitics, disrupting old power structures and altering the character of international relations ^[1]. There is certainly evidence that the standard view of global power has long been controlled by a few Western states. However, the BRICS countries' economic power has shifted this narrative, catapulting them into the world scene as formidable players with significant political, economic, and geopolitical relevance ^[2]. While growth in the economy is a crucial starting point, this discourse goes beyond an exclusive focus on GDP to investigate the complex connections between geopolitical considerations, diplomatic initiatives, and the ultimate objective of a more equitable distribution of power ^[3].

The BRICS countries' objective is to overturn the current unipolar system and establish a world order in which power is distributed among diverse regions^[4]. The purpose of the multipolar world order is to ensure that a range of perspectives are heard in order to establish a more diversified and equitable global leadership structure [Fig 1]. The collective impact of the BRICS countries extends beyond economic concerns to involve political alignment, cultural contact, and the pursuit of mutually beneficial objectives that go transcend conventional power imbalances as they navigate the complexities of international interactions^[5,6].



Fig 1: World population of BRICS nations

By analysing the BRICS phenomenon, I want to shed light on the intricate links that exist between economic might, geopolitical manoeuvring, and the broader goals of a multipolar world. This will provide additional insight into the intricate fabric of global dominance dynamics and the shifting role of emerging powers in determining the trajectory of international relations.

Theoretical Framework

Balance of power theory

In relation to the topic of this essay, the Balance of Power theory describes the dynamic power arrangements that undermine Western countries' traditional supremacy. BRICS constitute a challenge to the current quo. They are united by a common objective of economic success and geopolitical strength. According to the theory, nations seek to maintain the worldwide balance by teaming together or expanding their capacity to counter perceived threats. The BRICS nations' economic prowess disrupts the already present unipolar international framework and paints a distinct vision of multipolarity.

Economic growth is an essential part of this balancing act, elevating the BRICS to a place of the power on the international stage. The bloc's strength stems from Brazil's resource-rich economy, India's thriving tech industry, and China's meteoric rise to global economic importance. The Balance of power theory underscores the tactical choices made by these nations with the aim to confront the vast power of Western powers and build a new multipolar equilibrium.

The idea highlights the careful balancing act required to sustain this new multipolarity as the BRICS countries strengthen their military, political, and economic links. Realignment and power transfer dynamics are critical for deciding how international relations progress. In addition to economic growth, the quest of a multipolar global order, as predicted by the Balance of Power theory, emphasises the strategic calculus that leads the BRICS programme,

indicating a paradigm shift in world politics.

The theory of hegemonic stability

Concerning the topic of this essay, it is critical to acknowledge that the intricate connection between economic strength and geopolitical power can be best comprehended through the lens of hegemonic stability.

Previously, the global order was stable when a single hegemon dominated it. These were often times of institutional dominance, military might, and economic strength. However, the growth of the BRICS countries calls into question the established view of a unipolar world dominated by a single dominant force. The BRICS alliance has played a crucial influence in shifting the global power balance.

The creation of the BRICS nations signifies a shift closer to a multipolar global order, according to hegemonic stability theory. Rather than a single hegemon dictating global norms and policies, we are witnessing the growth of numerous centres of power with diverse economic and political goals. Because of their multipolarity, these emerging powers are challenging established norms and institutions in order to assert their power on the world stage.

The nations that make up BRICS are aiming to create a multipolar world order in addition to economic growth. A careful realignment is required in order to create a more equitable and inclusive global system. The goal of the BRICS countries is to promote a more equitable division of power and influence, which will promote global stability, by opposing the established hegemonic systems.

Literature review

Basis of the BRICS Economy

One of the most significant changes of the early 21st century has been the economic expansion of the BRICS countries. When economist Jim O'Neill first used the term in 2001, he was referring to Brazil, Russia, India, and China and highlighting their rapid economic growth as well as their growing political influence worldwide^[3]. In 2010, South Africa joined the coalition, contributing an African perspective.

China, the largest and most populous member, has served as the foundational element of the BRICS economic superpower. It quickly industrialised and expanded through exports, making it the second largest economy in the entire globe^[7]. At the same time, India, with its dynamic democracy and demographic variables, has experienced significant economic growth. Russia, with its substantial energy reserves, and Brazil, with its abundance of natural resources, have both had significant impacts on the world commodities markets. Despite having the lowest GDP within the BRICS, South Africa has been a crucial representative of Africa within the group^[8].

One of the BRICS nations' key goals has been to promote economic collaboration and lessen reliance on Western-dominated monetary institutions^[9]. The BRICS formed the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) in 2014, offering another option to institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank^[10]. The goal of this initiative was to make the world's economic system more egalitarian by providing poor countries more power over processes for making decisions.

Geopolitical Implications of BRICS and the characteristics of BRICS nations as an emerging power

Beyond economic cooperation, the BRICS coalition has important geopolitical ramifications, challenging the West's established power institutions. The member countries have persistently pushed for a multipolar world order, highlighting the need of different viewpoints and collective decision-making in international relations ^[11, 12].

China, for example, has become known as a key participant in world politics, threatening the established hegemony of the United States. Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a huge infrastructural development project that spans many continents, has increased China's global influence ^[13]. The BRI not only strengthens economic links but also diplomatic ties, establishing China as a vital role in influencing the geopolitical scene ^[14].

Russia has attempted to offset Western influence with robust foreign policy. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, as well as its engagement in conflicts in Syria, are examples of the country's efforts to impose itself on the world scene ^[15]. Furthermore, Russia's collaboration with China in projects such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has increased both countries' geopolitical power ^[16].

Because of its democratic values and commitment to a multipolar world, **India** has been an active participant in a number of regional and global forums. Its participation in organisations such as the SCO, the G20, and the BRICS reflects its desire to influence global debate and advance a more thorough international structure ^[17].

Brazil, a prevalent regional power in South America, has raised its international reputation by participating in the BRICS. Because of its participation in international conferences and initiatives, it now has a platform to discuss global issues such as environmental sustainability as well as climate change ^[18].

South Africa has played an indispensable part in representing the goals of the continent. Because of its membership in the alliance, Africa now plays a larger role in discussions about international economic governance and development ^[19].

Challenges and Criticisms

Despite its gains, the BRICS alliance faces numerous hurdles and criticism. One of its key challenges is the diversity of its member countries' political systems and economic growth ^[20]. Despite the fact that China and Russia are authoritarian regimes India and Brazil are vibrant democracies. When these discrepancies are balanced, it is difficult to reach an agreement on a variety of subjects ^[21].

The BRICS nations' economic gaps present further concerns. Because of China's economic supremacy, there are concerns about an uneven distribution of advantages within the coalition ^[22]. Furthermore, commodity price swings have disproportionately impacted Brazil and Russia, emphasising the susceptibility of economies that rely heavily on natural resources ^[23].

Another point of contention is the BRICS' ability to achieve their stated objectives. According to critics, the coalition has struggled to translate its economic achievements into actual geopolitical strength ^[24]. Despite the benefits they bring, the NDB and CRA pale in comparison to the depth and implications of the Western financial institutions that are already in place ^[25, 26].

The BRICS alliance's cohesion may also be jeopardised by geopolitical concerns among its members, such as India's long-running rivalry with Pakistan and China's decades-long border disputes with India. To manage these conflicts while working towards common goals, a delicate balance is required ^[27].

The Quest for a Multipolar World Order

The determination to challenge Western hegemony and pursue a more equal system of global governance is driving the BRICS nations' quest for a world with a multipolar order ^[9]. In addition to other dimensions, this viewpoint considers political, economic, and cultural factors.

Economically, the BRICS intend to reorganise current world banking systems to better reflect an evolving global economic scenery ^[9]. The formation of the NDB and CRA, which give additional finance choices for building infrastructure in poor countries, is a first step in this direction. The BRICS strive to build a more equal and balanced global financial architecture by questioning conventional traditions ^[25].

In terms of politics, the BRICS advocate for a global system in which only a few of powerful countries cannot exercise complete influence over all decision-making. They highlight the need of upholding sovereignty values and refraining from intervening in the domestic problems of other countries. The alliance has repeatedly advocated for modifications to bodies such as the United Nations Security Council in order to strengthen the inclusion of developing countries ^[28].

The BRICS nations value cultural variety and inclusiveness. With their distinct histories, cultures, and customs, these countries contribute to a more vibrant and diverse global community. The coalition aims to promote cooperation and mutual understanding, as well as the awareness and respect of cultural variety ^[29].

Challenges to a Multipolar World Order

There are several impediments to the BRICS countries' efforts to establish a multipolar international order. The current global power arrangements, which are predominantly controlled by Western countries, are resisting significant change ^[30]. The current authorities frequently deny developing powers leverage and authority to make decisions ^[31].

The goal of establishing a multipolar international order has been undermined further by the growth of protectionist sentiment in some Western countries. The promotion of collaboration and multilateralism by the BRICS governments is being called into question by the rising tide of nationalism and unilateralism. It is far more difficult to reach an agreement on the establishment of a global order at a moment of heightened international conflict ^[32].

Internal BRICS alliance concerns are a big impediment. Geographical differences, disparities in political systems, and disparities in economic interests among member countries may stymie joint efforts. The border issue between China and India, for example, as well as prior disputes between Pakistan and India, have the potential to damage the alliance's cohesion ^[33].

The Influence of Technology and Innovation

Technology and innovation are critical components of the quest to develop a global multipolar society. The BRICS

countries recognise the importance of technical developments in creating the international scene of the future^[34]. Because of its rapid breakthroughs in domains such as AI, 5G technology, and space research, China has become a technological powerhouse.

Cutting-edge technology increases the BRICS countries' geopolitical clout in addition to their economic potential. These nations can express themselves in global debates on problems such as cybersecurity, digital governance, and data privacy thanks to their creation and application of innovative technology^[35]. The BRICS nations hope to challenge existing technological domination as well as contribute to establishing the laws of the digital age by embracing innovation^[36].

The Role of Soft Power

Soft power, or the ability to impact people by appeal and persuasion as opposed to coercion, is an important component of the BRICS countries' ambition for a world with a multipolar order^[37], whereas economic and military might are important, so is the ability to frame narratives, stimulate interaction between cultures, and build alliances by diplomatic approaches^[38].

China has excelled in utilising soft power through initiatives such as the Confucius Institutes, which foster Chinese language and culture around the world^[39]. Similarly, India's thriving film industry, yoga diplomacy, and cultural festivals help it display soft power. Brazil's cultural exports, such as music and sports, increase its global impact, while Russia's rich literary and artistic traditions remain the basis for soft power^[37].

BRICS nations' collective attempts to encourage cultural exchange, intellectual partnership, and people-to-people links increase their soft power^[40]. The BRICS nations hope to increase their global impact and make a contribution to the multipolar world they foresee by giving another perspective to the Western-focused worldview.

Global Governance and Sustainable Development

The BRICS nations are aware that addressing major challenges like pandemics, poverty, and climate change requires efficient global governance. Their dedication to long-term progress includes social and environmental considerations as well as economic advancement^[41].

Climate change is a significant issue that the BRICS countries want to impact. Collaboration is critical to international efforts to prevent climate change because China and India contribute considerably to global greenhouse gas emissions. Based on historical approaches to environmental destruction, the BRICS countries advocate for a fair and impartial climate change approach^[42].

The BRICS countries emphasise the importance of combating disparities in society, poverty, and inequality in the context of long-term growth. Initiatives to improve food security, facilitate equitable economic growth, and promote invention for environmentally sustainable growth are among their collaborative operations^[42]. By bringing these issues to the centre of the international agenda, the BRICS countries help to create a more equitable and balanced world.

Conclusion

The rise of BRICS nations challenges Western powers' long-standing dominance and strengthens the argument for a multipolar world order, signifying a fundamental shift in the

global power balance. The BRICS alliance intends to reshape the international order by boosting economic collaboration, questioning traditional geopolitical conventions, and advocating for a more equal and equitable framework for global governance. Despite its accomplishments, the alliance still confronts numerous hurdles, including hostility from existing powers, economic differences among the nations that are members, and geopolitical competition. To establish a multipolar international order, these problems must be met by diplomacy, cooperation, and an equal commitment to shared ideals. Beyond traditional measurements of strength, the BRICS countries' impact extends to technological innovation, soft power projection, and a commitment to environmentally sustainable growth. The BRICS alliance leads to the establishment of a growing diverse and heterogeneous world by challenging old paradigms and laying the way for a future in which a diverse range of voices and opinions impact global interactions.

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