

# JOURNAL OF BRICS



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Editorial

# Shaping the Course of Humanity

Siphamandla Zondi , Norman Sempijja  & Thulisile Mphambukeli   
Editors

Opening the 14<sup>th</sup> summit of the BRICS, the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, said the BRICS had demonstrated resilience and vitality, that they together faced many shared challenges and opportunities. They practically coordinated their efforts, enhanced cooperation and used solidarity to confront shared difficulties. Held under the 2022 theme -Fostering High-quality Partnership and Embarking on a New Journey of BRICS Cooperation- the BRICS theme hoped to “shape the course of humanity”, Jinping reminded his peers.

This suggested that the BRICS platform was not about the narrow interests of the five states, but a broader common good including the interests of the developing world and emerging countries. Therefore, the platform measured its utility in relation to what it did in response to geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-social exigences of the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic, the Ukraine war, conflict in the middle east, climate change and natural disasters, global poverty and inequality, weakening multilateralism, industrialisation, digitalization, trade and investment and other developments that affect global development pre-occupied BRICS' attention. The implication of this is to position the BRICS as a force for the global common good, if it did what it planned.

This edition is the second of the first volume of the *Journal of BRICS Studies* dedicated to promoting the study of the BRICS, emerging powers, and developing countries and their agency. In this edition, we begin with an article problematising the challenge of child labour in Brazil amid Covid-19, followed by a discussion on vaccine diplomacy, both of which demonstrate how domestic issues in BRICS are actually global issues in need of concerted international solutions. The article on the ideological underpinnings of South Africa's response to Covid closely correlates with the article further below on how South Africa and Africa's use of lockdown presented many political and practical challenges. The paper on how the Covid stimulated new research forays is positive, just as does the article on women's economic empowerment during the pandemic. The impact of Brexit on Africa, which is an active member of the BRICS outreach, has lessons in building interdependence according to one article. We end with an article that makes the case for strengthening intra-BRICS bilaterals as the basis for strengthening the BRICS agency.

The work on this edition would have been arduous without the cooperation of the editors including Profs Norman Sempijja and Thuli Mphambukeli (who moved from the University of Free State to the

University of Johannesburg while working on this edition); associate editors in Drs Tinuade Ojo, Rich Mashimbye, Hlengiwe Phetha, Moorosi Leshoele and Odilile Ayodele. Ms. Kamogelo Segone was a dependable editorial assistant. We appreciate the sterling work of peer reviewers. The errors that remain are solely ours as editors.

Siphamandla Zondi    December 2022

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