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Editorial

BRICS and Digitally Just and Inclusive Futures

Siphamandla Zondi , Norman Sempijja  & Thulisile Mphambukeli 
Editors

As the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries gather for the 2023 Summit in August 2023, they are confronted with the task to deepen economic cooperation in line with the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy. Key to this is the building of a BRICS-wide digital economy that enables inclusion and dynamism. They see themselves as committed to driving digital transformation, harnessing opportunities and mitigating challenges they face in regard to digital technologies. They recognize the importance of digital inclusion and connectivity as economic growth and social development drivers. Initiatives such as India's Digital India program, China's Belt and Road Initiative, and South Africa's National Integrated ICT Policy emphasize expanding digital infrastructure and improving access to bridge the digital divide (Kaplinsky, 2017).

The BRICS countries see innovation and digital entrepreneurship as crucial to stimulate economic growth and inclusion. For example, iFood is a Brazilian food delivery platform that connects restaurants and customers through a mobile app. It offers a wide range of cuisine options and delivery services, revolutionizing the food delivery industry in Brazil. Yandex is a Russian multinational technology company that offers a variety of digital services, including a search engine, mapping and navigation, ride-hailing, food delivery, and online advertising. It is often referred to as the "Russian Google". Takealot is an e-commerce platform in South Africa that offers a wide range of products, including electronics, clothing, home appliances, and more. It provides a convenient and reliable online shopping experience, delivering products directly to customers' doorsteps. China's focus is on technology-driven industries such as artificial intelligence and e-commerce (Nayak, 2019).

There is also an effort to link systems of innovation across BRICS land. For instance, China's Digital Silk Road initiative promotes digital connectivity and cooperation among BRICS countries and beyond using infrastructure development, technology transfers, and knowledge sharing to promote digital cooperation and exchange (Wang, 2019). BRICS countries have established mechanisms for digital cooperation, such as the BRICS Innovation Cooperation Action Plan and the BRICS Digital Economy Cooperation Framework. These platforms facilitate collaboration in areas such as digital innovation, data protection, cybersecurity, and digital skills development (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

Individual countries have a lot to gain from efforts to improve innovation in economic development, especially the developing side of BRICS: South Africa, India and Brazil. These economies suffer the disadvantage of high socio-economic inequality, stubborn problems of unequal economic

development within them, high levels of poverty and attended ills. Their own efforts to overcome these are critical, but they will not be enough without harnessing international cooperation to further reinforce their own interventions.

Yet, to make headways the BRICS must confront and resolve such challenges as follows:

- **Digital Divide and Inequality:** Despite efforts to bridge the digital divide, BRICS countries face challenges related to unequal access to digital technologies, disparities in digital literacy, and socioeconomic inequalities. Addressing these disparities is crucial for ensuring inclusive digital futures (Kaplinsky, 2017).
- **Data Governance and Privacy:** As digital economies expand, issues of data governance, privacy, and cybersecurity become increasingly important. BRICS countries need to develop robust policies and frameworks to safeguard data privacy, protect digital infrastructure, and ensure trust in digital ecosystems (Wang, 2019).

The digital economies of BRICS countries present significant market opportunities. With a combined population of over 3.6 billion people, these nations offer vast consumer markets and potential for digital business expansion (Nayak, 2019). BRICS countries have the ability to turn this potential into reality for these people for whom BRICS represent a spark of hope. They also play a significant role in shaping the digital futures of other nations, especially those they relate with through the BRICS Outreach initiative since 2013, and to the global community broadly. Through promoting digital inclusion, innovation, and collaboration, they can help build momentum towards digitally just and inclusive futures.

In this edition, we feature papers that deal with various questions facing BRICS including digital technologies. The hope is that the papers stimulate debate on such various subjects as public health and well-being, public education, regional integration, economic value chains, ideology and women empowerment.

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Problematizing the Diversity Debit Hypothesis

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Abstract

One of the most studied hypotheses in political economy and development literature posits that social heterogeneity is negatively associated with favorable societal and political outcomes. This study problematizes the diversity debit hypothesis. It overviews its theoretical underpinning and uncovers its roots to be in rational choice theory and the homo economicus framework of human behavior. As such, scholarly accounts of diversity debit have attributed it to the agency (or lack thereof) of minority groups and their impaired ability to engage in collective mobilization to pressure elites for concessions. Through case studies of three countries – the United States, Turkey, and Vietnam, this study discovers that even when collective action problems have been overcome by minority groups either along ethnic or cross-ethnic boundaries, it has not led to favorable outcomes. In light of rapid changes to the global economic balance of power and the emergence of alternative modes of development policies, further investigation of the diversity debit problem is necessary to carry out through critically-oriented approaches.

Introduction

The diversity debit hypothesis posits that societal heterogeneity negatively impacts populations through economic, social, and political outcomes. Throughout dozens of studies across different social scientific disciplines, scholars have investigated whether ethnic and linguistic diversity are detrimental to political peace, public good provision, social trust, educational and health spending, conflict onset, duration, along with many different economic development indicators (Wimmer, 2016; Gisselquist et al. 2016). The association between social diversity and development outcomes represents one of the most “powerful” hypotheses in contemporary political economy (Banerjee & Somanathan, 2005). Through drawing upon rational choice and collective action theories, scholars have contended that ethnic divisions in a given society negatively impact the capability of the poor to be able to engage in various types of social participation (Alesina & Ferrara, 2000; Gerring et al. 2015). Levels of trust, social capital, and social sanctioning ability have been observed to be lower in ethnically diverse communities. In fact, some scholars have even contended that researchers should not even address this hypothesis anymore and should instead place focus on explaining its cross-national standing and salience (Habyarimana et al. 2007).

Recent inquiry has revealed that there exists variation in the diversity debit problem when observed across national, sub-national, and district levels (Gerring et al. 2015). To account for the general phenomenon of diversity debit, political economists have drawn from well-known Western-centric theoretical traditions to argue that diverse communities intrinsically have a harder time in engaging in and establishing collective action (Kosolapov et al. 2005). Others argue that social networks are stronger among members belonging to the same ethnic group which makes cross-movement mass mobilization more difficult to achieve for ethnic groups as they will tend to stick with their own kin. Institutional-based explanations tend to adopt neoliberal assumptions on political participation and place emphasis on democratic institutions which are argued to be able to deal with and alleviate conditions of poverty to superior extent than non-democracies (Boone, 1996; Bueno de Mesquita & Hilton, 2000). Since citizens can vote in elections and aim petitions at political elites, this is argued to incentivize bureaucrats and representatives to respond to the demands of their constituency.

In light of rapid ongoing changes to the global economy and the rise of alternative international institutions such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), recent years have seen countries that contain upwards of 3 billion people put forward an alternative to political and economic suppositions that have long been espoused through Western hegemonic structures. This study demonstrates that the diversity-debit hypothesis and its numerous associated theoretical justifications have been articulated by a scholarly tradition that has reinforced classical capitalistic and neoliberal practices and ideas. Such ideas sustain subjugating tendencies that are necessary for the functioning of Western economic and political hegemony. Specifically, aforementioned explanatory frameworks of the diversity debit problem illustrate how rationality can serve as a modality of negation. It is the fault of the poor and their lack of organizational capability which are (incorrectly) theorized to underpin diversity debit. These viewpoints reflect hegemonic neoliberal models of economics that place societal faults and adverse outcomes at the hands of the individual. With a massive amount of scholarly attention being cast on the diversity debit problem, it is indeed surprising that up to now, this topic has not been investigated through a critical lens.

Few studies have taken grander political and historical factors into consideration that are outside the narrow scope of rationalistic justifications which have been brought up to account for the diversity debit issue. Singh and vom Hau (2016) argue processes of state formation and variance in state capacity can account for the diversity debit problem. Wimmer (2016) makes similar claims by arguing that ethnic boundaries are not fully exogenous to the historical processes that created them (Wimmer, 2016). Nevertheless, a crucial omission still remains. This study demonstrates that ethnic boundaries are not exogenous to economic conditions in which they subside. While my aim is not to “solve” the diversity debit problem, the analysis put forward in this study offers a much-needed critical glance into how adverse outcomes tend to arise in three different contexts that are representative of an established and advanced economy (the US), a rapidly growing neoliberal state (Turkey), and a highly ethnically diverse former Communist state (Vietnam). The analysis reveals that the diversity debit phenomenon is causally complex and empirically brought about as a result of factors that are akin to *structure* – featuring historical capitalistic and contemporary neoliberal forces and to *agency* – in which political and economic elites exercise and engage in discriminatory behaviors, antagonization, and corporate profiteering.

In developing this argument throughout this study, I first problematize existing theoretical underpinnings of the diversity debit hypothesis. I then carry out three country-level case studies of socially heterogeneous contexts (United States; Turkey; Vietnam) and apply an alternative theoretical framework to account for diversity debit outcomes across these contexts. The analysis reveals that the diversity debit problem is much more complex and intricate than previously considered. Regardless of whether ethnic groups overcame collective action problems and organized themselves into a political force representative of different ethnic and class interests, the ultimate outcome of uneven economic and social distribution still ensued.

Diversity Debit

The diversity debit hypothesis entails that social heterogeneity is associated with adverse economic and political outcomes. Heterogeneity is usually measured according to linguistic and religious differences in populations, and is most frequently associated with ethnicity. To measure ethnic differences in a given societal context, the ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF) has been utilized by scholars. This is a statistical index that ranges from 0 (homogeneous societal composition) to 1 (maximal societal differentiation). Many also draw on the Herfindahl index which approximates a probability that two randomly chosen individuals within a society are members of different ethnolinguistic groups (Gerring et al. 2015). Ethnic heterogeneity has been correlated with inferior

provisioning of public goods when compared to ethnic homogeneity. Countries and populations that are ethnically diverse, on average, experience lower rates of economic growth (Easterly and Levine, 1997). These results remain salient when viewed nationally as well. For example, several widely referenced studies found this to be true in the United States (Alesina et al. 1999; Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). Others identified similar adverse outcomes in Zambia (Gisselquist et al. 2016). Why then, is ethnic diversity such a burden on economic, political, and social dynamics? Some economists have argued that ethnicity increases social distances between groups in a given societal context and this in turn, makes ethnic divisions more salient than class divisions (Berge et al. 2015). These dynamics have been observed to manifest alongside ethnic groups' cultural, linguistic, and network-based characteristics.

Political scientists have contended that ethnic differences make it harder for individuals, especially those of low economic status, to identify with other members of society with either identical or similar backgrounds (Habyariman et al. 2007). Accompanying observations can be traced not only in studies investigating cross-national data, but also in regional inquiries as well as qualitative assessments on the country-level. For instance, Van De Walle (2003) observed that the identity of workers and those employed in manufacturing industries were threatened as a result of ethnic cleavages across different contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Along similar lines, Alesina and affiliated scholars have posited that because of rampant ethnic heterogeneity, the US never experienced the same degree of working-class mobilization as in Europe and in turn, welfare state development (Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). Similar research has revealed that ethnically segregated neighborhoods in the US tend to support welfare redistribution for their groups belonging to their same racial background, while simultaneously voicing less support for other racial groups (Luttmer, 2001).

Another prominent finding belonging to the diversity debit problem is the pronounced lack of trust that ethnically diverse societies tend to experience. As political scientists have long noted, civil societies and civic association cannot flourish in social contexts lacking in trust. In an analysis of 44 countries, Anderson and Paskeviciute (2006) investigated levels of interpersonal trust and found that ethnic heterogeneity is negatively associated with this trust. This relationship is also variant in terms of established versus weak democracies, with the former experiencing greater levels of trust. Annett (2001) discovered that high levels of ethnic fractionalization are correlated with social conflict. Scholars have also attributed information inaccessibility to the diversity debit problem. Many economically disadvantaged citizens suffer from low rates of literacy, have less access to information, and are less aware of public policies than other more privileged groups. Khemani and Keefer (2005) refer to this as an information asymmetry imbalance between ethnically segregated groups and those that form the majority. Ethnic heterogeneity has also been observed to be positively correlated with societal and political corruption – ethnically diverse societies tend to be more corrupt on average (Mauro 1995; La Porta et al. 1999; Glaeser & Saks 2006; Alesina et al. 2012).

In one of the more comprehensive (cross-national) assessments to date, Gerring et al. (2015) investigated the impact of diversity on development outcomes through Demographic and Health Survey data on 36 different countries, 271 regions, and 322 districts. The outcomes of 1) child birth rate, 2) child mortality rate, 3) personal education levels, 4) personal wealth were examined with relation to diversity on the three noted levels. While diversity was found to be positively associated with only one of four outcomes on the national level (children born), it was positively associated with three of four outcomes on sub-national levels (lower child mortality; higher educational attainment; greater wealth/income). These findings raised an important implication for the literature – that the diversity debit hypothesis may falter when it comes to sub-national contexts. As Bharathi and Malghan (2018) note, there is no consensus one why this is so, yet they do point out that migratory waves within a given country can bring about optimal sorting wherein economically productive

workers move to socially diverse geographical areas (such as cities). In turn this may lead to positive outcomes in diverse societal contexts.

With these identified patterns in mind, it is important to keep in mind that social scientists' explanations that have been articulated in response to the diversity deficit problem are premised on very particular assumptions of political and economic reality and that such approaches inherently fail to demarcate the scientific characteristics of "social science" away from underlying ideological influences. In order to problematize this hypothesis and its explanations, we must ask the following questions: how can we characterize the phenomenon and its associated practices? Where did its explanations originate from and how did they get entrained in scholarly discourse? What are the logics that underpin and govern its assumptions? (Glynos & Howarth, 2008). This brings us to the beginning stage of my assessment.

Rationality and Collective Action

Rational choice theory (RCT) underpins most scholarly accounts of the diversity deficit problem. Since the 1960s a set of theoretical premises have grown to be definitive across economics and political science. Rational choice is part of what is frequently referred to as the "homo economicus" mode of thought (Labiano, 2000). It suggests that human beings are not only individualistic in their nature, but they are also self-interested, distrustful of one another, and fearful of insecurity - echoing the classical philosophical work of Thomas Hobbes (Labiano 2000, p. 145). RCT is heavily embedded in Olson's (1965) *Logic of Collective Action* which shifted attention to a rational ontology of human nature. Olson, similar to the many liberal thinkers that preceded him (even centuries prior), reasoned that rationality is the fundamental diagnostic of human behavior. A primary premise of Olson's argument is that governmental public policies are in themselves, public goods. This entails that obtaining favorable governance for a given society or segment of society is not predetermined, but rather, is conditional on the ability of a given group to be able to engage in successful collective action.

For a given group or organization to be successful, individuals need to be able to strategically organize membership through providing selective incentives. This is especially important if a group is to successfully obtain public goods. Monitoring members of a group, rewarding them for cooperative behavior, and punishing them for bad behavior is necessary, argued Olson (1965). In other words, monitoring and providing selective incentives to members of organizations or groups is essential due to the proposed intrinsic, selfish, and egotistical nature of human beings. Why participate in a protest or contribute to a group or organization if you can reap the benefits from it without putting in your own time and resources? This line of reasoning introduced the classical free-rider problem. Olson's (1965) work was of great significance as it not only changed the understanding of what many considered to be the nature of protest and revolutionary struggle, but it also spurred subsequent scholarship which led researchers to posit new concepts such as a rebel's dilemma (Lichbach, 1998). For example, Lichbach (1998) argued that an opposition movement can never get too large (e.g., 5% or more of an entire population) because of the free-riding problem. Protesters will weigh the costs of participating in collective action. If a social movement fails to provide selective-incentives to its members, there will be free riders that will take advantage of the resources of the movement at large, and in the end, the movement might not be able to sustain enough participation to achieve its goals.

These strategic dynamics have been applied to organizations and their experiences within institutional and market-based processes. For instance, Sandler (2015) gives sector specific examples of firms (find this info) strategically failing to dedicate adequate resources to lobby political actors because they know they can free ride on the lobbying activities that other firms engage in. Along these lines, political economists have theorized that ethnicity is a major barrier in the way of

collective action, and thus many in this tradition believe that the reason behind why economically disadvantaged segments of a population and specific communities do not obtain a greater number of resources from their representatives is because of their failure to act collectively. Some have accounted for these processes through the causal mechanisms of “ethnic egotism” and “preference divergence” (Wimmer, 2016). Ethnic egotism entails that in heterogeneous socio-demographic contexts, individuals may not want to share public goods with other ethnic groups. Collective action is also believed to be difficult for individuals to achieve if they have divergent preferences. These argumentative points have significant implications: societal heterogeneity is assumed to bring about a dysconnectivity effect that impacts the ability of populations to put forward cohesive demands to political representatives and hence, governments do not provide adequate public goods to those that need it most because of the latter’s lack of organizational capability. In the worst of cases, patronage networks will form as governmental actors will address specific groups that can successfully summon their preferences into coherent policy demands, while leaving those that cannot behind. For instance, in a case study of political parties and politician-public preference ordering in Mali, Gottlieb (2015) discovered that opposition parties that were held accountable to their electorate were likelier to provide public goods.

Among the most cited political economy research on welfare spending confers these points – electoral competition leads to more spending by governments on welfare (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2002). This brings us to the central political assumptions in this literature. Democracy is said to provide bureaucrats and political representatives incentives to respond to their electorate. The most compelling of incentives for political elites is re-election and in order to get re-elected, one must adhere to his/her constituency through responsive provisioning of public goods. In contrast, groups must be able to organize themselves accordingly to pressure their representatives for favorable public policy creation. As such, it becomes clear that justifications and theory behind the diversity deficit hypothesis serve specific political practices (democratic governance) and their origin is in the homo economicus framework of human behavior. If democracy does not work for all segments of society (ethnic groups or the poor), it is not due to corporations, groups of ruling elites manipulating markets for profit, the offshoring of industry for cheaper labor, or due to structural economic forces such as the never-ending need to acquire surplus profit, but rather, fault gets placed on the individual and his/her surrounding group. The installment of these ideas into scholarly discourse is influenced by the embeddedness of rational choice theory in the social sciences (especially in economics) as well as neoliberal logics. The promotion of such policies and their accompanying arguments is indicative of global power in international politics (Wolff, 2015).

Collective Action to No Avail?

The last few decades in the West have spawned the outgrowth of an oligarchic configuration of politics (Hutter et al. 2018). Liberal democracies increasingly rely on governance models that keep elites immune from popular claims, collective mobilization, and governance continues to shift to outside the setting of democratic competition. Special sector authorities that claim to be politically neutral play a crucial role in governance processes through the “technicization of political decisions” (Caruso & Cini, 2020). What sets apart recent history from previous eras is a marked lack of resistance to an ever-changing configuration of capitalistic order. Organizing into any significant class-based movement is just about unachievable in today’s political milieu. In agreement with Hassan (2012), market forces in the age of neoliberalism (since the late 1970s) and accompanying technological change have functioned as “abstract forces that are not under any meaningful democratic control anywhere in the world” (Hassan, 2012, p. 294). The age-old Marxian concept of “common ruin” of class identity now prevails as a formless logic and is present in networked globalization (Hassan,

2012). Populations across much of the world are now living under a new paradigm of capital in which resistance to it is minimal and disjointed.

Thus, before we can understand why ethnic group mobilization cannot be fruitful in a capitalistic context, we first have to consider the ailments of middle classes. For the numerous protests and mass movements of resistance that do unfold on a yearly basis around the world, nearly all seek to democratize their polis and liberalize markets. Democracy, unfortunately, in its modern manifestation, is a mere front for capitalistic economic structures at its best, and one of the ultimate and most successful scams in human history at its worst. Kropotkin pointed this out over a century ago in his comparative analyses of historical economic and social configurations in *the Conquest for Bread* [1906] in which he wrote, "A society founded on serfdom is in keeping with absolute monarchy; a society based on the wage system and the exploitation of the masses by the capitalists finds its political expression in parliamentarianism" (Kropotkin, 2011, p. 42). While middle classes fail to see their incomes rise, minority groups also suffer. This is precisely why "affirmative action" programs tend to fail in bringing about their intended results (Sander & Taylor Jr., 2012).

Irrespective of electoral mechanisms that are argued to be intended for middle classes (e.g., political representatives are assumed by political scientists to respond to the preferences of the median voter), and state-centered programs aimed at improving the socio-economic well-being of minority groups, empirically, the market reigns supreme and the central logic of the market means that there can only be a handful of winners. By placing fault onto the individual level, scholars in the diversity debit literature have neatly shifted attention away from the many discriminatory practices that not only sustain neoliberalism and market values, but uphold the structural positioning of the West within neoliberal globalization. In fact, twentieth century history has shown us that when markets do not have room to exist or have run the course of their exploitative cycle, then they must be recreated anew. This is why scholars have equated colonialism and imperialism with the expansion of capitalist markets (Pradella, 2017; Caruso & Cini, 2020). This does not merely mean that capitalism or unequal outcomes are completely identical across space and time. Rather, as the subsequent sections of this study will reveal, such outcomes are variant and are contingent upon complex dynamics and interactions that get brought about by an interplay of structural and agency-based forces that manifest according to cultural, historical, and other qualitative characteristics. None of these forces, importantly, can be accounted for by aforementioned individual faults and insufficiencies.

The Subjugation of Minority Groups: Insights from Three Countries

The following analysis features three different country level cases (the US, Turkey, and Vietnam) in which the statuses of minority groups will be assessed across ethnic, religious, social, economic, and political boundaries. These cases were selected according to the most different systems design which entails that the sample of cases differ in their independent variables (Landman, 2008). For instance, the chosen countries vary in terms of their type of governmental system, degree of ethnic heterogeneity, historical legacies of discrimination, income levels, among other factors such as the age of the governing polity. The US has possessed more or less the same governmental structure since 1789, Turkey since 1923, and Vietnam since 1975. I also will give attention to the temporal variance of processes that have left minority groups in disadvantageous positions. For example, the US has experienced slow moving processes of high level Federal based discrimination which were static for over a century but then transmuted into lower-level state-based discrimination. Other countries such as Turkey have experienced national level discrimination that was intensified when neoliberal structures were molded into governance status quos, whereas in Vietnam, temporally rapid processes of privatization were accompanied with new state policies of land grabs and ethnic discrimination.

While these independent characteristics belonging to each case are variant, there is similarity in the dependent variable (diversity debit) because it is present in all three cases. To investigate these similarities, I will overview the status of minority groups across important historical events, political processes, and economic outcomes. This will enable us to ascertain whether the agency of these groups was visible through collective mobilization and if it turned out to be causally relevant for their socio-economic standing. Throughout this analysis, emphasis will be placed on capitalistic forces that are indicative of structure and on agency which can be observed across behaviors of governmental and political elites as well as corporations. Before carrying out these three case studies, Table 1 reveals information drawn from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset which features data on ethnic groups' access to executive power from 1946-2017 (Vogt et al. 2015). The EPR data are considered some of the best in terms the number of groups present in observations (more than 800 in total) across every country in the world. Ethnicity is defined as "a subjectively experienced sense of commonality based on a belief in common ancestry and shared culture." The dataset codes how representatives from ethnic groups held executive-level state power and also measures their degree of control and political discrimination.

Table 1. Ethnic Power Relations in the United States, Turkey, and Vietnam

Country	from	to	group	size	status
United States	1946	1965	Whites	0.691	MONOPOLY
United States	1946	1965	Latinos	0.125	IRRELEVANT
United States	1946	1965	African Americans	0.124	DISCRIMINATED
United States	1946	1965	Asian Americans	0.036	IRRELEVANT
United States	1946	1965	American Indians	0.0078	POWERLESS
United States	1946	1965	Arab Americans	0.0042	IRRELEVANT
United States	1966	2008	Whites	0.691	DOMINANT
United States	1966	2008	Latinos	0.125	POWERLESS
United States	1966	2008	African Americans	0.124	POWERLESS
United States	1966	2008	Asian Americans	0.036	POWERLESS
United States	1966	2008	American Indians	0.0078	POWERLESS
United States	1966	2008	Arab Americans	0.0042	POWERLESS
United States	2009	2014	Whites	0.66	SENIOR PARTNER
United States	2009	2014	Latinos	0.15	JUNIOR PARTNER
United States	2009	2014	African Americans	0.124	JUNIOR PARTNER
United States	2009	2014	Asian Americans	0.044	JUNIOR PARTNER
United States	2009	2014	American Indians	0.0078	POWERLESS
United States	2009	2014	Arab Americans	0.005	POWERLESS
United States	2015	2017	Whites	0.66	SENIOR PARTNER
United States	2015	2017	Latinos	0.15	JUNIOR PARTNER
United States	2015	2017	African Americans	0.124	JUNIOR PARTNER
United States	2015	2017	Asian Americans	0.044	POWERLESS
United States	2015	2017	American Indians	0.0078	POWERLESS
United States	2015	2017	Arab Americans	0.005	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1954	1975	Kinh (Vietnamese)	0.794507	DOMINANT
Vietnam	1954	1975	Tay	0.018311	IRRELEVANT

Country	from	to	group	size	status
Vietnam	1954	1975	Thai	0.016277	IRRELEVANT
Vietnam	1954	1975	Muong	0.014242	IRRELEVANT
Vietnam	1954	1975	Hoa (Chinese)	0.010173	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1954	1975	Nung	0.010173	IRRELEVANT
Vietnam	1954	1975	Hmong	0.009156	IRRELEVANT
Vietnam	1954	1975	Dao	0.007121	IRRELEVANT
Vietnam	1976	1978	Kinh (Vietnamese)	0.781	DOMINANT
Vietnam	1976	1978	Tay	0.018	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Thai	0.016	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Muong	0.014	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Khmer	0.013	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Hoa (Chinese)	0.01	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Nung	0.01	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Hmong	0.009	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Dao	0.007	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1976	1978	Gia Rai	0.004	DISCRIMINATED
Vietnam	1979	2017	Kinh (Vietnamese)	0.85	DOMINANT
Vietnam	1979	2017	Tay	0.018	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Thai	0.018	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Muong	0.015	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Khmer	0.014	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Hoa (Chinese)	0.01	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Hmong	0.01	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Nung	0.01	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Dao	0.007	POWERLESS
Vietnam	1979	2017	Gia Rai	0.004	POWERLESS
Turkey	1946	2017	Turkish	0.75	MONOPOLY
Turkey	1946	2017	Kurds	0.18	DISCRIMINATED
Turkey	1946	2017	Roma	0.0066	DISCRIMINATED

Data are featured on the US context from the 1946-2017; Vietnam from 1954-2017; Turkey 1946-2017. As readers will observe, these data do not include all possible ethnic groups in each of these countries, but they do nevertheless offer the most comprehensive quantitative measures available. The column titled “status” captures the following tiers of political power (as defined in the EPR Codebook)¹ – *Monopoly*: group rules alone; *Dominance*: elite members hold monopoly power in the executive to the exclusion of members of all other ethnic groups and elite members of the group hold dominant power in the executive but there is some limited inclusion of “token” members of other groups who however do not have real influence on decision making; *Senior Partner*: representatives of the group participate as senior partners in a formal or informal power-sharing arrangement. By power sharing, we mean any arrangement that divides executive power among leaders who claim to represent particular ethnic groups and who have real influence on political decision making; *Junior Partner*: Representatives participate as junior partners in government; *Powerless*: elite representatives hold no political power (or do not have influence on decision making) at the national

1 The codebook is publicly accessible at: https://icr.ethz.ch/data/epr/core/EPR_2019_Codebook_EPR.pdf

level of executive power - although without being explicitly discriminated against; *Discrimination*: group members are subjected to active, intentional, and targeted discrimination by the state, with the intent of excluding them from political power. Such active discrimination can be either formal or informal, but always refers to the domain of public politics (excluding discrimination in the socio-economic sphere).

United States

Over a long span of history, both Federal and state governments have subjugated minority segments of the American population. The American people are ethnically, linguistically, economically, and politically diverse. Notions of freedom are realized through the pursuit of happiness and private property acquisition in a society that in its contemporary form, is considered to consist of chiefly free individuals. Although the US is formally a pluralistic democracy that features regular elections, an independent press, and an assorted civil society, the diversity debit problem is still salient in this country. In multiple ways, this is the perfect milieu for which to investigate the diversity debit problem. Of our three cases under attention in this study, the US has the utmost functioning democratic institutions and the greatest historical degree of civic association. The interplay of structure (economic/market forces) and agency (the incentives and behavior of state and non-state actors) have contributed to diversity debit in the US.

According to the Institute for Research on Poverty (University of Wisconsin-Madison), since 1959, non-Hispanic Whites in the US have lived in lower poverty in comparison to Hispanics and Blacks. As of 2011, 27% of Blacks and 25% of Hispanics were living in poverty whereas only 9.7% of the majority group (Whites) were. American slavery was a rigorous capitalistic endeavor and its exploitative effects were ravaging for the Black segment of the population. When British settlers, especially those from rural areas of Scotland arrived into the US South, the vast amounts of land they acquired were incomparable to anything they had seen in their country of origin. The vast land, however, was worth very little if there was no labor available to work the land. Hence, early on in American colonial history, shifting into the 19th century and well into the 20th century, America became the world's largest cotton producer (Rivoli, 2014). Slave labor played a mighty role in the production of cotton. In comparison to serfdom which was prevalent across much of Central and Eastern Europe at the same time in which slavery was present in America, the US system of slavery resulted in the total subjugation of a segment of the population that never fully recovered. The necessity of importing slaves and then up-keeping the slave labor system in the US was dictated by economic structure – in that there was no physical way to reap profits and produce cotton without human beings working the land.

The Fifteenth amendment to the constitution (1870) granted a degree of freedom to male slaves, but political representation was never realized completely due to the enactment of Jim Crow Laws in the South. After Jim Crow, the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) resulted in an institutionalized (Supreme Court) mandated status quo which upheld discrimination along the lines of *separate but equal*. Former slaves never actually obtained political representation and significant protection under both state and Federal law until nearly a century after the abolishing of slavery. As late as the 1960s, what at the time was the largest minority group in the US (Blacks), were categorically excluded from participation in politics. Although abolished, the effect of racism on US institutions was prevalent for more than a hundred years after. Although the 1960s ended formal federally upheld discrimination, discriminatory practices shifted to lower levels, including state governments. Evidence even exists of this effect today on a political level in the highly conspicuous practice of gerrymandering (Lipsitz, 2011; Tarter, 2019).

The most salient attempt of cross-societal collective mobilization waged by Black citizens in the US was the 1960s Civil Rights movement, led by Martin Luther King Jr. The movement, numbering in the millions, did bring about new political inclusiveness for Blacks (e.g., the Congressional passage of the Civil Rights Act), and resulted in subsequent higher wages and better economic opportunities. There are however, a significant number of citizens that believe the movement failed – in fact, recent survey evidence indicates that nearly half of all Blacks believe the movement was not a success (Santoro, 2015). Apart from the Civil Rights movement, very few instances of mobilization can be observed throughout US history in which a minority group obtained significant concessions from the government.² The caveat here is that when concessions were granted, their impact was positive in one realm, but highly negative in another. The impact to civil rights laws of the 1960s/70s were excluded from surveys, hence it was impossible to gauge their effects statistically, particularly in terms of their association with inequality (Pettit & Sykes, 2015). What's more, after the Civil Rights movement, mass incarceration started to pick up and resulted in a rapid expansion and growth of the prison system. As discovered by Pettit and Sykes (2015), "in the post–Great Recession era, young black men who have dropped out of high school are more likely to be incarcerated than working in the paid labor force."

On the other hand, throughout much of US history, Mexican-Americans have experienced what Ortiz and Telles (2012) argue is second-class citizen treatment. The historical incorporation of Mexicans into the Mexican-American category was carried out through a grueling process in which many Mexicans were granted US citizenship, but at the same time lost their property (Ortiz & Telles, 2012). What's more, Mexicans became demoted to low-status labor positions. They were discriminated upon in schools and workplaces. In 1953, the US government formally launched what was called "Operation Wetback," in order to deport nearly four million ethnic Mexicans, most of which were US citizens (Astor, 2009). Minority groups also do not experience the same outcomes when it comes to accessing public goods. For example, clean air and water are arguably the most significant of all public goods, but not all groups have equal access to these public goods. Pulido et al. (2016), ascertain that regulations in ethnically poor communities in the US have been inequitably enforced. Through case studies conducted in California, Texas, and in Georgia, the authors find that even though environmental activism has been recurrent and salient in these two states, organized and well-articulated demands have failed to bring about environmental conditions and regulations in minority communities. Although organized collective interests are achieved by ethnic groups in these contexts, either environmental regulations get explicitly ignored or no regulations get implemented at all.

One particular qualitative example of how this has occurred can be observed in California and the Exide Corporation (a battery recycling conglomerate). In recent decades, the Exide Corporation was observed to be operating on expired permits. The corporation has been accused of dumping toxic dust on neighborhoods in East Los Angeles and Maywood, specifically in Latino/working class communities. Pulido et al. (2016) explain how residents have filed complaints about arsenic emissions from the plant – arguing that these emissions have caused illnesses such as cancer and respiratory disease. Over the course of thirteen years (2000-2013), the Exide Corporation was cited 41 times for excessive lead emissions, but was still allowed to continue operations. Protesters have pressured the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), and over the years have experienced what Pulido et al., (2016) coin to be environmental racism. Similarly, in Texas, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has also failed to control environmental pollution in poor communities, again with practices related to the Exide company. Pulido et al. (2016) argue that

² This claim also applies to societal wide mobilization – apart from mass unionization during the 1930s or the anti-war (Vietnam) protests, few instances can be observed.

these two agencies have failed to protect the public. Tens of thousands of local residents still live in contaminated neighborhoods.

In Newtown, Georgia, predominantly Black communities have suffered not from bad regulations, but from a lack of regulations. Newtown is situated in the center of a number of different industrial sights, and over the last half century its residents have experienced high cancer rates. The major complaints of Newtown's residents are dust pollution and excess noise. Withal, even though complaints have been made and formally put forward to political representatives, they have not been adequately addressed over the last decades due to the activities of a primary polluter (a junkyard) which is designated as too small of an entity to be addressed by state and Federal monitors. The junkyard, thus, has had to abide by the Georgia *Regulated Metals Recycling Law*. Over the last decade, there have been many attempts by activists and residents to pressure lawmakers and bureaucrats in search of regulations, but hitherto, there has been reoccurring political failure.

These examples reveal that adverse outcomes are continuously being experienced by ethnic minority groups which are not as bold or severe as previous outcomes that were tied to Federal level discrimination, yet such outcomes are still important because they elucidate how diversity debit can still arise and ensue in a context that is theoretically ripe for its overcoming. In other words, ethnic groups were able to organize themselves, attract cross-ethnic support, put pressure on political representatives, but still could not alleviate their problems. There are a variety of other examples low-level processes ongoing which highlight how even in our present-day period of time, ethnic communities are failing to obtain public goods either as a result of indirect institutional discrimination or due to market forces and governmental failure of industrial regulation (e.g., Flint, MI water crisis).

Turkey

In Turkey, dynamics akin to state identity formation have consistently brought about human rights violations towards particular ethnic identities (Jongerden, 2003). Similar to the US context, in order to understand different adverse outcomes experienced by ethnic groups, one must begin the analysis at the historical origin of statehood. In Turkey, an interesting configuration of secularist premised political ideology emerged after the fall of the Ottoman empire. Here, the Turkish nation state came into being in the early 1920s when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk articulated a distinct ideology premised on a secularized polity that was imagined to be compatible with democratic conventions of Europe – this was formalized in a framework that ended up being referred to as *Republicanism* (Lewis, 1968, p. 414). In 1930 women were able to vote and by 1934 universal suffrage was achieved. Nevertheless, the exclusion of minority groups from dominant governmental positions were consistently carried out for political gain (Yeğen, 1996). In some cases, this was accomplished via the Guardian state, an institutional structure that was overseen by the Turkish Armed forces (Demirel, 2004). Governing elites frequently repressed those not fitting in with their perceived goals and these included Kurds, Communists, and religious groups such as Alevis. The latter are a Shiite minority religious group that make up nearly 20 percent of the Turkish population and have experienced significant historical persecution (Jongerden, 2003, p. 73).

In the 1960s and 70s, Marxist, socialist and various other left wing movements arose and posed highly threatening demands to governmental status quos, but were ultimately unsuccessful. The 1980s on the other hand, were filled with economic distress and separatism during a Kurdish insurgency against the Turkish state that began in 1984 for the hope of establishing an independent Kurdistan. Economically, by the 1980s, processes of neoliberalization began to make their way into Turkey. The instilling of neoliberalism into the Turkish economy and polity was accomplished by Ozal as well as the military junta who made what Blad and Kocer (2012) argue was a strategic effort to

reconcile many contradictory requirements of the neoliberal state. This in turn would rid the state of its protectionist ability and help to “legitimate authority for the purposes of capital accumulation” (Blad & Kocer, 2012, p. 51). By 1999, Turkey had agreed on a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) where a program was accepted that sought to settle down, privatize, and accordingly “soothe” Turkey’s unsteady economy (Bakir and Onis, 2010). In the 2000s, a significant portion of the citizenry and voters shifted away from the Kemalist Elite in favor of the AKP.

The AKP (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi) has controlled the Turkish polity since 2002 and can be viewed as a regime rooted in a new historical epoch; it has been highly effective electorally, and has obtained a wide array of political support (Türkün, 2013). What needs to be considered here is that even with IMF packages, it was the earlier shift to a neoliberal governance model that made an “efficacy of Islamist politics in Turkey” possible (Blad & Kocer, 2012). By the time the AKP came onto the Turkish political platform, it offered what Tugal notes was an “alternative Islamist elite” that has since gained support from some secularists (Tugal, 2009). While high rates of profit and private surpluses have accumulated, socio-economic dynamics have left many behind under the AKP’s tenure. As noted by Zülfikar Doğan, poverty has increased with nearly 50 percent of the Turkish population living at or near the poverty line (Zülfikar, 2015). The AKP government and its historical rule contain two important components: these are a Western-supported (IMF) neoliberal economic expansion scheme that operates at all levels of state and infrastructural development, and the articulation of a new symbol of Turkish citizenship. In AKP discourse, individualism and economic entrepreneurship have been championed as elements belonging to a “good” category of citizenship. Tax-loops have enabled the AKP to gain great support from the corporate sector while keeping union rights minimal. These processes are most visible in the sphere of housing. The TOKI, with aid from the AKP, has engaged in acts of flattening and literally bulldozing entire poor neighborhoods (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011). David Harvey (2012) notes similar processes at work in upscale areas of globalized cities such as New York city (Manhattan) and London (central). This has brought about ruinous outcomes for underprivileged populations (Harvey, 2012, p. 29).

Previously suppressed segments of the population (Kurds and Alevis – two of the largest ethnic and religious minority groups) continue to be antagonized in relation to the articulation of a “good” citizen. This echoes a larger historical trend from modern Turkish history – Kurds and Alevis have experienced disproportionately low rates of political participation as a result of historical occurrences and state practices (Grigoriadis, 2006). Survey evidence has verified these prejudices and discriminatory practices (Sarigil, 2018). Economic disparities between Kurds and Alevis when compared to Sunnis (the majority group) are vast. Kurdish regions in Turkey are by far the poorest (Shatzmiller, 2005). Throughout western cities in Turkey, Kurds are considered to be scavengers, benefit seekers and get blamed for rambunctious neighborhood conduct (Saraçoğlu, 2010). This is the binary opposite of the hard-working AKP voter aimed at progressing oneself through material development. In recent years, the Kurdish minority in Turkey have increasingly suffered from what Gambetti notes are violent responses (in the form of mob violence) that have been cast on Kurds by AKP supporters (Gambetti, 2013, p. 129). Similar outcomes have been experienced by highly segregated Roma communities throughout urban areas in Turkey. Social violence has broken out along state dictated ideological fault lines and many AKP politicians have portrayed the lynching of Kurds as a justifiable outburst of anger (Gambetti, 2013, p. 135).

As Akdemir points out, AKP dialogues regarding Alevism are always linked to the internal differences within the religion and how it relates to Sunni Islam; rather than acknowledging it as its own set of spiritual belief system (Akdemir, 2015). The Alevi population suffered immensely from rapid urbanization processes of the 1960s, and experienced several massacres during ethnic violence in the 1970s (Mutluer, 2016). Alevis are considered to be “Muslims that do not go to the Mosque,” and

the place of worship of Alevis (called Cemevi) are not recognized as actual locations of worship by the state (Akdemir, 2015, p. 71). What's more, Erdogan referred to Alevi protesters during a mass civil resistance based anti-governmental uprising (Gezi) in 2013 as "our Alevi Brothers," yet neither Erdoğan or any other AKP members would refer to their own party's and Turkey's majority (Sunni) religious population as "our Sunni-Brothers" (Akdemir, 2015, p. 73).

In recent years, the AKP has led a re-naming campaign having to do with newly constructed landmarks. For example, a mega-project bridge was named after a historical Ottoman ruler (Yavuz Sultan Selim), who oversaw the massacring of Alevi populations centuries ago. These are pertinent realities because collective mobilization is an uphill battle for these minority groups. On one hand, the Kurds sought territorial secession three decades ago, were defeated in conflict, and since, have been banned from parliamentary involvement and increasingly suffer from societal discrimination. On the other hand, Alevis are systematically antagonized by political leadership which brings us back to our claim that even if a cross-societal movement does emerge, it unlikely to foster significant change in the current neoliberal landscape. This entails that ethnic-based collective mobilization under a representative democratic system has an even smaller likelihood of leading to the types of outcomes that rational choice theorists believe it can. Such an oppositional challenge did indeed arise in Turkey, and was one of the largest protests in the country's modern history.

The 2013 Gezi movement began as a relatively low-profile peaceful protest in Istanbul which turned into a country-wide mass uprising. Dissent was triggered by the repression of environmental activists who were protesting an urbanization plan that sought to remove trees in a historic park (Anisin, 2016). In multiple ways, the state-led cooperative endeavor with a major development firm elucidated the salience of a neoliberal inter-linkage of decision making between elites and governmental actors that had been taking place for an entire decade prior to June of 2013. Upwards of two million protesters were dissenting in over 70 different cities in the country calling for regime change. The Gezi movement was very diverse in terms of demographic, social, religious, and political preferences (KONDA 2014). It featured participation from Kurds, Alevis, unions, youth, socialist groups, students, the elderly, and a variety of other segments of society. Yet similar to many other mass movements that have arisen in neoliberal contexts over the last several decades (e.g., Occupy Wall Street), Gezi was ultimately unsuccessful, and the socioeconomic well-being of the noted minority groups have not significantly improved even though such groups were able to organize themselves with other groups, establish collective action, and pressure political elites.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, economic growth has outpaced nearly every other country in the world if viewed from the time of the end of the Cold War up until present. Yet, market forces have left dozens of ethnic minority groups behind, even in light of significant state funding for social welfare and development. Put differently, state funding for social welfare, poverty, education, and other development categories has not brought about its intended effects – over the span of 1993-2014, notable indicators of the development gap between the majority group and minority groups widened (Fujii, 2018). In contrast to the US and Turkey, Vietnam illustrates how a state-centric approach of mass funding towards minority groups does not solve the diversity debit issue. This is fascinating as the diversity debit problem still persists, even in light of specific state policies that have targeted it. In fact, the 1990s still featured a significant degree of socialist ideas voiced by Vietnamese political elites who tried to constrain neoliberal reforms. This is observable in the rejection of WTO membership and other trade deals, and similarly, social policies during this decade were very pro-poor. Nevertheless, these policies could not alleviate the vast structural tendencies that transformed and commercialized the nation.

Although Vietnam's judicial branch of government is independent from its executive, the country is considered to be a one-party state. The institutional formation of the Vietnamese government places constraints on party leaders through what Malesky et al. (2011) argue are vertical checks and semi-competitive (one-party) elections. Vietnamese political elites have rearticulated their state ideology (similar to the Chinese model) to be complimentary to capitalism. In 1986, the state shifted its economy towards a market-compatible socialist doctrine called *Doi Moi*. Eventually, Vietnam joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), signed a free-trade agreement with the European Union, and now has a relatively open economy in comparison to some other Asian countries. The contemporary regime, interestingly enough, has articulated a logic of equivalence that combines communistic symbols alongside free market trade. This logic relies on the support of the majority ethnic group and the concurrent antagonization of minority groups.

Throughout Vietnam's transition, it became a significant actor in global markets and manufacturing. It also approved the sale of state-owned companies and mass privatization. This mixture of a one-party socialist state and a complimentary neoliberal economic structure has been a popular topic of scholarly investigations (Schwenkel & Leshkovich, 2012). Vietnam now has the worst of two systems – an authoritarian socialist state and an unfettered ideology of neoliberalism. In tandem, both of these factors have led to a tiny elite filling its pockets with large sums while touting rhetoric about socialist revolution (Davies, 2015). Of the three countries under analysis, Vietnam is by far the most ethnically diverse. In its population of 91 million, there are 54 different ethnic groups. The dominant group is primarily the Viet (Kinh) which is around 86 percent of the population (Imai et al. 2007). Another group that enjoys access to political and economic power are the Hoa which are ethnically Chinese – although only 1% of the population, this group is considered to be a part of the “majority” due to its unchained access to resources and capital (Fujii, 2018). In contrast, minority ethnic groups such as the Tay, Thai, Khmer, Muong, and Nung are greatly disadvantaged. Dang (2012), analyzed 54 different ethnic groups and discovered that even with a number of different applied government assistant programs, ethnic minority groups (when compared to the majority), live in five times of greater poverty, are four times more illiterate, and experience three times higher child labor rates (Dang, 2012). Even though development programs are aimed at the poor and specifically at ethnic groups, the regime does not actually tolerate any political pressure from these groups and ethnic minorities.

The majority (Kinh) have been observed to discriminate against ethnic minorities. Indigenous ethnic groups such as the Montagnards and Hmongs have especially suffered due to discrimination. Imai et al. (2007) found that minority groups lived in poverty at rates four times higher than majority groups. In the northwest of Vietnam, Hmong and Yao farmers argue discrimination and anti-ethnic bias put them in inexpedient positions (Tugault-Lafleur and Turner, 2011). Discrimination is carried out towards ethnic minority groups that voice their demands in attempt to preserve their heritage and land. The government has effectively kept oppositional voices out of mainstream communication channels while seizing land from minority groups. Similar to the AKP in Turkey, the ruling regime in Vietnam has cleverly articulated a cohesive bloc and logic of equivalence based around the support of a majority its population and symbols of democratic engagement, while at the same time, it has effectively differentiating and antagonizing minority groups.

Of the three countries under attention in this study, the Vietnamese ruling groups' antagonization of ethnic minority groups manifests itself in the most severe of forms. Roughshod practices of land expropriation and population displacement have left millions of ethnic group members in dire circumstances. The state has also sponsored mass migration of the majority Kinh group into once minority inhabited areas. Along with these migration processes have come arrests and civilian disappearances. Land grabs are frequent in the north-west and central-highland areas of

the country. Here state-sponsored organizations force ethnic minorities to concede their property for the purposes of developing mines, hydropower dams, and plantations (The Economist, 2015). During these processes of economic contestation, ethnic minorities have reported that they have experienced beatings and human rights violations. Religious minorities such as Protestant Christians also have voiced similar concerns. The Vietnamese government has continuously been attempting to realize its vision of high economic growth that has been supported by a new business elite which has flourished due to state privatization. This brings us back to our earlier claim – that when there is no room for a market or a given market has been used up, expansion into resource and land rich unfettered areas are the next necessary steps of capitalistic production cycles. In its justification, the ruling elite argue that the state has to be competitive in a globalized world (Balme & Sidel, 2016, p. 110). As Malesky et al. (2011) observe, ethnic minority groups in Vietnam are not only poorer, but also more vulnerable to negative shocks than those in the majority groups. This is because market-based processes are entrenched in networks of corruption – with political elites enjoying the spoils of both mass privatization as well as large scale economic growth year on end. For example, a senior government official diverted one billion dollars to his family member who now runs 20 different businesses (Davies, 2015).

Income levels of the poor are decreasing in Vietnam while the richest segment of society is prospering. What's more, nearly a third of the population has lost its land over the last two decades as a result of formerly state-owned enterprises getting privatized and seeking capital expansion. This has resulted in what Tran (2013) describes as a massive tide of peasants moving to cities in attempt to feed themselves and their families. In turn, a large informal sector has arisen in cities, specifically in sweatshops that are located in industrial parks as well as export zones. The neoliberal impact here is not only evident in the Vietnamese capitalist sector's necessity of industrializing for the goal of profit seeking, but in a new found absence of regulations and workers' rights. Tran notes that Vietnam once possessed progressive labor laws. In recent decades however, private interests have dictated state regulations on labor. The role of external actors is relevant here as the US Chamber of Commerce has also lobbied the Vietnamese state in order to offset state-sponsored unions and their ability to strike (Tran, 2013).

As one would expect, this collection of adverse occurrences that have arisen over the last several decades are ripe for the spawning of collective action. Dissent arose four different times in 1997, 2001, 2004, and in 2011. The protests of 1997 were waged by tens of thousands of farmers and peasants in Thai Binh. This prompted the state to engage in anti-poverty policy (Nguyen, 2014), which led to the creation of a state-led initiative based around "grass roots" democracy (GDD). This policy, interestingly enough, was widely discussed by international donors who coalesced with the Vietnamese state in order to offset severe poverty in rural areas. For example, most rural ethnic minority groups live on an average of 100 US dollars per year income. The impact of GDD led to more inclusive forms of governance on the local level that in the end, legitimated the interests of the state and its affiliated development donors (Larsen, 2011, p. 328). What's more, increased public participation did increase in local governance, but this nurtured a status quo of a participatory format that specifically could not challenge the central assumptions and power structures that rendered it existent in the first place.

In 2001 mobilization turned out to be the largest in the country's history since reunification in 1975. Here dissent arose in the country's central highlands where indigenous minorities unified into a peaceful campaign that sought independence, religious freedom as well as a return of their ancestral lands. The state responded with severe repression – utilizing both its police as well as armed forces who arrested, tortured, imprisoned and ultimately quarreled activists – thousands of which fled the country to Cambodia (Human Rights Watch, 2002). Afterwards, the state was observed to attempt

to “pacify” opposition groups under the prism of coercion and repression (Duncan, 2008). As these case-specific examples go to show, the recipes that scholars have spelled out for overcoming diversity debit problems have empirically been adopted by activists and regular people that have suffered from market forces and elite-led antagonization, exploitation, and discrimination, yet adverse outcomes have still been brought about.

Discussion

The three case studies on the US, Turkey, and Vietnam present us with a glimpse into how complex configurations of structure and agency interact with economic, political, historical, and cultural forces that place minority groups in adverse positions. The most salient of these dynamics are without doubt, economic in nature as the impact of capitalistic processes is overarching on societies, particularly in our contemporary neoliberal age of governance. It is crucial to also consider that minority groups are not the only segments of a population that suffer under a capitalistic system – middle classes have been all but left behind since the rise of the neoliberalist market entanglement with governance structures. In many liberal democratic states, including the U.S., beacons of free market capitalism no longer shine bright and offer little to the rest of the developing world in terms of policy making and societal progress. In the US growth in real wages has stagnated for 50 years – it is estimated that in 1970, the average family income was \$45,852 and by 2012 it had risen to only \$51,179 (Schubert, Dye & Zeigler, 2015). During this time, the participation of women in the workforce went from 40% to 70%, which entails that families hardly raised their incomes, even in light of greater workforce participation. What’s more, in 1970, the average wage was \$7.50 per hour then by 2014, it grew to only \$9.30 per hour. Meanwhile, unionization all but died off. In 1945, more than a third (35.5%) of the workforce were members of a union, by 2010 this number dwindled down to 11.9% (Schubert, Dye & Zeigler, 2015, p. 80). Unionism did not shrink because of ethnic-cleavages, but rather, was crushed by the onset of neoliberalism.

Although only one example, this stark illustration reveals how ideas of political and economic progress, as proxied by ideological presuppositions about democracy and free market capitalism, can bring about coercive conditions that ultimately disable populaces from achieving positive social change. In accounting for adverse outcomes experienced by ethnic groups cross-nationally (diversity debit), Western-centric scholarship has tended to place fault on the hands of individuals, which retrospectively, is an expected point of argumentation if we consider that the economic and political paradigms of knowledge frequently compliment, rather than contradict, the hegemonic order of the countries they arise in. The now “classical” Western international organizations in the age of neoliberalism have increasingly sought to use the issue of poverty reduction as a new way to achieve global governmentality. Such strategies, reasons Joseph (2010), ultimately serve as a means of regulating states and their behavior. These are key observations if we consider the rise of BRICS and the pending potential that this international institution has to provide populations (which number to nearly half of the world population) with a different set of social, economic, and political opportunities. In accounting for the highly skewed distribution of scholarly research which has long been dominated by Western-oriented paradigms of knowledge, de Albuquerque and Lycarião (2018) point out that, “the imbalance toward the West is not a topical phenomenon; rather, it is related to more general circumstances affecting the production and circulation of scientific knowledge related to the process of neoliberal globalization. This happens in two ways. On the one hand, as neoliberal globalization sets the rules of the game for international scientific publishing, it provides certain views (from the United States and United Kingdom, especially) with a structural advantage over others. On the other hand, neoliberal globalization is also a social agenda, which has been actively promoted by myriad agents interested in directly or indirectly influencing the academic debate” (de Albuquerque & Lycarião, 2018, p. 2875).

The rise of BRICS has offered a much-needed alternative to the IMF, World Bank, and other international institutions that have their origin in the Bretton Woods system and its hegemonic and ideational structures. BRICS' strategic abandoning of political clauses in economic development projects (such as in infrastructure planning and funding) may offer a future route that proves to be more adaptable to problems that are arising in a rapidly changing global economy and in turn, may present previously discriminated populations with more opportunities to climb up the ladder of equality. This is precisely where scholars have a role to play in identifying why problems such as diversity debit exist in some countries and not in others, or in some contexts, regions, and levels of social organization when compared to others. Although inequality is a variant but persistent problem in BRICS states, a key component of BRICS is that it presents countries with development opportunities to step away from cultural universalization and processes of norm setting that are embedded in the neo-colonial roots of Bretton Woods system institutions. As Maiorano and Manor (2017) note, in 1990 1.95 billion people across the world lived in extreme poverty. This number dropped to 896 million by 2012 and China, India, Brazil, and South Africa are responsible for much of this drastic reduction (Maiorano & Manor, 2017, p. 278). Social programs and government led initiatives (such as India's Food Security act or China's tax-for-fee initiative) played a significant role in spurring poverty reduction.

A major difference in these dynamics can be observed in the fact that programs for development and poverty reduction were not carried out with the ideological presupposition that failures of groups are down to their lack of individual utility as is present in the Western-based conception of economic development. The last century of history has shown that free-market capitalism in conjunction with liberal democracy cannot solve all political and economic issues in a given society, especially those that are akin to the diversity debit phenomenon. An aim of scholars working out of critical politically economy traditions is to continue to question and problematize theoretical premises that underlie the diversity debit problem. Porton, Rhee, and Gibson's (2022) recent inquiry into public good provision in South Africa demonstrates that ethnic heterogeneity does not undermine public good provision and that ethnic targeting may not be the most feasible or effective political strategy in increasing the quality of public goods services. Public good provision is actually more effective in municipalities that are more ethnically diverse which leads the authors to argue that the diversity debit literature undervalues the role that institutions have in shaping politicians' decision making during public good distribution. Identifying different mechanisms and processes that lead to effective public good distribution in ethnically diverse societies must done on a comparative basis. This study has shown how the US, Turkey, and Vietnam have suffered from adverse outcomes due to a complex interplay of structural and agency-based processes that feature capitalistic logics and qualitative discriminatory practices. In South Africa however, it appears that on municipal levels, legislative levels generate positive conditions for the formation of ethnic coalitions which then contribute to strong public service provisioning (Porton, Rhee, & Gibson, 2022).

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have problematized the diversity debit hypothesis and offered an alternative approach to investigate this widely studied phenomenon. To date, accounts of the diversity debit problem have been rooted in Western-centric modes of thought including rational choice theory. Scholars working out of this tradition have justified the empirical salience of diversity debit through reverting back to a hegemonic worldview that places fault on individuals while simultaneously discounts them due to their supposed failure in being able to organize themselves properly and pressure leaders to obtain public goods. The implications of this viewpoint are critical for our understanding of contemporary development policies. Since markets are considered to be free and to possess all necessary ingredients which can enable a given population to thrive and excel, significant

societal drawbacks or failures are thus intrinsically linked to the individual and his/her unification (or lack thereof) with a larger ethnic group's failure to overcome collective action problems. Repression, discrimination, and subjugation too often get concealed as being "natural" outcomes of economic practice. There is no greater evidence to support these facts than the theoretical and discursive articulations that surround the diversity debit hypothesis. The case studies carried out in this study reveal that in all three contexts, minority groups did in fact achieve rates of collective mobilization and posed threats to governmental status quos, but nevertheless, dissent failed to bring about favorable outcomes. For these reasons, scholars must abandon the claim that diversity debit is a result of individual faults or lack of democratization. Further investigation of the diversity debit problem is necessary to carry out through alternative and critically-oriented approaches. There is much to be learned in future ideologically transparent comparative social inquiry on these topics in other countries.

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BRICS immigration policies and visa regimes, strategic cooperation for a future BRICS African agenda

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Abstract

Africa is a geostrategic point of interest for the BRICS. However, the BRICS have been severely criticised for how Africa is engaged; that the manner replicates the low levels of growth that other western partners had engaged in. It is up to the BRICS to act in accordance with the narrative that has been crafted in that it is a global partner for reform. This paper explores how the BRICS may make a meaningful contribution to its Africa outreach project and global economic reform through the analysis of BRICS' immigration policies such as visa regimes to African countries in the context of a poly-pandemic world. The paper explores the international arena attempting to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic in the context of immigration policies and visa regimes as power levers, the BRICS' position on migration and their strategic engagement with Africa.

Keywords: immigration; visa regimes; emerging powers; BRICS; Africa

Introduction

The Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) partnership, which exists in the context of international asymmetries but is vested in the multi-lateral system (Abdeneur, Folly, Moura, Jordao, & Maia, 2014), are an opportunity to show international leadership on contentious issues like migration¹ and make an impact on their own interests while pushing for reform and diffusing global power through the movement of people through immigration policies and visa regimes. This is particularly important as critics question the relevance of BRICS, and the practical traction it can manifest, as well as the utility of the partnership in the future. While the benefits from cooperation are quantified more directly when compared to free trade arrangements between countries, it is anticipated that the free movement or ease of movement of people should receive as much prominence as the liberalisation of international trade (Di Battista, Doherty, Drzeniek Hanouz, & Geiger, 2014). However, as trade and finance has increased exponentially, labour flows have lagged substantially (Advan, 2019).

Africa holds a unique geostrategic placing for the BRICS. Since South Africa was included in the partnership in 2010, it has been hypothesised as a gateway to Africa in promoting closer cooperation and linking three continents that are home to the countries of the global South, Africa, Asia and South America. The focus for African governments in their engagement of the BRICS is dominated by the potential growth in economic activities. Visa regimes and the promotion of BRICS economic activities in Africa should go hand in hand because ease of movement across borders have an impact on economic benefits between the countries, although it is not a clear direct link from trade and investment to migration, the statistics available on remittances are clearer on the direct impact of migration.

This paper explores how the BRICS have approached immigration policies and visa regimes to African countries. While there is little data available on migration statistics, it is possible to link understanding

¹ This paper refers to 1) migration as the movement of people, and 2) immigration as a long-term relocation of people to another country, and 3) the rules and policies regarding the movement of people are located in immigration policy.

to remittances from the BRICS countries to African countries. The BRICS as an emerging partnership express that they want to achieve reform of global power asymmetries; power diffusion through easing migration may send a powerful message on the BRICS ability to change power asymmetries. What is the orientation of the BRICS to migration in Africa, what kind of discussion are facilitated through available platforms like the BRICS-Africa Outreach on the movement of people. This will be discussed in the following sections: the politicised impact of globalisation on immigration policies and visa regimes as power in migration; the role of the BRICS in power diffusion through migration; BRICS and migration; and the BRICS-Africa Outreach platform.

Immigration policies and visa regimes as power levers

Globalisation should engender more openness and interdependence impacting on more open borders and there is some evidence of freer movement internationally. Moreover, the anticipated added benefits of tourism, trade and investment revenue should encourage governments to remain optimistic. Yet the reaction of governments to tighten controls over the freedom of movement because of perceived threats shows deep contradictions in how countries apply the benefits of globalisation (Czaika & Neumayer, 2017); mobility is selective and seems to be more skewed towards privileged countries from the global North. With globalisation, security threats have also become more prominent and debates surrounding how do countries facilitate the movement of material gains with increased security threats and impacts on a country's grand strategy, however migration is not often discussed as such. It is important to acknowledge the impact of economic incentives and commercial partners in the opening of borders to labour strokes insecurity and ideas about nationhood, which is an additional threat to national social cohesion (Advan, 2019, pp. 2,8-9) (Czaika, De Haas, & Villares-Verla, 2018, p. 589). Before the advent of the Covid-19 outbreak globalisation and the multilateral system was already under attack; globally a rising nationalist trend has impacted governments, they face immense pressure from state and non-state actors to apply more protectionist measures. In a Covid-centric reality, migration controls have tightened and there is a large degree of uncertainty how cooperation facilitated by globalisation may recover and how this will impact migration for employment purposes in the future (Yaya & Labonte, 2020, p. 2). In spite of changing trends, immigration policies and visa regimes are complementary and will continue to hold immense value. Both are used to control the movement of people, which is inherently driven by political interests are governed by codified rules as to who has permission to access the territory and what kind of activities can be engaged in. Moreover, it has an important role in driving economic growth and development (Skrentny, 2013, p. 139).

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A visa, can be used as a tool, and serves a number of purposes: 1) catalogues and tracks migration through official documents, applications and border control; 2) controls migration and immigration, also through official documents, applications and border control; 3) demonstrates the level of closeness in political relationships; 4) reward or punish a bi-lateral partner, and 5) can determine how wealth can be accessed, and validate who has access to wealth (Czaika, De Haas, & Villares-Verla, 2018). Immigration policies and visa regimes are politically inclined.

There are a number of categories ascribed to visas, or rather levels of permissions that individuals are granted when moving across borders; however, this paper will only focus on: 1) whether a visa is required for a particular period and therefore the entry approval is required from an embassy, consulate, or other official representative, before entering the receiving country; 2) a visa is granted on arrival for a particular period that allows the traveller to obtain a visa when entering the country, which includes filling out immigration forms and paying a fee if applicable; 3) an e-VISA can be obtained from an official source through an online application before arrival for a particular period; and 4) if no visa is required then the traveller does not need to apply before or on arrival, but they are still required to present valid identification, receive an entry stamp and fill in immigration forms (Visa Openness Index, 2018). The formalisation of migration through visas can have a balanced effect as visas can both reduce immigration but also encourage long-term settlement, the emphasis is placed on the formality of arrangements. However, the challenge of short-term visas is the risk of irregular immigration and overstaying visas and therefore there is a reluctance to relax visa regulations (Mau, Gulzau, Laube, & Zaun, 2015, p. 1196). While there is commercial competition to attract highly skilled migrant workers, much migration tensions originate with the movement and local employment of low-skilled migrants who may often gain access to a country through a tourist or short-stay visa (Skrentny, 2013, p. 148).

As travel has increased substantially over the years, visa-free travel and waivers has not increased in corollary as anticipated to allow for greater ease in movement of people. The trend of increasing visa-free travel and waivers do not necessarily get relaxed over time due to increased demands in movement (Mau, Gulzau, Laube, & Zaun, 2015, p. 1199). And with the ease of travel, the visa regime has evolved over time to become increasingly complex and country specific according to perceived and potential risks. Moreover, "the perception of a North-South mobility divide may reflect a western or Eurocentric perspective" (Czaika, De Haas, & Villares-Verla, 2018, p. 1), which is important because of the legitimacy that is attached to multi-layered geopolitical dynamics between the global North and South and one-sided visa entry and exit requirements that are linked to broader bi-lateral or bloc diplomatic asymmetries. For example, Mau et al. (Mau, Gulzau, Laube, & Zaun, 2015, pp. 1203-1205) describes the trend of global visa distributions in different regions over 40 years, from 1969 – 2010, and explains that travel restrictions have not improved for Africans due to fears of irregular migration and where passports of particular nationalities have strengthened in the ability to gain visa-free access, African passports have stagnated in strength. There are clear winners and losers, which are drawn further to compare North-South dichotomies. While the North-South dichotomy is a simplistic narrative and it does not leave room for the challenge for global South solidarity in visa regimes, as this is not necessarily guaranteed either, and determined by bi-lateral political and diplomatic relationships.

For example, where a country may choose to remove visa restrictions this may be seen as a positive or constructive boon to the bi-lateral relationship, and the receiving country may respond mutually or open bi-laterally, alternately the receiving country may choose not to reciprocate. Or in the case where a country may choose to introduce a visa, which can be seen as a negative turn around in the relationship; the receiving country may similarly retaliate and respond bi-laterally or uni-laterally by placing harsher restrictions (Czaika, De Haas, & Villares-Verla, 2018, p. 8). This is another example of how power dynamics can be analysed in bi-lateral visa regimes. First, the ease of obtaining a visa shows what kind of legitimate power dynamic exists between two countries. Secondly, if countries wish to upgrade their diplomatic relations by improving migratory regulations it is anticipated that there are political and/or economic expectations of other countries or that economic benefits may follow or be part of the agreement. Next, if countries choose to renege on existing visa agreements, this could impact negatively on bi-lateral diplomatic relationships, politically and economically. While migration and visa studies are focused on the North-South relationship (Czaika, De Haas, &

Villares-Verla, 2018, pp. 5,8-9), it is important to explore the role of emerging powers in the power diffusion through migration formalised in the form of visa access. The mobility of people is a marker of power, and the ease of mobility the ability to access mobility can determine the degree of power countries can yield.

BRICS and positions on migration

The BRICS share a number of views on migration issues; 1) the link between transnational migration and development, 2) an openness to work with other countries while highlighting the importance of safety and order in the process of migration, and 3) emphasising the pragmatic importance of mobilising skilled workers to and from the BRICS (BRICS, 2015b). The 2015 summit hosted by Russia, in Sochi, was the first time that the BRICS had discussed migration Round table on “New strategies of managing migration as the key to a successful development of society” (BRICS, 2015a). The Agenda for BRICS cooperation on population matters 2015-2020, the ministerial discussion focused on a number of socio-economic indicators for population growth and development. More specifically, the migration and urbanisation agenda rooted in social sustainability and that international migration to emphasise the economic growth through effective immigration policies (BRICS, 2015c)

Immigration between the BRICS has been focused on achieving technical cooperation and development through skills transfers, student exchanges and bursaries, and cooperation in technical and higher education, academic development, science, technology and innovation. This kind of cooperation is pitched to developing BRICS countries but may also act as a justification for the mobility of unskilled workers for migratory work. Although the BRICS are easing travel restrictions and improving access to education opportunities, the existing challenge of brain drain is supposed to be addressed through other means of the BRICS partnership. Another challenge is that the BRICS are a transit gateway for migrants seeking access to the global North, where the BRICS need to make their countries attractive enough to potential skilled workers. And lastly, the high numbers of humans trafficked, transnational and organised crime and increasing corruption within the BRICS countries is of immense concern (Korobkov, 2015, pp. 10-19). However, these are highlighted as additional areas to improve cooperation and further deepen the quality of cooperation. Following the seventh BRICS Summit, the eight summit held in 2016, in India, noted “the importance of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people” and welcomed the new addition to ministerial meetings (BRICS, 2016).

The following occasion to focus on migration was the 2018 BRICS summit that South Africa hosted under the theme “BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution”. The Agenda for BRICS cooperation on population matters 2015-2020 was reemphasised as the policy framework to guide engagement among the BRICS with a specific emphasis on “gender inequality and women’s rights, youth development, employment and the future of work, urbanisation, migration and ageing.” (BRICS, 2018). Although the BRICS partnership highly values the people-to-people cooperation element that further deepens the ties through persons embracing and sharing BRICS cultures, they have stayed away from issuing specific statements on the migration of countries surrounding BRICS regionally. This may be due to the respect for BRICS’ sovereignty, but it also allows the BRICS greater flexibility when interacting bi-laterally with other countries of the world.

In order to facilitate the numerous trade and investment, education and exchange projects underway, the BRICS have aimed to streamline visa policies in order improve the work being done. And while the inter-BRICS visa regimes are not the same across the BRICS and still dependent on the bi-lateral relationships of the respective countries, the visa regimes have actioned more political and diplomatic reciprocity among the BRICS. Moreover, ministers have worked to create more Fourth

Industrial revolution-friendly methods of visa application and screening through e-visas, where the visa may be obtained electronically.

Table 1. Inter-BRICS visa arrangements, as of 2020

		Country of destination				
		Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
Country of origin	Brazil		Visa issued on arrival (up to 90 days)	Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application	Visa application required	Visa issued on arrival (up to 90 days)
	Russia	Visa issued on arrival (up to 90 days)		Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application	Visa-free travel	Visa issued on arrival (up to 90 days)
	India	Visa application required	Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application		Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application	Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application
	China	Visa application required	Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application	Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application	Visa-free travel	Tourist, business or medical e-visa or digital visa application
	South Africa	Visa issued on arrival (up to 90 days)	Visa issued on arrival (up to 90 days)	Consulate application required	Visa application required	

Source: Author's own

While these arrangements were noted before the outbreak of the Covid-19 outbreak and a number of border closures were issued following the announcement of the global pandemic, it is very likely that these visa arrangements will not be altered once border restrictions are lifted. There is indeed a high degree of reciprocity among the BRICS as most partners return the arrangement, the most popular is the visa that is granted on arrival, which means more relaxed travel among BRICS citizens. This generates more income through tourism and it is anticipated that doing future business is facilitated with greater ease once the people-to-people link is established. Although partners like China may still require a visa application in some cases; it is progressive to see the possibility of visa free travel between China and Russia, and the increased frequency of an e-visa or digital visa application.

If the spirit of cooperation among the BRICS is to be facilitated in earnest, the BRICS should be committed to liberalising their migratory policies and extending a number of courtesies to the BRICS' regional partners too, namely South Africa's regional partner, Africa. The BRICS have expressed an interest in Africa as a geostrategic point; the following section will discuss how the BRICS has engaged Africa through the Africa Outreach platform and bi-laterally since South Africa joined the partnership and how migration links to the BRICS vision of cooperation with Africa.

BRICS-Africa relations

The BRICS dialogue about Africa and African issues like development and conflict does not go as far as to present a specific BRICS-Africa strategy other than its support for African solutions, development and institutions. While engagement has promoted economic partnerships as well as education, in general; and barring summit invitations, BRICS-Africa engagements reflect bi-lateral engagements.

BRICS-Plus platform and the BRICS' Africa outreach

South Africa was the first to invite more countries to the BRICS summit. In 2013, during South Africa's hosting of the fifth Summit in Durban, a number of African countries serving leadership roles in African institutions were invited; Rwanda (as AU Chair), Senegal (as NEPAD chair), Gabon (ECOWAS Chair), Uganda (EAC Chair), Ethiopia (IGAD Chair), Togo (ECOWAS Chair), Burundi (COMESA Chair), Namibia (SADC Chair), Angola (SADC Organ Chair), and the then Chair of the AU Commission, Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat (Tralac, 2018: 5). Although South Africa is also part of the BRICS-Africa engagement as an African country, South Africa is discussed as a BRICS partner to Africa. Africa features strongly on South Africa's Africa agenda and an added advantage to the BRICS is geostrategic leverage, where the BRICS status as emerging powers is boosted and their leverage it improved internationally.

This trend was continued as the BRICS followed by inviting close regional partners to subsequent summits. The BRICS-Plus Platform was expanded upon by China in 2017, which created opportunities for greater regional interaction with countries of the global South. While BRICS countries China's hosting of the ninth summit At the 2018 BRICS Summit, Egypt (AU Chair), Rwanda, Ethiopia, Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Senegal, Gabon, Togo, Uganda, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania and Zimbabwe were invited (DIRCO, 2018). The BRICS-Africa Outreach and second BRICS Plus Cooperation with Emerging Markets and Developing Countries (EMDCs) during the Johannesburg Summit was an opportunity to improve BRICS-Africa opportunities to boost economic ties (BRICS, 2018). A prominent factor in the BRICS partnership is the importance of strengthening and promoting economic growth through trade, investment and development assistance, as well as a strengthening partnership between the public and private sector of the BRICS (UNECA, 2013).

In addition, the BRICS emphasise the importance of working within the existing institutions that support infrastructure development, job creation, education, and human security, like the African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the highly anticipated African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as well as the AU's Agenda 2063, the AU silencing the guns agenda and further collaboration between the UNSC and AUPSC (BRICS, 2018). All which ultimately contribute to regional and continental economic integration by addressing intra-African trade and continent-wide free movement that ultimately contribute to addressing socio-economic challenges. The BRICS are very specific in emphasising the principle of respecting sovereignty of nations, which is the underlying BRICS approach to Africa. This translates into a conundrum for the BRICS who may not be at liberty to critique another BRICS partner on the nature of bi-lateral relationships that the countries enter into. For example, South Africa is considered as the gateway to Africa, but it is severely critiqued for allowing external countries to access Africa and make preferential agreements that may not be in the continent's best interest.

The initial meeting of ministers dealing with migration issues was to discuss potential best practices among the BRICS while acknowledging potential regional risks. While, Africa is a major cornerstone of South African foreign policy and each of the BRICS have regional interests, Africa's opportunity for investment, resources and geographical positioning makes it a geostrategic point of interest for

the BRICS. Since South Africa joined the partnership in 2013, Africa has featured prominently on the BRICS agenda and embraced by all BRICS partners.

In terms of material gains, trade between BRICS and Africa is focused on energy based and commodities exports and manufactured or value-added product imports into Africa, which tells a similar story of how the rest of the world engages Africa. Moreover, the growing trend is to diversify engagement in Africa by improving access through investment in physical infrastructure and higher-production or manufacturing services, which could be extended to the movement of people. In terms of investment, the approach of Russia, India and China has been to incorporate or bundle these three activities, while Brazil and South Africa have kept these separate, and improve on key industries. And lastly, development assistance to Africa is disseminated in the form of concessional loans, linked to china's particular instrument of engagements; as well as technical cooperation and skills transfer in education, health and ICTs from all BRICS (UNECA, 2013).

The BRICS ardently express that there is scope for expansion of relations with Africa, and consistently link common histories to their geopolitical interest in Africa. For example, all BRICS consider themselves developing countries and lean more towards global South narratives in achieving global reform. In addition, Brazil and Africa share Portugal as the common colonial link; Russia was an ardent supporter of decolonisation and liberation movements of Africa; India's engagement in Africa too shares in its anticolonial movement and has a large diaspora living in Africa, having been a British colony; China, also a former British colony, quickly established itself as an equal partner to Africa and showed ardent support for similar movements that admired the communist ideology; and South Africa's share in the fight for liberation was much more closely followed and supported by African countries, as well as the other BRICS members.

In addition to economic returns, Russia's interest in Africa is also diplomatic as "Russia seeks votes in support of its position at the UN or other political gestures that uphold Moscow's diplomatic posture internationally" (Faleg & Secrieru, 2020). While this strategy aims to show that Russia values all diplomatic partners, it is also to counter an anti-Russian narrative in international relations and show that it cannot be isolated diplomatically and that its allies need not be traditional dominant powers in order for Russia to have relevance in the world.

India's engagement in Africa. Following engagements on multilateral platforms, India has become an important economic partner for Africa; for example, the India-Africa Forum in 2008, announcing the Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme for Least Developed Countries, scholarships for African students, credit line, and maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. In addition, the Africa-Asia Growth Corridor (AAGC), India's partnership with Japan and Africa established to rival the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Chakrabarty, 2016, pp. 267-268). India is viewed as a development partner by Africa and much of the engagement is driven by South-South cooperation principles and has grown to encompass commercial engagements in agriculture, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, ICT services. The focus of India's economic diplomacy has been to provide: 1) grants that are geared to launching a Pan-African e-Network to support education and medical capacity building; 2) technical assistance in the form of the Indian Technical and Economic Programme that has specialised in training and technical assistance; and 3) making lines of credit available to the continent that are geared towards developing agriculture and energy infrastructure projects. This, in addition to India's global governance aspirations to gain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, would gain traction with support from African countries (Lucey, Schoeman, & Grant Makokera, 2015).

China's engagement in Africa has risen substantially over the last 20 years, most of it being a strong encouragement from the Chinese government; through various tax breaks, concessional loans and credit to companies operating in Africa. China is the largest trade, investment, and development

assistance partner to Africa. China's investment strategy has been to optimise resources and target the development of key industries. China has actively sought to give more prominence to its relations with Africa by formalising its engagement through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which was established in 2000, and quickly developed a number of consultation mechanisms and sub forums (FOCAC, 2020). This platform aimed to create more sincere engagements between China and Africa, in comparison to traditional partners like the US and Europe, through the creation of a special interest free loan fund aimed at the construction of infrastructure, promotion of technology transfer, addressing trade imbalances, and cancelling African debt totalling RMB 10 billion to 31 Heavily Indebted Poor countries. In addition to FOCAC, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), holding both a continental and maritime dimension, was launched in 2013 and became popularised among African countries that has also been incorporated as a development assistance and investment vehicle to dovetail with FOCAC (Evangelista Medeiros & Martucci Benvenuto, 2020, p. 3).

South Africa's positioning in the BRICS in relation to its regional role is contentious. While South Africa advocates that its role in such clubs is to build effective clubs that can also promote Africa on an equal footing through its prioritisation of its African Agenda, other countries in Africa disagree with its status in representing African interests at international institutions and other platforms like BRICS. South Africa's African footprint has increased dramatically since democratisation, playing a bridge building role across institutions in the form of its peacebuilding, mediation and peacekeeping, as well as trade and investment engagements. However, South Africa's identity and reputation abroad still holds weight as a stakeholder for countries external to Africa. But in Africa, its identity is critiqued severely for its inability to actualise the image it communicates: 1) South African commercial competition standards are more developed and businesses are often cited as having an expansionist or at times predatory approach to local African enterprises; 2) Politicking by ANC leaders to gain favour at the AU 3) waves of xenophobic and anti-African violence towards African foreign nationals raise questions for how South Africa promises to make good on its commitment to human rights when it cannot uphold its high standards for respecting Africans on South African soil.

While all of the BRICS too have similar criticisms of commercial interests, politicking, and issues with human rights interpretation, South Africa is more severely critiqued for its geographic positioning and history in the continent as well as incohesive image and performance in Africa question its role and privilege as a gateway into Africa.

Migration as a new area for strategic cooperation

Migration among the BRICS is easily facilitated within the ministerial framework and relevant government departments, there is political will among the partners. While critics may express that the partnership is dwindling in relevance, there are also opportunities for growth in migration oriented towards Africans. World Bank data collection on migration has improved since 2010, where previously there would be no data reported for several African countries. While it is not possible to have an accurate comparison of how migration figures have increased over the years, the 2017 dataset provides a clearer picture of approximate bi-lateral estimates of number of people. From BRICS countries, India received 207,493 migrants from Africa, next China received 195,974, South Africa received 161,288, Brazil received 123,017 and the Russian Federation received 39,708 (World Bank, 2017). Reports about migration are still colloquial and therefore may impact the policy direction of official immigration positions.

For example, in previous years, Africans' migration to Brazil has increased dramatically over the years due to past years of relaxed regulations for African travellers from Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. Some of which is irregular and potentially dangerous for the immigrant, especially noting the increase in asylum seekers over the years from Africa. However the general push factor

towards migration is due to the general perception that opportunities are better and plentiful in the country of destination and Brazil is an attractive destination because entry is easy and a large number of the Afro Brazilian population share cultural ties and common history. However, in spite of the diverse population, Brazil's African asylum seekers are stigmatized due to existing Brazilian racial divisions and added risks of being drawn into illicit activities like drug trafficking back to Africa. The relationship between Brazilians and migrant Africans is further strained because there is unawareness of socio-economic hardship in many African communities. In various cases, Africans seeking asylum are able to reach Brazil and migrate across South America through asylum seeker status. Moreover, migrants who are at risk of overstaying their visas are predominantly exposed to unskilled or low skilled labour and therefore their exposure to learning additional skills and contributing to the economy through skilled labour is not always possible (Cowie, 2014); (World Politics Review, 2018).

However, Brazil's Africa strategy, the formation of the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) dialogue forum in 2003, has been complimentary and South Africa's role as a key African ally signalled ramped up diplomatic engagement. The South Atlantic is a key to Brazil's maritime and intercontinental security strategy, which is complimented by its 'overseas border' with Africa (e Pavia, Bravo e Pavia, Monfredo Mendes, & Carniero Correa, 2020), as seen with visa exemptions granted to Morocco, Namibia and South Africa that share the Atlantic ocean. Yet, Angola and all other Lusophone countries are still required to apply for visas (Itamaraty, 2020), which shows a division in how access and movement of people is not solely determined by cultural similarities, such as language.

Russia's engagement in comparison to the other BRICS is smaller due to the "capacities and diplomatic infrastructure to engage with local communities and politico-ethnic groups across Africa" (Faleg & Secieru, 2020). This is a growing diplomatic opportunity to communicate indirectly with local populations through migration to and from Russia. Russia has large numbers of resident migrants, as well as migrants abroad, and is remittance sending (International Organisation for Migration, 2020). While Russia does not see Africa as an irregular migratory threat as other western countries do, it is important to demonstrate more care towards the Africa diaspora, including those who are victims of human trafficking, and address racial stereotyping in society. Feedback from the African diaspora in Russia will impact on their relationships with African countries. In the meantime, Russia has become a popular destination for non-English higher education noting approximately 17,000 students from Africa, an increase from the 6,700 in 2011 (Foy, 2019).

African migrants in Russia can be linked to the following categories; academic migrants, transiting migrants, and those who have fallen victim to human trafficking. There is room for growth in Russia's education diplomacy with Africa as noted in *State Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025*, and while the strategy should dovetail with investment in soft infrastructure in Africa like education and health facilities, Russian schools need to be more receptive to such an internationalist vision when promoting Memoranda of Understanding with African institutions. The Russian Federation has increased the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions from 6 700, in 2010, to 16 700, in 2019 (Statista, 2019). A prevailing challenge is to reduce transiting migrants, who aim to reach third countries through Russia; however, in such a case, the Russian government needs to be increasingly proactive in communicating its immigration policies (Balytnikov, et al., n.d.).

While China has been severely criticised for bringing a large unskilled workforce to construction projects, it has become actively involved in international educational cooperation and subsequently passed immigration laws that allow skilled professionals to easily access China in order to attract more talented students and professionals, and in various cases retain them (International Organisation for Migration, 2020). African students make up the second largest population of students living in

China; as 59.9% are from Asia, 16.57% come from Africa, and the remainder are from Europe, North and South America and Oceania (Statista, 2020). and much interest has been encouraged because of the heightened economic relations and growing relationship between African countries and China as many self-funded students were also accepted to Chinese universities. Moreover, China has exhibited a readiness to receive masses of students through its Chinese government scholarships, and public and cultural diplomacy (Li, 2018). In addition, Li (Li, 2018) notes that cultural shocks for both Africans and Chinese are a significant barrier, which still contributes to racial discrimination or racial stereotyping, and African students have generally encountered Sporadic flareups of discrimination against Africans.

The BRICS approach to regional relations notes that South Africa should be able to take a lead in Africa, South Africa's engagement and reception of African migrants has been most controversial and impacted on African academic migration. While South Africa on of the largest African recipients of African immigrants due to its diverse economy and infrastructure, and relative political stability, Anti-African violence and xenophobic attacks due to limited employment opportunities have marred people-to-people relations (International Organisation for Migration, 2020). The Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997) and the Further Education and Training Colleges Act 2006 (Act 16 of 2006) are two particular policies that encourage skilled workers to come to South Africa through critical skills visas or permanent residence permits (Immigration Act 13 of 2002). However, opportunities to retain permanent employment remain scarce because South African policies are centred on reducing historical socio-economic imbalances that manifest in race relations.

Conclusions

The immigration policy and complementing visa regime are very much a part of economic relations. The BRICS partnership and its activities in Africa are mostly limited to elite interactions. Benefits through visa regimes are likely to reach those who can afford to travel; and therefore, African government employees, business people, academics, press, and holiday makers are likely the ones to benefit going to the BRICS countries. More likely, Africans are to engage BRICS countries locally. While the BRICS narrative was an exciting prospect to rewrite African development stories, BRICS trade in Africa that has focused on export of mineral wealth and import of manufactured goods still "replicates the low-quality growth model" that benefits African elites and very little development trickles down. Visa regimes are important because they are a key instrument of migration, but also promoting diplomatic relationships. The BRICS are ambitious as emerging powers and academic migration may promote this agenda because of the links to global South Solidarity and policy of promoting the migration of skilled professionals, but there is also a dilemma to get students to return to their country of origin.

Although the emphasis of regional leadership in BRICS plays a major part in education or academic migration and South Africa needs to develop rapidly to facilitate this demand, South Africa can play a greater role in negotiating more expressive engagements on the BRICS Plus and Africa Outreach platforms in how the BRICS can be accountable partners to Africa.

The BRICS have well established policies on academic migration, which have a direct impact on economic growth trajectory of a country. However, this needs to be mobilised at summit level on the BRICS Plus Platform and BRICS Africa Outreach, as well as at ministerial level by the BRICS Heads of Migration Authorities. Due to the prevalence of Anti-Africa sentiments, there is an impact on image that BRICS wish to portray of their countries and academic migration potential, which still a long way to go in appreciating BRICS-African people-to-people engagements.

Visa regimes are under studied in international relations and there is further scope for explore the BRICS' relationships with African countries in relation to how far the BRICS have opened visa regimes to African countries and if there is bi-lateral reciprocity, and to what extent this has improved on closer cooperation and economic growth. Current engagements have shown that the BRICS in general are focused on their pragmatic economic growth, while acknowledging issues of historical implications in international development. In general, solidifying relationships in the form of immigration and visa regimes, may improve the BRICS's relationship with African countries, especially if the BRICS are looking at consolidating their message as a reform partner, their approach to migration needs to be considered too.

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Somali Anti-Piracy Campaign, 2008-2012

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Abstract

Sea piracy, a centuries-old practice, has been portrayed as a phenomenon that rewards its perpetrators while decaying the states where it thrives. The decadence is a product of a piracy-fueled unsustainable criminal economy that erodes and weakens the fibre of the state. Reality and fear of state putrefaction has over the centuries and millennia pushed states to inconclusively counter the menace. The fight against piracy has been a teeter-totter of sorts whose common denominator has been the rise, decline and recurrence of piracy throughout history. Irrespective of the age-old indecisive returns, states have continued to roll out strategies with hopes of ending its vagaries and reforming its attendant criminal economies. While anti-piracy interventions of yore abound, their descriptions are not only chary and loose but also lacking in detail, an aberration that can be redeemed, just as an example by amplifying and contextualizing initiatives taken to curb the fabled Somali piracy. A truer portrait of anti-piracy initiatives can be unearthed by interrogating the international, regional and national steps taken to curtail a scourge that has been recurring in nature.

Keywords:

Introduction

Throughout recorded history, neither a warrior generation nor a powerful polity has succeeded in completely extinguishing sea piracy from its shores or distant but important pirate-infested waters around the world. Over the centuries, the principal fighters against piracy have been navies of successive world powers or whose vast maritime interests are hampered by piratical activity. All through these hundreds of years, powerful polities from empires to nations and modern states have unsuccessfully mobilized their navies to crush pirates (Schneider 2014; Kutsoati 2011). The historicity of these inconclusive anti-piracy campaigns in world waters is interwoven by inherent weaknesses and contradictions have been eroded by passage of time thus impairing us from knitting a clear portrait of the same. This unavailable portrait only allows us to speculate on the circumstances that may have underpinned the inability of empires of yore to successfully extinguish sea piracy. One such speculation may have been the successive polities' duality of interests in the anti-piracy campaigns. The same duality underlined the Somali anti-piracy campaign despite the popular perception that Somali piracy is new and not a relic from the past.

'Ending' Piracy through the Centuries

Throughout history, piracy has drawn the ire of empires and nations and the needs to end it. If one could flip back time in this world, the person will not only be able to walk in the footprints of successive piracies but also encounter the ire of polities against the menace. Irrespective, the outcome of the campaigns through millennia and centuries to end the sea piracy have never completely vanquished the menace which in turn has turned the campaigns into a see-saw affair

whose common denominator has been the rise, decline and recurrence of piracy throughout history. As such, the emergence, peak and decay of polities with maritime influence and interests have always had an intertwined resonance with sea piracy. Their intertwined path is characterized by growth, expansion, decline and subsequent emergence of new polities and sea piracies, a reality which reveals the recurring nature of sea piracy as a consequence of the changing fortunes of polities with maritime interests as was the case in the ancient times.

About 4,500 years ago, ancient Egyptians were not only constructing their pyramids but they were also running an intricate trading web on the Mediterranean Sea whose vagaries included presence of Lukkan pirates (Konstam 2005). Indeed, ancient Egyptian records highlight existence of the Lukkan pirates whose exploits on the Mediterranean Sea included the 14th century BC invasion of the island of Cyprus and signing of a pact with the Hittite empire. All these foregoing actions worked against the interests of ancient Egypt (Konstam 2005), an uncomfortable turn of events, a transgression in the eyes of the ancient Egyptians whose remedy was an attack on the Lukkan pirates. It is believed the ancient Egyptian attack on the Lukkan pirates occasioned their disappearance in the 12th century BC (Konstam 2005). Similarly, several centuries later (7th century BC), there appeared a gang of pirates on the Persian Gulf (The Persian Gulf is a water body which is an extension of the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It borders the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Iran). Their presence prompted successive Assyrian kings (Assyria was an ancient empire in Eastern Mediterranean whose reach included present day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine and a large south-eastern swathe of Turkey. It generally emerged at around the 25th century BC and disappeared in 609 BC when it collapsed) to mobilize and deploy their military forces to the Gulf to stop the pirates' disruptive activities on Phoenician and Greek traders (Konstam 2005). Our inability to secure relevant data denies us the chance to ascertain the success of this Assyrian campaign against the Persian Gulf pirates. However, tales of pirate exploits during ancient Greek's domination of the Mediterranean Sea is indicative to the possible survival of the pirates as the Greeks were conceptualizing their city states.

The constantly warring Greek city states chose to either befriend or confront the pirates, a decision that was dependent on the interests of particular states at different times. Thus, while city states such as Crete supported pirate activity others such as Rhodes established navies to eliminate them. It is in this context that the centuries old Cretan support for piracy was ended by Rhodian anti-piracy campaigns in the Second Century BC (Konstam 2005). Both Crete and Rhodes were Greek city states. Elsewhere, piracy supporting city states of Lemnos and Mikonos were invaded and occupied by the city state of Athens so as to eradicate entrenched piratical activity (Konstam 2005). Gradually, the Greek city states realigned themselves into rival alliances whose result was emergence of a Ping-Pong game with pirates with hopes of weakening each other (Konstam 2005). Irrespective, it was Roman (Ancient Rome was a geo-political entity that transitioned throughout its 1,000 plus years of existence from a small but thriving city state into a powerful expansive empire that declined at about 500 AD) and Carthaginian (Carthage is an ancient city state and civilization on south coast of the Mediterranean Sea that attained great military power before falling victim to a series of conquests. Today, its ruins form part of the city of Tunis in Tunisia) conquests that ultimately crushed the Greek pirates with survivors relocating to Cilicia, on modern Turkey's south coast (Konstam 2005). Ironically, Cilicia's inhospitable but piracy-supportive terrain and seclusion was ameliorated by initially unforeseen political chaos in Eastern Mediterranean that turned around Cilician pirates' fate from a staring on extinction to a powerful pirate gang. Roman military victory over the Seleucid Empire (It was founded by Seleucus I in 312 BC upon the death of Alexander the great. It survived for about 2½ centuries and spread to modern day Turkey, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan and western Turkmenistan) in the 1st quarter of the 2nd century BC ushered in an alliance between the Romans and the pirates leading to pirate prosperity

and explosion (Konstam 2005) an opportunity that enabled the pirates accrue enough power in a couple of decades to challenge the Roman Republic. Audacious attacks on Rome's notable citizens prompted the Roman senate to pass the world's first anti-piracy law in 101 BC (Konstam 2005).

While the new law shut Rome's harbours to pirates in western Asia Minor, it unknowingly emboldened the starved pirates to venture into surrounding waters in search of piratical treasure (Konstam 2005). All through the 1st Century BC, the pirates' unilateral attacks were met by inconclusive Roman anti-piracy raids. This back and forth was eventually halted when Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) was granted an Imperium, *Lex Gabinia de Pirates Persequendis* in 67 BC (Konstam 2005) whose sweeping powers and his military genius synchronized to quiet (Konstam 2005) the pirates. However, the pirates were never really annihilated but they remained in the shadows waiting favourable conditions to reappear again.

Just like the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, the foregoing see-saw history of piracy continued in the post-Roman Empire era centuries as polities such as the Byzantine Empire (Byzantine Empire was a successor to the Rome's Eastern region after the Roman Empire was divided into two halves - East and West in 395 AD. Headquartered in Constantinople, the empire survived until 1453 AD when it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire) supported pirate gangs and their activities so as to protect their interests (Konstam 2005). Polities that were adversely affected the same pirate activities opted to institute anti-piracy initiatives. Just like the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire (Ottoman Empire was an Islamic power that emerged in 1299 in modern day Turkey before expanding its rule to large parts of the Middle East, Eastern Europe and North Africa. It thrived for about 600 years up to 1922 when it was partitioned into several states) gave support to Islamic Corsair pirates whose activities were beneficial to the Empire as a strategy to checkmate rival trading principalities (Konstam 2005). Most of these rivals to the Islamic Ottoman Empire were Christian dominated European polities that chose to execute anti-piracy measures to protect their interests. The ensuing melee between piracy leaning Muslim polities and opposing Christian European polities turned the Mediterranean Sea into a centuries-long battlefield informed by Christian and Muslim identities and allegiances. In the end, the balance tilted in favour of the European Christian polities whose growing maritime power dealt a slow and eventual death to Mediterranean piracy.

A similar scenario played out in the Americas where competing European polities encouraged letter bearing (Issuance of these *Letters of Marque* was a practice that was started by England, France and Holland during war times before been extended to peace times) state sanctioned pirates known as privateers to target treasure-carrying vessels of rival polities so as to expand their mercantilist interests (Wombwell 2010). However, after several decades, the practice was deemed as retrogressive to gainful trade. This change of heart influenced nations to roll out initiatives to end the state sanctioned piracy. Consequently, anti-piracy initiatives were commenced in the 1670's to end piracy in the New World - as America was then referred to. Authorities in Britain were among the first to combat the piracy after they concluded that the piracy was negatively impacting on her commercial interests (Wombwell 2010). The anti-piracy initiatives included the cessation of hostilities amongst European polities that resulted in the 1730 stoppage of piracy but the dormancy was broken by re-emergence of piratical attacks in early 19th century when Spanish authorities in Cuba and Puerto Rico decided to give pirates operational bases. Gradual conclusion of political duels through the 19th century and strong naval patrols by British and American navies eventually halted piracy in the New World but the success was not replicated elsewhere around the world (Wombwell 2010). Among the coasts where piracy was never extinguished was the Somali coastal waters whose prowling pirates captured global attention eliciting initiation of local, national, regional and international anti-piracy measures.

Countering Piracy off Somalia Coastal waters through the Centuries

Just like other parts of the world, counter-piracy measures were initiated to combat Somali piracy whose pirates roamed the Somalia coast, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and the sprawling Indian Ocean waters. These measures are also centuries old as the Somali coast is a portrait of trade and piratical attacks (Schneider 2014). While Andrew Carlson (2009), Edward A. Alpers (2011) and David Anderson (2009) have shown existence of pirate activity in the general area around the Somali coast, Pierre Schneider (2014) writes that anti-piracy campaigns in the area date back to pharaonic times. It was the Ptolemy-led Egyptian kingdom that attacked Nabataen pirates to protest their interference of Egypt's maritime interests in the Red Sea (Schneider 2014). Indeed, an Egyptian expedition was sent against the pirates for their continuous plundering of vessels sailing to and from Egypt (Schneider 2014). Further, Pierre Schneider wrote that a naval party in a Greek/Roman quadrireme vessel also encountered, fought and punished the Nabataean pirates (Schneider 2014). Yet, the Nabataeans survived the attacks and continued to be a threat to vessels along the Northern Red Sea, something that forced Egypt's Ptolemaic pharaohs (Ptolemaic pharaohs were a Macedonian dynasty that ruled ancient Egypt between 323 BC and 30 BC. It was the last dynasty that ruled ancient Egypt) to send guards to patrol the waters.

Other Egyptian inscriptions show Ptolemaic pharaohs appointing officials to oversee maritime issues in the Arabian Gulf. The officials' duties included safeguarding sea traffic in today's Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean (Schneider 2014). Apparently, such an appointment was indicative of the pirates continued presence along the waters. A similar observation was made by a certain Pliny the Elder who wrote about vessels having archers on board to deter pirates from attacking them (Pliny the Elder, officially Gaius Plinius Secundus was a 1st century Roman author, naturalist and natural philosopher as well as a Roman naval and army commander of the early Roman Empire). An ancient biography of Appollonius of Tyana, a 1st century CE Greek philosopher also captures this growing anti-piracy wave with a description of the construction of a massive Egyptian vessel that operated in the Erythraean Sea (today's Indian Ocean) so as to abide by some local law. The vessel also carried armed men on board to repulse pirates who still roamed the Erythraean Sea (Schneider 2014).

Combat against pirates continued in today's Indian Ocean through the famed *Pax Romana* when Roman Empire's might and influence was felt far and wide. A newly found 144 A.D Farasan (Farasan is a large coral-island group in the Red Sea that today belongs to Saudi Arabia) inscription shows the appointment and stationing of a Roman official and military unit at Farasan to tackle pirates who were disrupting the Indian Ocean trade. Nonetheless, this empire-led anti-piracy campaigns to fight ancient Piracy in the Indian Ocean failed to eliminate it as it continued to rear its head in the post-Roman empires. Byzantine Empire, the political successor to Eastern Roman Empire continued combatting pirates in the northern areas of the Red sea (Schneider 2014). In 640 AD, a caliph-led Muslim movement raided and destroyed a pirate port on the African side of the Red sea (Schneider 2014). Later, the expansionist Muslim movement invaded and occupied the pirate-invested Dahlak Islands (Dahlak Islands are a 200-group islands located in the Red Sea near Massawa, Eritrea) in 702 AD (Alpers 2011). Muslim fight against piracy continued when the Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171 AD) (A Shia caliphate of Arab origin that ruled a vast territory of Africa's Mediterranean coast with tentacles in Sudan, the Levant (present day Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and most of Turkey), Hejaz (today's Western part of Saudi Arabia) and Italy's Sicily island) positioned 'military' ships to protect vessels that plied the Red Sea (Alpers 2011). All concerted efforts to end piracy in the Indian Ocean and surrounding waters didn't bear much fruit as piratical attacks persisted in the subsequent centuries up to the 16th century as mentioned by traders and travelers (Examples include the Island of Soqotra that played host to pirates in the 10th century and traveller Marco Polo complains about piracy in western India in the 13th century amongst others).

As the world ushered a new 16th century, the East African coast and the western Indian Ocean waters were witnessing the arrival of the Portuguese whose dominance lasted for the next two centuries. As much as there is dearth of information on anti-piracy campaigns in these waters in the 16th century, the waters were dominated by Arabs who zealously fought and diminished piratical activities in the Indian Ocean and surrounding waters. In the guise of attacking Muslim vessels to break their dominance along the Indian Ocean waters (Pouwels 2002), the Portuguese executed pirate like attacks. However, piratical activities escalated in the region when in the last decade of the 17th century (1680's) when outfoxed Caribbean (American and European) pirates found their way into the Indian Ocean waters after their temporary piratical sojourn along the West African coast (Konstam 2005).

The entry of American and European pirates into the Indian Ocean reawakened piratical attacks in the waters as their recorded successes included piratical exploits of Henry Every. Henry Every is purported to have captured the biggest pirate treasure (about \$105M today) (Konstam 2005). from an Indian fleet. Attacks on British East India Company's vessels prompted the company to tackle and shrink piratical activity in the 2nd half of the 18th century. Still, the Indian Ocean piracy was never fully eliminated as small-scale piratical attacks continued to be reported by travellers and missionaries in the 19th Century. Carlson 2009). The presence of colonial powers in Africa in late 19th and and lager part of the 20th century silenced piracy off the Somalia waters until the descent of Somalia into chaos which enabled resurgence of Somali piracy

21st Century International Initiatives against Somali Piracy

The first 21st century intervention against Somali piracy was primarily designed to combat terrorism as the United States of America (USA), the leading world power perceived that Somalia was bound to be turned into a refuge for terrorists due to its lawlessness. This was in the aftermath of September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks on USA which reawakened American international anti-terrorism campaigns. In the view of the USA, lack of law and order was turning Somalia into a haven for piracy which they saw as a potential enabler of terrorist activities (Lucas 2017). As a consequence, the USA established the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in October 2002 (Lucas 2017). Formed with the co-operation of Somalia's neighbours such as Ethiopia and Kenya, the CJTF-HOA force was formed to counter the supposed entry of Al Qaeda terrorist fighters into lawless Somalia. The force was to generally offer military assistance to regional counter-terrorism operations (Centre for Army Lessons Learned 1019). Though the force was not designed to explicitly deal with Somali piracy, its operational net included fighting against piracy whose results remain unclear.

CJTF-HOA was followed by the deployment of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150), a multinational fleet that was to engage in counter-terrorism and maritime security operations (Lucas 2017). A previously existing multinational fleet, it was re-established after the 11th of September, 2001 and detailed to patrol waters off the Horn of Africa and surrounding Indian Ocean waters in support of counter-terrorism and maritime security operations (Lucas 2017). This was an American initiative which later drew membership from other states leading to a rotational command arrangement of the force amongst the participating states (Lucas 2017). Although the promotion of maritime security in the Horn of Africa was among CTF-150's principal assignments, the force gave piracy a wide berth as the menace went unnoticed by the USA government whose major preoccupation was counter-terrorism (Lucas 2017).

As explained in the two preceding American initiatives, fighting piracy was not part of their mandates. Though Somali piracy was yet to draw international anti-piracy responses by 2002, its omission from the two American initiatives amounted to a false start by international community against Somali Piracy. In USA's interests, Somali piracy was yet to emerge as a threat to her maritime trade or that

of her allies (Lucas 2017). Seemingly, fighting Somali piracy was not part of USA's strategic interests in the Horn of Africa. This was also influenced by the 1990's American military failure in Somalia which made the Americans reluctant to engage in another military intervention in Somalia. This apparent American disinterest would later haunt anti-piracy initiatives as other world powers only considered dealing with the piratical problem only when their interests were at risk. Moreover, this initial contextualization of the Horn of Africa through terrorism lens clouded a clear illumination of the Somali piracy problem with the effect of influencing ineffective anti-piracy initiatives.

On 5th November, 2005, 'Seabourn Spirit,' a luxury cruise ship was attacked about 100 miles off the coast of Somalia by suspected Somali pirates (BBC News 2005). Until this point, the international community had shown less interest in the piracy menace in the Western Indian Ocean and surrounding waters. This attack aroused the international interest in the piracy issue including that of the United States of America (Lucas 2017). Subsequently, the American government began to have discussions on how to stop the scourge with two groups, one in support of military action and the other against a military intervention emerging (Lucas 2017). Apparently, the anti-military group was wary of another military humiliation in Somalia after the American peace enforcement fiasco in 1990's. Moreover, the anti-military intervention officials were cautious of the damage a military operation would do to Somalia's general population and its subsequent negative impact on USA's counter-terrorism campaign (Lucas 2017). These terrorism-centred considerations pushed anti-piracy campaigns to a marginal role thus negating mobilization for the complete defeat of piratical activity off the coast of Somalia. Officials who were against the deployment of the military to fight the piracy emerged convincing particularly on terrorism reflections and persuaded the pro-military to their side. Nonetheless, once senior officials promoted the terrorism narrative, it went without saying that prospective anti-piracy initiatives were aligned with their thinking and perspective, a development that further dented international anti-piracy campaigns against Somali piracy.

Further, an interrogation of the USA's Navy views that appeared to intertwine the fight against piracy and the fight against terrorism will go a long way in helping us to understand the international community's counter-piracy initiatives (Lucas 2017). For instance, Captain John Peterson, Chief of Staff of US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) was quoted to have stated that the USA was increasingly interested in piracy as it was an activity that was bound to facilitate terrorist organizations (Kucera 2006). Although these views were well intentioned in the fight against Somali piracy, they were premised on the fight against terrorism. This scenario denied the Americans and their international allies an opportunity to full contextualize the counter-piracy campaign which would have been critical in the conceptualization of well thought out counter-piracy initiatives.

The emergence of new extremist Islamist groups in Somalia such the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in 2006 forced the USA to re-examine its counter-terrorism strategies in the country and region which further clouded their fight against the piracy. Once UIC took control of Somalia by close of 2006, American agencies worked tirelessly to checkmate the group (Lucas 2017) as their focus on piracy was overlooked for the more urgent UIC threat. The resultant distraction did not augur well with the fight against Somali piracy as much as the UIC became an unintentional ally to the Americans in the fight against piracy as the group's principles detested piracy. The aftermath of this disinterest may have cost the Americans valuable counter-piracy data collection and campaign momentum, a situation that not only weakened but also slowed the American and international forces ability to comprehend and eradicate Somali piracy. With their initial interest focused on terrorism, it can be deduced that international forces led by Americans anchored their anti-piracy campaigns on the terrorism premise which was a prelude to failure.

As a consequence of the influence of focusing primarily on terrorism over piracy, international forces responded to Somali pirate attacks indifferently. International anti-piracy forces reacted

quickly and strongly when vessels with capability to undertake or aid terrorist attacks were attacked and/or hijacked. While the swift and strong responses went a long way in averting terrorist attacks, it gave Somali pirates ideas on the identity of vessels whose capture would not ignite a stampede from international anti-piracy navies. This was the case when naval vessels from Germany and USA promptly responded to an attack on 'Golden Nori,' a Japanese tanker whose chemicals had the potential of being converted into bombs (Lucas 2017). Such responses to Somali piracy that were induced by terrorism considerations occasioned adoption of faulty and weak foundations of the international community's campaign against Somali piracy.

USA's interventions to end Somali piracy was followed by United Nations Security Council's led international campaign to tackle the piracy. This campaign was kicked off at one of the then regular Security Council meetings on Somalia's general security situation (The regular meeting was held on November 19, 2007). It was on one of such meetings on 19th November, 2007 that Qatar, a then non-permanent member of the Security Council raised concern on the then increasing piratical attacks off the Somalia coast (Lucas 2017). Her views were supported by the American representative who went ahead to ask the council to draft a resolution on Somali piracy (Lucas 2017). In an endeavor to ensure realization of a resolution, USA went out of its way to seek support from both major maritime powers such as Japan as well countries with small maritime interests such as Slovenia (Lucas 2017). The United Nations Secretary General's March, 2008 report called for an international maritime task force to combat Somali piracy bolstered USA efforts, making her alongside France, United Kingdom and Panama to circulate a draft resolution on Somali piracy to the Security Council members on 28th March, 2008. (Lucas 2017). In the earlier stages of the drafting of the resolution, coded 1816, China and Russia expressed their misgivings about the idea. Amongst their misgivings was their fear of international anti-piracy navies trespassing Somalia's sovereignty (Lucas 2017).

Though resolution 1816 was applauded as a move in the right direction, China and Russia saw it as an opportunity to push and pull with their western competitors and rivals. So, while China and Russia supported the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution, they threw aspersions on the initiative so as to get even with their western competitors. The power games between China, Russia and western allies only served to show the challenges faced by the international community in organizing a united initiative against piracy. Despite the two states' misgivings, the resolution was adopted and operationized in June 2008 (UNSC S/RES/1816 (2008)). Interestingly, China and Russia joined in the anti-piracy operations raising doubt on their focus and objectivity in the campaign. Moreover, the campaign provided opportunities for world powers to spy and checkmate each other to the detriment of the anti-piracy campaign. UNSC S/RES/1816 (2008), Adopted by the Security Council at its 5902nd meeting on June 2, 2008, <https://undocs.org/S/RES/1816> (2008).

Despite the adoption of Resolution 1816, pirate attacks continued unabated. In the year 2008, Somali pirate attacks increased by 600% compared to 2007 making Somali piracy to contribute about 40% of worldwide piracy (Lucas 2017). In response to the pirate attacks escalation, USA re-strategized her operations by deciding to solely focus on fighting piracy. However, USA's reenergization of its anti-piracy campaign was a result of terrorist linked happenings. The link was in the hijacking of *Faina*, an arms laden vessel in September 2008 amidst reports of possible cooperation between pirates and Al Shabab, the then fast growing terrorist in Somalia group (Lucas 2017). Once again, the newly focused anti-piracy campaign was a response to USA's terrorist fears, a further fault line in the USA-led international anti-piracy campaign. On paper, the newly reestablished (January 2009) Multi-national Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) sole mission was to counter Somali piracy but in reality it was anchored on terrorism fears. The success, therefore, of the new initiative, was likely to be impaired by its terrorism foundation.

The Multi-national Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) initiative also became captive to selfish maneuvers by some of its members such as France and Spain. Despite being a member of CTF-151, France was keen on the establishment of a European Union anti-piracy initiative to provide escort to humanitarian aid to Somalia. France's campaign bore fruit when Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland successfully pulled together to establish and operationize EU NAVFOR Somalia - Operation Atalanta (EU Operation Atalanta) on 13th December 2008 (UNSC S/2009/146, 2009). In the case of Spain (Lucas 2017), she was reportedly keen on protecting her fishing vessels that were operating in Somalia's coastal and surrounding waters. As such, the CTF-151 counter-piracy campaign was ridden with self-serving interests of some states. The ensuing competing undercurrents occasioned distraction and heightened chances of failure in the anti-piracy campaign.

Disruptive and competitive interests amongst the international anti-piracy initiative members continued when the USA privately campaigned to have NATO join them in the Somali counter-piracy instead of the European Union (Lucas 2017). Although the USA was not forthright against European Union's participation in the Somali anti-piracy campaign, the lack of enthusiasm by Americans about European Union planned entry into Somali waters portrayed the probability of states ending up working in cross purposes. Lack of synergy among interested parties heightened the possibility of a mission which would not have delivered success in the fight against Somali piracy due to presence of competing moves. From her initial preference of a NATO force over a European Union force joining the counter-piracy initiative off the Somalia waters, the USA, it is feared did not fully embrace the European Union's Operation Atlanta, a scenario that may have led to a disjointed operation.

Somali piracy's focus on ransom payments ended up painting the international anti-piracy negatively, probably laying embers for the continuation and escalation of the piracy. After the capture of *Golden Nori* in October 2007, American and German naval vessels followed the hijacked vessel to its anchor (Starr 2018), where the military kept watch over it until it was released. After six weeks, *Golden Nori* was released, a process mired in secrecy and opaqueness. However, it is believed that ransom was paid right under the noses of the American and German military vessels (Reuters 2007). A similar pattern repeated itself when American naval vessels tracked and monitored the hijacked *MV Faina* near Hobyso until its release (Jones 2009). Reports also indicated that ransom was paid for the release of the hijacked vessel, again, in clear view of anti-piracy international naval forces. International forces 'acceptance' or 'disinterest' of ransom payment only but emboldened Somali pirates. Fired up by a sense of invincibility due to their good bargain and eventual receipt of ransom in full view of the world's most powerful navies, the now 'untouchable' pirates grew confident to continue pursuing their piratical interests in the presence of the world's greatest navies.

Despite the media, and in particular Western outlets, having played an important role in highlighting the sources, levels, intensity and decline of Somali piracy, it also uncharacteristically wrongly shaped the international fight against the piracy. The media's desire to serve certain interests including receipt of higher sales influenced them to choose incorrect and sensational reporting on the piracy. This was the case when the media amplified the piracy-terrorism nexus in Somalia. This was worsened when respectable media outlets such as the BBC published the jaw dropping nexus (Plaut 2008). To the BBC and other Western media outlets, piracy and terrorism had close linkages which was untrue as the truth was that there only existed some isolated local cooperation between the two entities for personal survival reasons. Thus, the incorrect but sensational reporting contributed in shaping western governments responses and initiatives against the piracy. Acting on the basis of sensational reporting, Western governments picked the terrorism narrative, an idea that was not yet exhaustively researched. Thus, world powers prepared, structured and executed their anti-

piracy campaigns on a questionable premise, a background with a potential of leading to the failure of the counter-piracy initiatives.

Discord within United Nation's international anti-piracy campaign reemerged when the organization adopted another Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1846 to broaden UNSCR 1816 provisions on 2nd December, 2008 (UNSC S/RES/1846 (2008)). During its drafting and adoption processes, USA and Germany differed on the issue of pursuing Somali pirates onshore. Americans felt that such an engagement was necessary so as to vanquish the piracy but Germany saw it as an unnecessary as it had potential for Germany getting into a land-based conflict in Somalia (Lucas 2017). The international anti-piracy campaign discord hampered a smooth synchronization of initiatives thus allowing the pirates survival chances. Challenges in getting unanimity among states engaged in the anti-piracy campaign was/is indicative of a probability of diminishing a piracy but not eliminating it altogether. Fears, gaps and misunderstanding of international Somali anti-piracy partners provided an enabling environment for the piracy's recurrence. (UNSC S/2009/146, (2009))

As the international anti-piracy initiative took shape, its multiplicity and plurality became its other undoing. By early 2009, international counter-piracy initiatives included USA-led CTF-151, European Union's Operation Atlanta (UNSC S/2009/146, (2009)) and NATO's Operation Ocean Shield amongst many other multiple independent state naval deployments from across the world. CTF-151, a 'new' counter-piracy force that was separated from CTF-150 on 13th January, 2009. CTF-151's primary mandate was to counter piracy while CTF-150 was to focus on countering terrorism. Operation Atalanta was the creation of France and Spain's campaign to establish a European Union counter-piracy fleet to escort World Food Programme (WFP) aid to Somalia amongst other assignments. Operation Atalanta became operational on 13th December 2008 despite backroom opposition from USA and delaying tactics from the United Kingdom (Lucas 2017). NATO's Operation Ocean Shield formally began counter-piracy engagements in March, 2009 but the organization had received United Nations mandate vide Security Council Resolution 1846 of 2008 which allowed it to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia and escort WFP vessels (UNSC S/2009/146, (2009)). Despite the navies endeavour to cooperate and coordinate in their campaigns, there were hitches as some naval vessels were legally barred from getting integrated into international naval operations (Lucas 2017). Other navies were unable to cooperate and coordinate due to their geo-strategic considerations which rendered rapprochement difficult. This was the case with China and Russia whose 'opposing' strand could not allow their navies to work closely with Western navies (Lucas 2017). Similar geo-strategic views hampered any cooperation between western navies and Iran. This legal and geo-strategic infused hitches cast doubt on possibility of registering success in the anti-piracy campaign.

Similar doubts on the anti-piracy campaign arose from the impractical expectations of UNSC Resolutions; 1816 of 2nd June, 2008, Resolution 1846 of 2nd December, 2008 and Resolution 1851 of 16th December, 2008, which allowed international anti-piracy forces to pursue and counter Somali pirates in their territorial waters and onshore land bases. Backed by the resolutions, international anti-piracy forces severally entered Somalia's territorial waters in pursuit of pirates. However, despite the resolutions allowing the forces to target onshore bases and resources, no navy went onshore to counter the pirates (Fawcett 2012). An answer to the navies disinterest could be that they were fearful of starting a new land war in Somalia which in turn could have blurred the anti-piracy campaign. A close look at Somali piracy's portrait reveals that the onshore component of the piracy was as critical as the sea hijacking attacks with the potential of re-igniting the piracy.

Moreover, the United Nations Security Council resolutions required international anti-piracy forces to notify and get approval of Somalia's TFG before pursuing Somali piracy suspects to their territorial waters and land bases (Fawcett 2012). Even though the TFG approval was a noble requirement to protect Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its implication and practicability was not

guaranteed. TFG's capacity to determine whether a particular naval force could enter Somalia's territorial waters in its anti-piracy campaign was doubtful. TFG regimes in Somalia have, in most times, only controlled a few streets in Mogadishu and other towns. Indeed, where TFG claimed coastal presence, its maritime officers and policemen had wanting skills and approaches that could competitively approve anti-piracy forces that entered its territorial waters and land.

Despite the foregoing, successful pirate vessel hijackings began to decline from 2011. The rather problem-prone anti-piracy initiatives appeared to bear fruit. This decline was occasioned by both the long term initiatives but significantly from a buildup and learning from past hiccups and problems encountered in the campaign. From 2011, new measures were adopted to safeguard vessels while naval ships applied new tactics in the pursuit of pirate vessels. Amongst the initiatives was the implementation of defensive measures by vessels that sailed within the Somali pirates' operational range. The measures included use of barbed wire to stop pirates from accessing the vessels during an attack as advised by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Moreover, by 2011, shipping companies had accepted to contract armed anti-piracy guards to deter hijacking of vessels. In addition, international navies regularly arrested suspected pirates and handed them over to third countries to face court trials. This success of international anti-piracy mechanisms was boosted by local anti-piracy initiatives.

Local anti-piracy initiatives

While it was generally perceived that piracy was a widely supported activity in Somalia's coastal villages, contrary views indicate that the piracy was opposed by sections of the local community. Among those who opposed the menace were Muslim religious leaders with some Sheikhs in particularly standing out to talk against the practice (A Sheikh is a senior Muslim cleric). The Sheikhs urged community members keep away from practice as it went against Koranic teachings and Muslim principles. Sheikhs termed the practice and the ransom money gotten from it, *Haram*. Accordingly, the Sheikhs stated that since the activity was outlawed in Islam, then its proceeds were similarly unlawful. The Sheikhs went ahead to ask the community to shun pirates and desist from transacting in piratical matters as a strategy to curb the menace.

Nevertheless, the Sheikhs' campaign faced a herculean task as their authority had been drowned by the pirates' huge money and its attendant influence in the community. Even so, the Sheikhs' anti-piracy crusade had positive response from the pirates despite unavailability of records on the success rates. This change of fortunes was partially orchestrated by the detrimental effects that the piracy and ransom money had meted on the pirates. Ransom money and pirate life turned pirates into societal misfits whose degradation chipped away at the popularized glamour of pirate money. The degeneration soon captured the attention of some of the pirates' parents and siblings whose reemphasis of the Sheikhs' anti-piracy message persuaded some pirates to turn their backs to the practice. Thereafter, these reformed pirates either resumed their former lives or picked acceptable economic livelihoods.

As a consequence of the Sheikhs' anti-piracy messages, a larger segment of Somali community gradually began to frown upon the practice. Community members felt that it was *Haram* to waylay travelers in the high seas and rob them of their possessions and use them as bait to acquire ransom money. The community believed that nothing worthwhile or blessed came from the ransom money. Parents to the pirates were displeased that their sons had become pirates, seeing the decision as a precursor to ills that will befall their families. Moreover, a young man's decision to become a pirate cast a bad name on their families and dissuaded them from engaging in piracy. Such negative branding led to isolation of the families which came along with its own attendant consequences.

Disapproval of pirate activities by the Somali society was also exhibited by the non-involvement of the community in burial processes of dead pirates. A jailed pirate stated that, "in cases where a pirate died, the family and community members did not bury him as touching his body was *Haram*." Moreover, whenever a pirate died, it was *Haram* for one to buy the burial white clothing using his piracy money for his burial. It is only the pirates who did it by using their own networks to get the white burial clothing. Other pirates quickly mobilized to take charge of the procedures and then bury their own. The Somali community was generally wary of pirate activities and not keen to contaminate their societal standing in respect to Islamic principles.

Pirates who were released from prison or from western anti-piracy navies detention faced a new dilemma after attaining their freedom that was beneficial to the anti-piracy campaign. The released pirates feared getting arrested by Somalia's regional authorities upon their return home. These arrests prompted imprisoned pirates to request their family, clan and friends to put in a 'kind word' to the authorities for their safe passage back home and resumption of normal life when their release was approaching. To their benefit, Somali close knit clan system enabled the community to distinguish between fishermen and pirates, knowledge that was critical as one returned home. As such, an innocent fisherman who was wrongly arrested by the international anti-piracy navies was received back by the community with open hands while criminals including pirates were allowed back with conditions including promises to abandon piratical activity for worthwhile activities. But in cases where these attempts were not made or the response was negative, freed pirates sought safe havens in other regions away from their homes. For instance, if one came from the north, he could go to live either in central or south Somalia amongst their clansmen who are spread throughout Somalia. Similarly, if one came from the south, he went to a kinsman either in central or northern Somalia. Of course, all this was done with the help of the expansive but close Somali kin networks across Somalia and beyond. These preceding initiatives contributed in reducing pirate attacks off the Somalia coast. By 2012, no Somali pirate succeeded in hijacking a vessel marking an 'end' to Somali piracy. However, this apparent success by the international navies has skeletons which seem to continue to stalk the waters off the Somalia coast with a possibility of re-igniting the piracy.

In a development that shows that Somali piracy had gotten subsumed within the context of the contest between western hegemony in a globalized world and localized notions nationalist sentiments, Somali pirates claimed that the anti-piracy war was a conspiracy of Western powers to pursue and sustain their selfish interests along Somalia's coast. The conspiracy unearths the clash between local and western notions of what constituted piracy. In this clash between the local and universal (as seen by the west), the pirates argued that western powers propagated both the piracy and anti-piracy propaganda as a smokescreen to their pursuance of oil prospecting activities. A number of Somalis believe that Western powers used the anti-piracy narrative as an opportunity to prospect for oil off the Somalia coast as Somalia's coastal waters are reportedly low when compared to the oil producing Middle Eastern countries. Further, a section of the Somali population also believes that Western powers were/are patrolling the Somali waters to distract people's attention from their (Western powers) oil prospecting and drilling enterprise off the Somalia coast. Moreover, Somalis believe that the piracy narrative has been induced onto Somalia so as to weaken it so that Western entities can continue furthering their economic interests. These sentiments have the potential of arousing nationalist feelings that can morph into another era of piratical attacks.

There was also a feeling amongst Somali pirates that the western powers are pulling strings behind the scenes to ensure Somalia remains lawless with piracy as one of its outcomes. They argue that the conflict in Somalia is largely political with western countries playing central roles albeit in a shadowy manner. While Western powers routinely enumerate their assistance to Somalia, one wonders why they continue to have their proxies and undercover agents in Somalia whose roles are unknown.

This view is bulwarked by the relative stability in the breakaway Somalia regions of Puntland and Somaliland after the two successfully kept away from western powers' influences and machinations showing that things work well when the Somali people are left alone.

The success in eradicating Somali piracy has been hijacked by foreign fishermen who are plundering Somalia's fisheries resources. The new post 2012 calm has seen foreign fishermen troop back to Somalia waters to the chagrin of local Somali fishermen (Stewart 2015). The foreign fishermen audacity to operate under the very noses of the international anti-piracy forces has further infuriated local fishermen who have angrily condemned their presence along the Somalia waters. The reentry of foreign fishermen into Somalia waters coupled with the now thinly patrolled (A number of the counter-piracy navies have exited waters off the Somalia coast since the eradication of Somali piracy as from 2012) but vast and open sea carries seeds for the possible recurrence of piratical activity. If left unchecked, these fishermen's anger alongside the fury generated by the seemingly flawed application of law on arrested pirates has the potential of reigniting Somali pirate attacks (Stewart 2015).

Regional Contributions to the Somali anti-Piracy Campaign

International and local anti-piracy initiatives were complimented by regional mechanisms that were overly legal in nature. Prosecution of pirate suspects was wrought with challenges resulting in a number of suspects escaping prosecution. Prosecution challenges mainly stemmed from the fact that only a few countries were willing to prosecute the suspects due to varied reasons. While countries such as Denmark and Germany could only prosecute pirates if they had threatened their national interests or citizens, willing states such as Kenya and Seychelles lacked requisite resources for prosecution processes (Stewart 2015). Both Kenya and Seychelles complained about being overstretched with the cases and were keen to discontinue accepting suspects from the international anti-piracy forces for prosecution. Moreover, the presence of different criminal codes across countries was also problematic in the prosecution of piracy cases as the scenario brewed inconsistencies and possible ill feelings (Haines 2009). Thus, lack of an understood legal system that could be used to try the piracy suspects aroused new grievances particularly from pirates who felt that they had not received justice in their trials. Some of the sentenced Somali piracy suspects were adamant that they were genuine fishermen who had been mistakenly arrested and arraigned in court as piracy suspects (Haines 2009). As much as we cannot authenticate the veracity of the complaint, it elicits an urge to examine the prosecution process. As such, there may be need to evaluate the prosecutorial capabilities of the international naval officers and the extent of their knowledge in the collection of evidence for presentation in court to ensure successful prosecutions (Haines 2009).

Kenya's acceptance to try Somali piracy suspects was not anchored in any particular law. Kenya's Penal Code did not define a piracy offence while Kenya's Merchant shipping Act of 1967 did not state what constituted piracy (Haines 2009). The gap was however removed when the Shipping Act was repealed in September, 2009. By this time, eleven piracy cases had opened in the Kenyan courts (Mwangura 2011). Filing of the cases was not anchored on any law and any good lawyer could have seen the legal loophole. The eleven cases were basically defective in the first instance. Any subsequent sentencing could have been successfully appealed as the requisite law of piracy was lacking in the first place (Mwangura 2011). A further filing of compensation for a wrong prosecution could have had the potential of denting the prosecution of Somali piracy suspects in Kenyan courts. This apparent injustice consequently aroused hatred and hostility from the Somali suspects upon realization of the illegality of their trials. Hatred and hostility is not a panacea to the Somali piracy particularly with the arrest of innocent men by international anti-piracy navies.

The decision by Kenya to accept the prosecution of Somali piracy suspects in its courts seemingly violated the country's supreme law, the Constitution of Kenya. Kenya's new constitution states that a suspect should be presented in court within 24 hours from the time of arrest. However, in respect to Somali piracy suspects, they were brought to Kenyan courts many days after their arrest. Somali piracy suspects who were brought to Kenyan courts of law before Kenya's enactment of a new shipping act that domesticated United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) were held for many days in contravention of Kenya's supreme law. Such a glaring legal mistake put into question the desire by international navies to use legal mechanisms to eradicate Somali piracy. Consequently, this contravening of the supreme law of Kenya and its operational laws did not serve justice to the suspects irrespective of the outcome of their court trials. This injustice was received unfavourably by the Somali populace who interpreted it as an affront on their community with the resultant backlash having the potential of rekindling the Somali piracy as revenge missions for the mistreatment.

Breakdown in communication between suspects and prosecutions hampered prosecutions. As much as the Kenyan law states that an accused person is entitled to be tried in a language that he/she understands, the Somali piracy suspects cases were conducted in English, an alien language to them. In one incident, a judge spoke English and then an interpreter translated the judge's statements into Swedish to the Swedish-speaking witness. The witness' statements were then translated into English. At this point, the Somali interpreter came along to translate the same into Somali to the piracy suspects (Mwangura 2011), a slow and mistake prone process. Alienated by language, Somali piracy suspects felt that they had been denied justice despite the eventual court's ruling- be it freedom or conviction. Attendant bitterness of innocuous individuals amongst the suspects left them an embittered lot with promises of going into the sea in the hope of accruing proceeds to compensate for their unfair prosecution.

Arrested and later convicted pirates questioned the manner in which their prosecution was conducted as a court appointed lawyer took to the floor to defend them after seven American naval officers had given evidence against them. In the meantime, the pirates were not asked to give their side of the story. In one case, a court appointed lawyer defended piracy suspects without consulting them on the exact circumstances of their arrest. The feeble defense allowed the judge to jail the suspects for four years without hearing their side of the story. Moreover, the judge did not seem to listen even to the weak defense as he was seen to be listening to the prosecutor's narrative. Such blatantly unfair prosecutions undermined the anti-piracy campaign.

The anger of innocent piracy suspects was exacerbated by the fact that real Somali pirates diversified their operations with the onset of international navies' anti-piracy patrols. In this diversification from piratical attacks, the pirates began to engage in smuggling rackets amongst other criminal activities (Mwangura 2011). This diversification reduced significantly the chances of international forces arresting the real piracy suspects as they engaged in piratical activity. The implication therein is that those who were arrested as piracy suspects were a marginal percentage (some innocent) of the high number of pirates who stalked vessels in the high seas. This then implies that most piracy suspects escaped or outmaneuvered the anti-piracy navies and melted back to the Somali community, posing a lurking threat to claims that Somali piracy had been vanquished.

There were further gaps in the prosecution processes since the assemblage of witnesses to testify against the suspects was flawed. Besides international anti-piracy naval officers agreeing to become witnesses, it was problematic assembling other witnesses who would testify and put suspects at the scene of the actual piratical act. In most cases, witnesses aboard merchant vessels that had been attacked proceeded with their journeys especially if they survived the attack (Robinson 2009). Once such vessels proceeded with their journeys, it became complicated to get the witnesses to travel to

third countries courts to testify in the trials. These circumstances hampered realization of fair trials to the extent of availing suspects opportunities of being found innocent by the courts at the end of trials. Such prosecutorial hurdles only helped to lethargitize the cases which in turn made judges to make rulings on the basis of conjecture.

More prosecutorial malpractices were registered when arrested pirate suspects were unnecessarily moved through third countries before getting to countries where they were to stand trial. Arresting international navies irregularly took piracy captives to Djibouti, Yemen, United Arab Emirates and finally Mombasa, Kenya to face piracy charges. Once in Mombasa, the Kenyan authorities exacerbated the suspects anguish by holding them for three days at the migration clearance desk as they were being processed to enter Kenya. In a fair judicial system, all these travesties of the law should have prompted the judge to give the suspects a lighter sentence.

International anti-piracy navies stand accused of arresting genuine sea-fairing Somalis whom they came across in the seas. Sea-fairing Somalis were arrested on suspicion of engaging in piracy when in reality they were genuine fishermen who were out in the sea to eke an honest living. Some were businessmen and passengers. Moreover, some of the people who were arrested were fish traders who bought fish from Somalia's coastal towns and transported it to Yemen for sale. In one instance, a jailed pirate claimed that as a fish trader, he used to buy frozen fish from Puntland and then transport it to Yemen for sale as fish is scarce and expensive in Yemen. It was in one of his many sea journeys to Yemen that he was arrested. Such concerns sound legitimate as international anti-piracy naval forces lacked mechanisms of differently suspected pirates from lawful maritime operators.

However, this contradicts the international naval forces claim that the piracy suspects were arrested while in possession of arms instead of fishing gear while others were seen throwing their weapons into the sea. Besides the unwarranted arrests, international anti-piracy navies used disproportionate force while arresting piracy suspects. In one instance, it was reported that American forces accosted a group of pirates on a small fishing boat with two military jets, two helicopters and a military vessel probably an intimidating technique to awe and shock the targeted individuals into surrender. Other forces such as the Russians undertook unprovoked killings of piracy suspects (Telegraph 2018) which made a complete annihilation of Somali piracy a mirage.

Conclusion

While Somali piracy beneficial in some quarters, it was powered by criminal dealings that made it unsustainable just like earlier piracies. The world has since the ancient times initiated mechanisms to end the plague of piracy. Although the fight against the menace was led by powerful polities, pirates somehow eluded and survived their might to regroup and reemerge in new locations under a new identity. A global outcry against Somali piracy prompted leading world naval powers to rise up and launch a campaign to terminate the menace. The global campaign was complemented by regional, national and local initiatives.

Regardless, the history of anti-piracy campaigns is replete with only partial successes. Thus, endeavours to curb piracy have only initialized recurring decline and recurrence episodes. This pattern is also true to waters off the Somalia coast as pre-2008 anti-piracy intercessions did not permanently end the menace. Despite the awe and potency of the 21st century naval initiatives to counter and suppress Somali piracy, the countries inherent diplomatic and policy considerations as well as political differences led to an indetermined campaign. The powerful navies' inherent obstructions found resonance in the inadequate regional anti-piracy initiatives.

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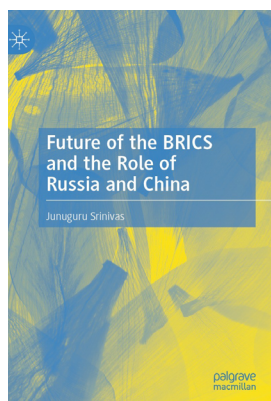
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Book review

Future of the BRICS and the Role of Russia and China

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Future of the BRICS and the Role of Russia and China

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Future of the BRICS and the Role of Russia and China is a single-authored volume exploring the future of the BRICS grouping in the face of a global system that is rapidly changing. The rise of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the severity of the 2008 global financial crisis have sparked a new round of debate about the long-term viability of transatlantic norms, ideas, and institutions that have dominated global governance since its commencement in 1945.

The author spends considerable time examining the evolution of the BRICS and the international system, including Russia and China's evolving position in the global system. He addresses pertinent questions concerning the BRICS, contemporary international relations and monetary institutions. Most importantly, he sheds light on the future of the BRICS and the international financial system.

Srinivas deftly explains the tectonic shifts that have led to global economic transformation in the post-globalisation period in the BRICS countries. Additionally, the author laments the post-Cold War shifts in the international system that saw unipolarity becoming the dominant political international orientation. The initial shifts resulted from Western domination of multilateral monetary institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the G-8 and G-20. The emergence of the BRICS, and the changing international system, threaten to upend the status quo.

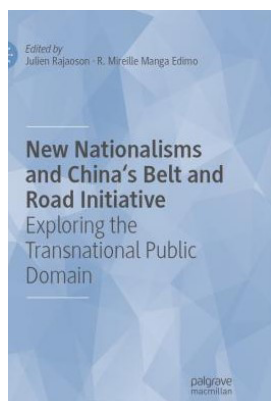
Interestingly, the author underscores Russia and China growing international role, particularly within multilateral groups such as the G-8 and the Group of 77 (G-77). The emergence of the BRICS promises to increase their influence. This observation aligns with the book's central argument, underscoring Russia and China's growing international role.

The book is well-researched, using qualitative and quantitative data and fieldwork. It is recommended for international relations scholars and practitioners or anyone interested in international politics and the emerging role of the BRICS. However, the author falls into the trap of current scholarship on the BRICS- it ignores South Africa's role. Although South Africa does not have economic or political muscle comparable to its BRICS partners, it plays an important role as a representative of African states. Moreover, what it lacks in material strength, it still has an ideological magnetism. Looking at the BRICS partners holistically would have provided a more credible prediction of the Future of the BRICS and its role as a strategic lever in reorientating the global world order.

Book review

New Nationalisms and China's Belt Road Initiative: Exploring the Transnational Public Domain

Malusi Mncube 



Julien Rajaoson and R. Mireille Manga Edimo (eds)

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New Nationalisms and China's Belt Road Initiative:

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China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI) launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping in Astana Kazakhstan constitutes a myriad of components amongst them "Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB)"; "The Maritime Silk Road (MSR)"; "The Made in China 2025 (MIC)". This globe-spanning strategy has tipped the global balance of power to China's advantage reshaping local economies and regional networks supposedly threatening the once unchallenged hegemonic mainstay of the west. All this in an unhinged market free economy that supposedly allocates factor endowments of production and business to the best and most efficient. The BRI juggernaut "Dragon" seemingly has ushered in an inevitable multipolarity of sorts. The contributions of this volume authored by leading scholars with multidisciplinary expertise provide detailed case studies of the recalibrating China's footprint globally. The BRI is China's signature global foreign policy and the largest ever global infrastructure undertaking that dwarfs the US Marshall Plan for Europe in comparison. It is dual-sided with a relational and dialectical composite features. By January 2022, China had signed more than 200 documents with 146 countries and 32 international organisations. The book is not exhaustive, but has case studies including those from Africa, Asia, Central Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, Brazil and South Africa. The BRI as a carrier of Chinese norms, values, identity, culture competes against the erstwhile embedded Eurocentric dominance of the USA and the EU. This transnational public domain has become contested space as the Chinese rise is counterpoised by a declining USA/EU. Against this backdrop the new nationalism is not a new model but consists of the responses, reactionary attitudes, feelings, sentiments, socio-cultural, and policy responses from both state and non-state actors to the BRI.

In the case of Angola, China's BRI infrastructure investment is fundamental for the country to realise its national policies, for example in modernizing Angola's rural economy on an industrial scale. This has consolidated the government's control over economic nationalism. The oil guarantees by Angola through concessionary loans from China with no intrusive conditionalities as demanded by western governments and their international financial institutions has facilitated ease of business. Any debt repayments difficulties arising has enabled ease of debt restructuring and rescheduling to the chagrin of western financial institutions as they view this as debt-trap diplomacy. China's BRI and concessionary loans to Angola has enabled the enhancement and diversification of its supply-side and demand-side sectors.

A comparative approach on four diverse African countries all underpinned by the BRI. In 2007 the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under the presidency of Joseph Kabila concluded the Sino Congolaise des Mines (Sicomines) with China. This agreement committed Beijing to build the nation's infrastructure such as roads, highways, schools and hospitals in exchange for mineral rights such as cobalt and copper in the DRC. The Sicomines agreements was not successful until January 2021 with the new DRC presidency of Tshisekedi. Under the latter's presidency a memorandum of understanding(MOU) was signed, providing for cooperation on the BRI with China.

On the question of Kenya, Chinese policymakers viewed Kenya because of its favourable strategic location as a "maritime pivot point". Thus it offers access to East and Central Africa and serve as a conduit for raw materials, including Sudan and Ugandan oil. Three major BRI projects have been the flagship of Kenya's infrastructural rehabilitation:

- expanding Mombasa Port, the region's largest port
- building a deep-sea port and related infrastructure at Lamu.
- laying a standard-gauge railways across the country.

Both in Nairobi and Mombasa, Huawei built Africa's first safe city with artificial intelligence managed cameras and surveillance systems. These BRI projects in Kenya have their western critics especially the USA, who argue that the projects have been costly for Kenya compromising the sustainable management of their foreign debt. Further the critiques remonstrate the lack of transparency around the BRI deals has encouraged corruption and rent-seeking. On the contrary, I argue that many US companies have regional headquarters in Nairobi, therefore the intrusion by China's BRI compromises US efforts to maintain their hegemonic influence.

Although the smallest country in Africa, Djibouti is an active participant in the BRI. Its geo-strategic location has been enviable to China regardless of its miniature size. Proximity to the Middle East and Europe and the trade and energy transit lanes between Gulf of Aden and the Red-sea compliments China's "Maritime Silk Road" ascendancy. This enables maritime counter-piracy operations in the Indian ocean and the Gulf of Aden. This has also enhanced cooperation with the African Union in facilitating humanitarian peace and security to catalyse socio-economic development for the citizenry.

Under BRI China has also extended a world class military base in Djibouti to the west's (USA, France, Germany, Italy, Spain) grudging acquiescence who also have military bases. With Cameroon, this book has outdone itself in China-BRI bashing and no opportunity is given in the book on China's position for the reader to independently ascertain for themselves the pros and cons of BRI. On 31 August, 2018 Cameroon with China signed a MoU on the BRI and how to strengthen economic and cultural cooperation. The "Made in China: is emblematic of China as an advanced country in the design of agricultural machinery globally. The Cameroon Agricultural Technology Application Center (CATAC) in the small village of Bifogo became a test case for the operationalization of BRI. The book only spews the projects failure mainly on the part of the Chinese insinuating that they might be government spies. That there is no pre-planning with the locals, unavailability of electrical energy to enable irrigation systems and as a result no end products like rice, maize and cassava have been produced.

In the aforementioned countries, BRI enjoys relatively high levels of support as China partners with the host countries in substantial infrastructure building. Concerns of rising debt trap continue to be amplified on western media but is quietly and confidentially negotiated between China and the host countries. The implicit criticism of a debt-trap by the west suggests that Africans cannot undertake projects with calculated risks only if rubberstamped by the west's oversight and approval.

The Middle East has vital and strategic importance for BRI, as a key hub connecting the land and sea routes of Asia, Africa and Europe. With the advent of the “Arab Spring” in 2011 geopolitical and geoeconomic engagement of BRI has been compromised with a region in constant flux and central state governments fundamentally challenged by non-state actors. For example the Islamic State (ISIS) and al-Qadi with their normative transboundary global caliphate pose a clear and present danger to the definition of territorial integrity as practiced in Westphalian tradition. Given this asymmetrical and multi-layered dialectical dynamics, the BRI has not found significant traction in the Middle East.

With the demise of the Union Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1989 China’s BRI penetration into central European countries such as Czechia; Hungary; Poland; Slovakia increased assertively on a bilateral basis. Diplomatic relations with these central European countries have existed with China since 1949. They have all become members of the European Union but still from 2013 China has sought to engage its BRI bilaterally. Since then there has been improved trade between all the countries and China but with trade deficit experienced by the former as they could not compete with China. Further on its soft diplomacy programs, China has opened up Confucius Institutes in all these countries to the praise of some of the hosts citizens and displeasure to the rest of the population.

This distrust by some of the host countries citizens stems from China’s suppression of human rights and anti-democratic practices. There is accusations of cybercrime and attacks from some of these countries, and the Huawei technology giant whose digital technology and 5G network-technologies is out-competing all western technologies This is perceived by Poland and other European Union (EU) members as colonization of Europe’s digital spectrum for future spying and surveillance. In 2013, Kazakhstan is where President Xi Jinping first launched BRI, as the country is geographically located in the middle of the continent and can potentially become the bridge between East(Asia) and West(Europe). At the time of publishing of this book the China-Kazakhstan (SREB) was still at normative stage, however these are the potential attributes of the project:

- Kazakhstan can be transformed from a landlocked country to a land-linked by enabling transit corridors.
- On a cost-benefit calculus Kazakhstan can balance and profitably leverage its dependency on Russia creating a win-win outcome.
- Against the backdrop of the above Kazakhstan can attract foreign direct investment (FDI) into its productive assets and beneficiation of end products/services.

The problems stated by the book repeatedly sound hackneyed, commonplace and tired as biased China bashing. Host countries can think and act independently and reschedule and restructure deals as it has been evidently demonstrated.

The double consciousness amongst the citizenry of praise and suspicion created by China’s BRI is also true of Laos. Since 2021 infrastructure development has been most welcome with signature projects like Vientiane-Luang Prabang highway; Laos-China Railway thus ultimately linking Junming and Singapore. China as a source of opportunity and anxiety is also visited to upon by its BRICS (Brazil; India; China; South Africa) partners specifically India. The anxiety is confirmed as India views BRI as China’s desire to dominate the Eurasian corridor that encircles India, thereby hamstringing its ability to benefit from international trade. The BRI confronts maritime and continental Asia and the combined soft and hard-power diplomacy tilts the balance of power in favor of China.

This undermines and threatens India geopolitically and geoeconomically. Beyond this anxiety and mistrust, India does not have capacity to competitively emulate the BRI will find it more uphill to integrate into China dominated Asian value chains. Another BRICS member South Africa established diplomatic links with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) supporting the one China policy over

Taiwan. China has unequivocally played a pivotal role in Africa's anti-colonial struggles including South Africa and this has cemented its bona fides with all of Africa. Its trade with South Africa grew exponentially from R22 billion in 1998 to reach R220 billion by 2020 becoming the leading trading partner with South Africa, displacing the European Union, United Kingdom and USA.

This resume of cordiality resulted in the China-South Africa signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in December 2015 to jointly build the SREB and the 21st Century MSR. South Africa's intention in partnering with the BRI is to enhance its National Development Plan, Operation Phakisa, intra-Africa production and trade leveraging on various African Union instrumental such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement(AfCFTA) benefiting from a plethora of multiplier effects with welfare gains.

As the BRI is the main foreign policy initiative of the Xi Jinping administration, it has complimented the BRICS and the New Development Bank(NDB) of which Brazil wholesomely participates in all of them. From 1930 until the global financial meltdown in 2009 the US had been Brazil's main trading partner, now replaced by the juggernaut China to the chagrin of the right-wing sectors of Brazilian society. The BRI has consummated all manner of mutual investments in varied sectors of Brazilian economy. This is from significant mergers and acquisitions, greenfield investments and joint venture investments and more pointedly Brazilians strategic energy sector that's suffered a deficit of capital injection for modernization and harnessing on efficiencies. A case in point is the significant shareholding in two national energy giants in Brazil, The State Grid Brazil Holding and the Belo Monte Hydropower plant for a period of 30 years. By any standards this is the consolidation of another Belt and Road landmark by China right in US backyard.

The geopolitical and strategic dimensions of China's BRI has aroused suspicion and opposition with Australia but full embrace with Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Indo-Pacific region once majorly influenced by USA, and deputized by Australia is now nestled in China's axis of influence that provides all manner of investments with least conditionality. Seemingly after the 2008 global financial meltdown Australia and the US cannot compete with China on foreign donor funding. Their narrative on debt trap publicity, clearly has not dissuaded host countries from making the own independent decisions to enlist on the BRI investment bandwagon. This Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asia region has witnessed the growing assertiveness of China and its BRI particularly the MSR. Host countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines do not feel compelled by China to be part of the BRI-MSR an implicit inference the book keeps alluding. Rather host countries have a myriad of development imperatives and amongst their list of investors is the US, Australia and China. On a comparative cost benefit calculus they will pick the investors they see fit for their countries. In this regard China presents the attractive cost-effective investments and skills. If the grand design of BRI mainly reflects China's economic and geopolitical ambitions so is the case with the US and Australia as they can also pitch and punt much more attractive investment packages in a so called free market economy.

About BRICS

Policy brief

The BRICS Summit in 2022: Continuity of Change?

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2022 marks the real begin of the post-Covid era with the pandemic having subsided significantly and the ramifications of the past two years becoming ever more gruesome. It also marks a period where to Covid and the global financial crisis before it is added the war in Ukraine among challenges deepening age-old problems of global poverty, socio-economic inequality, the global divide between the north and the south, the rendering ineffective of the UN by this divide and geopolitical contestations, and others. The BRICS are looked upon to contribute to arresting these problems and accelerate the reforms towards an inclusive world development. The BRICS, aware of this, has tended to be big on dreams and plans, but short of what has been done so far to get to the targets. The BRICS still does not have a mutual accountability mechanism by which they could hold each other to account for the implementation of decisions made. This piece seeks to show that the BRICS is born in change, and they embody this, but it is long on plans and visions, no report back on what has been achieved.

What is in the history?

The BRICS was established as a mechanism for cooperation at the meeting of foreign ministers from Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2006. South Africa joined in 2009 when the BRIC became BRICS, when it upgraded into a summit level. In 2022, BRICS leaders gathered at the 14th summit in Beijing, China, on 23-24 June 2022 to make decisions under the theme: 'Foster High-Quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development'.

2022 Summit

As with all summits, this summit was a culmination of a series of meetings from which recommendations are escalated to heads of states to make final determination on. About 26 meetings were part of this build up. Many of these are by senior government officials in various sectors of public policy, including national security, health, education, agriculture, industry, investment, space, science and technology. There is a lot of negotiation and horse trading. Some of these meetings are consultative in nature, involving state agencies that are semi-autonomous like central banks, competition authorities, audit institutions, development banks and so forth. Some involve non-state actors like business associations, experts, political parties, trade unions and NGOs that seek to feed into the chain of decision-making. It is a long and protracted process of making the BRICS agenda often running into months ahead of each summit.

BRICS on values and principles

The summit theme in 2022 is meant to discipline all this hive of activity towards a coherent set of decisions at the summit. In this case, the theme straddled the need to strengthen partnerships with the BRICS, which was the theme in India in 2021, with the intention of the BRICS to participate in fashioning the new post-Covid and post-financial crisis global development agenda. The first theme is out realization that without internal cohesion BRICS may not be able to deliver on their promises. The second is in recognition of opportunities that come with the universal sense that something needs to change in global affairs.

As usual, the BRICS reaffirmed its principles, values and objectives because these define who they are together in a changing work. These include the values of mutual respect and understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness, and consensus. The principles lifted up this time include “mutual trust, deepened intra-BRICS mutually beneficial cooperation, and closer people-to-people exchanges”. The shared objectives emphasised are to improve “BRICS solidarity and cooperation based on our common interests and key priorities, and to further strengthen our strategic partnership”.

Seven strategic priorities were emphasised, most of them as a build up from decisions of the past four years. First among this as usual is to strengthen and reform global governance. It is standing position of the BRICS to reaffirm their strong commitment to global governance and multilateralism first and then indicate the need to reform it in order to make it more inclusive, representative, participatory, responsive, effective, transparent, democratic, objective, action-oriented, solution-oriented and credible. It is hope shared with the developing world that these reforms would make the achievement of global development more feasible.

BRICS Priorities

The second being ‘Working in Solidarity to Combat COVID-19’ is advancing solidarity and multilateral cooperation witnessed during the height of the pandemic. The idea is that there should be no reversals, but consolidation. They want World Health Organisation-guided international cooperation on prevention and treatment strengthened. This support of the WHO is critical at the time when there is attack on the body from right wing.

On ‘Safeguarding Peace and Security’, as usual they commit to the principle of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, in a manner that suggests non-approval of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. They actually discussed the war in Ukraine and decided to respect national positions as already vocalised in the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council. Of course, the positions of four BRICS not involved in the war emphasised peace, calling for an end to war, and recommended negotiations to give effect to this call. The call for peace through negotiated settlements is reiterated in reference to other conflict situations also. BRICS leaders also committed to disarmament, peaceful use of outer space, and peaceful ICT-environment. International cooperation in response to all security issues is stressed.

On ‘Promoting Economic Recovery’, the BRICS had an extensive list of decisions and commitments as usual. These include the continued implementation of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025; the BRICS Digital Economy Partnership Framework, the BRICS Initiative on Trade and Investment for Sustainable Development, the BRICS Initiative on Enhancing Cooperation on Supply Chains, the BRICS Framework for Consumer Protection in E-commerce, and the BRICS Framework for Cooperation on Trade in Services. They stressed infrastructure development as a catalyst for economic recovery. BRICS leaders committed their countries to work together to strengthen the

Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) mechanism as a contribution to strengthening the global financial safety net. They want the new Agreement Between the Governments of BRICS Countries on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters enforced.

'Expediting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' has become an apex priority for BRICS since 2016. They think global partnership as envisaged in SDG 17 is crucial to this end, so developed countries have to honour their pledge to contribute (finances, capacity and technologies) to SDGs implementation in poor countries. They called for stronger and demonstrable commitment to a shared climate change agenda by improving implementation of the Paris Agreement and the adherence to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. They think breakthrough in big data and artificial intelligence hold promise for the development agenda and therefore BRICS countries have set up platforms to enhance cooperation in digital technologies.

With regard to 'Deepening People-to-People Exchanges', what is new is the adoption of an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Agreement between the Governments of the BRICS States on cooperation in the Field of Culture (2022-2026). The BRICS want to improve digitalization in the fields of culture, heritage and arts in the hope that this will enhance mutual learning and appreciation. Educational exchanges are to be expanded. The intention is to also strengthen third-track diplomacy in the form of forums for universities, think tanks, youth, political parties and civil society formation.

It has become ever more urgent for the BRICS to look at how it is organised and institutionalised. In this regard, under institutional development, the BRICS countries committed to a structured process to discuss possible expansion of BRICS. It will continue to expand its cooperation with other emerging and developing countries as part of its BRICS Plus Cooperation strategy.

In all this, there are opportunities to grow intra-BRICS research collaboration to better understand what the BRICS are doing, how its actions might impact other processes by which the global agenda after Covid is being shaped and what might lead to meaningful benefits for the peoples of BRICS? The BRICS has not failed to inspire with its commitments and declarations of intents. All of them are in keeping with the latest thinking in the developing world. They all are commitments that if they were to be achieved would change much of the world for better. But the BRICS continues to report on intentions and not on what has been done, or what impacts have been realised. This is BRICS' next challenge, the proof that it can do what it envisions.

We, therefore, recommend that the BRICS should set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, a statistical platform to collect data on actions made, and mutual accountability mechanism. The Institute for Global African Affairs is developing a project to study ways in which this accountability in BRICS and related countries (BRICS Plus) may be enhanced.