



Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and Africa: New Projected Developmental Paradigms¹

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Abstract

This article reflects on the dynamics of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) states' political economy and its implications for Africa's continuous effort to search for new developmental paradigms. The core questions addressed in the article are: What are the BRICS states specifically proposing to the existing world order and the global south in the areas of paradigms of economic and social development and systems of governance? What do these countries have in common? Can this commonality be instrumentalised and converted in favour of African progress? What is the ideological foundation of their solidarity? Within the pragmatism and ideology related to this solidarity, are the BRICS states proposing new development schemes to replace the failed old, top-down, anarchical, market-based, linear, and one-size-fits-all model of social and economic development? Based on the dynamics of the BRICS grouping and the movements of its members, it is argued that the emerging markets and economies in the Global South, regardless of the ideological contradictions and internal structural political weaknesses among its members, implies that the business-as-usual approach in the practices of the institutions of international political economy and world politics is no longer the only pragmatic way of conducting business. To have a significant impact in Africa, BRICS's activities should be shaped and guided by the bottom-up perspectives. BRICS strongly calls for shifts of paradigms in the realm of the world power and for qualitative state intervention in the management of the invisible hand of Adam Smith.

Résumé

Cet article se penche sur la dynamique de la politique économique du Brésil, de la Russie, de l'Inde, de la Chine et de l'Afrique du Sud (BRICS) et ses

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implications dans les efforts continus de l'Afrique pour la recherche de nouveaux paradigmes de développement. Les questions fondamentales abordées dans l'article sont: Que proposent particulièrement les BRICS à l'ordre mondial actuel et aux pays du Sud en matière de paradigmes de développement et de systèmes de gouvernance économique et sociale? Qu'est-ce que ces pays ont-ils en commun? Ce caractère commun peut-il être instrumentalisé et converti en faveur de progrès pour l'Afrique? Quel est le fondement idéologique de leur solidarité? Dans le pragmatisme et l'idéologie liés à cette solidarité, les BRICS proposent-ils de nouveaux schémas de développement pour remplacer l'ancien modèle de développement social et économique, raté, descendant anarchique, fondé sur le marché, linéaire et uniforme? En se basant sur la dynamique du groupe BRICS et des mouvements de ses membres, certains soulignent que les marchés et les économies émergentes de l'hémisphère sud, quelles que soient les contradictions idéologiques et les faiblesses structurelles politiques internes entre ses membres, montrent que l'approche de statu quo dans les pratiques des institutions d'économie politique internationale et de politique mondiale n'est plus la seule voie pragmatique en matière d'affaires. Pour avoir un impact significatif en Afrique, les activités des BRICS devraient être conçues et guidées par des perspectives ascendantes. Les BRICS appellent fortement à des changements de paradigmes en matière de puissance mondiale et à l'intervention qualitative de l'Etat dans la gestion de la main invisible d'Adam Smith.

Introduction

This article is a critical reflection of the dynamics of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) states' political economy and its implications for Africa's continuous effort to search for new developmental paradigms. Although it is theoretically and conceptually reflective, the arguments advanced are shaped by African cultural, economic, historical and political experiences.

The core questions are: What are the BRICS states specifically proposing to the existing world order and the Global South in the areas of paradigms of economic and social development and systems of governance? What do these countries have in common? Can this commonality be instrumentalised and converted in favour of African progress? What is the ideological foundation of their solidarity? Within the pragmatism and ideology related to this solidarity, are the BRICS states proposing new development schemes from the failed top-down, 'free' and anarchical, market-based, linear, one-size-fits-all model of social and economic development? The article addresses these questions.

Emergence of the New Economies in the Global South

With the emergence of the new economies in the Global South, I argue that there is no law of gravity or natural law that stipulates the claim that some countries will never grow and progress. As these countries are in the process of 'graduating' from their status of underdevelopment to a transitional phase towards the consolidation of their status of new emerging economies, some issues are being raised about the impetus and the origins of this new dynamic and the nature of the relationship between the free market forces, the state and the society within the global capitalist economy. Each of the BRICS countries still has a large proportion of its population that is poor, unemployed and cannot effectively participate in the political process because they are considered politically disabled.

In 2001, Jim O'Neil, the former Chief Economist and Chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management at the London Office of Investment Banking Group, in a research report paper entitled 'Building Better Global Economic BRICs', coined the acronym BRIC to signify Brazil, Russia, India and China as the new fast-growing economic powers in the world.² In 2008, Mark Atherton predicted that by 2050, the BRIC nations would dominate the globe.³ Nearly 60 per cent of the total increase in world output in 2000-2008 took place in developing countries and transitional countries, half of which occurred in the BRICS; while their share of global GDP during the same period rose 16 to 20 per cent.⁴

Based on the dynamics of the BRICS grouping and the movements of its members, it is argued that the emerging markets and economies in the Global South, regardless of the ideological contradictions and internal structural political weaknesses among its members, imply that the business-as-usual approach in the practices of the institutions of international political economy and world politics is no longer the only pragmatic way of conducting business. These new political actors claim that the paradigms and the policies based on 'savage capitalism' which is extremely exploitative as articulated by the old industrial powers, are responsible for the failures of the global political economy and its tragic social and environmental consequences.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the dynamics of international political economy have been challenged by the ways nation-states and people are reacting to the imperatives of such an economy, especially the new technical management style and new usage of the dominant social paradigms (technology, science and the free market). The demands on the states and other institutions to accelerate social progress the

world over have intensified. These demands have been influenced by the forces related to international and national judicial activism, civil societies, popular movements and state reforms.

The law of colonial or imperialist vertical centre of gravity of power, which was conceived as 'natural' is being shaken. For instance, since 2010 China has become the number two economy globally, replacing Japan. In 2011, Brazil overtook Britain as the world's sixth largest economy. Brazil's objective is to soon displace France at fifth position. And it has been forecast that India, the tenth largest economy as of 2011, will change its rank by 2020. In the next two decades, it is predicated that, with the exception of the United States, BRICS will replace France, Germany, and, once again, Japan. These shifts will have a significant impact on the African developmental paradigms.

Regardless of the perspectives that one might choose analytically, it is necessary to consider the nature of the BRICS' solidarity as an important policy tool in Africa. The origin of this solidarity has to be examined structurally and historically within the dynamics of world politics, which are ideologically creating a hybrid transition in which there is no single entity with monopolistic power or any state, individual or corporation with hegemonic governance, authority and legitimacy to create any new linear order.

I argue that the shifts declared by BRICS through its summits and other meetings only will not and/or cannot guarantee that through the membership of South Africa, Africa as a whole would likely change her place holistically within the liberal world economy and the existing nature of the international division of labour. For the BRICS' actions to be positively felt in Africa, there would first be a need to establish substantive political reforms prior to BRICS' policy implementation. For instance, if African nation-states and people and their social agencies could transform their technically-defined 'representative democracies' or 'illiberal democracies' into real functioning social democracies in which people participate effectively in the political process; can force their states' institutions and decision makers to take advantage of the new spaces in world politics and move forward.

Using a historical-structuralist approach with a comparative perspective, I raise an issue for these countries' methods of structurally conceiving and perceiving south-south relations; how they re-define politics, and how they deal with the old elements of the dominant social paradigms. These approaches put an emphasis on causal relations among the political actors and their systems.

Within the above approach and its philosophical assumptions and claims, the world is a system and an organic whole whose behaviours are

conditioned by the actors' locations and how they came to exist in the system. The actors and the subsystems do not act similarly. Their specific functions and attributes are conditioned by their locations within the system. The system is not just the sum of its elements. It is more than what is tangible. In order to understand why a system behaves the way it does, we have to ask the questions of the origins of its elements, examine the nature of the relationship among them, and discuss the nature of the interactions between the system itself and other phenomena within or around its larger environment

Within the systems analysis, I interpret history as a changing phenomenon that is not predetermined by any circumstances or forces. I build my arguments in finding correlations between historical facts and the structures of the African contemporary society. Within the structures of the African societies, I put more emphasis on the political institutions or the states and their relations to Immanuel Wallerstein's world system (1974, 1980, and 1989). Furthermore, my interests in historical causation of social phenomena and critical examination of their structures are shaped by social constructivism. Adler (1997, 2002) and Fearon and Wendt (2002) take the social world of agreed upon collective social values seriously in their analyses.

Another important feature of the world system since the end of the twentieth century has been the movement of states and people's struggles toward their redefinition of themselves. This redefinition has been taking different forms and shapes in almost every part of the world. The substance of this redefinition and its significance depend on the dynamics of the local political configurations, who the actors are, what their alliances are, how a given people and state have become part of the world system, the location of these actors in the international political economy, what they are bringing into the global market. This process of redefinition is facilitated by the means and forces of liberal globalisation.

Additionally, since the end of the twentieth century, the capitalist economy has been operating more forcefully toward the controlled dynamics of both regionalism and globalism. While capitalists at the regional level have tendencies to advance some national and cultural interests in the process of making their surplus or acquiring and protecting their capital, the globalists tend to see the world more on the perspectives of the so-called free market. Regionalism is more associated with geo-politics and history than globalism, which has claims and tendencies of promoting 'universalism' from a perspective of a world without borders. Regionalists are more sympathetic to protectionism. Furthermore, while capitalist regionalists

accept the existence of other poles of influence in other parts of the world, the globalists tend to emphasize on the universal human values.

In May 2011, the World Bank published a report called 'Multipolarity: the New Global Economy'. According to the World Bank, emerging countries like Brazil, Russia, Indian, China, and South Africa will induce clear signs of change in the socio-economic power relations (World Bank 2011). Multipolarity is a measurement of the distribution of power concentrated in several poles of power, those poles being the great powers. BRICS are projected as becoming great powers along the United States and the European Union.

On 14 June 2014, while many leaders were preoccupied with the World Cup in Brazil and the situation in Ukraine, the G-77 summit took place in Bolivia. It celebrated the 70th anniversary of non-alignment. This grouping now counts 130 members. Russia is being invited to join this organization. The final declaration called for a new world order; and it supports the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They also intend and plan to eradicate poverty by 2030. Evo Morales of Bolivia went further and requested the suppression of the Security Council of the UN. In March 2013, in Durban, South Africa, the leaders of BRICS also agreed that the election for the next WTO Director-General should have a candidate from a developing country.

The South-South agenda is to project the creation of a multipolar approach and strategies to development. Thus, multipolarity is about a system of multiple global and regional powers, which exist simultaneously. It is about the dispersal of powers. A multipolar approach underlines the decentralisation of world resources and their better management, and their fair distribution. It calls for more people's participation in the reconstruction of their economies, which implies that it puts more emphasis on building communities rather than the 'idolatry' of individualism. Furthermore, it calls for the reconceptualisation and establishment of new international partnership/cooperation based on the win-win theory.

A multipolar perspective to development implies the coexistence of several equally used and respected spaces or locations of power with similar value systems. It can be advanced through dialogical relations between the subject and object of learning. It calls for the development of social welfarism and the implementation and respect for the laws of the ecology. This perspective is framed within four laws of ecology, which are: 'everything is connected to everything else'; 'everything must go somewhere'; 'the nature knows best'; and 'there is no such thing as a free lunch' (Smith 2009, pp. 2-3). Things do not happen in a vacuum.

History and Goals of BRICS

In analysing the BRICS' genesis, I identify the philosophical elements of its projected developmental model. Some may view BRICS as a global actor, as *sui generis*. Some people think that it is yet an 'unidentified political object'. How much unique is it? And how much 'unidentified' is it in the world of the states and international capitalism?

The history of BRICS states has to be located in the efforts of developing countries to try to build alliances and coalitions in order to confront oppression and underdevelopment. It has to be examined within the frame of the struggles of many members of the UN that have been trying to re-define their sovereignty and their capitalism. Through its summits, the BRICS' main objectives and the mechanisms through which these objectives were intended to be translated into policies can be identified.

The visions of each of these states are also important as they can inform us about the kind of political world and development they intend to produce. Vision is essentially a philosophical concept. It is an ideal concept in which one creates a plan for the self with a long-term purpose that ought to be beneficial to the collective self as well. In a nation-state, there is no vision if its leaders do not know where they are taking a given country to and where the country is coming from. As a philosophical concept, it implies futurism and progress.

In the past, various attempts were made by new politically independent nation-states located in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East during the Cold War international relations and politics to challenge the policies and the politics of industrialised countries, which were considered as negative political forces impeding the progress to take place in the former colonial countries. It is in the name of so-called free market dogma and free trade as articulated by the WTO that Western industrialised countries and the US still dominate the world economy.

The Bandung Conference in 1955, which was held in Indonesia, is the first remarkable point in which an official statement was made to voice collectively against imperialism and colonialism. It is out of the spirit of this conference that members of the UN promised to make a new political activism, which created the organisation of non-aligned states. Two major sponsors of the conference, India and China, are also the co-founders of BRICS. Despite the ideological differences among them, they thought that their common enemies were stronger than their ideological differences. Their peripheral locations in the dynamics of the global political economy and the vision of tomorrow led them to minimize their historical, cultural, ideological and political differences.

Although non-alignment as a movement of the weaker nation-states in the international scene claimed to be ideologically neutral in world affairs, it was de facto an ideology in itself. It was articulating a collective way of thinking about world politics, which during the Cold War, was shaped by enormous contradictions. Its strengths were demonstrated at the level of the UN General Assemblies but its weaknesses were expressed at the level of the world economy's functionality and international security. For various national security imperatives and the free market demands, many members of the Non-Alignment Movement allied themselves with the states that oppressed them. However, despite its weaknesses, it contributed toward the advancement of the concept of the Global South.

The idea of the South can be traced to the 7th Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 1975 in which a resolution concerning development and international cooperation was adopted. Section V of this resolution dealt specifically with cooperation among developing countries. In 1978, the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in the UN Development Programme was established by the General Assembly. Its primary mandate was to promote, coordinate and support South-South and Triangular cooperation in the UN system and globally.⁵ In short, it should be noted that the concept of the Global South has geographical, political, historical and economic connotations and meanings.

With Russia, a former super power during the Cold War era, as a co-founder of BRICS, which is also geographically located in the North, what kind of South-South grouping is this new organization? In December 1999, a group of countries known as G-20, represented by the ministers of finance and central bank governors had first met subsequent to the Asian financial crisis, the meeting brought together the major industrialised countries, the European Union and the representatives of the major developing economies.⁶ Brazil, India, China, Russia and South Africa were among the countries represented in the meeting. Former Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin proposed the G-20. His main goal was to set up a group in which members have solid functioning economies for cooperation and consultation on matters pertaining to the international financial system. However, he is not known for being a progressive leader.

Although the BRICS states were initially interested in talking about specialised investments, banking practices and new ideas about new financial strategies to be used toward the advancement of their economies, the declarations from the summits reflect a broad agenda, which includes paradigm shifts from the old stagnated development programmes, a new political orientation about social progress, and the nature of the global power.

The main reason for creating this new club was based on an underlying perception that the economic crisis of the world would not be solved by the industrialised countries which are also to blame as being part of the problem as they have been advocating economic reforms with orthodox austerity programmes whose consequences led to the collapse of many economies and the states in the Global South.

In their annual summits, the leaders of the BRICS have been discussing the issues related to the status of the international economy and finances. As Cynthia Roberts indicated:

In 2006, as BRICs Mania gathered momentum, the four governments, at the initiative of the then former Russian President Vladimir Putin, collectively lifted themselves from the pages of investment reports to hold their first foreign ministers' meeting on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly session. After a second meeting of the four foreign ministers in New York in September 2007, the BRICs launched a consultative process at the level of deputy foreign ministers to foster regular contacts and multilateral diplomacy.⁷

After the World Financial Crisis of 2008, the leaders of the BRIC states had their first summit meeting in Yekaterinburg in Russia and declared these goals:

To achieve more influence in world governance forums, how their nations could contribute to improving the world economic situation and, by working together, could reform international financial institutions. Their financial declaration called for the establishment of a multipolar world order.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry in 2008, active efforts by the BRIC to reform the world financial system were some of the factors that led to a decision at the G-20 Washington Summit in November 2008 to include emerging economies in an enlarged Financial Stability Forum.⁸ The second Summit took place on 16 April 2010 in Brasilia and the Third in Sanya, China on 14 April 2011, during which South Africa was invited. Their final declaration of the 2011 leaders' summit supports what was indicated earlier:

It is the overarching objective and strong shared desire for peace, security, development and cooperation that brought together BRICS states with a total population of nearly 3 billion from different continents. BRICS aims at contributing significantly to the development of humanity and establishing a more equitable and fair world.... We are open to increasing engagement and cooperation with non-BRICS states, in particular, emerging and developing countries, and relevant international and regional organizations.... Accelerating sustainable growth of developing countries is one the major

challenges for the world. We believe that growth and development are central to addressing poverty and to achieving the MDGs. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger is moral, social political and economic imperative of humankind and one of the greatest global challenges facing the world today, particularly in Least Developed Countries in Africa and elsewhere.... We review the progress of the BRICS cooperation in various fields and share the view that such cooperation has been enriching and mutually beneficial and that there is a great scope for closer cooperation and the further development of its own agenda. We are determined to translate our political vision into concrete action and endorse the attached Action Plan, which will serve as the foundation for future cooperation. We will review the implementation of Action Plan during our next Leaders Meeting.⁹

The above declaration indicates the priority items and the projection of new perspectives to deal with economic development through the eradication of poverty and not the old approach of alleviation of poverty. Another important dimension involves democracy.

In a one-day meeting (the fourth summit) of 29 March 2012 in Delhi, the leaders of BRICS, notably Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, Dmitry Medvedev of Russia, Manmohan Singh, Hu Jintao of China and Jacob Zuma of South Africa, discussed closer trade links and a new bank. The fifth BRICS summit was held on 17 March 2013 in Durban, South Africa, under the theme: 'BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialization'. The summit outcome documents known as the eThekweni Declaration and Action Plan were adopted at the conclusion of the Summit. 5 leaders agreed on the establishment of:

- (a) New Development Bank with the initial capital contribution to the bank that should be substantial and sufficient for its effectiveness in financing infrastructure;
- (b) The contingent reserve arrangement (CRA) with an initial size of US\$100 billion. The CRA would help BRICS countries forestall short-term liquidity pressures and further strengthen financial stability;
- (c) The BRICS Think Tanks Council and the BRICS Business Council. The BRICS Think Tanks Council will link respective Think Tanks into a network to develop policy options such as the evaluation and future long-term strategy for BRICS.

On 15 July 2014, the five leaders' meeting in Fortaleza, Brazil, agreed to locate their newly established Development Bank in Shanghai (China) with a capital of US\$50 billion, rising to US\$100 billion. This was conceived in terms of lending policies and the role of the stakeholders as having an alternative perspective as compared to practices and policies of the existing financial systems of the World Bank (with its US\$232 billion) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The BRICS reiterated their

proposition to creating an alternative financial institution to the World Bank. At the same time, in its Delhi Declaration, BRICS agreed to expand the capital base of the World Bank and other multilateral institutions to ensure global economic stability. It is important to compare and contrast some specific economic variables in order to have a sense of how BRICS would advance 'a multipolar, equitable and democratic world order'¹⁰ that it claims while there are still major political, cultural and economic policy differences among them.

A Brief Comparison of Economic and Political Dimensions of the BRICS States

Some comparative trends are necessary to discuss what these states have or do not have in common. The imperatives of the world of nation-states and those of their citizens, and their complex relationships are still prevailing. While the world of the states means sovereignty, national security, citizenry, well-defined territoriality, the world of citizenry means rights to life, which embodies all the cognitive liberties. BRICS claim to articulate a visionary state system that has to emancipate people toward these rights.

As of 2013, the BRICS group accounts for 26 per cent of the world's landmass, 42 per cent of the global population, nearly 28 per cent of the global economy and 40 per cent of the global GDP (\$18.486 trillion). Intra-BRICS trade is growing at an average of 28 per cent annually and currently stands at about \$230 billion.¹¹ BRICS countries also have accounted for over 50 per cent of global economic growth in the last decade. However, BRICS is not yet known in African ministries of planning and development, let alone in the African business circles, rural areas and non-governmental sectors. It is hoped that South Africa will be able to bring the BRICS' agenda to African political and economic debates through the African Union's activities, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Economic position and its political involvement in international affairs determine much of the state's place and its status in world affairs. The supranational space that the BRICS states have created functions in a world that is dominated by the imperatives of neoliberal globalisation and their consequences in developing countries, such as large unemployment, lumpen-intellectualisation, political instability and rampant poverty. At the same time, civil society is also consolidating itself while democratic consolidation is zigzagging in many developing countries, despite some economic growth.

Brazil has come into BRICS with confidence as a mixed economy with strong state interventionism in the factors of production. It has been developing an independent foreign policy since Lula. It wants to become a global power. It has become the sixth largest economy, overtaking that of the United Kingdom. Its trade has increased faster between itself and other BRICS states, as stated by Dwyer (2001: 27): 'In a single decade the BRIC states – Russia, India and China – have gone from being responsible for 3.42% in 2000 to 18.3% in 2010 of the total Brazilian trade with the world. Of special relevance is China, which now represents nearly 15% of Brazil's total foreign trade.'

In 2011, Brazil had the second GDP per capita of \$11,600 after Russia with \$16,700 and a GDP of \$2.284 trillion after India with \$4.463 trillion. Brazil also had GNP of \$2,144,884,440,510 with a GNP per capita of \$9,390. Although, as of 2011, Brazil's GDP per capita was still a third of that of United Kingdom, its economy overtook that of the United Kingdom as the world's sixth largest economy. It rose 2.7 per cent as compared with that of the United Kingdom 0.8 per cent.

Brazil has about 20 per cent of the world's fresh water supply. It is one of the few countries in the world that is still able to increase its agricultural frontier. Research plays a major role in increasing agricultural productivity. It has a comparative advantage in growing and exporting food. Brazil is self-sufficient in energy production. Brazil's total commercial exchanges with BRICS in million US Dollars between 1990 and 2010 were gradually increasing, from \$52,075 in 1990 to \$383,636 in 2010, more than any other country in the new grouping. BRICS as a percentage of all Brazilian trade has jumped from 3.42 per cent in 2000 to 18.3 per cent.¹² Brazil has the ambition of becoming a superpower in South America, as well as a strong power within the UN system. With its large population of 203,429,773 in 2011 and population growth of 1.13 per cent and a growing middle class, Brazil has a large market of everything that its economy can produce.

China joined the WTO in 2001 after several years of probation. It has access to more resources associated with membership. Since 2010, China has become the number one economy in terms of quantitative output of both its export-import. It displaced Japan, which has become number three. Both China's GDP and GNP of \$11.3 trillion and \$410,221,684,440,510 respectively are the largest in the world. However, its GDP per capita of \$8,400 is smaller than that of Russia, \$16,600, Brazil with \$11,600 and South Africa with \$11,000 as of 2011. China has invested heavily in Brazil and South Africa. In 2011, China became the largest foreign investor in Brazil.

In 2011, China spent more in industrialisation plus manufacturing (about 47 per cent) than any other country member of the BRICS. The second country was Russia with 37 per cent, and India was the last with 26 per cent. South Africa was close to Russia with 31 per cent. China's exports and imports in 2011 are larger than any country within BRICS states with \$0.897 trillion and \$41.664 trillion respectively. Although its foreign investments are based on the cost-benefits related to capitalism, they are state-based.

China's ambition is to become the number one economy. Its power is reflected in its investments in the world, including in the old axes of power, the US and Western Europe. Almost every power is conducting business with China as it offers cheaper labour, the market and the determined citizens and the state to progress. With its population of 1,336,718,015 as of 2011, China has a large reservoir of agents of change. Its security resources' needs, which are the combination of energy and strategic minerals, are higher than that of any country within the group.¹³

With the slowdown of the Chinese economic growth of about 7 percent in 2015 and its stock market crash in July 2015, its government responded on August 10, 2015 in allowing its controlled currency to depreciate 2 per cent to the United States dollar (US \$). China is embracing what President Xi Jinping called 'new normal.' However, with the magnitude of its foreign investments and its trade activities worldwide, this slowdown situation is not likely to lead to the devastation of Chinese economic status that some in the West are forecasting.

India had a GDP of \$4.463 trillion, higher than those of Russia, Brazil and South Africa and also with the GNP of \$4,159,721,220,009, higher than those of Brazil, Russia and South Africa. Its GDP per capita was lower than that of any country in the group, \$3,700, and a GNP per capita of \$1,330 as of 2011. Indian total exports and imports in 2011 were \$298.2 billion and \$451 billion, respectively. Exports were higher than those of Brazil and South Africa, but smaller than those of Russia and China. In the combined industrialisation and manufacturing, India and Brazil had almost the same amount of spending at almost 26 per cent. In the area of development and research, India spends about 0.80 per cent lower than South Africa, which spends about 0.93 per cent. It needs not to be emphasized that more than 60 per cent of the Indian population is still characterised massively as poor.

South Africa is the smallest economy of all in the combination of GDP and GNP. For instance, its GDP and GNP were \$554.6 billion and \$517.93 billion respectively in 2011, while its GDP per capita was \$11,000 and GNP per capita was \$6,090. However, in the areas of education and health,

for instance, South Africa has been doing better than Russia, Brazil and even better than India and China in health areas. Additionally, South Africa is the fourth-largest source of gold and diamonds and has more than three quarters of global platinum reserves.

BRICS' Agenda for African Development

The BRICS states do have an agenda for the countries involved to challenge the policies and the structures of the existing systems and the status of other countries that could also benefit from their 'protective' policies. However, the agreed upon regional policy framework and the political philosophy that constitute the foundation of this agenda are complex as the BRICS states have not proposed a tangible and practical unified ideology to be used toward the actualisation of its policies.

In the world of global liberalism, the main questions would be: What are the free best trade practices or best preferential arrangements among the BRICS countries which value fairness? How would their trade systems contribute to build democracies in Africa? How would the economic activities of BRICS, especially free trade relations, foreign investments, technological transfer, the construction of infrastructures contracts, through South Africa, reach the African villages and people, and transform their low production capacity, improve their management of the rural resources and advance the needed sustainable self-sufficiency schemes upon which local economies can be built?

BRICS states are challenging a post-American unilateral world as well as a non-polar world articulated by the mid-size economic and political powers. They are repeatedly calling for diversifying global services away from the US dollar toward a global currency and have begun experimenting by using their currencies for regional commerce.¹⁴ It is through globalisation that this agenda is likely to be realised. However, it cannot be done through the existing neoliberal globalisation. There is still a need to reconstruct new globalisation paradigms in trade practices and in democratic governance, which should lead to more citizens of the BRICS participating in this organisation's activities in integrating the market into the economy and in controlling the free market.

Through the BRICS' claims, it is not clear what ideology they might pursue to promote multipolarity. There are also historical rivalries between some of them and their conflicts also are due to their positions in the global system. China, for instance, perceives itself as the most important player in the global system, as it works toward challenging the US place. South Africa perceives itself as a young respectable player with potential to play a solid

role in world affairs but has not been mature enough and has not acquired the wisdom needed in international relations except in Africa.

Brazil, India and South Africa are liberal democracies, while Russia is in a non-liberal democratic transition, and China is still socialist, with a market economy based on Marxist and Maoist perceptions of world politics. The Chinese Communist Party works on the premise of centralised democracy.

Russia and China are more suspicious of the American-European power intrigues than Brazil, India and South Africa. Therefore, Russia and China project more the place of state sovereignty and national security thinking in their attitudes and policies than other members. However, all are strong nation-states with their own national policy agendas and all wish to change their political statuses in regional and international arenas.

Although they share some common attributes and higher political and economic goals, the domestic, internal, social class conflicts, the manner in which labour organisations operate and how each state is responding to the demands of democratisation will challenge their good intentions.

The role of South Africa is determinant in the mobilisation of resources that can be used beyond South African national interests. Furthermore, the inclusion of South Africa, which has a smaller economy, may imply that the major players have some strategic interests to advance in Africa. Thus, this inclusion could be viewed more as a political move than only simplistically an economic ambition.

However, South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, stated: 'We will be a good gateway for the BRIC states. While we may have a small population, we don't just speak for South Africa, we speak for Africa as a whole¹⁵.' President Jacob Zuma recently stated: 'South Africa's and the continent's future prosperity is increasing linked to the BRICS economies and that the grouping is well placed to decisively assist in tackling our development deficits'.¹⁶

Obviously, South Africa is a smaller economy and smaller manufacturing within the grouping. But the national and regional demands on South Africa are relatively larger than in other countries. Although there is no survey made on how other African states would expect South Africa to perform, I can only anticipate that other countries would like South Africa to play a central role in investments, job creation, fiscal policies, free movement of goods and services, technological transfer, wage parity between men and women – all economic, commercial and financial activities that would be beneficial to other African economies beyond the Southern African Development Community. It is not clear how BRICS, through South African economic and political actors, will be able to integrate intra-

African trade and economic development schemes, which operate through regional communities or organisations such as the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, Economic Community of West African States, Economic Community of Central African States, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, West African Economic and Monetary Union, Arab Maghreb Union and Mano River Union, and positively transform their activities for the benefit of all.

I hope that South Africa will not be reduced to a dumping ground of cheap goods and services that would originate from the other power members. Although the issue of equal treatment of each member is alluded to in all of the BRICS' declarations, as a nation-state centred organization and its realism, its actions are essentially power-based. It is through its democratisation that I hope BRICS can reach other African countries. As to the potential benefits that the whole African continent could gain from the BRICS, there is no concrete strong data multilaterally to suggest that there is any correlation at the moment between their trade arrangements and policies and their redistributive capabilities of goods and services. At the level of bilateral relations, this kind of assessment is plausible.

Conclusion

Although the BRICS states now constitute Africa's largest trading partners and investors, the question of their political ideologies and that of their political regimes will determine how this grouping will impact Africa. It has to contribute to solving the unfinished story of the African pan-African economy and pan-African governance. Currently, neoliberal globalisation and its policies have been the enemies of such a project. It is only through a pan-African political economy that poverty in Africa can be eradicated.

The BRICS' story is one of powerful institutions and its developmental perspectives are generally a combination of the top-bottom with a dose of decentralisation. To have a significant impact in Africa, BRICS' activities should be shaped and guided by the bottom-up perspectives.

Notes

1. Finally, is the BRICS only repackaging the heterodox policies of the 1980s and the 1990s? The answer is clearly no. It strongly calls for shifts of paradigms in the realm of world power and for a qualitative state's intervention in the management of the invisible hand of Adam Smith.

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13. For furthermore information on this topic, see Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo's article: "China-Africa Relations: A Neo-Imperialism or a Neo-Colonialism? A Reflection," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 10 No. 2-3, 2011.
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