

MULTICULTURALISM AND THE BRICS+: EXPLORING EMERGING ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges and prospects of multiculturalism within the context of emerging global alliances, with a particular focus on the BRICS+ bloc. While globalization has facilitated unprecedented interconnectedness across cultures, economies, and political systems, it has also increased asymmetries and cultural hierarchies that risk reproducing hegemonic structures within multilateral formations. Despite BRICS+'s growing significance as a driver of global economic growth, limited scholarly attention has been paid to the cultural dynamics that underpin its cohesion and long-term sustainability. Drawing on globalization theory and deploying qualitative analysis of secondary data, this study examines how cultural diversity within BRICS+ shapes internal relations, policy coordination, and global positioning. It argues that although multiculturalism provides a framework for inclusivity and cooperation, it simultaneously generates tensions such as ethnocentrism, majoritarian dominance, and latent supremacist ideologies that may undermine collective identity. The findings reveal that the success of BRICS+ as a geopolitical and economic bloc is dependent not only on economic complementarities but also on its capacity to negotiate cultural differences through inclusive and non-hegemonic structures. The study advances the concept of "bounded identity" as a strategic model for engendering unity without eroding cultural distinctiveness. It further demonstrates that multiculturalism, when effectively managed, can promote cross-cultural understanding, strengthen institutional cooperation, and support more equitable global engagements.

Keywords: *BRICS+, bounded identity, culture, globalization, multiculturalism, multilateralism.*

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Introduction

Multiculturalism, being a defining aspect of modern global dynamics, has a significant impact on the political, social, and cultural spheres. It connotes the coexistence and cohesion of multiple cultures, encompassing diversities in language, religion, traditions, and social norms, within a shared political or geographical framework (Taylor 1994). Within the context of the BRICS+ framework which is an expanded alliance of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and other developing economies, multiculturalism presents both challenges and opportunities even as these nations seek to create synergies despite their vast cultural and systemic differences (Stuenkel 2015). This union represents a diverse array of cultures, political systems, languages, traditions, and economic structures exemplifying a microcosm of global multicultural coexistence. Multiculturalism plays a fundamental role in shaping interactions among nations and promoting global cooperation in international politics.

The BRICS+ coalition is aimed at the amalgamation of established and emerging economies in global governance thereby fostering cooperation in trade, technology, and sustainable development. It is also targeted at reshaping global governance by presenting an alternative to traditional Western-led institutions (Khasru 2021). In achieving this, the multifaceted construct of member-nations springs complex issues, including issues of cultural integration, policy harmonization, and the equitable representation of diverse identities in decision-making processes. Favorably, this diversity serves as a potential strength, offering innovative pathways for inclusive policymaking, intercultural dialogue, and collaborative problem solving. For instance, the linguistic diversity among BRICS+ nations—spanning Portuguese, Mandarin, Hindi, Russian, and Zulu—is both a communication barrier and an opportunity for promoting multilingualism in global governance (Chakrabarty & Bhattacharya 2020).

This study delves into the interplay between multiculturalism and the BRICS+ alliance, examining how a cultural mix and diversity can be transformed into channels for influencing policy formulation, economic collaboration, and geopolitical strategies. It also explores the prospects of leveraging multiculturalism as a unifying force to address emerging global challenges. By understanding the analysis of these dimensions, the study reveals the opportunities and obstacles inherent in building a multicultural coalition in an increasingly interconnected world.

Multiculturalism Conceptualized

As is common with concepts, ideas and terminologies in the Social Sciences, multiculturalism does not have a generally accepted definition. However, there are factors that aid the understanding of this ideology. The core idea of multiculturalism has been taken up, deployed and curated for use by a wide array of researches in the Social Sciences. It is even believed to be, in contemporary times, one of the most articulated concepts within social theories and practice. The term “multiculturalism” has other allied concepts such as “multicultural society”, “policy of multiculturalism” and they emerged in academic glossary in the 1960s in Canada (Grishaeva 2012).

Cashmore presents multiculturalism as an ideology, a discourse, a sphere of policies and practices. It is a way of thinking, and a pattern of scientific behavior established

over the years among different sets of people (Cashmore 1996). By tagging it a discourse, it presents multiculturalism as an area of debate, which is subject to various levels of intellectual discussion. It can also be described as a sphere of policies and practices when regarded as a guideline for action or a blueprint established for people bound by it to follow.

In Rosado's conception, multiculturalism is a set of values and beliefs that acknowledges and respects the existence of all different groups in a society or organization, values their sociocultural differences, and supports and facilitates their ongoing contributions in an inclusive cultural setting that empowers everyone in the society or organization (Rosado 1997). This depicts a sense of affinity and adaptability to certain sets of standards practiced in a society. This definition recognizes diversity among groups of people and their contributions at different levels to the progress of the society.

According to Song, the term, "Multiculturalism" encompasses a number of normative claims and goals, however, it is apt to say that proponents of multiculturalism mostly find a common ground to reject the idea of a "melting pot"; a situation in which members of minority groups are expected to blend in and adapt into the prevailing culture. In lieu, exponents of multiculturalism have an agreement on the idea that the members of those minority groups can retain their distinguishing collective identities and practices (Song 2010). In this context, the reference is to participating states of BRICS+, in that, despite the heterogeneous nature of the states, it is plausible for them to retain their own culture in all its shades. This will foster a smooth coexistence in the larger space.

Other closely associated concepts with multiculturalism are "identity politics," "the politics of recognition," and "the politics of difference." These concepts are bound together in their commitment to revaluing marginalized, less-recognized and less-respected identities and changing prevailing communication and representation practices that exclude or discriminate against certain groups (Gutmann 2003; Taylor, 1992; Young, 1990). According to Song (2010), multiculturalism is not merely about claims of identity and culture but also encompasses matters of economic interests and political power. This extends to the demands for alleviating political and socio-economic disadvantages that people experience due to their marginalized group identities.

Membership of BRICS+ has some benefits such as development assistance, increased foreign direct investment, access to a vast market, and the opportunity for free trade with prominent BRICS+ members such as China. It also provides opportunities to invest in critical infrastructure projects that are capable of enhancing connectivity and economic integration among member states. Trade and investment of participating nations get a boost as the common economic aspirations of the member-nations get a lift.

Presumably, the whole gamut of the idea of multiculturalism is that groups and individuals are completely absorbed into a community, and yet not having to experience the loss of their national identity or any form of identity whatsoever nor being alienated from their rights. In this context, nations from different global axes are coming together for mutual benefits, which would require signing pacts, treaties, and

agreement, some of which can puncture their sovereignty. Multiculturalism depicts the conceptual foundation of non-conflictual cohesion and co-existence of several, diverse and independent cultural groups in a common milieu. Therefore, a budding assortment produces delineating multicultural values, such as an idea of freedom of choice and mutual commitment. Even as BRICS+ is primarily and essentially an economic inter-governmental formation, it presents a number of constraints one of which is the hegemonic tendencies of the super powers in the formation and fear of subjugation.

In simple terms, multiculturalism, which refers to the concurrence and collaboration of multiple religious, ethnic, and cultural groups within a society or between nations, carries out a fundamental role in shaping the policies, economic cooperation, and global influence of BRICS+.

There are quite a number of studies on the concept of multiculturalism (Grishaeva 2012; Song, 2010; Gutmann, 2003; Rosado, 1997; Cashmore, 1996; Taylor, 1992; Young, 1990) but there is a dearth of literature on the study of multiculturalism with a special focus on BRICS+. Therefore, aside analyzing multiculturalism, this study is focused on enunciating and discussing the emerging issues in the BRICS+ (with a focus on cross-cultural interactions and the dynamics involved) as well as problems and prospects, especially future prospects of BRICS. Globalization theory, particularly cultural globalization would be used to foreground and analyze the understanding of cultural diversity in the operations of a multilateral body such as the BRICS+.

The BRICS+ Ideology

The forces of globalization have fostered the communion of peoples, languages, societies, ideologies, and cultures across races and states. Multi-polarity, multilateralism, and multiculturalism have therefore become common phenomena in international politics. The cohesion among the members of BRICS (which transited to BRICS+ at the admittance of six more nations in January 2024) and the remarkable progress and landmarks attained since inception is noteworthy. Despite the lopsided or uneven economic status of member-states, they are the major engine of global economic growth over the years. Embracing multiculturalism is necessary but comes with its encumbrances. The likelihood of supremacist ideologies, internal wrangling, politics of majority versus minority, and ethnocentrism may not be far-fetched. In world politics, as an example, the dissection of states into global north (super dogs) and global south (underdogs) is palpable. It is therefore likely that hegemonic tendencies, discrimination, and other forms of cultural bias would exist within the BRICS+.

BRICS, a conglomerate of established and emerging economies (comprising the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa), was founded in 2009 after several meetings and strategic deliberations. In 2024, it added Argentina, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates out of over 40 nations that indicated interest in aligning with the economic forum for the welfares, supports and aids membership would provide which includes upward changes in finance, and an improvement in trade and investment.

With their intentions and purposes, in terms of the 16 June 2009 Russian proposal, at which the first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, the purposes of the group

were "to foster dialogue and cooperation among the countries participating in the group in a gradual, pro-active, pragmatic, open and transparent fashion." The exchange of dialogue and cooperation between BRICS+ countries is not only conducive to achieving common interests of emerging market economies and developing nations but also conducive to building a world with common prosperity and enduring peace. These were issued as a joint statement by the leaders following the Summit (BRICS 2015).

As it is now, the membership of BRICS traverses the global space with participating member-nations spreading from Asia to Europe, and Africa to South America. Notably, BRICS+ countries are influential members of leading international agencies and organizations, including the UN, the G20, and Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. They also have membership of various regional associations: Brazil is a member of the Union of South American Nations, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and MERCOSUR. The Russian Federation is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Russia and China are members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. India is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation while South Africa is a member of the Southern African Development Community and the African Union. (InfoBRICS, n.d.).

There are principles that govern relationships among BRICS+ partners and are established on the basis of the UN Charter, other well-established principles and norms of international law and the best principles, which the member states agreed to in their 2011 Summit. These are pragmatism, solidarity, openness, non-bloc nature and neutrality in respect to third parties. The BRICS all agree that for them to achieve their mutual economic aspirations, transformation in the international political economy as well as the form of multilateralism is required. They have a shared aspiration to transform the existing pro-western global governance system (Erediauwa 2024)

The BRICS+ initiative, which builds upon the original BRICS formation, represents a coalition of nations with different political systems, economic structures, and cultural heritages. In spite of the dissimilarities, scholars argue that cultural pluralism can engender innovative policymaking and intercultural dialogue, enabling member states to tackle global challenges collaboratively (Hofstede 1991). More so, the group's diverse composition may enhance its resilience and adaptability, as members bring unique perspectives and ideas to the table. For example, India's deep-rooted democratic traditions, China's centralized governance model, and Brazil's emphasis on regional cooperation contribute to a rich tapestry of approaches to global problem-solving (Nye 2010).

Theoretical Alignment

Globalization theory provides a framework for understanding how BRICS+ countries can manage cultural mix and diversity, both at the domestic level and at the international arena. This theory examines the constantly increasing interconnectedness of the world through economic, cultural, and technological exchanges. This interconnectivity is facilitated by information and technology. It explores how global

flows of people, ideas, and goods impact national identities, cultural practices, and social structures.

In simple terms, globalization is re-defining the conventional framework of learning by observing the social world and human culture (Appelbaum and Robinson 2005). Globalization studies emerged from the 1970s and onwards and led to multi-level concepts on the whole idea of globalisation. Firstly, there was the advent of a globalized economy with new types of production, consumption, finance, politics and global economic integration. There were also the new patterns, practices and flows that were emerging transnationally or globally, and the concept of 'global culture(s)'. Third, there was the political processes in the global system, the development of new institutions that were transnational, and concurrently the spreading of global governance and authority structures of any sort. The fourth one was the unprecedented multi-faceted movement of people all over the world consisting of new forms of transnational migration, identities and communities. The fifth concept of globalisation was emerging new social hierarchies, forms of inequality, and relations of dominations in the world and in the whole global system (Robinson 2007).

As comprehensive as is the notion of the concept of globalization, different authors have equated globalization with expanding global imbalances, new methods of domination and exploitation, marginalization, displacement, ecological holocaust and anti-globalization. Other individuals have welcomed the process as one of new wealth, freedom, emancipation, and democracy. Such normative issues, as much as whether or not they are brought into focus, will feature prominently in any summary of globalization theories. Robinson (2007) represents a variety of theoretical discourses which are paradigmatically heuristic tools in realized research on globalization such as the theory of transnationalisation and transnationality, the world systems theory, the theory of global capitalism, the theories of global culture, among a few others.

However, a suitable theoretical underpinning for analyzing multiculturalism within the context of BRICS, even when it can be multi-variegated, may conveniently draw up on the idea of cultural globalisation, which depicts that there would always be a prevailing and dominant culture in any multi-polar and multilateral system. This eventually has implications for other specific aspects of multiculturalism such as internal cultural policy, international cultural diplomacy, and the impact of global cultural flows on BRICS societies. It is also applicable in the critical analysis of how members of BRICS+ can navigate the challenges as well as the advantages of multiculturalism in a modern, globalized world. As such, this theoretical framework provides understanding on how member-nations are able to manage the impact and influence of global cultural flows on their individual national identities. It also aids in comprehending how they strategically position themselves as cultural and economic hubs in the global system.

In sum, globalization theory indicates the increasing interconnectedness of the world through economic, cultural, and technological exchanges. It is an exploration of how global flows of people, ideas, and goods impact national identities, cultural practices, and social structures.

BRICS+: Emerging Issues

Kymlicka highlights how crucial culture is to both individual liberty and national self-determination. According to him, belonging to a culture is a "primary good" and a necessary prerequisite for success. Self-identity is also significantly influenced by cultural affiliation. However, when a state is absorbed by different cultures, multiculturalism can cause its identity and culture to become blurred, possibly losing its distinctiveness. In another piece, Kymlicka (1989) drops the Rawlsian conception, and places primacy on national self-determination, which is closely synonymous with autonomy. His viewpoint on multiculturalism emphasizes the importance of having a wide variety of choices (Kymlicka 1995, 89–90).

According to Grishaeva (2012), multiculturalism takes on unique logics and manifests as a means of fostering intergroup collaboration aimed at preserving particular cultures and giving people and groups the ability to be equal in all areas of social life, including politics and culture. Multiculturalism in practice translates to the multi-level interaction that evolves from the heterogeneous society fostered by the fusion of countries with different and dissimilar cultures, traditions, conventions, and systems.

Despite the lopsided or uneven economic status of member-states, they have been the major engine of global economic growth over the years. Embracing multiculturalism is necessary but comes with its encumbrances. The likelihood of supremacist ideologies, internal wrangling, politics of majority versus minority, and ethnocentrism may not be far-fetched. In global politics, for example, the dissection of states into global north (super dogs) and global south (underdogs) is palpable. It is therefore not unlikely that hegemonic tendencies, discrimination, and other forms of cultural bias would exist within the BRICS+.

Multiculturalism within BRICS+ presents both challenges and opportunities. As the member-nations continue to navigate the complexities of cultural diversity, their collective experiences and policies could offer valuable lessons for other countries, regions and potential intergovernmental groupings. The prospects for multicultural cooperation in BRICS+ are promising, with the potential to enhance not only internal cohesion but also global influence through a more inclusive and culturally aware approach to international relations. The injection of the idea of multiculturalism into a basically economic, trade and investment-oriented multilateral organization may be a new or novel idea. More importantly are the future projections of the positive and negative angles to the actualization of this concept.

Supremacist ideologies and cultural imperialism go parri passu. Russia is a prime member of BRICS+ and going by her antecedents, this study reveals there are tendencies on the long run, for her to lord her superiority over the others especially the countries in the third world.

The issue of human rights and cultural autonomy should be given prominent consideration. As BRICS+ nations navigate multiculturalism, the international community is prone to monitoring how these countries manage cultural and ethnic diversity, particularly in places where there are suspicions or outright allegations of repression and human rights abuses. China and Russia are two major powers in the group and they are socialist and mildly authoritarian.

A thought is given to the conception of digital multiculturalism in that the evolution and rise of digital technologies have provided new spaces for cultural interaction and expression. Digital content productions, social media platforms (such as WhatsApp, WeChat, LinkedIn, Facebook, Thread, X, Instagram, etc.), and online communities, form critical tools in shaping multicultural identities and narratives in BRICS+ countries. On the flipside, it also raises important concerns about digital divides and the potential for cultural homogenization through global media. Another aspect of concern is the strict regulation of social media use by China.

Migration within and between BRICS+ countries is another emerging issue. Free movement of persons and goods are a major factor for a moving economy although it comes with its constraints. It might lead to a rush in the spate of emigration from the less-economically developed countries and countries in the third world, to the well-developed countries. There are implications to all of these. Economic disparities and conflicts drive migration, leading to the growth of multicultural urban centers and a spike in cultural diversity. This migration therefore presents both opportunities for cultural exchange and challenges related to cultural integration and social cohesion.

Another key issue is the discourse on achieving a balance between integration and assimilation within the BRICS+. Integration implies that diverse cultures find their foothold without being submerged by a seemingly superior culture thereby maintaining each country's distinct culture and identity while assimilation connotes that minority culture would be subsumed under a dominant or major culture. While countries like Brazil and South Africa have leaned towards multiculturalism, thereby promoting diversity as a national strength, China and Russia support assimilation, with strategies and guidelines for action that are targeted at breeding a integrated national identity, sometimes putting minority cultures at risk. If this holds sway, cultural imperialism is the result.

Equity and equality are two major concerns that should be paid attention to by the major powers in BRICS+. Toloraya (2016) considers the very idea of bringing disparate countries together as a weakness of BRICS and that each country puts its interest first. He expresses the opinion that the members are all at different development levels and have different political regimes (both democratic and authoritarian). Toloraya also points out that there are long-standing geopolitical conflict between China and India and the fact that the members have varying levels of relations with the United States and Western Europe. It is noteworthy that the BRICS institutions—the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), which were established as copies of the Bretton-Woods institutions (World Bank and IMF)—use consensus rather than majority voting rules to decide on important issues in the CRA and operate an equal-weight system rather than a weighted voting system in the NDB (all five BRICS countries have equal shares and voting weights regardless of the significant differences in their economic weights) (Luo & Yang 2022).

According to them, the consensus rule and the equal-weight scheme are both firsts for multilateral financial institutions worldwide. The Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the IMF, and even the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) all use majority voting procedures and weighted voting methods.

However, with the new additions to the organization, there are speculations that status quo may not remain the same.

Stemming from the foregoing is a puzzle raised by Tripathi (2023) about a common currency in the organization. As impractical and premature as it may sound, trading in national currencies is becoming a reality. With the rupee-designated oil transaction between India and the United Arab Emirates, there are indications that the petrodollar arrangement that has prevailed since 1973 may be confronting a threat soon. It as well signals that the world's major commodity importers and exporters might make an attempt at lowering their dependence on the dollar. The BRICS expansion appears to be an attempt at an alternative world order, one with a more sympathetic ear for the developing many versus the developed few thereby shaking the predominance of the extant global order.

The question of sustainability comes to fore in the policies and practices of BRICS. As welcoming, accommodating and endearing as the policies are, it is not unfounded to presume that changes might take place as they enlarge, expand and attract more members. More so, the question of who joins the BRICS+ as a member may not be as important as who holds the key to decisions on policy positions. Policymaking may not turn out to be an easy exercise as a result of the consensus-driven decision-making process of the BRICS+, however, the attempt to democratize it would be a concrete effort.

Challenges of Multiculturalism in BRICS+

The ethnic, cultural, and religious levels of diversity within the BRICS+ is immense, yet expected. Aside these, they also have different political and economic systems that they practice. This goes to show that they differ in many ways. For instance, while Brazil breeds and emphasizes racial and cultural integration, India supports and promotes a secular, pluralistic society. Post-apartheid policies in South Africa concentrates on reconciliation and inclusivity. Russia and China, on the other hand, have more centralized approaches being socialist-oriented, with significant emphasis on maintaining national unity and often suppressing separatist tendencies among minority groups. The UAE provides a booming business environment accommodating investors and tourists from all climes. Iran is pursuing its ambition of nuclear arms race while Ethiopia is battling issues of internal conflicts. Argentina is struggling with political dysfunction and financial crises hoping that the current leader, President Javier Milei would be able to spin the wheel around positively. India, on its own, is known for its incredible religious and linguistic diversity (with a constitutional recognition of 22 languages) is currently battling sexual violence against women. Egypt has gone through waves of military coups and civil dissents especially during the Arab Spring and other forms of protests, political turnovers, sporadic violence and waves of repression since 2011. Egypt has also been deeply involved in the efforts towards achieving peace in Gaza.

One of the challenges or fears of this association are supremacist tendencies and cultural imperialism, which go parri-passu. Russia is a prime member of BRICS+ and going by her antecedents, this study reveals there are tendencies on the long run, for her to lord her superiority over the others especially the countries in the third world.

Toloraya (2016) refers to Russia as a rogue state and that China is an unwelcome competitor, which threatens the US hegemony. While India is a new power aspiring to establish mutual contacts with the West, Brazil is considered as being economically troubled and South Africa, according to Toloraya, should not be regarded as a full-fledged actor in global geopolitics.

Ethnic and cultural tensions spurred by ethnocentrism can occur in some instances. Ethnocentrism means the feeling that one culture is superior to the other. However, all cultures have their peculiarities and are distinct in their own rights. Member-nations of BRICS+ have domestic issues they are dealing with separately. The diversity within BRICS+ countries sometimes leads to ethnic and cultural tensions. In India, communal conflicts and caste-based discrimination have always persisted. There are tensions in Russia with ethnic minorities, particularly in the Caucasus region. South Africa struggles with xenophobia, often directed at immigrants from other African countries. This has brought her at loggerheads with other African countries a number of times and severed their diplomatic relationship. China faces significant challenges in regions like Xinjiang and Tibet, where cultural repression and human rights issues have drawn international criticism. Internal displacement has become an issue since the war in Ethiopia between it and Tigray in 2021. Rubbles of the conflict still exist today. Iran is still in a war tango with Israel.

The politics of majority versus minority should be considered because the membership of BRICS+ is not on equal basis. Investment, input, impact, commitment and financial contributions to the group are not balanced. Ensuring that all groups feel equally valued and included therefore, requires conscious and continuous effort. Despite policies promoting multiculturalism, instances of discrimination and cultural bias can still occur. However, BRICS+ should be commended for its structure of annual and rotational leadership. This has helped to give the members a feeling of relevance and influence.

The Interest of other African Countries in BRICS+ Membership

South Africa was the only African nation who was on the membership of BRICS+ until 2023 when Egypt and Ethiopia were welcomed as members. While at the 16th annual BRICS Summit hosted by Russia in October 2024, 13 nations were announced as partner countries; Nigeria, Algeria and Uganda being African nations. This emphasizes the burgeoning interest of the Global South in BRICS+ (Bhattacharya 2024). The point of attraction can be surmised to be multi-faceted. According to Famiyesin (2025), using a liberal framework presupposes that Nigeria can attain high investment flows, enhanced trade, and technological transfer through multilateral mechanisms like the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Business Council. This also comes as the Global South seeks other alternatives to the conventional North-South relations. In further discussing this from the Nigerian viewpoint, there are mutual benefits attached to her membership. Nigeria's engagement with BRICS+ is a channel for accessing alternative development financing to support critical and major infrastructural projects. Her active participation also presents a strategic shift towards diversifying her international relations and positioning Nigeria as a key player in the evolving global

economy. On the other side, BRICS+ members would be able to relate better with Nigeria being members of the same body.

Another implication of the interest of African countries in BRICS+ is that it presents an opportunity for them to reduce their dependence on Western powers and forge more formidable alliances with emerging economies, especially in a multi-polar world and with the emergence of new global powers. IMF and World Bank place heavy tasks, conditionalities and burdens on African countries when they want to obtain loans and so, BRICS+ presents just a more suitable alternative for them. However, the twisted dimension to this development is the superiority game between BRICS+ and the Bretton-Woods institutions or between the former and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

A note of caution to interested African nations is that they should ensure internal security and stability in their polities, economies and societies.

Future Prospects of BRICS+

A significant quota of the world's population and economic activities is what BRICS+ occupies and controls. Obviously, the member-nations are diverse in nature and culminate in a wide array of cultural, social and political origins. A proper understanding of the prospects of multiculturalism in this global association involves a discourse about their internal differences and the forms of collaborations they undertake at the international arena. It also attempts a forecast of the likely future explorations, achievements and challenges of the group.

First off, it is pertinent to understand the distinct history, colonial antecedents, migration patterns, and cultural uniqueness of each of the states. For instance, while Russia hosts many ethnic groups and languages, China has diverse ethnic minorities within a predominantly Han Chinese population. South Africa may never be able to stave off its post-apartheid history and its mix of African, Asian and European cultures with 11 official languages. Brazil, on its own, is the melting pot of African, European and other indigenous cultures. While India strikes remarkably for its religious and linguistic diversity, Saudi Arabia runs a monarchical system and is a deeply religious state with it being the fifth largest country in Asia but the largest in the Middle East. Ethiopia is reputable for hosting the headquarters of the African Union (specifically in East Africa) and located in the region popularly known as the Horn of Africa in the East African sub-region. Argentina, which is a republic, is known for speaking Spanish, English, Italian, German and French as official languages. More so, it was an overseas territory of the Spanish Empire. Egypt, officially known as Arab Republic of Egypt, is also one of the new additions to the group and is typically regarded as one of the homes of principal civilization of the ancient Middle East. The United Arab Emirates is a federation made up of seven emirates, possessing record-breaking attractions and comprises 80percent expatriate population from over 200 nationalities. Last but definitely not the least is Iran which is officially an Islamic republic, has a Muslim majority population and is one of the oldest nations in the world with a history dating back tens of thousands of years (Summaya 2023).

In addressing cultural diplomacy on the global stage, Cummings opines that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

acknowledges that the multilateral arena is particularly essential for cultural diplomacy, with some states consistently and increasingly investing in global or regional forums. It traces the existence of cultural diplomacy in the multilateral sphere to the age of World Expos, which began in 1851 in the United Kingdom. More so, Expos began to connect cultures and present national achievements in all domains of human engagements and activities and since the year 2000, the main UN agendas have guided the selection of Expo themes although it was originally conceived to promote industry and national identity. Acknowledging that cultural diplomacy, which is a dimension of soft power is the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects in a bid to nurture shared understanding (Cummings 2003), BRICS+ nations can leverage their cultural diversity as a form of soft power in international relations. Through initiatives and forums like educational exchange programs for students, cultural exchange programs, collaborative film festivals, art exhibition and tourism, cultural diplomacy can be harnessed to strengthen ties among BRICS+ nations and with other parts of the world.

Multiculturalism can enrich economic collaboration. When multiple and diverse perspectives and practices collide, they can birth creativity and innovation. The consumer markets in the various BRICS+ nations present diverse needs and opportunities (possibly as a result of cultural preferences) to cater for a large mixed market and this can promote trade and economic growth.

As a multilateral organization, multiculturalism contributes to a more inclusive approach to global governance. As these countries take on more significant roles in international institutions, their diverse cultural perspectives can influence global norms and policies, potentially leading to more equitable and representative global governance structures. Despite negative and discouraging feelings expressed in some quarters about the viability and validity of BRICS+, it seems to be expanding its area of coverage. For instance, in 2016 at the 8th BRICS summit in Goa, India, matters relating to energy, health, trade, education, agriculture, space utilization, and other common spaces, development of humanitarian contacts and tourism, banking cooperation, the fight against poverty and social inequality were discussed. In addition to the Declaration, a number of sectoral agreements were signed to concretize their actions. The leaders of BRICS came to a consensus to launch a variety of new areas of cooperation, initiated by the Russian Presidency as they delve into the field of migration, youth, industry, environment, energy, peacekeeping, fight against infectious diseases etc.

Gradually and over time, BRICS+ could work towards building a common or bounded identity that respects the cultural differences of its members while highlighting shared goals and values. This could foster a sense of solidarity among BRICS+ nations, making multiculturalism a central part of their collective identity; recognizing individual identities and creating a BRICS+ identity, not aimed at supplanting the individual nations' identities but to build a rallying point of identification for members. This could come as slogans, anthem, declarations, unified color, flag or logo. Future summits can feature attendees dressed in their indigenous attires with a special BRICS+ badge or sash, with local cultural displays and exhibitions.

Issues arising from a cultural mix and focusing on dimensions by which a peculiar BRICS + global branding devoid of cultural imperialism can be created. It also proposes the idea of bounded identity in the face of cultural disparities as multiculturalism is able to breed recognition and respect for cultural diversity and cross-cultural interactions that can further enhance the principles of tolerance, equity and equality, and mutual universal pluralism. Their influence on the global stage is based on the BRICS+ countries' expanding economic potential, their significance as one of the primary forces behind global economic development, their sizeable population, and their abundance of natural resources.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study has discussed multiculturalism as a feature of BRICS+ being a multilateral, inter-governmental organization characterized by racial, ethnic, cultural and lingual varieties. Despite these disparities, conscious efforts can be put together to enjoy the prospects of multiculturalism within BRICS. This requires a careful navigation of both opportunities and challenges. By promoting cultural exchange, respecting diversity, and addressing social inequalities, BRICS+ can enhance multiculturalism both within their countries and in their collective global influence, being a dynamic and inclusive approach that values the diversity of cultures within a society. The success of these efforts will depend on the willingness of member-states to embrace cultural diversity as a strength and to incorporate it into their national and international policies. The expansion of BRICS+ is hinged on building attractiveness through developing inclusive policies, fostering a more innovative, vibrant, and harmonious community and modeling successful multicultural cooperation and understanding.

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Ethics Statement

The authors affirm that this research was conducted in accordance with the Journal's Research Ethics and Integrity Statement and that all ethical requirements applicable to the study have been fulfilled.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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