

Deconstructing the Empire: BRICS and the Rise of a Multipolar World

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Date received: 01 February 2024 Revision date: 30 March 2024 Date published: 01 May 2024	This study examines the rise of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and its impact on the global political economy through Hardt and Negri's concept of "Empire." BRICS has challenged Western dominance by leveraging economic globalization to build influential networks, reflecting trends of deterritorialization and decentralization. Key strategies include China's push for internet sovereignty and Russia's market realignment under Western sanctions. The recent expansion of BRICS to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE underscores its growing influence in reshaping global governance. However, the study also identifies elements of "Empire" within BRICS, such as the use of economic leverage and biopower to exert control. These findings reveal a complex interplay between power and resistance, where BRICS, while challenging Western hegemony, also replicates some control mechanisms. This research contributes to the theoretical discourse on globalization and provides practical insights into the evolving multipolar world order.
Keywords <i>BRICS;</i> <i>empire;</i> <i>global economy;</i> <i>affective labor;</i> <i>multitude</i>	
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INTRODUCTION

The recent announcement by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) regarding the launch of cryptocurrency as a new medium of trade has sent shock waves through the global political economy (Adjinacou, 2024). Additionally, at the beginning of 2024, BRICS expanded by adding five new members: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE (BRICS, 2024). This bold step aims to establish an alternative economic framework capable of challenging the long-standing dominance of Western countries. Since the term "BRIC" was coined in 2001, these countries have emerged as significant economic powers, with projections indicating faster growth than established groups such as the G7 (The Economic Times, 2023).

This rise has sparked critical discussions: What do the BRICS represent in the evolving global order? Do they replicate existing power structures, or do they offer a new way forward? To analyze this, we must explore the concept of "Empire" as theorized by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt. Their framework provides a robust lens for understanding the shifting dynamics of global power, which is crucial for analyzing the role of BRICS in this context.

Negri and Hardt's concept of "Empire" is essential for several reasons. Firstly, their theory articulates how globalization has transformed traditional power structures. It emphasizes that power is no longer confined to nation-states but is diffused through complex networks of multinational corporations, global institutions, and decentralized actors (Hardt & Negri, 2000). This theoretical framework helps in understanding how BRICS, as a coalition of geographically disparate countries, operates within and potentially challenges these new power structures (Fillion, 2005).

Secondly, the concept of “Empire” helps in examining the dual nature of BRICS. On one hand, BRICS represents a challenge to Western hegemony, embodying the principles of deterritorialization and decentralization that Negri and Hardt describe. On the other hand, some BRICS members, particularly China, exhibit characteristics that mirror the Empire’s mechanisms of control, such as dominance in technological production and data sovereignty (Meena, 2013). Polatin-Reuben and Wright (2014) note that BRICS’ different interpretations of data sovereignty could lead to internet Balkanization. Additionally, the World Internet Conference, held annually in Wuzhen, advances China’s vision of Internet sovereignty (Bradford, 2023; Mueller & Farhat, 2022). The framework allows us to explore this tension and assess whether BRICS is truly an alternative to the Western-dominated global order or merely replicates aspects of it.

Lastly, the Empire theory provides insight into the role of media and technology in shaping global narratives. Hardt and Negri’s notion of the “multitude” — global communities that transcend national boundaries — is pertinent for understanding how BRICS uses media and technology to influence global discourse (Hardt & Negri, 2000). By analyzing BRICS through this lens, we can better appreciate the coalition’s impact on global economic and political dynamics.

This article delves into these complexities by examining how BRICS navigates the tension between challenging the Empire and potentially replicating some of its characteristics. We will investigate economic initiatives such as proposed trading currencies and analyze the role of media and communications technology in amplifying the voices of the “multitude.” Additionally, we will explore Indonesia’s political and economic relations with BRICS members and assess whether BRICS represents a genuine alternative to the existing global order or merely a new iteration of the same power dynamics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s Empire concept to examine the role of the BRICS countries in the global political and economic systems. A qualitative research approach is used to gain in-depth insights into the complex interactions between the BRICS nations, the global economic and political framework, and the Empire concept. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to gather data. This included analyzing academic articles, books, policy documents, and news reports related to the BRICS countries, global politics, and the Empire concept. The sources were selected to provide a broad and diverse range of perspectives on the subject matter.

The collected data were thematically analyzed within the Empire framework. This involved identifying and examining key themes, patterns, relationships, and contradictions to understand the BRICS countries’ impact on the global economic and political system. The analysis aimed to uncover how the BRICS nations both challenge and embody traits of the Empire. To ensure consistency and accuracy in data interpretation, triangulation was employed. This method involves comparing and contrasting data from various sources, such as academic literature, policy documents, and news releases, to increase the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation helps to verify the data and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. By using the Empire concept as an analytical lens, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the BRICS countries’ role in the evolving global order. The methodological approach combines rigorous data collection and thematic analysis with triangulation to ensure robust and credible findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Empire: the new global regime

In analyzing the impact and role of the BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—as developing nations challenging the dominance of Western powers in global political and economic systems, the concept of the Empire is highly relevant. “Empire,” a book by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri published in 2000, describes a new form of global political order that they call the Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000). This idea is their way of interpreting the transformation of international relations after the collapse of the communist Eastern Bloc, which marked the spread of liberal democratic political systems and free-market capitalism worldwide (Hiariej, 2012).

According to Hardt and Negri, the realization of this political system of liberal democracy and economic free-market capitalism has led to power that permeates not only social relations but also the very ontology of society. Power relations at this level are evident in the global networks of multinational corporations and international political forces that organize and control transactions in free markets. While the power of dominant nation-states remains significant, it is intertwined with the power of supranational institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and United Nations. Additionally, sub-national forces such as NGOs and the media are also elements within the Empire (Çubukçu, 2005).

This network of international and regional corporations and political forces shows that no entity operates outside the current global political-economic order (Hardt & Negri, 2009; Ritzer, 2011). The Empire can be understood in two domains: first, as a network of power, and second, as a mixed constitution (Hardt & Negri, 2000). These two domains mark what Hardt and Negri call deterritorialization and decentralization of power. As a network of various centers of power functioning together, the Empire signifies that there are no single centers of power but rather networks of multiple centers functioning together. In the domain of mixed constitutions, Hardt and Negri explain that the Empire is not a global state and does not create a unified, centralized government structure. Thus, simple global divisions such as First and Third Worlds, center and periphery, East and West, and North and South are no longer relevant. The globalization of Empire power is not a simple process of homogenization but a simultaneous process of homogenization and heterogenization. Instead of creating a single new power boundary, the rise of the Empire resulted in the proliferation of borders and hierarchies at every geographic scale. Moreover, the Empire does not allow democratic political participation; for instance, supranational institutions like the IMF and World Bank are not democratically elected (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

Another key point is that, for Hardt and Negri, the Empire is not only a form of political power but also a form of biopolitical power. They link the concept of the Empire with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a ‘society of control.’ They distinguish between two types of desire: paranoid and schizophrenic, which correspond to two main tendencies of societal structure: fascist and revolutionary. In social terms, this difference is between authoritarian and libertarian organizations; on one hand, there are states with centralized power, and on the other, there are small groups like nomadic peoples without territorial boundaries or hierarchical systems (Beckman, 2018; Paradis-Gagné & Holmes, 2022; Sarup, 1993).

Hardt and Negri argue that contemporary society has shifted from a disciplinary model of control to a control society. This control operates through the “normalization” of specific behaviors embedded within our daily practices. They posit that power in this “Empire” rests on immaterial labor—the production of information, knowledge, and cultural artifacts—rather than traditional

manufacturing. This shift creates a more flexible and mobile workforce capable of working anywhere. Furthermore, it fosters the rise of affective labor, a form of work centered on manipulating feelings and emotions (comfort, well-being, etc.) performed by various service professionals like legal advisors, flight attendants, and even fast-food workers (Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2005).

Immaterial labor, the production of intangible goods like services, knowledge, or communication, has become a defining feature of the contemporary economy. Within this category, two key types of work emerge (Hardt, 1999; Hardt & Negri, 2000). Symbolic-analytical services represent the high-value jobs of the new global economy, involving problem-solving, strategic planning, and knowledge brokerage. In contrast to the centralized, factory-based model of Fordism, immaterial labor thrives in a decentralized environment. Advances in communication and information technology have rendered distance irrelevant, allowing workers to connect to the internet and work from anywhere, unconstrained by physical location (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

Affective labor forms the other side of the coin, focusing on manipulating emotions and feelings, such as comfort, well-being, or excitement. Examples include legal advisors, assistants, flight attendants, and even fast-food workers. Hardt and Negri (2000, 2005) argue that communication advancements are crucial for affective labor. Technology allows producers to directly understand consumer desires and build more reciprocal relationships. Production becomes a two-way street where consumers provide valuable input that producers can act upon. Market decisions transform from a one-sided process driven by producers to a dialectical exchange linking production and consumption activities.

As discussed above, the Empire produces deterritorialization and decentralization of power beyond the central boundaries of global states towards the power that controls society at the level of social life (biopower), thus producing biopolitical bodies through immaterial forms of labor. However, decentralization and deterritorialization of power also allow for the creation of dispersed political subjects. Hardt and Negri (2005) refer to these dispersed political subjects as Multitude—a new form of political networking comprised of diverse and decentralized social movements, grassroots organizations, and other forms of resistance capable of challenging the Empire’s power from below.

BRICS: challenger to global political economy power

In 2001, Jim O’Neill, chief economist at Goldman Sachs, identified Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) as the fastest-growing economies. He famously categorized these countries as critical players: China as the “factory” of the world economy, India as the “service provider,” Brazil as the “grocery store,” and Russia as the “gas station.” Since then, the economies of China and India have grown drastically, with their share of the global economy increasing from 12% to 27% since 2001, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Busch, 2019).

BRICS began as a forum for international cooperation at Russia’s initiative. On May 16, 2008, Russia hosted the first meeting in Yekaterinburg with the other three countries, minus South Africa, where they issued a Joint Communique on global development. The first official BRIC summit took place on June 16, 2009, also in Yekaterinburg, where the BRIC Leaders issued a Joint Statement outlining their goals to promote cooperation and dialogue among BRIC countries in a transparent, open, proactive, and gradual manner. In 2010, South Africa joined the group for political reasons, changing the acronym to BRICS (The Economic Times, 2023).

The BRICS agreement aims to serve the common interests of developing countries and emerging market economies. Beyond economic benefits, the agreement emphasizes cooperation and dialogue to build a harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous world. BRICS focuses on several regional issues, including conflicts in Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran. The group also works on reforming the IMF, combating illicit drug trafficking, and developing information and communication technology. They strive to create conditions for barrier-free trade (The Economic Times, 2023). Despite the economic sanctions on Russia due to the war in Ukraine, BRICS countries have distanced themselves from the West, with none of the members participating in sanctions against Russia (Prange, 2023).

BRICS holds significant power and potential. Accounting for about 27% of global GDP in terms of purchasing power and encompassing a population of 2.88 billion, or about 42% of the global population, BRICS is a formidable force capable of challenging Western political-economic dominance. This challenge is evident from initiatives like the New Development Bank, an alternative to the World Bank and IMF, and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, a liquidity mechanism supporting members facing domestic economic challenges (Prange, 2023).

The rise of BRICS as a counterweight to Western dominance resonates globally, especially among developing countries with adverse experiences with IMF structural adjustment programs and austerity measures. This explains the surge in interest from nations seeking to join BRICS. In early 2023, South Africa's Foreign Minister reported receiving inquiries from 12 countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Algeria, Mexico, and Nigeria (Prange, 2023).

This interest materialized in early 2024 with the official addition of five new members: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE (BRICS, 2024). This expansion significantly strengthens BRICS' potential to reshape the global political and economic landscape. Leaders like Brazil's President Lula da Silva see BRICS as a platform to unite the interests of the "Global South," advocating for a greater voice for developing nations within international institutions like the United Nations and challenging the dominance of the World Bank and IMF (BRICS, 2024). Moreover, Brazil's role as host of the 2026 G20 Summit presents an opportunity for BRICS to further amplify its message on the world stage.

Apart from Brazil, Russia's ongoing conflict with Ukraine has dramatically shifted its economic landscape. Europe, once its primary market for fossil fuels, is no longer a viable option. Russia's membership in BRICS, particularly its close ties with China and India, offers a crucial lifeline. These new markets provide a vital outlet for Russia's oil and natural gas exports, a critical source of revenue for its war effort. However, Russia's ambitions extend beyond mere economic gain. By positioning itself as a leading BRICS power and champion of the "Global South," Russia seeks to establish itself as a moral and ideological counterpoint to the West (BRICS, 2024). This strategy aims to bolster Russia's legitimacy on the world stage and potentially garner support from developing nations.

India, on the other hand, approaches BRICS with a policy of "multi-alignment." Unlike Russia, India avoids aligning itself solely with one power bloc. Instead, it strategically participates in various international forums, including BRICS, to maximize its political and economic advantage. This approach, championed by the Modi government, allows India to leverage its membership in BRICS to strengthen its position on the global stage (BRICS, 2024). India's recent successful hosting of the G20 Summit in mid-2024 further underscores its growing influence.

China's economic dominance casts a long shadow within BRICS. By far the strongest member in terms of GDP, China's economic clout dwarfs that of the other members combined. This economic leverage positions China as a key driver of BRICS' development. However, China's interests extend beyond mere economic power. One key motivation for China's participation lies in the shifting global balance of power. With the addition of new members, BRICS now boasts a majority of countries that share a certain degree of skepticism towards the US-led international order. This aligns with China's strategic aim to challenge American dominance and forge a multipolar world order. The ongoing trade tensions between the US and China further fuel China's desire for a strong BRICS as a counterweight to US influence. Additionally, China likely views BRICS as a potential "insurance policy" against international isolation, particularly in the event of escalating tensions with the US, such as over Taiwan (BRICS, 2024). Russia's ability to leverage BRICS support amidst its conflict with Ukraine serves as a potential model for China.

South Africa, the smallest BRICS member from the initial group, represents a different set of priorities. As the economic powerhouse of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa joined BRICS primarily to strengthen economic ties with other developing nations. However, South Africa's ambitions extend beyond economic interests. They see BRICS as a platform to amplify the voice of Africa on the global stage. South Africa actively seeks to challenge established norms within the international community and promote African perspectives, often in contrast to the dominant Western viewpoint. The recent inclusion of Egypt and Ethiopia further strengthens South Africa's position within BRICS, potentially leading to a more unified African voice within the bloc (BRICS, 2024).

BRICS' challenge to the dominance of traditional global powers extends into the digital technology sector. China has been a vocal proponent of shifting internet governance from a multistakeholder model to a UN-centric model. This preference aligns with their vision of "Internet sovereignty," where all countries participate equally in the evolution and functioning of the Internet and its governance. In 2017, China issued the BRICS Leaders' Declaration with Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa, emphasizing equal participation in Internet governance for all countries (Bradford, 2023). This approach aims to give greater weight to governments, potentially at the expense of private companies and civil society groups that play a significant role in the current American-led model. Additionally, a UN-centric system benefits China by leveraging the presence of developing countries, which China can potentially mobilize to support its vision of state-led digital governance.

Apart from the UN, China is also championing its platform through the annual World Internet Conference in Wuzhen. Launched in 2014, this landmark event serves as a platform to promote China's internet governance model. President Xi Jinping's inauguration speech emphasized international cooperation but within the framework of state sovereignty. This emphasis is also reflected in the Wuzhen Declaration, which calls for respecting each country's right to develop and regulate its own internet space while refraining from using technology to undermine other countries' internet sovereignty. These principles were later incorporated into China's 2017 International Strategy for Cooperation in Cyberspace, which further emphasized each country's right to choose its path in internet development and regulation. This approach can be seen as a direct challenge to market-based models that prioritize an open, free, and universal internet (Bradford, 2023).

This challenge is manifested in a competition involving China and the United States, which is known as the home of the largest digital platform in the world. Mueller and Farhat (2022) call this type of economic competition digital neo-mercantilism. These platforms, such as social media and e-commerce giants, operate globally due to the nature of the internet that transcends national boundaries and challenges state sovereignty. While China's digital platforms embraced US openness and

investment, both countries have increasingly restricted access to their domestic markets since 2009. This shift, justified by national security concerns rather than traditional trade issues, reflects the growing convergence of state power, economic development, and security in the digital era. Both the US and China prioritize information control and domestic technological dominance, resulting in policies such as industrial support, data localization, and protectionist measures. This neo-mercantilist digital approach stands in stark contrast to the open and interconnected internet landscape previously envisioned (Mueller & Farhat, 2022).

Despite the advantages of closer cooperation with BRICS, Indonesia has chosen to maintain its strategic autonomy by not joining the group. This decision likely reflects Indonesia's broader political calculations, as BRICS membership could entail deeper involvement in the complex geopolitical dynamics that the group represents. Adhering to its "independent and active" foreign policy, Indonesia seeks to balance its relationships with major global powers without aligning too closely with any one bloc (Saptohutomo, 2024). Indonesia's significant economic ties with BRICS nations underscore this strategy. In 2022, Indonesia exported \$93.16 billion to BRICS members and imported \$85.44 billion, with China being the dominant trade partner, accounting for approximately 70% of both exports and imports (Dini, 2023). These economic relationships allow Indonesia to benefit from BRICS' economic power while retaining its policy autonomy.

The actions of BRICS countries can be interpreted through the lens of the concept of "Empire," a theoretical framework that critiques the global system dominated by Western powers. According to Laïdi (2012 and Sakwa (2019), BRICS forms a heterogeneous coalition of often competing powers that share a fundamental political objective: to challenge Western hegemony by upholding the principle of state sovereignty. This coalition does not seek to create an anti-Western political bloc with a radically different vision of global governance but rather aims to maintain independence of judgment and action in an increasingly interconnected world. This perspective aligns with the concept of "Empire," as articulated by Hardt and Negri, which suggests that globalization, driven by liberal democracies and large market economies, has established a global order where power is concentrated in the hands of a few, primarily Western, entities.

However, this process of globalization has also facilitated the deterritorialization and decentralization of power, creating space for new global actors like BRICS to emerge and challenge traditional hegemonies. Despite its diverse membership and internal contradictions, BRICS represents a cornerstone of sovereign internationalism—a commitment to resisting the universalization of Western norms and values while asserting the sovereignty of its member states. Yet, as Laïdi and Sakwa note, BRICS is not entirely a force of radical change; it mirrors some aspects of the very power structures it seeks to contest. This dual nature of BRICS—both challenging and, in some respects, replicating elements of the Empire—highlights the complex dynamics of power and resistance within the global political economy.

BRICS' rise exemplifies this dynamic. By engaging in and benefiting from economic globalization, BRICS nations have created networks of influence that disrupt the longstanding dominance of Western powers, particularly the US and Europe. This shift is not merely about economic might; it also involves the creation of alternative political and social models that contest the universalization of Western norms and values. The cooperation among BRICS countries has led to various tangible and intangible benefits, both for the member states and the broader global community. For instance, the proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within BRICS reflects a shared aspiration to influence global governance, despite the diverse political and economic characteristics of these countries (Henry & McIntosh, 2021).

This development resonates with the concept of the “multitude,” a term used by Hardt and Negri to describe a new kind of political subjectivity that emerges from the intersections of diverse economic, social, and political systems. The multitude represents a challenge to the traditional dominance of Western powers by embodying the plurality and complexity of globalized societies. However, BRICS also exhibits certain characteristics of the Empire, particularly in its use of biopower and the production of immaterial labor.

China’s role within BRICS is particularly illustrative of this dynamic. China’s economic strategy, heavily reliant on the production and manipulation of information and knowledge, rather than on traditional forms of industrial production, underscores the shift towards immaterial labor. This is evident in China’s dominance in the global digital economy, as exemplified by companies like Alibaba, which operates vast online marketplaces with hundreds of millions of users worldwide (Mueller & Farhat, 2022). This dominance, however, is not without controversy. Thussu (2020) argues that China’s digital supremacy is, in fact, a key element in maintaining the global dominance of the US, the originator of the Internet. The governance and regulation of cyberspace have thus become critical issues in international relations, with China and other BRICS countries playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of global digital governance.

Moreover, China’s economic influence extends beyond the digital realm. Its provision of significant loans to developing countries has led to accusations of “debt trap diplomacy,” where China is said to leverage its financial power to exert control over borrowing nations (Brautigam, 2020). Critics argue that these loans, often for projects with limited returns, place recipient countries in a vulnerable position, making them susceptible to Chinese pressure. This strategy has been met with considerable skepticism, with some analyses suggesting that it undermines the sovereignty of borrowing nations by creating dependencies that are difficult to escape (Condon, 2023).

However, this narrative is not universally accepted. Kc and Chand (2024) argue that the ‘debt trap’ theory, particularly in the context of Nepal, is more myth than reality. They contend that Nepal should continue to engage with China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) based on its national interests and priorities. Alshareef (2024) similarly defends Chinese finance, asserting that it expands the development policy space by addressing critical infrastructure gaps without the neoliberal conditionality that often accompanies Western-centric finance. This perspective highlights the importance of the Global South in capitalizing on the opportunities presented by China’s internationalization strategy, particularly in contrast to the restrictive policies of core Western countries.

The differing interpretations of data sovereignty among BRICS countries further illustrate the complexity of their relationship with the concept of Empire. Polatin-Reuben and Wright (2014) note that these divergent views could lead to the fragmentation, or “Balkanization,” of the internet, challenging the notion of a unified global digital space. The US, for instance, views Russia’s use of propaganda and surveillance as forms of biopower that exert control over its population. However, Chernobrov and Briant (2022) suggest that the US and Russia share more similarities in their approaches to propaganda than differences. Both countries use propaganda as a tool of foreign policy, framing it as a national security threat and employing it to manipulate public perception and maintain control.

This convergence of tactics between the US and Russia underscores a broader trend within the framework of the Empire, where state actors, regardless of their ideological differences, adopt similar methods of control and influence. The discourse surrounding propaganda in both countries

emphasizes its role as a security issue, reinforcing the idea that the Empire's mechanisms of power are not confined to a single region or ideology but are instead pervasive across different political systems.

In conclusion, while BRICS challenges the traditional dominance of Western powers and represents a form of resistance to the global Empire, it also embodies certain aspects of that Empire, particularly in its use of biopower and immaterial labor. The rise of BRICS thus highlights the complexities and contradictions of globalization, where the forces of deterritorialization and decentralization coexist with the persistence of hierarchical structures of power. This duality reflects the broader dynamics of Empire, where the emergence of new global actors both challenges and reinforces the existing global order.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the rise of BRICS as a formidable force in the global political economy, challenging the long-standing dominance of Western powers. The analysis revealed that BRICS nations have significantly expanded their economic and political influence since their formation, with China and India achieving remarkable economic growth, while Russia and Brazil have capitalized on their natural resources to enhance their global standing. South Africa has strategically used its membership to elevate Africa's voice on the global stage, and the recent addition of new members like Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in 2024 has further amplified BRICS' potential to reshape global power dynamics. The emergence of BRICS underscores a shift towards a more multipolar world order, challenging the hegemony of Western nations through initiatives like the New Development Bank and the blockchain-based payment system, which offer alternatives to Western-dominated financial institutions.

However, the rise of BRICS is not without its complexities. While it challenges the traditional power structures of the West, BRICS also mirrors some of the control mechanisms associated with the concept of "Empire," as theorized by Hardt and Negri. This includes the use of economic leverage and biopower, as exemplified by China's "debt trap diplomacy" and Russia's strategic use of propaganda. These actions demonstrate how globalization has led to both the decentralization and the replication of power, where traditional structures are disrupted but also reasserted in new forms. The findings suggest that the global landscape is evolving, requiring policymakers and international organizations to adapt. Traditional Western powers may need to engage more constructively with BRICS and consider reforms in global governance structures to accommodate the interests of emerging economies. In conclusion, the rise of BRICS signifies a profound shift in global power structures, highlighting the ongoing struggle for influence and autonomy in international relations. As BRICS continues to grow in influence, understanding its role in the global political economy will be crucial for shaping a more equitable and multipolar world order.

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