

BRICS: Past, Today, and the Future

Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, or the BRICS nations, are living proof of how power and influence are constantly changing in the world's politics and economy. Redefining their positions within the global system and laying the groundwork for a multilateral world order that aims to challenge the traditional dominance of Western economies and institutions, the BRICS countries have been active since the acronym was coined in the early 21st century and expanded to include South Africa in 2010. Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Argentina, Bolivia, Indonesia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Cuba, Gabon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Comoros, and Kazakhstan are among the more than 40 nations that have shown interest in becoming BRICS members. Now, after a huge expansion, the BRICS has grown into a more formidable club of nations with the recent addition of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE. Also, Saudi Arabia is still working on becoming a full member, even though Javier Milei, Argentina's newly elected president, turned down the invitation. Given that BRICS now includes over 40 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's economy, it's easy to see why the organization is so essential to be better understood. Given this, the purpose of this TPQ special issue is to delve into the background, reality, and future prospects of the BRICS as well as the various reasons and motivations behind the accession of its member states.

This issue stands out from the rest of the literature in two ways: first, it contains a wide range of opinions and articles; second, it welcomes prominent contributors from academia and diplomacy, both of which contribute to the goal of stimulating meaningful discussions about the future of BRICS. Professor Ziya Öniş, who greatly assisted us in preparing for this special issue, deserves a significant amount of gratitude. It has been a privilege and an honor to work with him on this important special issue, and we are eternally thankful for his unwavering support for our journal throughout the years.

Contributors to this issue come from a wide range of notable countries and regions, all influential in the debates concerning the establishment as well as the enlargement of BRICS in the global stage. These include Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Brazil, India, Latvia, South Africa, Russia, USA, Türkiye, and the UAE, among many more. With this in mind, our goal at TPQ is to provide a platform for constructive conversations on BRICS and beyond.

Professors Haroldo Ramanzini Junior and Tullio Vigevani examine Brazil and the BRICS in the context of a shifting international order from three perspectives: multilateralism, autonomy, and multipolarity. They contend that, starting in 2023, when Lula da Silva assumes the Presidency once more, the BRICS and support for multipolarity in the international system will become important pillars for Brazil's international integration. Even though new problems are likely to emerge because

of both internal and structural limitations, they argue that the new government will restore the primacy of universalism and autonomy in Brazil's foreign policy.

Professor Carlos R. S. Milani poses the question of whether it is possible to make the case that BRICS+ could revolutionize South-South collaboration, especially around climate change mitigation. He argues that the BRICS+ grouping, with its diverse membership, has emerged as a major player in international development cooperation, striving for two goals: first, to create a symbolic regime that questions the norms of the Western liberal global order; and second, to implement economic decisions that address the climate emergency as part of a revitalized development agenda. Considering this, his research delves into the possibilities and challenges of this endeavor, examining national resources and BRICS+ answers to the climate crisis from a Brazilian viewpoint.

Mr. Fernando López Ariñez, Political Scientist at the University of Buenos Aires, who currently works at the Consulate General of Bolivia in Santiago de Chile, argues that the emergence of BRICS has spurred discussion on the reorganization of the global order. Nevertheless, he thinks that in Latin America, this discussion has not been able to move away from a mocking depiction that aims to discount the significance of this new block. Yet, he argues that Bolivia, a Plurinational State, has begun its path towards BRICS membership as part of an international strategy to fortify its relationship with the emerging powers in the global system. Therefore, he believes that the key to comprehending the intricacies of this new reality lies in the bilateral partnerships with Brazil, South Africa, India, Russia, and China.

Professor Leslie Rogne Schumacher structures his paper so that it discusses two simultaneous processes that are occurring in the Mediterranean region. First, concerns that the leading Mediterranean member state of the European Union and NATO, Italy, may start to lean toward authoritarian global powers like Russia and China have been stoked by the 2022 general election victory of the neofascist Fratelli d'Italia. The second point is that Egypt became the first member state of BRICS to be located on the Mediterranean Sea when the leaders of Russia, China, and the other governments in the bloc invited six new nations to join in January 2024. His study examines these two developments simultaneously and concludes that liberal-democratic alliances (such as NATO and the European Union) and partnerships led by illiberal global powers (such as BRICS and the Belt and Road Initiative) are likely to witness rising geopolitical rivalry in the Mediterranean.

Senior Research Advisor Frank O'Donnell of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network and Senior Fellow Mihaela Papa of the Fletcher School contend that BRICS has been strengthening space security and technological collaboration over the last ten years. They assert that the United States' and China's aspirations to establish space norms have clashed on this subject. In addition, they make one wonder if the growth of the BRICS nations is helping to further bloc politics and the ambitions of China

and Russia. Their research delves into the space policies of the five BRICS countries, as well as the United States, and the potential for fostering space governance and technological collaboration. They contend that the expansion of the BRICS will undoubtedly assist Russia and China's space programs, but that the United States can take advantage of this opportunity to establish new programs that will lessen the likelihood of space conflicts and increase access to space technology for all.

Professor Pinar İpek believes that new strategies in energy diplomacy are necessary in view of the ongoing crises in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as the energy transition. The energy dynamics of Türkiye are analyzed in her policy brief considering the BRICS countries' positions in international energy politics. She discusses the ongoing issues with Ankara's imbalanced reliance on Russian energy imports and raises concerns about the big obstacles that BRICS and Türkiye will face as they adjust to the changing energy security landscape and trade geographies. Considering the country's participation in international energy commerce and its Middle Corridor multilateral transportation policy in light of changing ideas about energy security and the ongoing energy transformation is her primary point.

Professor Hesley Machado Silva suggests a global stage examination of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the new BRICS (Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates), focusing on the economic and political aspects while also addressing the necessity to address increasing environmental crises like climate change and global warming. Moreover, his analysis also includes countries such as Argentina and Saudi Arabia, the first has declined the membership with President Milei's decision and the latter is still considering to becoming a full-member. An analysis is conducted on each of the BRICS nations, focusing on their unique traits and the ways in which they impact the political, economic, and ecological domains. He lists the concrete actions taken by each country—from studies of earth systems to plans to increase food security and decrease emissions—and stresses the significance of the BRICS' cooperative and long-term approach to climate change. He stresses the critical role of the BRICS in the fight for global climate justice and environmental preservation, and he ends by saying that the BRICS must act together to combat climate change.

On behalf of Transatlantic Policy Quarterly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors who committed a significant amount of effort and work. Moreover, we are grateful for our Premium Cooparete Sponsor for this issue, Tüpraş. We also like to thank our other sponsors, TEB and Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi for their ongoing support.

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