IJoC | **Building BRICS**

Building the BRICS:
Media, Nation Branding, and Global Citizenship

Introduction

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In this introductory essay we discuss the importance of studying the BRICS (acronym of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the emerging themes of scholarship about the BRICS in general, and the eight essays collected in this Special Section. We argue that studying the BRICS demands understanding the strategic and ambivalent engagement of these nations with their own history, the colonial West, and modernity. Such an ambivalence is shown by how these countries deal with the dialectics of tradition and modernity; the local and global; nationalism and cosmopolitanism; and hope, desire, and anxiety in a postcolonial world. Thus, their nation branding and public diplomacy efforts, to a large extent, aim to facilitate domestic and global political and economic objectives.

Keywords: The BRICS, national identity, nation branding, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, affect

Why the BRICS?

The rise of the BRICS (acronym of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) nations is one of the most significant social, economic, and political phenomena of the 21st century. The history of the bloc can be traced to the late 1990s when Russia attempted to organize a counterblock consisting of Russia, India, and China (RIC) to balance the increasing influence of the United States (Schaefer & Poffenbarger, 2014). The term *BRIC*s (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) was first coined in November 2001 by

investment bank Goldman Sachs's analyst Jim O'Neill. In the paper titled "Building Better Global Economic BRICs," O'Neill (2001) discusses the relative decline of G7 countries and calls attention to four scenarios of economic growth in the four emerging markets,[2] thus requesting global policy-making forums to incorporate leaders of the BRICs nations. The 2007–2008 global economic recession diminished confidence in the Western development model and further elevated the BRICs as a new global political and economic bloc. Indeed, Jim O'Neill (2013) asserted that "the BRIC thesis really came of age" (p. 3) after the 2008 global financial crisis. In 2010, South Africa joined the bloc, officially forming the BRICS economies.

The BRICS nations are positioned to play an important role in global politics and economics in the foreseeable future. These nations (before the inclusion of South Africa in 2010) represented 42% of the world population, 14.6% of global GDP, 12.8% of global trade (Schaefer & Poffenbarger, 2014), and more than 30% of the world's land area. Notably, both Russia and Brazil are energy-rich nations. At the beginning of 2016, China, India, and Brazil held the spots for the second, seventh, and eighth largest economies, respectively. What is more, all three are predicted to continue being among the top global economies, alongside the major advanced economies of Europe, Japan, and the United States, despite some recent challenges.[3]

Although the group was joined together because of the need of global capital for growth and growth potential, these member countries have actively pursued the formation of a collective bloc. For example, they inaugurated the BRICs summit in 2009 in Russia. Since then, six more annual summits have been held, with the eighth summit scheduled to take place in Goa, India, in late 2016. Meanwhile, the group has founded the New Development Bank BRICS (formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank), as an alternative to the U.S.-led World Bank and International Monetary Fund, to strengthen financial and development cooperation among these nations.

 What is more, there are historical connections and cultural exchanges among these nations. For example, Russia (as part of the Soviet Union) maintained relations with India and China. Brazil and India are now collaborating on media productions (Rai & Straubhaar, in this Special Section). Brazil exported the first telenovela, called *A Escrava Isaura* (The Slave Isaura; 1976–77, TV Globo), to China in 1984, where it was a tremendous success. What is more, each of the BRICS nations is a major regional power (in Africa, South and East Asia, Latin America, East Europe, and Central Asia), and their global influence could be channeled through their regional standing. In sum, these countries have taken ownership of the acronym in order to assert their own political and socioeconomic agendas in the global marketplace.

However, despite efforts to unite these nations, the BRICS countries differ greatly in terms of their diverse languages, history, political systems, cultures, media systems, and financial regulations. In

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[2] The term *emerging markets/economies* has gradually replaced terms such as *less developed/undeveloped nations* and *third world countries* in the international community, rhetorically portraying these countries in a more positive light.

[3] Although China and India's economic growth has sustained interest in the potentials of emerging markets, the modest progress of South Africa alongside the economic and political instability in Russia and Brazil have made some question the grouping and continued importance of these nations.

terms of politics, China is ruled by one party, whereas India, Brazil, and South Africa are democratic countries, and Russia is a transitional country leaning toward authoritarianism. Although China, India, and Russia have a shared history of socialism or socialist legacy, South Africa and Brazil have historically been more involved with capitalism.

Furthermore, their different relationships with Western colonialism and varying contemporary geopolitical status have shaped their different approaches and views toward their current standing in the global world. Their disparate relation to Western colonialism informs their national identities and expressions of nationalism. For example, the British military invasion in China during the first Opium War (1839–1842) is often considered the beginning of China's "one-hundred-year humiliation." China's semicolonial history has shaped the country's ambivalent relationship with the West: China admires Western modernity while it mistrusts Western powers (H. Li, 2012, 2016). India had a long history of trading with European countries (i.e., Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Norway, and England), and the British Empire had direct or indirect control over India by the middle of the 19th century. Although India gained independence in 1947, the country still harbors an ambivalent relationship with the colonial West (see Sangeet Kumar, in this Special Section). Nation building in India involves a response to the colonial history of British India. South Africa was exploited by Western colonial powers for hundreds of years, during which time European powers instituted slavery and forced labor; later, apartheid was established as a continuation of colonialist racism and economic, social, and cultural segregation (see Albuquerque, in this Special Section). Different regions of Brazil were colonized by the Dutch, French, Spanish, and then primarily the Portuguese for centuries before the country became officially independent in 1822. Yet the country has had a very different relationship with Western colonial powers, owing in part to being a nation of significant European immigration. Historically, Brazil shares with South Africa a violent history of slavery and racist oppression, but now positions itself as a diverse nation with a significant Black population.[4] Historic transatlantic connections have prompted Brazil to make efforts to strategize its relationship with Lusophone nations of Africa. Unlike China and India, Brazil does not harbor ambivalent feelings toward the West, generally; however, there is lingering resentment for U.S. economic exploitation and interference (throughout Latin America) during the 20th century.

Russia, on the other hand, has historically acted as a colonizer. As part of the Soviet Union, Russia flexed its military strength as a superpower during the Cold War. Although Russia's global influence has declined after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it aims to return to its great power status (Carmody, 2013; Chun, 2014). Indeed, the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and armed support to the Assad government in Syria have prompted some observers to assert that we are now entering a new "cold war" period (Lucas, 2008). Similarly, the territorial disputes between China and the neighboring nations in the South China Sea and East China Sea have raised tensions in Asia.

Internally, these countries have been undergoing rapid economic, social, political, technological, and cultural transitions. Since the end of military dictatorship in 1985, Brazil has gradually transformed

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[4] We wish to acknowledge that terms for race and ethnicity are not consistent among nations. Thus, we use the term *Black* here to refer to individuals of African descent (outside Africa) to be consistent with language used, in this instance, with terminology found in official Brazilian census data.

into a democracy with direct elections. Starting around 2002, Brazil enjoyed steady economic growth and technological development. Although the nation has been going through a deep recession that has affected efforts to continue some social programs, from 2003 to 2014 Brazil was the only country of the bloc that was able to lessen the gap between the rich and the poor. Despite significant economic growth, all the other BRICS nations have experienced growing inequality, as measured by increasing Gini coefficients. South Africa is categorized as an upper middle-income country (World Bank, n.d.), but, as has been observed with other BRICS nations, not all citizens have enjoyed economic growth. Despite clear efforts in policy to create a more just, egalitarian society, income inequality remains a significant problem. For instance, unemployment rates for Black South Africans in recent years has continued to average nearly 30% versus 4%–8% for White South Africans (StatsSA, 2016). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has undertaken market-oriented economic reforms. The process of liberalization and privatization has been accompanied by a growing Russian middle class but has also resulted in increasing income inequality. (However, it must be noted that growing income inequality is not a phenomenon unique to these nations, because countries of the advanced global economies are also experiencing similar socioeconomic challenges.) Analogous to Russia and Brazil, India has been liberalizing its economy since the 1990s. The Indian economy now enjoys the fastest rate of growth, and, with more than a billion people, the country is the largest democracy in the world.

Finding unity among the BRICS nations presents challenges, given each nation's internal diversity. The growth and relative stability of India's economy contrasts with its social variability. Unlike Brazil, whose population speaks primarily one language (i.e., Brazilian Portuguese), the Indian population includes ethnic groups speaking many different languages with different religious beliefs and a traditional caste system. Establishing sociopolitical cohesion presents a challenge for a country of such remarkable heterogeneity. Meanwhile, more than 90% of the Chinese population belongs to the same ethnic (Han) group,[5] with Mandarin Chinese being the official language in the People's Republic of China.[6] In South Africa, racial and ethnic separation under apartheid was officially in place from 1948 to 1994, after which democratic elections were held and a new constitution established a legal framework for a pluralistic society, creating what has been referred to as a "Rainbow Nation." Despite the progress that has been made since 1994 (including the restorative justice of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), historic racial and class differences will take time to overcome, but, similar to Brazil, South African society is (imperfectly but) slowly moving toward greater cultural democracy.

Externally, these countries attempt to strive for international recognition, reshape global power structures, and challenge traditional East–West, South–South, and North–South relationships. Using varying strategies and by different degrees, these nations have sought to redefine how they are

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[5] It is important to note that even though a majority of Chinese identify as belonging to the Han ethnic group, there are 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities whose populations range from several thousand to more than 10 million.

[6] The linguistic situation is more complicated. There are many dialects of Mandarin and indigenous languages spoken in China. Also, Hong Kong and Macau are more complicated, owing to the existence of local dialects and colonial history; English, Portuguese, and Cantonese exist alongside Standard Mandarin, which is preferred for writing.

recognized in the global landscape with a goal to assert their place alongside (and possibly in contention with) influential, advanced economies of Europe and North America. Nearly all have embraced international mega sporting events such as World Cup football (Brazil, South Africa) and the Olympic Games (Russia, China, Brazil). Only India has not hosted a mega international sporting event and, as Polson and Whiteside discuss in this Special Section, has yet to decide whether or not to "get into the game" (discussed below). For China, the Beijing Olympics is often viewed as a starting point for China to mark its new image as a modern nation (H. Li, 2011). Yet, for Brazil, the benefits of hosting international sporting events are unclear. Brazil has come under relentless scrutiny concerning whether or not it will be ready to host the Summer Games. Realizing the exorbitant costs involved, Brazilians have protested the investment of significant financial capital in stadiums, roads, and Olympic venues when basic public services like education and health care demand greater resources.

Although mega-events such as the Olympics are an opportunity to boost a nation's image and national pride, one also finds more direct interventions in the global landscape. For instance, the Russian government has undertaken clear measures to rebrand itself. Russia hired a Western public relations firm and launched a campaign to manage the perception of the country and leadership after finding out from a survey that Russia is generally associated with "autocracy," "cold weather," "vodka," and "authoritarianism" (Volvic & Andrejevic, 2011). What is more, the launch of English-language *Russia Today* is a long-term strategy to get Russian voices heard internationally. Other nations, such as China and Brazil, have looked more closely at their opportunities for international diplomacy and cultural productions as "soft power" strategies to assert themselves. For example, China has been implementing a comprehensive media and cultural plan to increase its soft power (H. Li, 2012). Brazil's growing confidence in global affairs is accompanied by its mediations of global conflicts to maintain world peace (Chun, 2014), and the country takes a stand in environmental protections and sustainable development (United Nations, n.d.). In the course of their contemporary socioeconomic and geopolitical transformations, these nations witness ongoing negotiations between nationalism and cosmopolitanism and cross-cultural conflicts and collaborations.

We admit that grouping these nations together may have been artificial and unusual at the outset, especially given that the BRICS as a bloc has evolved quickly from an investment term to one used to describe a new landscape for international politics. But it is certainly not the first time in history that several nations have been joined together for strategic political and economic purposes. Although some may continue to question the BRICS as a bloc, a more important question is to ask, who benefits by grouping these nations together, and why? Conversely, who benefits by not grouping these nations? The answer to either question frequently reveals unspoken desires, anxieties, and frustrations. It also reveals particular points of view.

We identify four perspectives that tend to frame discussion of the BRICS: the BRICS is a false union; the BRICS are the future; the West/North has not declined; and a pragmatic approach. The first dismisses the concept of the BRICS as a false union and a neoliberal scheme to support capitalist expansion for the ultimate benefit of the North. A second tends to be more optimistic and suggest that the BRICS will play an important role in the future. Not all in this perspective are overly optimistic or entirely triumphalist. For instance, X. Li (2014) defends the BRICS and upholds the future of an interdependent

hegemony as opposed to past colonial relations and cultural imperialism. A third perspective tends to dismiss the BRICS and assert that the rise of the BRICS and the decline of the West has been exaggerated (Kiely, 2015) and that marked inequality and lack of technological development will prevent the BRICS from ascending to any position of global power (Beausang, 2012). A fourth perspective takes a more pragmatic approach and emphasizes an interest in exploring what has happened in the past decade to identify successful (and potential) collaborations in practice (Crane, 2015) and focuses on what the future holds for these nations and global politics (Kingah & Quiliconi, 2016; Stuenkel, 2015). Whereas all the essays in this Special Section may at times draw upon any one or more of these perspectives, we contend that, on the whole, the collection of essays offers a pragmatic exploration of past, current, and future changes in the geopolitical landscape for these emerging nations.

Building the BRICS

The Special Section, "Building the BRICS: Media, Nation Branding, and Global Citizenship," originated from an International Communication Association preconference in 2013 that we co-organized with support from Dr. Zhong Xin at Renmin University and Dr. Xin Xin at the University of Westminster. More than 50 speakers from multiple countries participated in the conference. Additional contributors were later invited to submit their essays for anonymous reviews. The Special Section, consisting of eight essays, examines media and communicative practices among the BRICS countries and how these countries have negotiated significant social, economic, political, and cultural transitions in recent decades. This Special Section focuses on the role of media in building national identity, nation branding, and producing new understandings of citizenship. It further explores how their media, communicative, and humanitarian practices have challenged and shaped new global norms. Such an inquiry is due: Although students of international relations, economics, political economy, and international business have paid attention to the BRICS as a power bloc, there is little research in media, communication, and cultural studies that compares and contrasts these emerging nations.

We offer a few words about the title of this Special Section, with its focus on building, nation branding, and global citizenship. The first point concerns the idea of *nation branding*. As we work with scholarship rooted in media and cultural studies, we argue that nation branding is a rich approach to considering the multifaceted process of how national and cultural identities are undergoing transformation and being communicated in these countries. Thinking about these transformations from the perspective of nation branding allows for greater understanding of the intersection of politics, society, and economics. Indeed, the weight of marked economic growth and increased international attention has exerted influence on how individuals of these nations see themselves and are seen. This, in turn, speaks to the second key concept of *global citizenship*—or, how people belong to and participate in the global community. A third point concerns the notion of *building*, which affords an understanding of broad transformations that involve multiple aspects, stakeholders, and phases. The essays in this Special Section emphasize the tensions and negotiations taking place to define national identities less in terms of well-defined strategic programs, but more as process.

Drawing upon the essays in this Special Section and existing scholarship, we argue that studying the BRICS demands examining the strategic and ambivalent engagement of these nations with their own

history, the colonial West, and modernity. Such an ambivalence is shown by how these countries deal with the dialectics of tradition and modernity; the local and global; nationalism and cosmopolitanism; and hope, desire, and anxiety in a postcolonial world. Also, these countries' development paths are strongly shaped by neoliberalism, characterized by privatization, deregulation, and export-oriented market economy (Marsh & Li, 2015). Thus, their nation branding and public diplomacy efforts, to a large extent, aim to facilitate domestic and global as well as political and economic objectives. Unsurprisingly, their nation branding efforts target not only external audiences but also their own citizens.

The essays in this Special Section engage with geopolitical and temporal debates informing national identities. These two larger concepts are the departure points addressed directly and indirectly by the contributors' essays from the fields of communication, cultural, and media studies. First, the geopolitical debate concerning nationalism and cosmopolitanism serves as a broader framework under which the essays gathered here discuss nation branding practices. More specifically, the essays address, on the one hand, tensions between a (sometimes protectionist) internal focus vis-à-vis external actors or markets and, on the other hand, strategies to cultivate diplomatic relations. For instance, the essay by Polson and Whiteside focuses on whether or not India, like the other members of the BRICS, should participate in the global industrial sports complex as a way to cultivate greater soft power and mode of development. Two essays focus on contemporary cultural policies and the role of governments in developing a creative economy. Whereas Marsh writes about the Brazilian context and Fung overviews the development of creative industries in China, both essays reveal the tensions and contradictions between cultivating an internal market and seeking external participation in the global market. Meanwhile, Popkova's analysis of Russian media's coverage of the law on "foreign agents" captures a tension between asserting internal control and dominance versus allowing for global influence and dialogue. In essence, these four essays ask questions concerning how, on what terms and to what degree these nations should engage with the global community.

Developing new political relationships can be prompted by trade or diplomacy. Whereas Popkova's essay reflects on how the media play a role in assessing international diplomacy and cross-cultural collaboration, Albuquerque considers non-Western modes of journalism in Brazil and South Africa, the role of the press in peripheral locations of the global order, and the role of the press in political accountability. In terms of nation branding, Albuquerque asks us to consider how media may play a role in promoting a particular view of politics and democracy. However, he also notes the message may not connect with a previously disenfranchised electorate, which asserts itself as a new political force and does not feel beholden to the interests of postcolonial elites. Thus, developing a new national identity and a sense of place in a new global order is an uneven process that faces a number of internal challenges. What is more, Albuquerque's observations are particularly interesting in light of recent votes to impeach Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff. Whereas Popkova refers to a rejection of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Russia, Pamment and Wilkins note that possessing a new role in international relations means developing new geometries of development in which nonprofit organizations play a role in establishing new paradigms of cooperation.

A second, broad debate is one that can be defined as temporal or, in other words, the negotiation of identities in historical terms. What has defined the national identities of these countries in the past?

And, what will in the future? As they take their places on the international stage, to what degree and how will their national identities transform? What external influences will be embraced, rejected, or partially absorbed? We argue that this temporal debate can be productively described as a synergy of affects—interactions (and possible intensification) between hopes, desires, and anxieties—concerning the past, present, and the future as these countries experience significant transformations. This synergy of affects frequently informs the formulation of nation branding practices. Whereas Rai and Straubhaar draw on the concepts of deterritorialization and hybridity to examine the Brazilian telenovela *Caminho das Indias* (or, *India, A Love Story*, 2009) as a new kind of South–South international product, Kumar also considers global cultural flows in the case of Indian rock music. For Kumar, a study of Indian rock music allows for thinking about desire among global subjects toward a particular type of global cultural production. His research shows that rock in India reveals aspects of colonialism and a new global subjectivity that challenges a unified notion of Indian national identity. These two essays ask important questions about how new identities may be performed in a context in which new axes of international relationships (i.e., South–South, North–South) are being developed.

National Identity and Nation Branding in the Context of Cultural Globalization

National identity involves how a nation collectively defines itself and how people in other nations identify it. Scholars agree that nationalism is socially constructed (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Duara, 1993; Gellner, 1983). Based on this view, nationalism preexists before the nation state. Only after national consciousness is established is it possible to build a nation state. Anderson (1991) in particular points out the importance of print media in constructing the modern nation-states in Europe as "imagined communities." Anderson's observations can be extended to understand the role of different forms of modern communicative technologies and media practices in nation building. Media dictate what is normative and desirable, thus cultivating people's view toward a given nation and one's position within the nation and the global community. As a relational concept, national identity is invoked when other nations are involved.

In one sense, branding can be seen in terms of how a country promotes itself internally and externally. Yet Marsh observes that nation branding should be viewed as "a contingent, relational phenomenon that communicates new notions of national and cultural identity in the current context of economic globalization" (this Special Section). At the center of the promotional effort is the idea of constructing a national narrative that enables a country to attract foreign direct investment, trade, and tourism, and mobilize local and global resources and support. As a discursive process, branding goes beyond the production and external transmission of a new image or global presence and involves policies, media industries, material exchanges, and creative economies to cultivate new geopolitical imaginaries. Among the various modes of nation branding discussed by the contributors, one finds direct and indirect efforts such as sponsoring international sporting events, cultivating specific cultural industries, cultural exchanges, international diplomacy through nonprofit work, and the role of the media in shaping narratives about the nation tied to social, political, and economic profits.

Nation branding has been identified as an important endeavor for countries in transition (Anholt, 2005; Szondi, 2007). As a strategy for development, the BRICS countries have developed branding

activities to increase their soft power. Joseph Nye (2004) cites three types of resources (culture, political values, and foreign policies) through which a country exerts its soft power order to win foreign publics and "co-opt" individuals. Nation branding involves the mobilization of cultural artifacts, high and popular, and foreign policies and the application of value systems in telling credible stories about a nation. In this Special Section, Marsh underscores that branding is a discursive process that involves storytelling, mythmaking, and commodification of everyday life in producing some renewed version of a nation. Using consumerist logic and terminologies, nation branding leads to the elevation of some narratives and the suppression of others in producing national identity (Aronczyk, 2013). Ultimately, branding is concerned with how a nation responds to challenges and opportunities posed by globalization in the neoliberal era, which leads to market-oriented cultural policies and media practices at the expense of collective interests.

All the BRICS countries, except for India, have hosted large global events (such as the Olympics, the World Cup, and Asian Games) as a way to boost the country's image and shape its imagination. Polson and Whiteside critique how the "global sports industrial complex"—consisting of sports organizations and governing bodies, media corporations, and transnational brands—have shaped the discourses of hosting mega-events in terms of ideology and economic incentives. Although India has not yet hosted any large global mega events, the discussions are certainly in place to determine when India would host the Olympics or the World Cup and whether India could be successful. Such debates make sports not only a platform for articulating "global aspirations" but also highlight how global commercial interests intertwine or conflict with a country's basic developmental needs in a neoliberal economy. Questioning the thesis of cultural imperialism in globalization, some essays in this Special Section provide a more nuanced understanding of global cultural flows and attempt to capture the heterogeneity of global information exchanges and interactions, as will be discussed below.

Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

As noted previously, when analyzing national identity and nation branding among the BRICS nations, one prominent theme is that these nations consistently deal with the dialectic of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Although nationalism often represents a retreat to the existing boundary that is shaped by the imaginaries of the nation-state, cosmopolitanism relates to more universal humanity and community by openly embracing border-crossing activities, which can be physical, symbolic, or imaginary (Clifford, 1992). Cosmopolitanism can also be understood as being produced by postmodern conditions characterized by increasing interactions among various local and global forces. However, globalization does not necessarily lead to cosmopolitanism. An increasing body of literature documents how globalization triggers parochial identities such as fundamentalism and nationalism as reactions (Castells, 1996). Taken together, cosmopolitanism and nationalism are different constructions of communities and shared meanings in response to globalization (for more discussion, see H. Li, 2016).

All the essays, in varying ways, touch upon the issues of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. For example, Popkova analyzes the coverage of the controversial law on "foreign agents" (passed in 2012) in four Russian media: the newspaper *Izvestiya*, the satellite television channel Russia Today, the newspaper *Kommersant,* and the radio station Ekho Moskvy. She presents a complex history of Russia's attempts to integrate with the global community while desiring nationalism "incompatible with Western values." She

also argues that Russian media are not homogenous, but rather provide "alternative interpretations of national identity" that "constantly challenge the dominant narratives." Her research is consistent with the observation made by Gvosdev and Marsh (2014), who argue that nationalism in Russia reflects conflictual foreign policies despite the existence of a more Western-leaning stance among some of the elite. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian foreign policy has shifted from being described as "more moderate, middle of the road" toward a stance that "openly challenges the United States" (Schaefer & Poffenbarger, 2014, p. 34). A perceived loss of status has produced a strong desire among some elites that Russia should reemerge as a great power (Carmody, 2013). This nostalgia for great power status has been accompanied by surging nationalist sentiments in Russia.

Similarly, China shares a desire to integrate with the global order and simultaneously build a strong nation. Since the 1990s, China has attempted to globalize its economy while also reviving and promoting traditional culture for the country's "great rejuvenation." Leaders have presented various concepts, such as "the Harmonious Society" and "the Chinese Dream," to redefine the role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) within China and the country's role in the world. The Chinese Dream (in contrast with the American Dream), proposed by Xi Jinping, in particular, was praised by Chinese media and some scholars in China as embodying a new theory and a multipolar view that aims to balance celebrating Chinese national identity and reconceptualizing China's cosmopolitan profile. Meanwhile, China's domestic policies and the CCP's ideologies are increasingly scrutinized by the international community. Indeed, how to manage China's international identity has become a key project for Chinese elites and media. China has an intense anxiety that the country's comprehensive power does not match its economic status. Even though China has become more confident since 2008, there are still two Chinas: a powerful China and a fragile China (Shirk, 2008). China's simultaneous developmental and developed status suggests the ambiguities of how China is perceived by others and how China perceives itself.

As China allocates more resources to maintain a global order that facilitates China's economic development and increase the CCP's legitimacy and the country's global attraction, Chinese media are taking on a more significant role in voicing China's perspectives globally. Broadly situated in the scholarship that critiques China's totalitarianism and lack of press freedom, Fung (in this Special Section) argues that Beijing's branding of China as a harmonious society is propaganda and aims to reconstruct how external audiences imagine China. Looking closely at four entertainment and media industries (film, music, animation, and online gaming), Fung explains that politics and the market (local and global forces) shape the complexities of the media industries in China. Although Chinese media can be flexibly used by the state to subtly channel nationalism, Fung asserts that Chinese media lack global competitiveness, and only globalization (i.e., importing capital, expertise, and management) can improve these industries. His essay points to paradoxes in nation branding: media control and censorship means that the state can easily channel unified messages and controlled narratives, but it also makes Chinese media less credible in the global mediated world. Although China's hard power (i.e., economic and military) is rising, China still lacks soft power, and most of its power comes from "its soft use of power" (M. Li, 2009, p. 3). In sum, nation branding may produce a controlled (or advantageous) narrative, yet controlled media often lack credibility among domestic and foreign publics.

Others in this Special Section also point out the paradoxes and disjunctures in nation branding. Marsh outlines key trends in Brazilian cultural policy and efforts to develop the creative economy, defined as a way to achieve greater sociopolitical inclusion and sustainable economic development. Notably, the aims of cultural inclusion and celebration of diversity in Brazil have ceded to economic imperatives. Whereas Fung offers a contemporary mapping of the music, film, animation, and gaming industries, Marsh focuses on the audiovisual sector and outlines its role in place branding Rio de Janeiro. Her study of contemporary cultural policy and place branding also reveals tensions between support of making Rio de Janeiro a "creative city" and rejection of efforts to "sell" the city landscape. Meanwhile, Albuquerque compares and contrasts South Africa and Brazil and argues that colonialism has shaped the tension between mainstream media and left-leaning governments in both countries. Three types of media (English language, Afrikaner media, and indigenous media) have different orientations, thus influencing their more nationalistic or cosmopolitan orientations.

However, the nationalism and cosmopolitanism dialectic also shows potential fusions and collaborations. Rai and Straubhaar analyze the representation of global migration in the Brazilian telenovela *Caminho das Indias* and how social and cultural relations are reconfigured, which challenges and sometimes reinforces existing boundaries in India such as caste, gender, and other normative relations. Their study suggests that globalization opens up new opportunities and reshapes cultural spaces.

Polson and Whiteside's investigation of the discourse of whether India is ready to host global mega-events (discussed previously) further reinforces how nationalism and cosmopolitanism are often fused to serve the interests of transnational capital as well as local elites. Finally, Pamment and Wilkins (discussed in the next section) analyze the changing perceptions of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) donor community toward South–South collaborations, suggesting that BRICS nations have posed challenges to established norms with power to shape donor practices. All these essays suggest that nationalism and cosmopolitanism can potentially function as a productive framework to understand media industries, cultural production, policies, and developmental practices.

The formation of the BRICS economies and associated nationalism and cosmopolitanism suggest the dynamics of power struggle (Castells, 2007; Deibert, 1997) in the contemporary era of globalization. Notably, this tension between individual desires and the broader goals of the collective is not one that uniquely affects BRICS nations. In recent years, the Syrian refugee crisis and economic instability among its member nations has strained the European Union. The United Kingdom has plans (at the time of writing) to hold a referendum on whether or not the country should remain part of the European Union. Although specific factors certainly differ, the broader tendency of "isolation versus engagement" is not unique to the BRICS.

Hope, Desire, and Anxiety

The second debate that informs how the BRICS nations redefine themselves can be characterized as a synergy of affects—of hope, desire, and anxiety. We argue that this is largely a temporal issue where past, present, and future ideas about the BRICS nations are negotiated. What is more, this debate is a

matter of perspective about the BRICS— looking *outward* from the position of the BRICS or looking *upon* the BRICS from outside.

The rise of the BRICS has been celebrated, but it has also sparked suspicions. As discussed previously, this is one of the four perspectives about the BRICS. The rising influence of the bloc has been keenly felt after the 2008 global financial recession and has resulted in hope and anxiety for the established West. Western anxiety toward the rise of the BRICS can be identified at several levels. On the one hand, there has been anxiety about how these emerging nations could reshape global geopolitics, challenge the U.S.-led global order, and threaten the global status quo (Schaefer & Poffenbarger, 2014), as discussed before. Another kind of anxiety comes with the rising expectation toward these nations. For example, since 2008, China has been expected to play a bigger role and shoulder more global responsibilities. Paradoxically, with rising expectations, there are also anxieties that these countries are not yet ready to play such roles.

One also finds internal concerns about these countries joining the global order. As noted above, because of the colonial history in China, India, South Africa, and Brazil, these nations have some ambivalence toward Western modernity and globalization. For example, Albuquerque points out how the cultural and political elites in Brazil and South Africa are discontented by the shift of these two nations in establishing closer relationships with neighboring countries and the South in general, given that the elites view these countries as belonging to the West.

Kumar's study on Indian rock music shows how identities in the global context are fluid, and rock provides space that channels different kinds of desire for Indian-ness as well as an alternative identity. By studying three dimensions of rock culture (media representation, the musicians' portrayal of their own relationship with the music and how their choice was inflicted with contradictions), he argues that Indian national identity construction is influenced by the past and shaped by corporeal and affective responses to rock music. The study suggests that the emerging countries in general, and the BRICS, in particular, harbor a desire to emulate the West while wanting to maintain their own national and cultural authenticity.

Returning to the perspective of looking upon the BRICS, one finds desires for these nations to continue advancing, but anxieties about the same. In this Special Section, the essay by Pamment and Wilkins suggests how Northern countries are anxious about the challenges posed by the emerging nations, and by China in particular. The BRICS have created new donor practices, such as respect for sovereignty, noninterference in domestic affairs, and technical cooperation. These countries rarely tie any conditionality as posed by the West through organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Carmody, 2013). Despite the good will, the different humanitarian practices of the Southern countries have sparked misgivings among established, developed nations.

Focusing on emerging South–South collaborations, Pamment and Wilkins question the model of one way cultural flow from the West to the rest. They explore how the traditional OECD donor community deals with the challenges posed by the emerging nations. They argue that the North has developed evolving discourses dealing with Southern donations, such as indifference, skepticism, fear, integration,

and conciliation. These emerging countries pose challenges to a traditional "development geometry" that has "juxtaposed North and South, East and West, and First and Third Worlds" along the development–underdevelopment continuum. Their participation in global development not only forces the Northern (Western) countries to change the donor practices but also advances an emergent global citizenship. For the first time, the South is not just "the target of development" but "an active partner in development." Their essay contributes to our understanding of the dynamic formation of global citizenship and the donor community, which problematizes traditional Northern donor practices that define the North as donors and the South as recipients. These challenges may lead to a further erosion of the Euro-centric order and an intensification of a multipolar global order. While recognizing the heterogeneous nature of aid practices, the study also cautions against the nontransparency and the lack of checks and balances associated with South–South collaborations.

In terms of nation branding, when Southern countries engage in humanitarian programs, they not only promote cosmopolitanism and global citizenship at home but also project a nation's reputation globally. Schaefer and Poffenbarger (2014) argue that all the BRICS nations are aiming for more power, and the formation of the BRICS is responsive to the hegemony of the United States. Moreover, despite their diversity (government type, military capacity, politics, economy, and growth prospect), they assert that the group could be "a possible balancing coalition" that constrains the U.S. through hard power and soft power by creating a "multipolar" world order (p. 1). However, a major challenge that can hinder the BRICS' power lies in how to balance members' desires for individual power versus the elevation of the strength of the collective.

Although the essays in this Special Section do not deal with conflicts between or among these member countries, these nations have historical and contemporary conflicts with one another. More specifically, there are anxieties toward the military buildup seen in Russia, India, and China. The historical conflicts among the member countries (between China and India, and between China and Russia, for example) and between the member countries and nonmember countries (such as India and Pakistan, China and Japan, Russia and Ukraine) have further intensified global anxieties. At present, the BRICS nations have focused mainly on financial restructuring, but there has been increasing attention to the political implications and their collective voting power. These countries also face tremendous challenges within their own national borders (such as corruption, environmental degradation, political instability, and ethnic conflict). The power dynamics in the global community among the member countries, as well as within their national borders, will further challenge how nation-centric politics negotiates with a more cosmopolitan model that promotes mutual interests.

Conclusion

The rise of the BRICS is a significant phenomenon in recent decades. Although the global order is still largely determined by the North, South–South collaborations have increasingly questioned the existing global order, resulting in shifting international power dynamics, cultural landscapes and access to resources. Studying these BRICS countries, as rising global powers and dominant regional powers, adds greatly to a nuanced understanding of global transformations, international relations, global politics, and cultural flows. All countries construct their global influence in response to increasing domestic demands for

development, a relative decline of the United States, and a desire for a multipolar, multicultural world in a post–Cold War era.

As noted previously, the BRICS nations comprise diverse experiences, cultures, political systems, and histories. Their relations are collaborative and competitive, which means that they have individual national agendas as well as collective needs. As a unit, the BRICS may provide support to one another, but to varying degrees. Again, a major challenge lies in how the BRICS can become an organic bloc that works toward collective actions that benefit all.

In closing, we present a few questions for further consideration. What are the implications of South–South collaborations? Would they offer true alternatives or replicate some dimensions of Western imperialism? Will the shared experiences and challenges solidify the strategies to deal with the future, or will the future of the BRICS become entangled with division? How will the BRICS nations change the world, and how will the world change the BRICS?

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