

Constructing a New World Order through a Narrative of Infrastructural Development: The Case of the BRICS

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Abstract : The aim of this research is to understand how the emerging power bloc BRICS employs infrastructure development narratives to construct a new world order. BRICS is an international body consisting of five emerging countries that collaborate on economic and political issues: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This study explores the projection of infrastructure development narratives through an analysis of BRICS's attention to infrastructure investment and financing, its support of the New Partnership on African Development and the establishment of the New Development Bank in Shanghai. The theory of Strategic Narratives is used to explore BRICS's commitment to infrastructure development and to distinguish three layers: system narratives (BRICS as a global actor to propose development reform), identity narratives (BRICS as a collective identity joining efforts to act upon development aspirations) and issue narratives (BRICS committed to a range of issues of which infrastructure development is prominent). The methodology that is employed is a narrative analysis of BRICS's official documents, media statements, and website imagery. A comparison of these narratives illuminates tensions at the three layers and among the five member states. Identifying tensions among development infrastructure narratives provides an indication of how policymaking for infrastructure development could be improved. Subsequently, it advances BRICS's ability to act as a global actor to construct a new world order.

Keywords : BRICS, emerging powers, infrastructure development, strategic narratives

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