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CULTURAL DIPLOMACY FRAMES IN BRICS: FORMATION OF FOUNDATIONS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract. The article examines the BRICS countries' cultural diplomacy in the light of globalization and its impact on international relations. Nowadays, when international issues and dangers necessitate coordinated actions to maintain peace and stability, cultural diplomacy becomes a crucial instrument to foster understanding and collaboration between nations. This article explores the successes and difficulties of cultural diplomacy among the BRICS nations, as well as its importance in promoting multipolarity and balancing international relations. The 16th BRICS Summit Kazan Declaration, which was approved at the summit and assigns the job of updating cultural diplomacy strategies in light of shifting geopolitical circumstances, receives particular attention. The authors investigate how cultural diplomacy and its external strategy in the BRICS nations and worldwide trends may be impacted by recent political and social developments. The study draws conclusions regarding the importance of cultural diplomacy as a means of strengthening the system of international relations, challenges and prospects.

Key words: BRICS, cultural diplomacy, multilateralism, 16th BRICS summit.

Introduction

In the light of the international stage's fast changes of the current geopolitical realities and the escalation of transnational issues including migrant crises, climate change, and international conflicts, the BRICS is an important in forming the new global order.

This group of nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (and five new members) is a significant component of the multipolar global architecture. Along with their shared political and economic interests, the BRICS nations are bound together by a shared goal of fostering cultural interchange as a means of enhancing understanding and collaboration.

The foundation for forging close cultural links and resolving global issues that call for cooperation is cultural diplomacy, the most significant instrument of the BRICS nations' foreign strategy. Stronger links and the avoidance of conflict are made possible via cultural exchange, which is particularly crucial in the age of globalization, when international relations are growing more complex and multidimensional.

In international relations, procedures for cultural diplomacy are crucial because, in addition to political and economic tools, cultural collaboration fosters trust and enduring alliances.

A proclamation that highlights the value of cultural linkages in bolstering the BRICS bloc's impact in world affairs and upholding multipolarity ideals was most recently endorsed during the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan in 2024. Since cultural variety and understanding are becoming just as significant in the context of globalization as political or economic factors, BRICS aggressively employs cultural diplomacy to bolster its position as a significant global actor.

The relevance of the work

As the globe becomes more multipolar, cultural diplomacy is emerging as a crucial tool for international affairs. It facilitates communication between nations, improves understanding between them, and fosters trust. Cultural diplomacy has two purposes for the BRICS nations: first, it enhances the bloc's standing internationally and promotes cultural variety; second, it acts as a means of balancing ties within the group. In order to foster multipolarity, sustainable

development, and international collaboration, the 16th BRICS Summit Kazan Declaration, which was adopted at the BRICS Summit in 2024, highlighted the value of cultural diplomacy. Understanding the workings and relevance of BRICS cultural diplomacy is crucial because it helps to fortify international ties, support the global order, and respond to the problems posed by globalization.

Literature review

The main scholarly publications and sources that have influenced the conversation on cultural diplomacy, especially among the BRICS countries, are examined in this overview of the literature. It highlights the connection of cultural diplomacy with globalization and multipolarity while identifying important arguments and famous scholarly methods.

A variety of conceptual frameworks support the study of cultural diplomacy, and many academics connect it to the more general idea of soft power. Understanding soft power, which Joseph Nye defines as a country's capacity to draw in and co-opt rather than compel, is essential to comprehending cultural diplomacy. His theories offer the theoretical underpinnings for investigating how governments use cultural projections rather than economic or military means to exert power (Nye, 2004). Milton Cummings expands on this by defining cultural diplomacy as "the sharing of knowledge, ideas, art, language, and other cultural elements between countries and peoples in order to promote understanding." (Cummings, 2003). In the 1930s, academics like F. Barghoorn coined the phrase "cultural diplomacy," highlighting its early application as a propaganda tactic. Despite being out of date, Barghoorn's work offers important insight into the origins of cultural diplomacy, especially during the Cold War when it emerged as a crucial instrument for ideological rivalry (Barghoorn, 1960). This view was further developed in the 1967 UNESCO Roundtable Report on Cultural Policies, which emphasized cultural diplomacy as a means of governmental involvement in the cultural sphere (Cultural policy: a first investigation. UNESCO, 1969).

Many academic publications address the connection between cultural diplomacy and globalization. According to some scholars, the ability of globalization to provide quicker and more extensive cultural interactions has increased the significance of cultural diplomacy. Bogatyrova, Kovba, and Tabarintseva-Romanova (Bogatyrova; Kovba; Tabarintseva-Romanova, 2022) investigated how diplomatic mechanisms, such as cultural exchanges, have changed in

the digital era. They discussed the early stages of cultural diplomacy's growth and successful cultural initiatives. In order to promote unity and expand their worldwide impact, the BRICS countries have come to understand the importance of cultural diplomacy. Among important cultural endeavors, film festivals have become well-known venues for cross-cultural interaction. According to them, BRICS Film Festivals are manifestations of soft power that challenge Western-dominated narratives in the film industry while fostering cultural diversity. These celebrations promote economic cooperation inside the bloc, which serves both symbolic and utilitarian goals (Bogatyrova; Kovba; Tabarintseva-Romanova, 2022).

Langhorne presented a historical view on the history of diplomacy in the context of globalization. His research looks on how cultural diplomacy adjusts to a multipolar world in which non-Western nations, such as those in the BRICS, are more influential. (Langhorne, 2001). As, Stuenkel examined the geopolitical relevance of BRICS cultural diplomacy, claiming that it is a strategic endeavor to undermine the current global order controlled by the West. By fostering alternative cultural narratives, the BRICS want to transform global power systems. (Stuenkel, 2015). Alexandrov concentrated on the practical elements of international collaboration in cultural heritage, providing a framework for understanding how cultural diplomacy is implemented. His work emphasizes the value of collaboration in maintaining and sharing cultural legacy, which is important to many BRICS cultural efforts. (Alexandrov, 2009)

BRICS cultural diplomacy has also heavily relied on educational undertakings, especially through programs like the BRICS Network University. According to T. Muhr and M.L.N. de Azevedo, these initiatives are important for promoting intellectual cooperation and enhancing cultural linkages between participating nations, especially in the framework of the SDG of the UN for economic growth. (T. Muhr; M.L.N. de Azevedo, 2018)

Uvarov also looked at the impact of social media in enhancing BRICS' cultural diplomacy activities. Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have helped BRICS countries access a larger audience, encouraging cultural interchange through events such as the BRICS Games and other international cultural projects. (Uvarov, 2024)

By integrating even academic viewpoints and connecting them to the unique setting of BRICS, this literature review advances our knowledge of cultural diplomacy. It emphasizes the special role of BRICS in forming a multipolar global order by looking at the

theoretical underpinnings, historical development, and real-world implementations of cultural diplomacy.

Methodology

This research uses primary and secondary sources to investigate the practice and theoretical underpinnings of cultural diplomacy within the BRICS context. These include summit statements (for example, the Fortaleza Declaration and the Kazan Declaration), major protocols (for example, the BRICS Protocol on Cultural Cooperation), and associated treaties. Furthermore, scholarly writings on cultural diplomacy, globalization, and multipolarity provide a framework. The study also examines modern uses of cultural diplomacy using multimedia sources such as BRICS-sponsored film festivals, youth exchanges, and internet platforms. Quantitative data from official BRICS publications and cultural exchange initiatives supplemented the qualitative research.

Research Questions: 1. How can cultural diplomacy within the BRICS framework help to promote multipolarity in global governance?

Hypothesis (Thesis): 1. Encourages intra-BRICS cohesiveness and collaborative problem solving in a multipolar global framework. Serves as a means of projecting soft power, balancing global narratives, and tackling transnational issues through cultural interaction and digital innovation.

The study developed over the course of four carefully thought-out stages:

1) Theoretical Framework Development: This phase entailed combining existing academic ideas, notably Nye's notion of soft power, Barghoorn's early insights into cultural diplomacy, and UNESCO's thoughts on intercultural collaboration. These ideas provided a platform for interpreting cultural diplomacy as a strategic tool for BRICS.

2) Data collection involved gathering primary data from BRICS papers and statements, as well as quantitative indicators on participation and involvement in cultural programs. Secondary data consisted of scholarly assessments and reports on cultural diplomacy practices throughout the world and within the BRICS.

3) Thematic and Content Analysis: Recurring themes including cultural diversity, intra-BRICS cooperation, global impact, and digital involvement were found by analyzing the data that was gathered. The content analysis of declarations and protocols revealed strategic agendas and shifting narratives.

4) Case Studies: Several projects, like the BRICS Film Festivals and the BRICS Network University, were reviewed to give real examples of cultural diplomacy in operation. These case studies focused on operational methods, successes, and obstacles.

The inquiry used a variety of methodological strategies to ensure a thorough grasp of the issue. Content analysis was critical in deciphering policy papers and agreements, revealing the strategic objective underlying BRICS cultural diplomacy. Comparative analysis placed BRICS cultural endeavors in the larger framework of global diplomacy, comparing them to attempts by Western countries and other international blocs. Digital analysis investigated the importance of online platforms in broadening the reach of cultural diplomacy, namely the use of social media and virtual platforms to stimulate interaction. Finally, case study analysis provided detailed insights into individual efforts, highlighting best practices and opportunities for development.

The findings highlight the importance of cultural diplomacy in establishing BRICS' global narrative and building intra-bloc solidarity. Cultural diplomacy projects have increased BRICS' exposure on the global arena, portraying the bloc as a coherent and culturally diversified organization capable of providing alternative narratives to Western-dominated global discourse. Programs such as the BRICS Film Festivals have highlighted member states' cultural diversity while encouraging cross-cultural communication. Similarly, the BRICS Network University has promoted intellectual engagement and mutual understanding among students and professors from member nations.

The findings also demonstrate the efficacy of cultural diplomacy in tackling international issues. Educational and cultural interactions, for example, have helped member nations improve their mutual understanding and cohesion, developing a feeling of common purpose. The use of digital media has expanded the reach of cultural projects, allowing for greater involvement and engagement, especially among young.

Finally, the study shows that cultural diplomacy is a key component of BRICS' strategy for managing globalization and furthering its vision of a multipolar world. Cultural diplomacy not only strengthens BRICS' international stature but also positions it as a crucial actor in tackling the challenges of the modern world by encouraging collaboration within the bloc and projecting soft power on a global scale.

Results and discussion

The driver of multilateralism

In the ever-developing landscape of intercontinental relations, the emergence of BRICS represents an exemplar transformation in the conventional balance of power. Created out of economical prescience and a shared perception for a more prerogative world, BRICS has ascended to eventually be a potential, thought-provoking accepted norms and shaping the contours of the current global order. It conceives a quarter of the Earth's territory and more than forty percent of its total population. These days this organization is getting more universal and essential for the establishment of the world order.

The term BRICS has an exclusive history, considering the term was first introduced previously the meeting of the presidents of Brazil, Russia, India and China. First and foremost, in the given organization were four countries, where the origin of the BRIC abbreviation can be attributed to "Goldman Sachs" analyst Jim O'Neill, who, in 2001, emphasized the uprising domination of this grouping of states on the worldwide stage. It is remarkable that the chain of capital letters in the acronym is substantial particularly for its euphony. Notwithstanding, it is not exclusively the euphony of the letters, on the contrary also it is meant the phonetic likeness to the English word "brick". In this manner this term is exploited to indicate a group of nations whose enlargement is expected to importantly donate to the forthcoming elaboration of the global economy and, in particular, stock markets (O'Neill, 2001). The humanitarian sphere is also a very important part – soft power and cultural diplomacy.

Initially, this represents a refreshing approach to the implementation of multilateral diplomacy. When closely examining the development of intercontinental relations, it becomes evident that a reorganization and redistribution of international forces is taking place. Innovative configurations of interstate interaction often emerge that depart from the established relations of the past, demonstrating distinctive geographical and operational characteristics. As an example of such a model, one can consider BRICS, since in this model the main factors of integration are the intersection of various intercontinental relations and interests, rather than geographical and state ones.

In subsequent analyses conducted by Goldman Sachs, the facts reveal the cooperative relationships among the BRIC countries, which allows us to reconstruct a distinctive view of cooperation and collective. A comprehensive 2005 essay emphasized

that the contradictory characteristics of the BRIC countries, in which the potential initiatives of some countries are balanced by the needs of others, and this allows the participants to jointly participate in the international economic arena through a unified approach. For example, Brazil with its abundance of agricultural products, Russia as a major world exporter of mineral resources, India with its cost-effective intellectual resources and China with its comprehensive distribution of budget labor – thus, each of the countries makes an important contribution to its own economy. Ultimately, forecasts show that the separation in the development and contribution of economies will allow the BRICS as an entity to transform economic expansion and diversification into expanded international governmental influence, which will lead to the emergence of a modern economic aristocracy and simplification as a result of the "golden billion" (Krylova, 2016). Thus, such a vision of BRICS as an informal but powerful association of countries leads to diversification and expansion of the international balance of power and strengthening of multipolarity. Along with the economy, the humanitarian sphere and cultural diplomacy, which is more flexible and diverse than the economic one, plays an important role.

The theoretical basis of the concept "cultural diplomacy"

It is worth noting that the pace of global processes is growing every day and will continue to grow. In today's predominantly digital world, both economic success and active participation in various international alliances are becoming increasingly important, as they facilitate long-term relationships and strengthen diplomatic ties. Since this gives governments a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge, values, and cultural characteristics, special attention should be paid to cultural diplomacy in this environment. Cultural diplomacy is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization, when society must quickly adapt to changing conditions. Cultural attitudes and mentalities change much more slowly than institutional changes such as reforms or laws, making adaptation more complex and time-consuming.

Cultural diplomacy is one of the most important instruments in international relations and an important source of foreign policy for any state. It dates back to the 19th century, when European countries such as France and Great Britain created institutions such as the Alliance Française and the British Council to spread their languages and cultures around the

world. However, despite this, cultural diplomacy was not used effectively in international relations for a long time and only became popular after World War II. As is known, until that time, armed intervention was the main force, and military power was the main instrument. Everything changed after World War II, when the Cold War began with significant changes in international politics. These changes were associated with the development of technology and new forms of communication. The world was divided into two blocs, the Cold War began, and it was from that moment that cultural diplomacy began to be actively used, and many research and cultural centers appeared on the international arena. If we analyze the meaning of the concept, we can see that the term “cultural diplomacy” appeared in the 1930s and was introduced into scientific circulation by the American researcher F. Barghoorn. In his view, cultural diplomacy means “the manipulation of cultural materials and personnel for propaganda purposes” (Barghoorn, 1960). Moreover, according to the UNESCO Round Table in Monaco, one of the first definitions of cultural policy was introduced in 1967 in the report *Cultural Policies – Preliminary Considerations*; cultural policy was understood as “the set of principles, administrative and financial measures and procedures which provide the basis for government action in the cultural field” (*Cultural Policy: Preliminary Study*. UNESCO, 1969). Moreover, cultural diplomacy is related to the soft power approach. In line with Joseph Nye’s concept of “soft power”, Milton Cummings also gives his own definition of cultural diplomacy: “the exchange of ideas, information, art, language and other aspects of culture between nations and peoples in order to promote mutual understanding” (Nye, 2004).

Since elements of cultural diplomacy have historically often been used as a tool to impose certain opinions and behavior patterns in the interests of its creator, the idea of “cultural diplomacy” is highly controversial. Because of this historical legacy, a generally accepted meaning for the term has not yet been developed. However, as a key tool for promoting mutual understanding and strengthening international relations, cultural diplomacy is becoming increasingly important in the creation of a multipolar world order.

Analysis of cultural diplomacy as a connecting element in the BRICS countries

Cultural diplomacy is a crucial tool for enhancing collaboration across the BRICS nations, fostering understanding amongst them, and fostering better

ties. The formation of this partnership did not immediately lead to the growth of cultural diplomacy. The evolution started in 2006 when a system of frequent meetings was established to talk about important areas of collaboration. However, beginning in 2009, when the leaders of the BRICS countries recognized the value of this mechanism, they began to pay close attention to it during their annual summits.

This notion is based on the acknowledgment of the value of cultural cooperation, which is highlighted in the association’s major texts. The Fortaleza BRICS Summit marked a watershed moment in the evolution of cultural diplomacy. Specifically, the 2014 Fortaleza Declaration of the BRICS nations states that cultural diplomacy is a powerful instrument for advancing sustainable development, increasing humanitarian interchange, and fortifying intercultural relations. (The Fortaleza Declaration, 2014) The Declaration highlights how the cultural diversity of the BRICS nations may be used as a foundation for forging solid international ties and providing a forum for global collaboration. Given these clauses, it is evident that culture serves as a catalyst for the development of new kinds of collaboration in addition to serving as a symbol of national identity.

This is especially true for the BRICS countries, which have a rich cultural heritage that can strengthen their international authority. Cultural initiatives such as joint festivals, educational exchanges and the promotion of art are becoming an integral part of a diplomatic strategy that can contribute both to strengthening ties within the bloc and building relations with the outside world. The application of the provisions of the Fortaleza Declaration in the modern context opens up prospects for further institutionalization of cultural diplomacy. For example, speeding up negotiations on the creation of a single agreement on cultural cooperation could contribute to a more systematic approach to the development of cultural interaction. This, in turn, can become the basis for the implementation of a wide range of joint projects aimed at raising awareness and mutual respect for the cultural values of the participating countries.

Each BRICS country uses unique tools of cultural diplomacy. Since 2015, it can be examined that significant results in the field of cultural diplomacy after the first meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Culture in 2015 on June 17 in Moscow, when they discussed a number of possible projects and signed agreements between the governments of the BRICS member states on cooperation in the field of culture, signing the Protocol and Declaration of the first meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the BRICS mem-

ber states. The draft Agreement states: “The BRICS member states promote cooperation and exchanges in various areas of culture: music, theater, libraries and museums, preservation of cultural heritage, dance, fine arts, crafts, and circus art and cinematography.” (Presidential Library, 2015). Thus, it can be observed numerous successful cultural diplomatic projects, where each participating country has invested its efforts. BRICS cultural diplomacy covers a wide range of areas and directions that promote mutual understanding, strengthen friendly ties and promote the cultural diversity of the participating countries.

The BRICS Film Festivals are one of the largest annual initiatives that have become an important component of cultural diplomacy. Films serve as a means of disseminating national ideals around the world and are important in the context of soft power strategies. Since 2016, this project has provided member countries with an opportunity to showcase their films and cultural aspects. Agreements contained in publications such as the Fortaleza Declaration (Fortaleza Declaration, 2014), which emphasizes the value of cultural interaction to improve mutual understanding between people, actively support these festivals. As is well known, Hollywood in the West has consistently maintained its status as a leader in the film industry. Thus, this initiative represents an alternative to Western film festivals, which is in line with the main goals of the alliance. By promoting economic development, this project facilitates the exchange of information between countries. In addition, the countries produce various projects in the film industry in addition to hosting film festivals. One of them, the Beijing Film Academy BFA Program for BRICS Film Students and Talents, which will last until 2023, provides an opportunity to encourage the exchange of personnel among BRICS countries. (Bogatyrova; Kovba; Tabarintseva-Romanova, 2022) In addition, the BRICS countries may develop their own streaming service, similar to Netflix, to promote their films. In 2019, the Chinese Ministry of Culture and executives of China Media Group met with Brazilian Minister of Citizenship Osmar Terra to explore this idea. (Kapital.kz, 2019) Thus, the contribution made to the film industry has a significant impact on economic and cultural growth. In addition, most of the cultural events and projects were organized within the framework of the 2015 agreement. According to this agreement, which prohibits the illegal import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property; the exchange of academicians, university researchers, experts and students; and expanding cooperation in areas such as protection, preservation, restoration,

return and use of tangible and intangible cultural heritage have become the main drivers of cooperation in this area. (Bogatyrova; Kovba; Tabarintseva-Romanova, 2022) At least seven diplomatic meetings were held between 2015 and 2022 following the signing of the Agreement. During these sessions, ideas for strengthening cooperation in the fields of art, culture, protection of cultural heritage and the development of an active humanitarian discourse were discussed. In addition, the concept of developing multi-format cultural events as a way to promote BRICS culture was endorsed within the framework of the Declaration on Cooperation in Culture and the Arts in China (BRICS, 2017). During this period, major projects such as “BRICS Great Teachers”, “BRICS Peoples: Dedicated to the War Heroes” and “Film Festivals and the Year of Culture” have been successfully implemented. (Bogatyrova; Kovba; Tabarintseva-Romanova, 2022). All these activities contribute to the development of the general strategy of the humanitarian sphere and aspects of cultural diplomacy of BRICS.

In addition, inter-museum collaboration and exhibition sharing play a significant role in BRICS cultural diplomacy, which aims to preserve and promote the member nations’ cultural legacies (Orientmuseum.ru, 2020). The Declaration on Cooperation in the Field of Cultural Heritage (BRICS, 2017), which highlights the benefits of exchanging cultural values and experience in the conservation and preservation of heritage, serves as the foundation for this initiative. So, inter-museum collaboration and exhibition sharing play a significant role in BRICS cultural diplomacy, which aims to preserve and promote the member nations’ cultural legacies.

A key component of the BRICS soft power strategy is the growth of intellectual and educational interactions as the BRICS Network University. In 2013 there were organized meeting of ministers of education of BRICS countries which was held by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In this meeting the ministers decided to launch new initiative for education after this statement: “The diversity of their policy experiences implies that BRICS can learn from one another: policies that have proven successful in one country could be adopted in another. In particular, the five countries would gain from cooperating in areas where they face common challenges, such as organizing and financing skills development, and positioning their higher education and research institutions on the global stage.” (UNESCO, 2013) Thus, the education collaboration projects such as the BRICS Network

University (BRICS NU) and the BRICS University League was launched. Further efforts include cultural cooperation through language education and multilingualism, streamlining cooperation among educational associations and researchers, youth winter/summer camps, scholarships, and advocating for global education policies that prioritize common concerns. (T.Muhr; M.L.N. de Azevedo, 2018) This initiative was started according to the “SDG4-related targets with the national and subnational-level education sector development plans/programs ” (The Beijing Declaration of Education, 2017). So active enlargement of the BRICS activity in the developing cultural collaboration and strengthening important informal cooperation sector.

Enhancing academic collaboration among participating nations’ institutions, creating collaborative curricula, and promoting scientific research in high-priority fields including energy, climate change, information technology, and economics are the objectives of the initiative. These initiatives foster not just scholarly collaboration but also cultural diplomacy by establishing intellectual networks that advance intercultural understanding. Collaboration in the sector of education contributes to the development of long-lasting cultural and humanitarian relationships in addition to strengthening scientific links, all of which are crucial for advancing BRICS’ strategic objectives globally (MGIMO, 2022). A significant instrument of cultural diplomacy, the BRICS Games foster greater comprehension, cultural variety, and stronger inter-governmental connections among the nations that are involved. Since their beginning, these athletic events have developed into a significant forum for communication between the populations of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, supporting the bloc’s core principles of equality, respect for one another, and cultural variety.

The BRICS Declaration on Youth and Sports (2015), which highlighted the value of sports and cultural events in fostering the growth and upkeep of amicable ties between nations, served as the foundation for these events. (BRICS, 2015) Moreover, to encouraging a sense of athleticism, the BRICS Games also help to improve collaboration in the area of youth policy and broaden cross-cultural interactions via athletics, providing a forum for more in-depth communication. (Okoli, 2024) The primary objective of the BRICS Games is to foster interethnic communication and cultural integration via sport, which acts as a global language. In addition to showcasing physical ability, the Games foster understanding and promote bonds between nations. They fos-

ter togetherness among the nations that make up the bloc, which serves as the foundation for discussions and collaboration in other fields including education, music, and the arts.

The BRICS Games encompass more than just athletic contests. In order to acquaint participants and viewers to the customs and cultural legacy of the participating nations, they are accompanied by cultural festivals, exhibits, and educational initiatives. The bloc’s vast cultural variety is showcased through national dances, music, and theater acts throughout the opening and closing ceremonies. The last BRICS Games were held in Kazan which was the vast project of BRICS countries for the 2024. As a result of games, it can be seen from the citizens’ opinions that they were passionate with games. According to the results of analysis of Brandanalytics.ru, main opinions were stated that: “The BRICS Games are an alternative to the Olympics, free from political interference. The Games are described as fair competitions without Western interference, without doping scandals. Users highly appreciated the development and popularization of the BRICS Games, which are increasing each time they are held”. (Brandanalytics.ru, 2024)

Thus, by presenting the bloc as an alliance committed to a just and equitable global order, the BRICS Games serve to advance the idea of “soft power” on the global scene. Such events, which compete with sporting endeavors that are mostly focused on the West, provide an alternate strategy for international collaboration in which connection between cultures and sports is crucial.

As a result, efforts and programs to improve cultural relations and employ “soft power” techniques are still being developed today. The exchange of cultural legacy, its popularization, and the mutual enrichment of the participating nations are their primary objectives. The declarations made at the BRICS summits, which are supported by actual practice, make it feasible to carry out such activities. However, by analyzing all data and statistics, cultural rights issues are only discussed in relation to heritage conservation, and there is no centralized platform for tracking cultural initiatives and their efficacy. The BRICS countries still have work to do on this aspect to develop centralized platform of some other mechanism.

The role of the 16th BRICS Summit 2024 and Kazan Declaration

In 2024, the BRICS Summit in Kazan was held in the BRICS+/Outreach format from 22 to 24 October. The Summit was held under the slogan “Strengthen-

ing Multilateralism for a Fairer and More Democratic World Order". All countries reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening global governance by promoting an international and multilateral system that is more responsive, effective, sufficient, representative, legitimate, democratic and accountable. The Kazan Declaration was an important step forward in the development of both the international system and BRICS cultural diplomacy. The agreement calls for closer cooperation in the fields of science, education and culture. Particular attention is paid to digital innovations that allow BRICS countries to overcome geographical and cultural barriers (Kazan Declaration, 2024). The Kazan Declaration emphasized the value of humanitarian exchanges to improve intercultural relations among countries and proposed several creative programs. UN resolutions serve as a basis for many initiatives. The International Day of Dialogue among Civilizations (A/RES/78/286), one of the first resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, calls for increased efforts to ensure respect for cultural diversity. In addition, the growth of cultural exchanges was guided by the values of the UNESCO Constitution and the UNESCO Framework Program for Arts and Culture Education, which was unanimously adopted in February 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (Kazan Declaration, 2024).

The development of new initiatives, such as the BRICS Folk Dance Culture Alliance and the proposal to establish a BRICS Film Schools Alliance, is given special attention. In addition, the Kazan Declaration calls for the creation of a single online platform for the BRICS countries for trade in cultural goods. This will improve interaction between artists, educational institutions and cultural groups. The Declaration also emphasizes the value of supporting young talent through the funding of programs and competitions. Thus, in addition to key elements of business and geopolitics, the Kazan Declaration also outlined trends that need to be formed within the BRICS framework for the era of digitalization in the humanitarian context.

Challenges and Critiques of Cultural Diplomacy of BRICS

One of the most important components of soft power, cultural diplomacy can promote cultural values, build bridges between countries and improve a country's reputation. In today's world, where Western values dominate, cultural diplomacy offers the BRICS an opportunity to unleash the potential of other aspects and directions in terms of both civiliza-

tional and cultural dimensions. However, its implementation faces many institutional obstacles and its influence remains limited, which calls into question its effectiveness in international politics. Despite lofty claims, BRICS cultural diplomacy is poorly organized and underfunded. Film festivals, art exhibitions and student exchange programs are examples of large-scale projects that are often scattered and do not effectively reach audiences outside the member states. Moreover, cultural initiatives tend not to develop into long-term plans, but rather remain symbolic gestures. However, the little money spent on cultural diplomacy is insignificant compared to the significant soft power expenditures made by Western countries, making it impossible for the BRICS to compete effectively on the international stage.

The Western cultural framework has a greater influence on the BRICS cultural diplomacy worldwide. Unlike the US soft power, which is represented in Hollywood, music and famous companies around the world, the BRICS have not yet become a visible cultural force. Although Brazil uses football and carnival, India uses Bollywood and China uses Confucius Institutes to promote their culture, these initiatives are largely regional in scope and are not related to the BRICS as a whole. It is difficult for the BRICS to promote new cultural alternative narratives, as the existing ones are still strong, well-organized and effective. The potential of the BRICS to influence world opinion is further limited by the fact that these efforts cannot compete with influential Western media such as the BBC or CNN. Online visibility is essential for cultural diplomacy in the digital age. Unlike Western countries, which rely heavily on social media and streaming platforms to promote their cultural assets, BRICS has yet to develop a unified digital strategy, putting it at a disadvantage. The cultural influence of BRICS is diminished by a lack of digital integration, especially among younger audiences who rely heavily on digital platforms for entertainment and information.

The appeal of BRICS cultural diplomacy for neutral or pro-Western countries is diminished because it is often seen as a component of an anti-Western agenda. The bloc's focus on challenging Western dominance serves to perpetuate misconceptions of BRICS as a competitive and reactive organization rather than a useful cultural force.

Despite the ambition of the attempt, BRICS cultural diplomacy faces a number of internal and external obstacles. Its effectiveness is limited by internal political disputes, a lack of coordination, a minimal online presence, and a lack of funding.

To increase its influence, BRICS needs to develop a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy that takes into account both the national characteristics of each member state and their combined potential. Thus, BRICS cultural diplomacy risks remaining a regional endeavor with limited global impact unless internal disputes are resolved and resources are increased.

Conclusion

This study attempted to obtain results that are aimed at a better understanding of the theoretical and practical approaches to cultural diplomacy in the BRICS countries.

The first important conclusion is how cultural diplomacy can strengthen the position of BRICS as an informal interstate association at the international level.

This study confirms that cultural diplomacy is an important foreign policy tool in the context of globalization, necessary for increasing recognition and promoting other interests along with the humanitarian agenda. Thus, BRICS cultural programs promote respect, understanding and cooperation between member states, considering various types of these activities. This improves not only the image of the BRICS bloc at the international level, increases its attractiveness in addition to strengthening political and economic relations.

The Kazan Declaration of 2024, which is important for strengthening multipolarity in complex international realities, is also important for promoting cultural diplomacy within BRICS. The Declaration is important in its focus on strengthening ties between member states and aiming to update the methods of cultural diplomacy. The Kazan Declaration, which reflects the BRICS commitment to the values of multipolarity and cultural exchange, becomes more relevant in the current geopolitical environment where there is a pressing need for multilateral cooperation and understanding.

The study also highlights the importance of modifying cultural diplomacy to fit the rapidly changing realities of digital change and globalization. It draws attention to how BRICS countries could collaborate more closely using digital platforms and creative methods of disseminating cultural values. These tools

significantly increase the prospects for intercultural interaction and exchange, as many member countries are already actively promoting their cultures through digital platforms.

The study also suggests expanding the reach and improving the practice of promoting cultural diplomacy in BRICS through the development of its institutionalization and mechanisms for more coordinated promotion. This should include developing more creative and comprehensive projects to address contemporary issues, including digitalization, cultural diversity and the use of multimedia platforms. These initiatives are necessary to ensure that in a rapidly changing global order, cultural diplomacy continues to be a useful and effective tool, particularly within the BRICS framework. However, the study also acknowledges the significant internal and external barriers that BRICS cultural diplomacy faces. The bloc's ability to present a cohesive and powerful cultural identity on the international stage is weakened by challenges such as poor coordination, political disagreements, lack of funding and limited reach. To overcome these limitations, BRICS must prioritize the creation of a unified strategy that balances the individual strengths of each member state with their common goals. Thus, it can be said that BRICS cultural diplomacy is a shining example of the bloc's aspiration to create a unique political and cultural narrative in the modern world. The bloc's commitment to cultural cooperation and the importance of intercultural dialogue in promoting peace and sustainable development are demonstrated in the Kazan Declaration 2024 and its provisions. Going forward, creative strategies such as digitalization of cultural projects and expansion of the scope of international cultural events will be important for promoting cooperation and mutual understanding among the peoples of the BRICS countries and beyond. Ultimately, the bloc's ability to implement strategic plans, cope with external obstacles and adapt to the changing political environment will determine how successfully BRICS cultural diplomacy will develop in the future. At the same time, BRICS cultural diplomacy can become a vital tool for promoting the common values of the BRICS countries: respect, cooperation and coordinated international participation in the context of the development of a new world order and complex multipolarity.

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