



# Editorial: BRICS in an Evolving World Order

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**Abstract:** The editorial explores the evolution of the BRICS community, overviewing the articles included in the special issue. The authors emphasize various facets of ongoing and evolving cooperation, delineating how BRICS nations engage with climate change, development assistance and collaboration, global governance reform, and the progressive advancement of the New Development Bank (NDB).

**Keywords:** BRICS cooperation, BRICS enlargement, strategic cooperation, multilateral engagement, bilateral partnership

The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) are increasingly asserting their collective voice on the global stage. This heightened engagement is particularly evident during Russia's chairmanship in 2024, which places a special emphasis on the partnership's agenda. The substantial economic growth, human capital, and shared interests within the BRICS nations are reshaping the contemporary international political landscape significantly. Previously marginalized viewpoints, deemed insignificant by conventional wisdom, are now gaining consideration from alternative perspectives.

The process of BRICS enlargement and the decisions made by potential new members regarding adherence to existing commitments have sparked vigorous debates among scholars and policymakers. Despite encountering practical challenges in aligning their interests and defining joint objectives, initiatives such as science cooperation or science diplomacy present proactive avenues for collaboration. This MGIMO Review of International Relations special issue on BRICS exemplifies the scholarly research collaborations contributing to the understanding of the partnership. Various experts have provided diverse interpretations of the BRICS community's role and potential for further development, each offering insights into its evolving dynamics and future prospects.

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Gabriel Rached and Rafaela Mello Rodrigues de Sá explore the positioning of new institutions such as the New Development Bank and initiatives led by China within the context of coexistence with traditional structures, notably those led by the United States and Europe. Their analysis seeks to ascertain whether the current environment, marked by events ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, aligns the BRICS countries' actions with their original reformist aspirations for a more equitable international order.

In his article, Dylan Yanano Mangani challenges skepticism regarding the BRICS' ability to transform contemporary global governance. He argues that institutional initiatives such as the New Development Bank illustrate BRICS' ability to deploy both hard and soft power tools, contributing to the emergence of a multipolar global governance architecture. Furthermore, BRICS' political responses to various crises, including turmoil in Zimbabwe, Libya, and Mali, as well as nuclear issues in Iran, highlight the group's approach to peace and security governance as an alternative to traditional Western policy.

Qi Shen and Xiaolong Zou bring attention to another significant issue for BRICS scholars: climate change. Despite their disparities, BRICS countries collectively contribute the largest share of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally. Drawing from the perspective of neoliberal institutionalism, the authors investigate the origins of BRICS cooperation mechanisms and their implications for collaborative efforts on climate change within the BRICS framework. Their analysis evaluates the climate policies and positions of BRICS nations since the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. It identifies various factors influencing a country's stance and actions on climate change, including economic development level, environmental vulnerability, and the strategic environment. The authors contend that, although underlying competition among the BRICS nations also exists, overall, these factors push the group's countries towards cooperation on climate governance.

Scholars from Russia, Valentina Dmitrieva and Denis Kuznetsov, delve into the topic of development assistance. They analyze the role of IBSA Fund in the foreign aid policy of IBSA member states, as well as discuss possibilities for Russia's and China's involvement in the Fund's operations. Their analysis reveals that the IBSA Fund serves as an additional instrument for member states' development cooperation, driven by shared opportunities and responsibilities. The selection of project partners predominantly reflects the national interests of IBSA states. Regarding possible cooperation between the IBSA Fund and the New Development Bank, both institutions share a commitment to development principles and goals, underpinned by a narrative of equal partnership, standards, and sustainable development. Nonetheless, differences exist in terms of the focus on loans vs. grants, project geography, and priorities. As this makes the merger of the two entities unreasonable, given Russia and China's alignment with IBSA states' interests, their inclusion in the IBSA Fund activities is still feasible, especially if additional funding is required.

Finally, Bruno de Conti and Cyro Faccin delve into the pivotal issue surrounding the New Development Bank, probing its effectiveness against prevailing financial trends. Their inquiry focuses on Brazil as a primary case study, aiming to assess the trajectory of NDB loans to the country. This evaluation is deemed crucial as it offers insights into potential hindrances and opportunities for bolstering loan disbursement to Brazil. The authors argue that despite recent increases in operations, there remains ample scope for expanding the Bank's utilization, particularly in light of the political shifts that took place in Brazil in 2023.

Overall, it can be asserted that increased collaboration among BRICS economies and the inclusion of new members will yield various effects on both the BRICS economies and the global economy. Each newly admitted BRICS nation brings forth a host of strategic advantages for the organization. Nations such as Argentina, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates possess abundant natural resources, including freshwater, rare earths, oil, gas, arable land, and fisheries. Additionally, these new members are affiliated with prominent political and economic organizations such as OPEC, the Arab Trade Zone, MERCOSUR, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the African Continental Free Trade Area, and ASEAN. Through these affiliations, existing BRICS countries stand to enhance their global influence and bolster their economic presence in various new markets.

The current momentum in science cooperation is evident, and this special journal issue serves as a prominent illustration of this trend.

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**Conflict of interests:**

The authors declare the absence of conflict of interests.

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## Вступительная статья: Роль БРИКС в меняющемся мировом порядке

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Во вступительной статье даётся обзор исследований об эволюции сотрудничества в рамках БРИКС, включённых в данный тематический номер. Авторы подчеркивают многоаспектный характер взаимодействия стран – членов объединения, рассматривая роль стран БРИКС в реформировании глобального управления, содействии развитию, международном сотрудничестве по борьбе с изменением климата, а также в становлении Нового банка развития.

**Ключевые слов:** БРИКС, расширение БРИКС, стратегическое сотрудничество, многостороннее взаимодействие, двустороннее партнёрство

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