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ON THE BRICS MECHANISM

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**Connecting People,
Understanding the World**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 01 06

THE BRICS 20 YEARS IN REVIEW:
HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF BRICS

Chapter 02 16

KEY COOPERATION ACHIEVEMENTS OF BRICS COUNTRIES

Sub-Topic 01: Traditional Security Cooperation

Sub-Topic 02: Non Traditional Security Cooperation

Sub-Topic 03: Trade and Economic Cooperation

Sub-Topic 04: People-to-People Exchanges and Cultural Cooperation

Sub-Topic 05: Energy Cooperation

Chapter 03 33

CHINA AND THE BRICS

Chapter 04 42

THE PROSPECT OF THE BRICS

Challenges

Opportunities

References 54

Previous BRICS Summits

JUNE 2009

Yekaterinburg, Russia

The Inaugural BRIC Summit!

Theme: The agenda items covered issues like the global financial crisis, global development, food security, energy security, climate change, and development aid.

Outcomes: The Joint Statement of the BRIC leaders was adopted after the Summit. The BRIC leaders call for increased economic reform, demanding a "greater voice and representation in international financial institutions, and their heads and senior leadership should be appointed through an open, transparent and merit-based selection process."

APRIL 2011

Sanya, China

Theme: "Broad Vision, Shared Prosperity"
The agenda items covered the international situation, international economy and finance, development issues and BRICS cooperation

Outcomes: The *Sanya Declaration* and its action plan were adopted after the summit. During the summit, South Africa made its debut as a new member. Supporting events such as the BRICS think-tank conference, the BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism Annual Meeting and finance forum, the BRICS Business Forum and the BRICS Economy and Trade Ministers' conference were also held.

MARCH 2013

Durban, South Africa

Theme: "BRICS & Africa: Partnership for Dev't, Integration & Industrialization"
Focus on world economic situation, global economic governance, BRICS countries, and strengthening cooperation with African nations

Outcomes: The final communique of the first BRICS Leaders' Meeting announced the establishment of the New Development Bank of BRICS, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, and the BRICS Business Council and Think Tank Council. The meeting also passed the *Durban Declaration* and its action plan, and signed multiple cooperation agreements.

JULY 2015

Ufa, Russia

Theme: Under the theme of "BRICS Partnership - A Powerful Factor of Global Development", with agenda items including international political and economic issues and BRICS cooperation

Outcomes: The 2015 *Ufa Declaration* and its action plan were adopted. BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy was proposed.

APRIL 2010

Brasilia, Brazil

Theme: The agenda items covered the international situation, international and regional hotspot issues, the international financial crisis, BRIC cooperation, G20 affairs, climate change and UN reform

Outcomes: A joint statement was adopted after the meeting, agreeing on specific measures to promote BRIC cooperation and coordination, marking the initial establishment of the BRICS cooperation mechanism. During the summit, supporting events such as the BRIC entrepreneur forum, the BRIC inter-bank cooperation mechanism, the BRIC cooperative forum and think-tank conference were also held.

MARCH 2012

New Delhi, India

Theme: Under the theme of "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity", with agenda items including global governance and sustainable development

Outcomes: Released the *Dehli Declaration* and its action plan, discussed the possibility of founding a development bank under the BRICS framework, signed *The BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement*, and *The Multilateral Letter of Credit Confirmation Facility Agreement*.

JULY 2014

Fortaleza, Brazil

Theme: Under the theme of "Inclusive Growth: Sustainable Solutions", with agenda items covering political coordination, sustainable development and inclusive growth

Outcomes: Issued the *Fortaleza Declaration* and its action plan, with the five leaders witnessing the signing of agreements to establish the BRICS New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

OCTOBER 2016

Goa, India

Theme: "Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions"

Outcomes: The *Goa Declaration* and Plan of Action were adopted after the summit and multiple cooperation agreements were signed, pledging to jointly combat international terrorism and economic crimes such as tax evasion and money laundering.

AUGUST 2023

Johannesburg, South Africa

Theme: "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism"

Outcomes: The *Johannesburg II Declaration* was issued. The announcement was made to invite Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Iran and Ethiopia to join the BRICS mechanism as official members. (Full membership was scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2024).

SEPTEMBER 2021

Digital Format

Theme: "BRICS@15: Intra BRICS cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus"

Outcomes: The *New Delhi Declaration* was issued, summarizing the achievements of BRICS cooperation in various fields, and expressing the common aspiration of BRICS countries to strengthen cooperation in public health, accelerate the process of the global economic recovery, implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and safeguarding world equity and justice.

NOVEMBER 2019

Brasilia, Brazil

Theme: "BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future"

Outcomes: The *Brasilia Declaration* was adopted after the summit. BRICS leaders acknowledged the progress made by the BRICS New Development Bank towards expanding its membership. Significant progress was made in "BRICS Plus" cooperation, covering issues of different key areas.

SEPTEMBER 2017

Xiamen, China

Theme: "BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future"

Outcomes: The *Xiamen Declaration* was issued and multiple cooperation agreements in the fields of economy, trade, finance, and innovation were signed. China pioneered the "BRICS Plus" model, which invited representatives from Mexico, Egypt, Guinea, and other countries to participate in the dialogue, providing an effective pathway for other emerging countries to strengthen cooperation with BRICS countries.

JUNE 2022

Digital Format

Theme: "Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development"

Outcomes: The *Beijing Declaration* was issued. The agenda items covered the digital economy, green sustainable dev't, supply chain cooperation, and the WTO reform. A major dev't on the summit was creation of a new basket type reserve currency.

NOVEMBER 2020

Digital Format

Theme: "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security, and Innovative Growth"

Outcomes: The *Moscow Declaration* was adopted after the summit. The Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership through to 2025 and other essential cooperation documents were signed, identifying key areas of cooperation including trade and investment, digital economy, and sustainable development.

JULY 2018

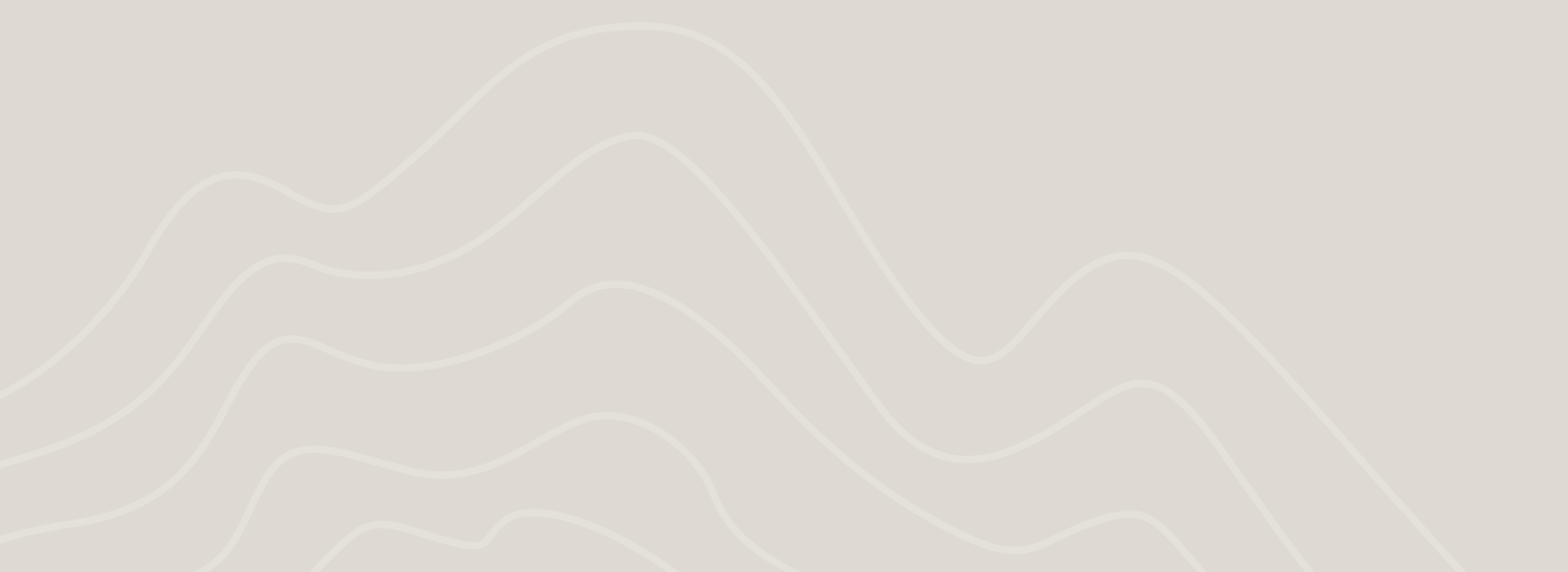
Johannesburg, South Africa

Theme: "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution"

Outcomes: The *Johannesburg Declaration* was issued after the Summit. BRICS countries sent a clear signal of BRICS members' continuing commitment to uphold multilateralism and reject protectionism. The BRICS countries decided to initiate the PartNIR and deepen cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, finance, political security and people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

CHAPTER
01

The BRICS 20 Years in Review: History and Evolution of BRICS



BRICS COOPERATION: OBJECTIVES, SPIRIT, AND MECHANISM BUILDING

金砖国家合作的宗旨、精神和机制建设



Author: YANG Jiemian (Dr.)

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- iGCU Academic Committee Member

Abstract

"In the article, the author summarizes the characteristics and objectives of BRICS cooperation as well as the development of the BRICS mechanism in general. Proposals for the future development of BRICS cooperation in the short- and long-run have been put forward. The author believes that the formation and development process of BRICS solely have presented the change in global power dynamics in the contemporary era. He regards BRICS as an important mechanism for South-South cooperation and North-South dialogue, stressing that the significance of strategic and pragmatic cooperation has continuously been emphasized, especially for long-term cooperation. Nonetheless, the author also points out that the BRICS countries adopt a 'soft' mechanism, i.e., the nature of BRICS is more or less a 'loose' forum, with no consistent guiding norms yet in place and its internal stability yet to be strengthened. The relationships between BRICS and other regional organizations or mechanisms have also been complex. Thus, the author suggests that in the short-run, BRICS' mechanism building should focus on practical cooperation, aim to reach a political consensus between member states, and construct a basic institutional framework. In the long-run, it is vital for BRICS to first work on internal integration and then sort through its intricate relationships with external organizations and other mechanisms. In the foreseeable future, BRICS is expected to undergo a strategic leap, transcending material considerations to the conceptual and its influence from a regional to a broader systemic level."

Comments by iGCU

Since its establishment, the international community has held differing views and perceptions regarding the BRICS. In the article, the author envisions three probable development scenarios of BRICS (optimistic, neutral, and pessimistic), reflecting his different views on the future of BRICS. The author reckons that forecasting and evaluating the outlook for BRICS requires reviewing its internal structure and reassessing the consistency of each member state in planning the development of the BRICS. He notes that, at present, the member states struggle to reach a consensus on the nature of BRICS. Specifically, Russia tends to approach BRICS cooperation from a geopolitical angle, whereas other members prioritize the development aspects of BRICS. The author believes that this divergence would inevitably affect the future development of the BRICS mechanism. Nevertheless, the author also indicates that a broad consensus exists among the members to raise BRICS influence in the international arena, especially in areas such as international politics and security. Therefore, the author opines that it is crucial to maintain the consensus and boost the centripetal force of BRICS nations.

Reference

Yang, Jiemian [杨洁勉]. 2011. BRICS Cooperation: Objectives, Spirit, and Mechanism Building(金砖国家合作的宗旨、精神和机制建设). Contemporary World (当代世界). 05:22-23.

[Published in May 2011]

THE EVOLUTION OF BRICS COOPERATION AND ITS PROSPECTS

金砖国家合作发展历程与展望



Author: HAN Yiyuan

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Abstract

"The 'BRIC' was originally seen as more of a marketing hype of investment banks and global financial markets. However, with closer trade and economic ties among the BRIC countries being forged and a common identity being constructed, member states became involved in non-institutional forms of political engagement. A multilateral platform for cooperation was officially established in 2009, and a regular meeting mechanism was set up. In 2010, the BRIC member states unanimously agreed to admit South Africa into the group, and the 'BRIC' was officially renamed 'BRICS'. Over the past decade, the cooperation among members and the institutional building of the BRICS mechanism has deepened. The establishment of the New Development Bank (formerly called the BRICS Development Bank) and the Contingency Reserve Arrangement (in 2014) have facilitated the reform of international financial institutions and further deepened economic and financial cooperation among BRICS countries. New areas of cooperation have continually been added, and member states have adopted an open and active attitude in promoting the democratization of international relations. The influence of BRICS in the international arena is growing consistently. However, as the member states grapple with significant domestic and global challenges, insufficient political and strategic mutual trust is growing among them. Hence, the existing cooperation framework is loose and faces obstacles vis-à-vis deepening and expanding BRICS cooperation. Nonetheless, the potential and advantages of the BRICS countries in areas like resources, markets, and labor forces remain unchanged. The prospect for the long-term development of BRICS is still bright."

Comments by iGCU

In the article, the author reviewed the evolution and achievements of the BRICS mechanism in its first "Golden Decade", and succinctly predicted its future developments. In the past five years, the development of the BRICS seems to have matched what the author had once forecasted in 2016 when writing this article. Indeed, the existing cooperation among BRICS countries has been deepened, and new areas of cooperation have been expanded over the past few years. In 2017, China hosted the ninth BRICS Summit in Xiamen, Fujian Province, serving as the rotating BRICS presidency. The BRICS Plus (BRICS+) cooperation model was first proposed by China, facilitating the creation of the annual dialogue of emerging economies and developing countries. Since proposing the BRICS+ cooperation, the scope and areas of cooperation have continuously expanded, and a growing number of countries from across the globe have expressed their willingness to participate in the BRICS cooperation. As the BRICS mechanism enters its second decade, it becomes increasingly significant to further explore avenues for BRICS+ to reach its full potential. This includes expediting the construction of the BRICS Innovation Base and facilitating the integration of the Belt and Road Initiative and the BRICS mechanism.

Reference

Han, Yiyuan [韩一元]. 2016. The Evolution of BRICS Cooperation and Its Prospects (金砖国家合作发展历程与展望). International Data Information (国际研究参考). 11:1-6.

[Published in Nov. 2016]

THE ORIGIN OF BRICS COOPERATION MECHANISM

金砖国家合作机制源起



Author: CHENG Zhijie (Dr.)

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Abstract

"The article primarily investigates the origin and historical development of the BRICS cooperation mechanism, elucidating the factors that drove its establishment and growth. In the 1990s, with the Cold War's demise, a global economic boom and the deepening of economic globalization, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa successively embarked on the path of economic marketization and industrialization reforms, which have effectively propelled their domestic economic development. Consequently, a common identity of 'emerging economies' has emerged, and the economic growth rates of the five countries have generally been maintained at a relatively high level. The close relationships among the five countries, vis-à-vis the strategic partnerships and early-stage multilateral cooperation mechanisms, have played pivotal roles in creating the conditions for the inception of the BRICS mechanism. These multilateral cooperation mechanisms that have helped lay the foundation for the BRICS mechanism include the China-Russia-India cooperation mechanism, the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, and the initial 'BRIC' (without South Africa) cooperation mechanism. Some important external and internal factors have contributed to successfully establishing the BRICS cooperation mechanism. External factors like the interests and attention that the international community, especially the Goldman Sachs Group, have paid to the concept of 'BRIC' and the efforts they have put into publicizing the concept; and internal factors like the active facilitation of Russia and Brazil, have all contributed to the further refinement and development of the BRICS mechanism."

Comments by iGCU

In the article, the author notes that the Goldman Sachs Group was a significant external driving force facilitating the establishment of the BRIC(S) mechanism. In 2001, Mr. Jim O'Neill, the then Chief Economist at Goldman Sachs, first coined the concept of the 'BRIC' and fully recognized the 'BRIC' countries' growth prospects and their investment potential. In the first place, many doubted that the 'BRIC' was just Goldman Sachs' marketing strategy to encourage investors. Still, it is also a matter of fact that the 'BRIC' has attracted global attention and led to a changing direction of global investment (toward emerging markets). In 2015, Goldman closed its BRIC Fund and was seen by the international community as the end of the BRIC's investment era. However, the author suggests that Goldman's assessment of the BRICs mechanism's prospects was solely based on the economic growth rates of the four individual countries, neglecting the fundamental driving force behind the formation of the BRICs, which is the members' coinciding interests. BRICS countries' needs for maintaining stable internal development, expanding international cooperation, and strengthening strategic and policy coordination would continue to offer extensive cooperation potential for the BRICS mechanism. Furthermore, the author reckons that the existence of the BRICS mechanism holds great significance for emerging markets and developing countries. The author further points out that the 'BRICS+' cooperation is conducive to uniting more developing countries and advancing South-South cooperation into a new phase.

Reference

Cheng, Zhijie [成志杰]. 2017. The Origin of the BRICS Cooperation Mechanism (金砖国家合作机制源起). International Data Information (国际研究参考). 06:1-9.

[Published in Jun. 2017]

A DECADE OF BRICS: THE ROAD TO COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

金砖十年：合作发展之路



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Abstract

"Since the first meeting of the Chinese, Russian, Indian, and Brazilian foreign ministers during the UN General Assembly in September 2006, BRICS cooperation has undergone three phases: the preparatory phase (2006-2008), the preliminary stage (2009-2012), and the deepening institutional construction phase (2013 to present). This progress has led to the development of a comprehensive, multi-level cooperation model driven by both political and economic forces, embodying dialogue platforms and cooperative entities. However, BRICS cooperation has faced intense scrutiny due to a slowdown in economic growth and significant differences among member countries vis-à-vis political systems, economic policies, cultural backgrounds, and value systems. Nevertheless, these factors do not constitute a basis for diminishing the value of BRICS cooperation. On the contrary, the economic size of member countries, potential for cooperation, and shared desire to promote reform in the international order will continue driving BRICS cooperation forward. Only by deepening coordination and collaboration in areas such as economy, trade, and finance under the BRICS framework and harnessing their immense economic size and potential can the BRICS nations generate sufficient influence in the global economy and secure their position in the competition of international rules."

Comments by iGCU

This paper examines the developmental trajectory of BRICS, addressing the following questions: How has BRICS evolved from a financial investment concept to a tangible and increasingly cohesive cooperative entity in the international political and economic arena? Given today's complex international landscape and sluggish global economy, what direction will BRICS take? After years of development, the BRICS mechanism has established a comprehensive, wide-ranging, and multi-level cooperation model driven by political and economic forces, combining dialogue platforms with cooperative entities and deepening its collaborative depth. Despite being a nascent phenomenon on the international stage, the BRICS cooperative mechanism is maturing, albeit facing scrutiny from various quarters. Critiques primarily target two fronts: the perceived 'fading' relevance of BRICS based on its members' decelerated economic growth rates, and the notable differences among member countries. Nevertheless, this paper maintains that the economic size, cooperative potential, and shared aspiration to reform the international order among the BRICS nations will continue to propel the BRICS cooperation mechanism forward, seeking more equitable and representative institutional arrangements that better serve the interests of emerging economies and developing countries.

Reference

Ning, Shengnan [宁胜男]. 2017. A Decade of BRICS: The Road to Cooperation and Development (金砖十年：合作发展之路). China Investment (中国投资). 15: 40-42.

[Published in Aug. 2017]

A DECADE OF BRICS: LEARNING FROM THE PAST, SEIZING THE PRESENT AND WINNING THE FUTURE

金砖十年：总结过往、把握当下、赢得未来



Author: HAN Yonghui (Prof.)

Professor and Research Fellow at the Guangdong Institute for International Strategies, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Abstract

"The BRICS countries have established cooperation mechanisms in economy, science and education, culture and people-to-people exchanges since its formation, effectively promoting solutions to issues highlighted in the BRICS summits. However, several factors at institutional, economic, political, and mechanism levels hinder further deepening cooperation among BRICS countries. Thus, developing a clear grasp of the BRICS countries' future development trends is pertinent. It is also essential for the member nations to collaborate to promote the 'Belt and Road Initiative', seize new momentum and explore new forms of digital economic cooperation, and actively lead global governance. In the coming 'Golden Decade', the BRICS countries need to remain open and strengthen their efforts to foster win-win cooperation and enhance innovative development mechanisms. Moreover, the bloc should strive to establish a security cooperation pattern based on mutual trust and assistance, joint contribution, and shared benefits. It is also important for the BRICS countries to form a closer partnership that embraces equality and mutual understanding and advances open and inclusive cultural exchanges. These efforts are crucial in laying a solid foundation for building a large market that facilitates the BRICS integration."

Comments by iGCU

By reviewing the history, evolution, and current condition of the BRICS cooperation mechanism, the author provides a comprehensive analysis of the bloc's achievements and problems, proposing feasible measures to further enhance the organization. The author acknowledges that although the BRICS mechanism has enabled cooperation in economy, science and education, culture, and people-to-people exchanges, it still faces grave problems on multiple levels that need addressing. At the institutional level, the impasse in the multilateral system and the rivalry over discourse power regarding trade system reform have affected the BRICS's development trajectory. Economically, China and India share excessively similar industrial structures, which have resulted in intense competition in the international market. Likewise, as the BRICS countries are at different stages of industrial development, their economic interests or demands differ significantly. Politically, geopolitical conflicts and competitions for discourse have negatively impacted member states' cooperation. Moreover, the author further suggests that the imperfections of the BRICS cooperation mechanism have posed difficulties in addressing key issues. In the face of the deteriorating global development environment, the author indicates that the BRICS countries need to collaborate and establish a long-term mechanism for cooperation. This would involve strengthening people-to-people exchanges, promoting the construction of an integrated market, and revising the existing security cooperation mechanism to achieve collective growth and common prosperity.

Reference

Han, Yonghui [韩永辉]. 2019. A Decade of BRICS: Learning from the Past, Seizing the Present and Winning the Future (金砖十年：总结过往、把握当下、赢得未来). https://theory.gmw.cn/2019-11/11/content_33311026.htm. [online]. Accessed August 5, 2023.

[Published in Nov. 2019]

THE BRICS MECHANISM: 16 YEARS OF DEVELOPMENTAL LEAPS & BOUNDS, AND TRANSCENDENT PROSPECTS

金砖 16 年：“跨越式”发展、“超越性”前景



Author: WU Hongying (Dr.)

Director of Center for BRICS & G20 Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations

Abstract

"Since its establishment in 2006, the BRICS mechanism has experienced a successful development process, achieving significant leaps. Over the past sixteen years, the BRICS mechanism has evolved from nonexistence to existence, witnessing a proliferation of cooperation projects across several areas. Member states collaboratively worked to deepen BRICS cooperation, resulting in the bloc's increased discourse power in the international arena. Overall, the global influence of the BRICS has been ascending, reaching a critical juncture. The challenging international situation has provided ample time and opportunities for the BRICS countries to accomplish their vision. The solid foundation of the existing BRICS cooperation framework provides vital support to member states, facilitating the further advancement of BRICS cooperation. Natural complementarity among BRICS countries generates robust intrinsic momentum for each member to further advance its domestic development. A consensus exists between the BRICS countries on the necessity and significance of enhancing cooperation. Thus, if member states can seize the opportunities to promote innovative development, the BRICS is poised to stabilize the world economy, promote unity, development, and cooperation among developing countries worldwide, facilitate changes in the international order, and enhance global governance. Optimism exists for the transformative development of the BRICS in the foreseeable future."

Comments by iGCU

The author begins by reviewing the achievements of the BRICS mechanism over the past 16 years. Subsequently, they discuss the opportunities and development prospects facing the BRICS mechanism, extensively evaluating China's role in its construction. The author argues that China is not only a major founder and key participant of the BRICS but also a leader in shaping the cooperation framework's concept, an innovator, and a supporter of the BRICS mechanism. Nevertheless, the author also points out that, despite China and Russia's relatively greater international influence as permanent members of the UN Security Council, all BRICS nations highly value the principle of sovereign equality. The piece also warns that the bloc's dominance by one or two countries could increase internal divisions and directly impact the image and reputation of the BRICS mechanism among other developing countries. Therefore, China's reluctance to seek a leadership position within the BRICS has, to a large extent, eased tensions in the China-Russia and China-India relations within the BRICS framework. The author believes the absence of a dominant leader in the mechanism's construction is conducive to equal governance within the group, aligning with the BRICS countries' advocacy for democratization in international relations.

Reference

Wu, Hongying [吴洪英]. 2022. The BRICS Mechanism: Sixteen Years of Developmental Leaps and Bounds and Transcendent Prospects (“金砖” 16 年：“跨越式”发展、“超越性”前景). <https://www.icc.org.cn/trends/mediareports/181.html>. Accessed August 5, 2023.

[Published in Jun. 2022]

BRICS COOPERATION MECHANISM INJECT STABILITY INTO TURBULENT WORLD

金砖合作是动荡世界的稳定器



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iGCU Academic Committee Member

Abstract

"The BRICS cooperation mechanism has evolved since its establishment. It is no longer solely aimed at enhancing economic cooperation but also fosters all-round and multi-level participation in global governance, forming a 'three-pillar' cooperation framework that includes economy, politics, and people-to-people and cultural engagement. Currently, the global economic landscape is undergoing profound readjustments, and the international situation is increasingly uncertain owing to the intertwined effects of the 'once-in-a-century transformation' and 'once-in-a-century pandemic'. It is now essential for the BRICS countries to take the lead in promoting multilateralism and economic globalization under the framework of the BRICS cooperation mechanism, actively countering hegemonism and collaborating to forge ahead and tackle the challenges head-on. Looking ahead, the BRICS countries should prioritize the 'Global Development Initiative' and 'Global Security Initiative', actively contributing to global development and safeguarding world peace. In the post-pandemic era, the BRICS countries should continue to pursue high-quality development, strive to achieve sustainable development goals, and expand BRICS' influence in global governance through deepening the existing BRICS plus cooperation."

Comments by iGCU

The author suggests that the intertwined effects of the 'once-in-a-century transformation and pandemic' had caused the international landscape to enter a new cycle of turbulence and adjustment, resulting in the existing framework of global governance experiencing further systematic changes. In this context, the author reckons evaluating the potential impact of the BRICS mechanism requires examining the differences and similarities between the BRICS countries vis-à-vis their values in global governance. The author points out that although the BRICS countries share similar views and propositions on global governance subjects, targets, and approaches, they also hold divergent opinions on non-traditional security issues, including reforming the UN Security Council and WTO, counter-terrorism, and cyber security. Therefore, the potential influence of the BRICS mechanism will be significantly impacted by how the BRICS countries strengthen cooperation and seek common ground while evading differences, enhancing their voice in global security and development governance, and injecting new vitality into the current global governance system.

Reference

Wan, Zhe [万喆]. 2022. BRICS Cooperation Mechanism Inject Stability into Turbulent World (金砖合作是动荡世界的稳定器). <https://m.gmw.cn/baijia/2022-06/23/35830518.html>. Accessed August 5, 2023.

[Published in Jun. 2022]

THE EVOLUTION, CHARACTERISTICS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRICS COOPERATION MECHANISM

金砖国家合作机制的演进、特点及意义

Author: LU Jing (Prof.)

Professor and Director of the Institute of International Relations, China Foreign Affairs University



Abstract

"Since the formal initiation of cooperation among the BRICS nations in 2006, the BRICS cooperation mechanism has undergone continuous evolution and improvement. It has developed into an integrated system centered around the formal summit, where leaders of the BRICS countries provide leadership. This comprehensive system incorporates ministerial-level conferences across various fields, including diplomacy, trade and economics, finance, agriculture, environment, culture and education, health, and other specific working group conferences. Additionally, several forums exist that engage participants from various sectors of society, including business and think tank forums. Moreover, apart from the mechanisms established among member countries, there are cooperative mechanisms between BRICS nations and other countries and international organizations. The BRICS cooperation mechanism exhibits four significant characteristics: systematization, substantiality, openness and inclusiveness, and action-oriented focus. These features enhance the resilience of cooperation and sustain the momentum of collaboration. The mechanism establishes an exemplary model for cooperation among emerging powers in the new era, elevating BRICS nations' capacity to actively participate in global governance and holding positive significance for reforming the global governance system. China has been pivotal in the BRICS mechanism construction process, participating in the creation and improvement of almost all BRICS cooperation mechanisms. China has introduced new initiatives and solutions and taken concrete actions to promote practical cooperation among BRICS countries."

Comments by iGCU

The article reviews the evolutionary process of the BRICS cooperation mechanism, summarizing its main characteristics and significance. It also reflects on China's role in developing the BRICS cooperation mechanism. The author suggests that with more than a decade of development, the BRICS cooperation mechanism has been evolving and improving, establishing an integrated system involving various forces such as government, business, and society. This mechanism operates across multiple fields, levels, and channels. The BRICS cooperation transcends mere rhetoric and is implemented through concrete actions. However, the author acknowledges that despite the significant achievements of the BRICS cooperation mechanism, it still faces challenges in enhancing internal cohesion, strengthening execution capabilities, and increasing institutional resilience. Amid intensifying global changes, BRICS nations must prioritize the reinforcement of BRICS mechanism construction and continue collaborating to build high-quality partnerships, thereby contributing to the world economy's recovery and development and global security and stability.

Reference

Lu, Jing [卢静]. 2022. The Evolution, Characteristics and Significance of the BRICS Cooperation Mechanism (金砖国家合作机制的演进、特点及意义). Office Administration (秘书工作). 08: 70-73.

[Published in Aug. 2022]

CHAPTER
02

Key Cooperation Achievements of BRICS Countries

Sub-Topic 01: Traditional Security Cooperation

Sub-Topic 02: Non-Traditional Security Cooperation

Sub-Topic 03: Trade and Economic Cooperation

Sub-Topic 04: People-to-People Exchanges and Cultural Cooperation

Sub-Topic 05: Energy Cooperation

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION AMONG BRICS STATES UNDER THE NEW TRENDS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

全球治理新常态下的金砖国家政治安全合作

Author: WANG Youming (Dr.)

Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Department for Developing Countries Studies, China Institute of International Studies



Abstract

"In recent years, globalization and global governance patterns have undergone significant systematic change, influenced by the overlap between expanding traditional and non-traditional security issues and other long-standing challenges. In this context, BRICS countries need to strengthen political, security, and economic cooperation. Enhancing political, security, and economic cooperation among BRICS countries would contribute to constructing the BRICS mechanism and hold practical significance for member states in advocating a new international security concept. Additionally, it could help restructure the existing international order towards a more rational and just framework, and safeguard the global security order. The chaos and imbalance resulting from the deconstruction and construction of the global governance system pose unprecedented challenges for BRICS political and security cooperation. To effectively address the internal and external challenges, BRICS countries need to prioritize handling conflicts of interest within the bloc. For the BRICS mechanism to further develop steadily, member states need to exhibit creativity and proactiveness in providing new platforms and creating new opportunities for cooperation."

Comments by iGCU

The author suggests that the rise of emerging economies has been facilitated by their openness strategies and the less restrictive global multilateral trade environment. To enhance the sustainability of their national development, the author stressed the imperative for each BRICS country to strengthen political and security cooperation within the bloc. This involves actively participating in global cooperation on traditional and non-traditional issues and collaborating to create a favourable external environment for their respective national development. Acknowledging the limitations imposed by the current international situation, the author reckons a restricted space for cooperation among BRICS countries in political and security fields. Specifically, India and Brazil are cited as having reservations about advancing relevant BRICS cooperation under the influence of the U.S. The political mutual trust among the member states still awaits to be strengthened. Meanwhile, the author underscores the significance of managing contradictions between member states' national interests and the interests of BRICS as a multilateral actor to effectively contribute to world peace and global security.

Reference

Wang, Youming [王友明]. 2019. Political and Security Cooperation among BRICS States under the New Trends of Global Governance (全球治理新常态下的金砖国家政治安全合作). *Contemporary World (当代世界)*. 12: 6-11.

[Published in Dec. 2019]

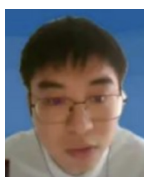
BRICS POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION: CONNOTATIONS AND CHALLENGES

金砖国家政治安全合作的内涵与挑战



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Author 02: XIE Letian

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Abstract

"The political and security cooperation among BRICS nations aims to address peace and security issues at various levels and domains within the multilateral framework centered around the United Nations. Specifically, BRICS countries advocate for upholding the 'collective' and 'peaceful' methods stipulated in the UN Charter vis-à-vis ideology. Institutionally, they push for comprehensive reform of the UN, particularly the adjustment of the UN Security Council power structure. In terms of action, BRICS nations support international practices authorized, participated in, or recognized by the UN, thereby ensuring adherence to the values of 'legitimacy,' 'rationality,' and 'compliance' in BRICS political and security cooperation. Hence, BRICS countries need to carefully handle competitive and cooperative relationships with developed country groups, coordinate diverging interests among members, and properly manage conflicts involving their core interests. Moreover, BRICS nations need to collaborate to explore innovative paths for future cooperation, enhancing both intra- and inter-group collaboration, as well as bilateral and multilateral interactions. Despite the challenges to fast-track political and security cooperation, including those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and dynamic global landscape, these circumstances offer opportunities for BRICS countries to strengthen cooperation and contribute to maintaining international peace and security."

Comments by iGCU

The authors point out that strengthening political and security cooperation among BRICS countries serves to amplify developing countries' voices on global issues and propel the global order toward greater equity. In light of an increasingly complex international environment, they suggest that BRICS nations, as representatives of developing countries, should engage in more effective dialogues and constructive discussions with developed countries, especially on contentious global issues, to promote global peace and security. The authors also note the need for BRICS political and security cooperation to broaden its horizon and innovate its approach to construct a security system distinct from Western alliances. Under the unified guidance of the 'BRICS spirit,' members should establish a new collective concept of security, set up new platforms for political and security cooperation, and push for the practical enhancement of the BRICS mechanism. This approach would require departing from traditional security frameworks and encouraging collaboration on various fronts, including economic, environmental, and cyber-security issues, thus contributing to a more holistic and inclusive global security paradigm.

Reference

Zhu, Tianxiang [朱天祥], Letian Xie [谢乐天]. 2021. BRICS Political and Security Cooperation: Connotations and Challenges (金砖国家政治安全合作的内涵与挑战). *Journal of Latin American Studies* (拉丁美洲研究). 06: 32-47+155.

[Published in Jan. 2021]

AN ANALYSIS ON THE MOTIVATION AND COOPERATION MECHANISM OF BRICS COUNTRIES' PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

金砖国家参与全球气候治理的动因及合作机制分析



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Author 02: JIANG Ping (Prof.)

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Abstract

"As latecomers to the global industrialization process, it is believed that the BRICS countries would hold partial responsibility for the rise of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the foreseeable future. However, the member states have diverging interests and demands concerning the considerable differences between the BRICS countries, particularly their differing domestic economic situations and national circumstances. Yet, their attitudes towards participating in climate cooperation have generally aligned. Moreover, other factors still challenge the BRICS cooperation, including member states' political and cultural differences and complex geopolitical relations. Nevertheless, in recent years, with greater consensus among member states being built and the rising willingness to cooperate, a mechanism for climate cooperation has gradually taken shape, with green finance as its backbone, structural energy transformation as its guide, and clean energy and environmental cooperation as its developmental direction. Climate change is not merely an 'environmental issue' but an issue that concerns the relationship between development and environmental management. For the BRICS countries, participating in global climate governance means that they could play an active role in constructing the future global climate order to safeguard their rights to develop. Meanwhile, it also means they could facilitate the transformation of the other member states' development patterns to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals and strengthen discourse power over climate issues."

Comments by iGCU

The authors analyze the motives of the BRICS countries for participating in global climate governance, examining the specific policies of each member state and the construction and influence of the BRICS climate cooperation mechanism. The authors believe that the issue of climate change is fundamentally about the rivalry between developed and developing countries for the right to set rules for global climate governance since the rules regulate every country's future GHG emissions, and the GHG emissions and (economic) development are strongly correlated. The authors reckon that since the BRICS countries are quite different from one another vis-à-vis their economic structure, political systems, and development stages, it would be difficult to elaborate the motives for the BRICS climate cooperation solely by examining the relationship between economic growth and the environment, and domestic political situation of each member state. Facing the complex global issue of climate change, the authors reckon that the BRICS climate cooperation would enable the construction of a comprehensive mechanism which could enhance cooperation in various fields, including energy, finance and environmental cooperation. Through strengthening cooperation on the climate issue, the BRICS countries could counter the rhetoric of a "fading" BRICS, promote mutual understanding and cooperation for sustainable development, and eventually gain greater "discourse power" in global climate governance.

Reference

Zuo, Pin [左晶], Ping Jiang [蒋平]. 2017. An Analysis on the Motivation and Cooperation Mechanism of BRICS Countries' Participation in Global Climate Governance (金砖国家参与全球气候治理的动因及合作机制分析). International Review (国际观察). 04: 57-71.

[Published in Jul. 2017]



INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING, PEKING UNIVERSITY

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION AMONG BRICS COUNTRIES

金砖国家非传统安全合作的理论与实践路径

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Abstract

"Concerning BRICS cooperation, many express pessimism, citing concepts like the 'fading theory' or 'BRICS differentiation'. They argue that cooperation is challenging among BRICS countries since they do not enjoy strong endowment complementarity. However, when viewed through the lens of cooperation theory and the governance practices of non-traditional security issues, BRICS cooperation appears feasible. Theoretically, cooperation takes exchange-based or collaborative forms. Exchange-based cooperation focuses on complementarity but overlooks other aspects of the current debate on BRICS cooperation in academia. Collaborative cooperation, on the other hand, aims at achieving common interests and building interdependent relationships without solely relying on endowment complementarity. The cooperation practices of BRICS countries outside security issues demonstrate that the transformation of security concepts and agenda as well as governance paths has generated more common interests between countries. In an era of globalization, the complexity of non-traditional security agendas transcends the capacity of any single country to manage alone. Regarding governance practices, BRICS cooperation involves creating an 'action focus' to expand mutual benefits, fostering trust and forging partnerships. In addition, cooperation among the BRICS countries shall attach great importance to inclusive norms, an open posture, and closer ties with other platforms and countries around the world."

Comments by iGCU

In recent years, there has been a growing pessimistic outlook on BRICS cooperation. These perspectives argue that the BRICS countries lack complementary endowments, resulting in mediocre cooperative outcomes, limited growth potential, and possibly leading to the decline or even dissolution of the group. This article aims to counter the "BRICS fading theory" from both theoretical and practical dimensions. By integrating cooperative theory and the broader governance demands of non-traditional security, it asserts the existence of a driving force behind BRICS nation cooperation and explores theoretical and practical pathways for this collaboration. Cooperation may stem from complementary endowments, but the absence of conditions for exchange-based cooperation does not preclude the possibility of collaboration. Whether willingly or not, the complex security agenda of the globalization era cannot be addressed by any single nation alone, thus creating many potential drivers for cooperation in the expansive field of security. In essence, cooperation encompasses collaborative efforts, echoing the adage, "If there are no conditions, create them." The feasible paths to avoid the 'BRICS fading' include expanding the cooperative domain to enlarge the "policy basket" of dialogue, fostering concessions and collaboration among member countries; as well as maintaining a group identity, shaping BRICS partnerships, cultivating trust, and enhancing the sustainability and stability of cooperation.

Reference

Ren, Lin [任琳]. 2017. Theoretical and Practical Paths of Non-Traditional Security Cooperation in BRICS Countries (金砖国家非传统安全合作的理论与实践路径). *Journal of International Security Studies* (国际安全研究). 04: 103-124+157-158

[Published in Jul. 2017]

THE ARCTIC: A NEW FRONTIER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR THE BRICS COUNTRIES

北极：金砖国家合作治理新疆域

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Abstract

"Against the backdrop of global warming, the ripple effects of Arctic warming have had and will continue to have extensive impacts on global economic and social development, the environment, geopolitics, etc. There is no gainsaying that Arctic governance has become an important part of global governance. Among the BRICS countries, Russia is (by virtue of its geography) the largest Arctic country, and both China and India received observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013. Certain member states already started an Arctic cooperation. For the BRICS countries, there is indeed a foundation for potential Arctic cooperation and governance, but challenges remain. Member states should fully utilize the existing BRICS cooperation mechanism and incorporate Arctic cooperation into the BRICS agenda. Through direct or indirect participation in Arctic cooperative governance, it is believed that the BRICS countries could eventually turn the Arctic into a new frontier for cooperation."

Comments by iGCU

This paper introduces the challenges and opportunities the Arctic region faces in the context of global warming, explaining the significance and necessity of BRICS countries' participation in Arctic cooperation. The authors first introduce the current situation of the BRICS countries' involvement in Arctic governance, particularly Russia-China-India cooperation in the Arctic, which focuses on the Arctic expedition and research, energy development, and the utilization of the Arctic Sea routes. The authors then analyze the challenges facing the BRICS countries regarding Arctic cooperation and governance, including rudimentary legal regulations, high environmental risks, and increased security threats. To conclude, the authors forecast the outlook for the BRICS cooperation in the Arctic, advocating the member states to further strengthen communication and coordination, deepen energy and environmental cooperation, and promote the construction of multilateral mechanisms. The authors suggest the BRICS countries play an active role in participating and leading the Arctic cooperative governance, making the Arctic region a new frontier for cooperation.

Reference

Kuang, Zengjun [匡增军], Kaifei Ou [欧开飞]. 2018. The Arctic: A New Frontier of Cooperative Governance for BRICS Countries (北极：金砖国家合作治理新疆域). Journal of Guangxi University (广西大学学报). 01: 80-86.

[Published in Jan. 2018]

BRICS CYBERSECURITY COOPERATION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEEPENING PATHS

金砖国家网络安全合作：进展与深化路径

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Abstract

"As a force representing emerging economies, the BRICS countries are gradually gaining international influence in non-traditional security areas like cybersecurity. BRICS member states have been actively working to promote the formulation of relevant international rules. The shared cybersecurity concerns among BRICS countries provide a strategic basis for cooperation in this area. Member states of BRICS have taken different measures to deepen cybersecurity cooperation and improve the existing coordination mechanism to solve cybersecurity challenges. Three main challenges impact BRICS cybersecurity cooperation: differing member states' vision about cyberspace governance, constraints hindering the advancement of BRICS cybersecurity cooperation, and the dividing policies adopted by the West. The BRICS countries should collaborate to improve their cooperation platform for addressing cybersecurity threats, facilitate intergovernmental cooperation through people-to-people exchanges, fully utilize the BRICS mechanism, lead IT cooperation among developing countries, and jointly promote the formulation of global cyberspace rules."

Comments by iGCU

The author points out that the BRICS is transforming into an all-around cooperation mechanism that transcends economic governance, emphasizing a political and economic governance focus that signals a more comprehensive and inclusive end. It is believed that BRICS cybersecurity cooperation would not only be conducive to realizing the economic interconnection of BRICS countries but would also help strengthen their mutual trust, safeguard their information security, and enable the formulation of global cyberspace rules. The authors also indicate that all BRICS member states have rather different visions concerning cyberspace governance. Thus, members need to effectively manage their differences and seek consensus to prevent the cooperation from the negative effects of internal differences or, at worst, potential external influence from the West. In summary, it is vital to establish a unified conception of cybersecurity for deepening the BRICS countries' cybersecurity cooperation. The author notes that concerning the emergence of all sorts of challenges facing cybersecurity all around the globe, BRICS countries should also strengthen cooperation in information security, enhance exchanges among member states, and advance in-depth interactions among countries in the governance of cybersecurity.

Reference

Gao, Wanglai [高望来]. 2018. BRICS Cybersecurity Cooperation: Achievements and Deepening Paths (金砖国家网络安全合作：进展与深化路径). *International Studies (国际问题研究)*. 05:63-74+130.

[Published in Feb. 2018]

EVALUATION & ANALYSIS OF BRICS FOOD COOPERATION

金砖国家粮食安全合作评析



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Abstract

"Food security is an issue associated with the broader considerations of human security, state security, and the stability of the international system. The potential threats arising from food security are transnational, degenerative, multi-faceted, and multi-dimensional. Thus, food security constitutes a non-traditional security issue. Addressing food security requires a departure from conventional state-centric security paradigms. A better approach is establishing a governance system for food security based on a new security concept – one that is universal, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable. Thus, it is paramount to construct a sizeable and multi-layered 'non-traditional security community'. BRICS cooperation on food security has shown to be beneficial for improving the food security of each member state. Through collective efforts, BRICS countries not only expedite progress towards sustainable development goals (as outlined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda) but also bolster their global food security governance capabilities. Eventually, collaborative efforts among BRICS nations could drive reforms in global food security governance, contributing to building a community of shared destiny among the BRICS nations.

Presently, the basic framework for BRICS cooperation on food security has been built, marked by the formation of a preliminary agricultural science and technology information platform for future cooperation. Moreover, BRICS nations' agricultural and agrarian development continues to improve, contributing to the rise of a 'non-traditional security community' among member states. Nevertheless, BRICS cooperation on food security still faces multiple challenges, including a declining motivation for cooperation, deficient cooperation mechanisms, and the need to further deepen cooperation in many areas. The key to overcoming these challenges lies in embracing and practicing the new security concept, where the needs of each member state are met. Increased motivation for cooperation will pave the way for enhanced collaboration in several areas, including climate, technological innovation, simplification of agricultural trade and investment process, and information exchanges can thus be strengthened. Additionally, refining the current three-in-one cooperation mechanism involving governments, research institutions, and enterprises can help drive the global food security governance system towards a direction that facilitates the development of developing countries."

Comments by iGCU

In 2009, the release of the BRIC's Joint Declaration on Global Food Security marked the commencement of BRIC(S) cooperation on food security, subsequently becoming a crucial component of the BRICS cooperation mechanism. This article broadly examines the connection between food security and the comprehensive security concept, summarizes the progress achieved in food security cooperation among BRICS nations, identifies member states' future challenges, and discusses potential strategies for further development. Over the years, BRICS nations have laid the foundation for food security cooperation, establishing an information exchange platform for agricultural science and technology, attaining continuous growth in agricultural trade, and engaging in limited global food security governance cooperation. However, the author notes persistent difficulties among BRICS countries in reaching a 'common understanding' and coordinated action on the issue. Specifically, a visible decline in cooperation motivation among the members is discernible, and existing cooperation mechanisms are far from perfect. The author reckons overcoming the challenges necessitates BRICS countries to embrace and practice a new security concept designed to meet each member's diverse needs, increase motivation for cooperation, and deepen collaboration in multiple areas (not limited to climate, technological innovation, agricultural trade, and investment). Additionally, refining existing cooperation mechanisms is essential to ultimately steer the global food security governance system toward a direction more favorable to the development of developing countries.

Reference

Zhang, Jiaolong [张蛟龙]. 2018. Evaluation and Analysis of BRICS Food Cooperation (金砖国家粮食安全合作评析). *Journal of International Security Studies (国际安全研究)*. 23(10):1-9.

[Published in Nov. 2018]

A STUDY ON ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, AND SECURITY COOPERATION OF BRICS COUNTRIES

金砖国家经贸安全合作：挑战与对策

Author: JIA Zhongzheng (Dr.)

Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences



Abstract

"The rise of emerging economies has brought significant changes to the global landscape. However, the global governance system appears to have not completely aligned with this dynamic change. The emerging transformative powers represented by the BRICS countries have begun to step onto the stage of global security governance. Nonetheless, BRICS member states still face many challenges, especially in advancing BRICS economic, trade, and security cooperation. For example, rising trade protectionism and deglobalization tides have weakened the growth momentum of intra-BRICS trade. Besides, the BRICS countries also face the challenges of declining foreign direct investment (FDI) net inflow caused by the U.S. Federal Reserve interest rate hike, interventionist policies on investment, and certain BRICS member states' unstable political environment and economic weakness. In addition, the sharp fluctuations in the prices of bulk commodities have created hurdles for BRICS cooperation in energy and security, which has resulted in the slow progress of BRICS financial and security cooperation. Consequently, BRICS countries need to deepen reforms in various fields and accelerate their economic structures adjustment process to lay a solid foundation for BRICS security cooperation. Doing so would facilitate the coordination of BRICS development strategies and enhance BRICS security cooperation. Strengthening communications and coordination and actively participating in global governance would enrich the connotation of BRICS partnerships."

Comments by iGCU

The article assesses the economic development situation in BRICS countries, the challenges facing their economic, trade, and security cooperation, and various factors influencing the cooperation. The author presents several proposals to improve the current BRICS cooperation mechanism, addressing how BRICS countries can achieve institutional and organizational development despite internal and external pressure. These pressures include internal factors like deepened transformation and structural readjustment, and external factors like reduced external demand and uncertainties from developed economies' changing policies. The author points out that the negative impacts of the 'deglobalization' trend on intra-BRICS trade cannot be neglected. He further indicates that since 2017, the tide of deglobalization has been gaining momentum. However, it is of utmost urgency to strengthen and advance global governance, especially given growing concerns from emerging issues such as terrorism, climate change, and cybersecurity governance. Hence, the author believes the evolving global landscape presents BRICS countries with opportunities and challenges. By strengthening cooperation with other member states under the existing BRICS cooperation mechanism, it is anticipated that the influence of BRICS countries in global governance will continue to expand. This, in turn, will spur the deepening of the BRICS partnerships and eventually help member states to shift from "participants" to "leaders" in global governance.

Reference

Jia, Zhongzheng [贾中正]. 2017. A Study on Economic, Financial, and Security Cooperation of BRICS Countries (金砖国家经贸安全合作：挑战与对策). *Journal of International Security Studies (国际安全研究)*. 04: 125-153+158.

[Published in Jul. 2017]

BRICS MARINE ECONOMIC COOPERATION: PRIORITIES, CHALLENGES, AND VIABLE STRATEGIES

金砖国家海洋经济合作：着力点、挑战与路径

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Abstract

"Facilitating BRICS marine economic cooperation can potentially inject a new impetus into the economic growth of its member countries and serve as a catalyst for jointly promoting global ocean governance system reforms. BRICS marine economic cooperation aligns with the interests and demands of all member states, and the existing BRICS cooperation mechanism provides guarantees and guidance for all members. Nevertheless, several challenges have to be addressed. BRICS nations have different strategic priorities, are at varying levels of marine economic development, and a specialized marine economic cooperation system is still non-existent. These factors pose hurdles to advancing multilateral marine economic cooperation among BRICS countries. Therefore, it is essential to leverage the achievements of the existing cooperation, properly manage differing member states' viewpoints, and establish a cooperation mechanism. By creating close ties between BRICS countries in marine economy and other relevant activities, and identifying priority areas of cooperation based on each member's interests and demands, the BRICS cooperation could advance to the next level."

Comments by iGCU

The author suggests that strengthening marine economic cooperation among BRICS countries would benefit not only the bloc but also the world. However, the author notes that the different perceptions of member states concerning marine economic cooperation and the lack of a unified cooperation system pose significant challenges to BRICS cooperation in the maritime economy. Hence, the author believes that seeking consensus and forming a cooperation mechanism to deepen collaboration among BRICS countries is vital. The author further indicates that as all five member states of the BRICS are all coastal countries, marine economic cooperation would be in all parties' interests. However, compared to BRICS economic cooperation in other areas, the author notes that maritime economic cooperation is still in the preliminary stages of development. Thus, the author underscores the importance of expediting the process of establishing relevant mechanisms and systems to facilitate practical maritime economic cooperation. Additionally, the author highlights that the marine economy is intricately linked with various issues in non-traditional security areas. Hence, it is necessary to consider issues like marine pollution governance and the protection of marine life when advancing BRICS maritime economic cooperation.

Reference

Xue, Zhihua [薛志华]. 2019. BRICS Marine Economic Cooperation: Priorities, Challenges, and Viable Strategies (金砖国家海洋经济合作：着力点、挑战与路径). *International Studies (国际问题研究)*. 03: 94-107.

[Published in May 2019]

RESEARCH ON THE COOPERATION OF BRICS IN THE FIELD OF E-COMMERCE

金砖五国电子商务领域合作研究



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Abstract

"E-commerce presents a significant opportunity for developing countries, including those in the BRICS, to play a leading role in shaping global trade rules. However, despite being a crucial platform for economic governance among developing nations, the BRICS cooperation mechanism still faces challenges in advancing pragmatic negotiations for e-commerce rules. Divergent opinions remain within the BRICS at multilateral levels. At the bilateral and domestic level, BRICS countries are in the early stages of e-commerce rule-making, lacking sufficient experience to support the process. To move forward, BRICS countries should adhere to the principles of foresight and strategic and security cooperation. Progress in e-commerce agreements should be practical and incremental across various areas, including digital infrastructure, paperless trade, cross-border e-commerce facilitation, and mutual recognition of electronic authentication and signatures. It is also important to pay sustained attention to the transborder data flow."

Comments by iGCU

The authors argue that for the digital economy to thrive, global e-commerce trade rules need to align with the practical development of the industry. However, current negotiations on these global economic and trade rules are trailing behind industrial needs and technological advancements. Moreover, there exist limited universal regulations for e-commerce within global economic governance platforms. Against this background, the authors note that e-commerce (digital economy) has not only become one of the new engines driving global economic growth but has also provided BRICS countries, as a group of latecomers, opportunities to participate in and potentially lead in this new wave of industrial revolution. However, the authors also indicate that BRICS cooperation on e-commerce is still in the exploratory phase, primarily focused on intergovernmental cooperation with limited involvement from private companies. In addition, compared to the accrued progress and investments of other global governance platforms like the Group of Twenty and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, BRICS countries are still lagging in this field. The authors believe that while these issues are the main challenges facing BRICS cooperation in the digital economy, they could be potentially overcome through multi-dimensional institutional construction.

Reference

Fu, Li [付丽]. Ying Zeng [曾英]. 2019. Study on Cooperation in The Field of E-Commerce Among BRICS Countries (金砖五国电子商务领域合作研究). *Intertrade (国际贸易)*. 11: 59-66.

[Published in Nov. 2019]

PROGRESS AND OUTLOOK OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION MECHANISM IN BRICS COUNTRIES

金砖国家农业合作机制进展与展望



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Author 2: TONG Yuhuan
Fellow at Beijing Academy of Science and Technology



Author 3: DONG Bo
PhD Candidate at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences



Author 4: LI Zhemin (Prof.)
Vice Dean of the Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences

Abstract

"Enhancing agricultural cooperation mechanisms is crucial to promoting and achieving sustainable development and cooperation among nations. Against the backdrop of the global financial crisis in 2008, the BRICS cooperation mechanism was officially launched, and in 2010, the official dialogue mechanism for agricultural cooperation was established. As one of the world's most significant multilateral agricultural cooperation mechanisms, its development has undergone three main stages: the preliminary exploration stage (2010-2011), where the five action directions for BRICS agricultural cooperation were established; the gradual improvement stage (2012-2017) that saw the establishment of the BRICS Agricultural Ministers' Dialogue Mechanism; and deepening cooperation stage (since 2018) that deepened innovative and collaborative efforts on global common issues among BRICS nations. Currently, BRICS agricultural cooperation has yielded several positive outcomes: the rising role of BRICS countries in the international arena; a relatively fast growth rate of intra-bloc agricultural trade, and the continuous enhancement of the members' capabilities in utilizing foreign capital. However, challenges persist, including political and security risks, a lack of platforms to support the implementation of relevant policies, and insufficient exchanges and communications in the technological sector. It is recommended that a special fund be established to support agricultural technological innovation, improve the agricultural information exchange platform, and promote multilateral trade stability through bilateral agreements."

Comments by iGCU

The BRICS countries span three climatic zones and are adjacent to the four major oceans. They exhibit significant complementarity vis-à-vis resource conditions, agricultural development levels, and market alignment, offering enormous potential for collaboration. In recent years, the BRICS nations have continuously explored establishing a long-term and stable cooperation mechanism, focusing on practical cooperation in several domains, such as food security and poverty reduction. Presently, agricultural cooperation among the BRICS countries is in a transitional phase, and future efforts should prioritize advancing digital agricultural cooperation to foster innovation for the future. Firstly, there is a need to construct a framework and platform for digital agricultural cooperation to facilitate technology sharing and information connectivity. Secondly, efforts should be directed towards enhancing the construction of large agricultural databases, leveraging the BeiDou Global Satellite Navigation System to optimize the utilization of arable land resources and scientific input materials, increase crop yields and quality, reduce production costs, and minimize environmental impact. Thirdly, there should be a push for developing 'Internet + Agriculture' and cross-border e-commerce and cultivating high-quality agricultural talents to elevate BRICS agricultural cooperation to a new level.

Reference

Ren, Yufeng [任育锋], Yuhuan Tong [佟玉焕], Bo Dong [董渤], Zhemin Li [李哲敏]. 2021. Progress and Outlook of Agricultural Cooperation Mechanism in BRICS Countries (金砖国家农业合作机制进展与展望). Journal of Agricultural Science and Technology (中国农业科技导报). 10: 1-9.

[Published in Oct. 2021]



INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING, PEKING UNIVERSITY

ANALYSIS ON THE MECHANISM OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES IN BRICS COUNTRIES

金砖国家人文交流合作机制分析

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Associate Professor at the College of Russian Studies, Sichuan Int'l Studies University



Abstract

"BRICS countries' people-to-people exchange cooperation mechanism represents a crucial component of the BRICS cooperative framework and is a significant pathway for deepening BRICS partner relationships. The current scope of cooperation within this mechanism continually expands, with cooperation initiatives becoming more refined and profound. China and Russia, in particular, play vital roles in developing and advancing the people-to-people exchange cooperation mechanism within BRICS. This mechanism is characterized by a combination of institutionalization and the innovative element of rotating chairmanship. To further enhance people-to-people exchanges among BRICS nations, it is essential to effectively balance their shared needs with each state's unique requirements within the cooperation mechanism's framework. Simultaneously, it is essential to coordinate and strategically align the BRICS people-to-people exchange cooperation mechanism with other multilateral initiatives focused on such exchanges."

Comments by iGCU

While cooperation in people-to-people exchange among BRICS countries started relatively late, its effectiveness is becoming evident, and the scope of cooperation continues to expand. The author suggests that, generally speaking, establishing the BRICS people-to-people exchange cooperation mechanism is a top-down process: creating the macro-level framework, defining and discussing micro-level topics, and executing specific activities and concrete measures. Developing the mechanism is pivotal for deepening partnerships among BRICS countries and contributes to fostering the coexistence and development of diverse world civilizations. However, the author points out that compared to the substantial economic, financial, political, and diplomatic achievements, people-to-people exchange remains a relatively weak aspect of cooperation among BRICS countries. The BRICS mechanism possesses distinct characteristics, and its development combines institutionalization with the innovative element of rotating chairmanship. The author states that this arrangement can partially bridge the communication barriers arising from cultural differences among BRICS countries. However, it cannot completely avoid the development and participation imbalances that tend to emerge in multilateral exchange mechanisms. Therefore, the healthy and sustained development of people-to-people exchanges among BRICS countries necessitates concerted efforts from all five member states.

Reference

Pu, Gongying [蒲公英]. 2017. Analysis on the Mechanism of People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges in BRICS Countries (金砖国家人文交流合作机制分析). *Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (俄罗斯东欧中亚研究)*. 04: 46-56+156-157.

[Published in Aug. 2017]

DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES MECHANISM AMONG BRICS STATES: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

金砖国家人文交流机制建设：作用、挑战及对策



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Abstract

"People-to-people and cultural exchanges play a fundamental role in facilitating BRICS cooperation and are prerequisites for deepening pragmatic cooperation among BRICS nations. However, at the moment, there seems to be insufficient cooperation in cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the BRICS member states compared with cooperation in other areas. Moreover, the building of people-to-people exchange mechanisms still faces challenges. In this new and current historical phase, people-to-people exchanges and cooperation among BRICS nations should fully utilize various resources. This will enable think tanks from member states to actively contribute their intellectual expertise, ultimately boosting the development of the BRICS cooperation mechanism and steering it towards a more multi-dimensional future. Meanwhile, it is also important to apply the coupling effect of public and private mechanisms, aiming to achieve exemplary results in building people-to-people exchange mechanisms."

Comments by iGCU

The author reckons that overcoming the cultural barriers and accommodating cultural differences between the BRICS countries to boost people-to-people and cultural exchanges among them is essential. The author further suggests that using different media outlets properly and adopting simpler communication mechanisms would be helpful to indirectly facilitate mutual learning and understanding between people of BRICS countries. He points out that while government-led cultural exchanges are often assumed to develop more rapidly, they may not always be as effective as cooperation programs initiated by non-governmental actors. Consequently, the author emphasizes the significance of consolidating and expanding the existing people-to-people exchange mechanisms, noting that it is vital to enhance effective communications between NGOs and think tanks and promote multi-dimensional people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in different areas. The author also highlights the necessity of establishing a people-to-people exchange mechanism that could have a long-lasting positive effect on BRICS cooperation.

Reference

Xu, Xiujun [徐秀军]. 2018. Development of People-to-people and Cultural Exchanges Mechanism among BRICS States: Achievements, Challenges, and Solutions (金砖国家人文交流机制建设：作用、挑战及对策). *Contemporary World (当代世界)*. 08: 26-29.

[Published in Aug. 2018]

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES AMONG BRICS COUNTRIES: PROGRESS, FUNCTIONS, AND CHALLENGES

金砖国家人文交流：进展、功能与挑战



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Abstract

"Initially, the main areas of cooperation within BRICS were centred around finance, trade, politics, and security, with people-to-people exchanges not originally included in the primary focus areas. It was not until the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, in 2014 that the summit declaration included people-to-people exchange as one of the goals. The bloc further officially acknowledged the significance of expanding people-to-people exchanges in all dimensions during the 2017 BRICS Summit in Xiamen, China, recognizing it as one of the 'Three Pillars' of BRICS cooperation: Political and Security; Economic and Financial; Cultural and People-to-people Exchanges. In 2018, the Tenth BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Johannesburg Declaration was released after the Summit. BRICS members agreed to fully operationalize the BRICS Partnership on a New Industrial Revolution, aiming to deepen BRICS cooperation in digitalization, economic, trade and finance, political security, people-to-people exchanges, and many other areas. Since then, all BRICS members have officially recognized the important role of people-to-people exchanges in the BRICS cooperation. The extension of intra-BRICS people-to-people exchanges is primarily evident in inter-governmental high-level meetings and non-governmental interactions and collaboration. These two functions are mutually reinforcing and cannot be detached. Meanwhile, cultural diversity has brought valuable non-material wealth to BRICS cooperation and created new opportunities for people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning among the five states. However, it is also a matter of fact that BRICS member states' different cultures have caused problems like a lack of mutual understanding and difficulties in empathizing with individuals from different cultures, which impede cooperation among BRICS countries in the foreseeable future."

Comments by iGCU

The author reckons that overcoming the cultural barriers and accommodating cultural differences between the BRICS countries to boost people-to-people and cultural exchanges among them is essential. The author further suggests that using different media outlets properly and adopting simpler communication mechanisms would be helpful to indirectly facilitate mutual learning and understanding between people of BRICS countries. He points out that while government-led cultural exchanges are often assumed to develop more rapidly, they may not always be as effective as cooperation programs initiated by non-governmental actors. Consequently, the author emphasizes the significance of consolidating and expanding the existing people-to-people exchange mechanisms, noting that it is vital to enhance effective communications between NGOs and think tanks and promote multi-dimensional people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in different areas. The author also highlights the necessity of establishing a people-to-people exchange mechanism that could have a long-lasting positive effect on BRICS cooperation.

Reference

Shen, Chen [沈 陈]. 2018. People-to-People Exchanges among BRICS Countries: Progress, Functions, and Challenges (金砖国家人文交流：进展、功能与挑战). *World Affairs* (世界知识). 16: 46-47.

[Published in Aug. 2018]

COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AMONG BRICS COUNTRIES: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

金砖国家高等教育合作：进展、挑战与应对



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- Vice Director at the Center for Asia-Europe Studies, XJTU



Author 02: ZHANG Xinning

PhD Candidate at the School of Marxism, XJTU

Abstract

"BRICS countries attach great importance to collaboration in higher education, seeing it as crucial for people-to-people exchanges. Indeed, higher education cooperation is strategically significant in promoting sustainable development and inclusive growth in BRICS countries. In the past years, as the multilateral consultation mechanism for cooperation in higher education among BRICS countries continues to improve, regular exchanges and dialogue have been made possible, becoming the 'new normal'. With more platforms for cooperation being built, member states' educational resources have effectively been integrated. Moreover, diversified educational exchange activities and various relevant cooperation projects have actively been conducted, achieving fruitful results. Nevertheless, it is also noteworthy that there are still challenges facing higher education cooperation. For example, underinvestment in education in times of economic downturn, competitive multilateralism, the inadequacy of the existing educational cooperation mechanism, and differences in the higher education systems among the member states have adversely affected the cooperation. Looking ahead to deepen cooperation in higher education, it is first essential to expand financing channels and increase investment, improve the current cooperation mechanism, and stimulate the emergence of synergistic effects of different actors. More importantly, it is vital to uphold the principle of 'seeking common ground while preserving differences', and promote the construction of a just global higher education order."

Comments by iGCU

The authors point out that cooperation in higher education is of great significance for deepening people-to-people exchanges among BRICS countries. Despite progress made in the past few years, the authors note that problems exist that need addressing. Examples include boosting investment in higher education cooperation, improving existing cooperation mechanisms, and maintaining the unwavering commitment to the principle of 'seeking common ground while preserving differences'. The authors stress that education is the core of sustainable economic development, and emerging countries should prioritize education investment, aim to continuously improve and optimize their education systems by actively participating in international exchanges, and boost the conversion efficiency of their educational and economic resources. Additionally, the authors indicate that education is key for people-to-people exchanges, and introducing students to the educational information of other BRICS countries could facilitate mutual understanding and provide opportunities for sustained and meaningful interactions between people of the BRICS countries.

Reference

Zhu, Xu [朱旭], Xinning Zhang [张馨宁]. 2022. Cooperation in Higher Education among BRICS Countries: Progress, Challenges and Solutions (金砖国家高等教育合作：进展、挑战与应对). Journal of National Academy of Education Administration (国家教育行政学院学报). 09: 76-83.

[Published in Sep. 2022]

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES AMONG BRICS COUNTRIES: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES & INNOVATIVE PATHS

金砖国家人文交流：进展、挑战与未来选择



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Abstract

"People-to-people exchanges play a crucial role in supporting BRICS cooperation, contributing to mutual understanding and fostering friendship among the BRICS countries and their populations. At present, the BRICS countries have made positive progress and accumulated experience in promoting people-to-people exchanges between themselves and among countries worldwide. However, to effectively address challenges, including the BRICS countries' widely dispersed geographic locations, economic instability in some member state(s), varying stages of digital infrastructure development, and mutual trust deficit, the BRICS countries need to put efforts into strengthening intergovernmental collaboration, developing the digital economy, and enhancing mutual trust among member states."

Comments by iGCU

This paper provides an all-round overview of people-to-people exchanges among BRICS countries from four aspects: BRICS countries attained progress, member states' accumulated experiences, their challenges, and the BRICS institutionalization process and the bloc's developmental path of innovation. BRICS countries, united by their goal of facilitating the common development of all (which constitutes the cornerstone of the BRICS partnership), have provided a new paradigm for reforming global governance and accumulated successful experience in promoting positive relationships with countries of different cultures. This has led to gradually intensified people-to-people exchanges among the BRICS countries. Nevertheless, the authors also note that the BRICS countries' widely dispersed geographical locations have, to a certain extent, hindered the further enhancement of people-to-people exchanges. Moreover, certain member states' economic instability has also limited the monetary investment in promoting people-to-people exchanges. Also, since the BRICS countries are at different stages of development in digital infrastructure, the channels for people-to-people exchanges are yet to be improved. In all, BRICS countries still face some outstanding problems. Consequently, the authors reckon that it would be of great importance for the BRICS countries to further consolidate the BRICS cooperation in trade and economics, boost the construction of digital infrastructure, and undertake and strengthen exchanges in key areas such as think tanks, youth, and gender equality.

Reference

Wang, Weiwei [王维伟], Jin Xue [薛锦]. 2023. People-to-people Exchanges among BRICS Countries: Progress, Challenges, and Innovative Paths (金砖国家人文交流：进展、挑战与未来选择). Henan Social Sciences (河南社会科学). 03: 23-32.

[Published in Mar. 2023]

BRICS ENERGY COOPERATION AND GLOBAL ENERGY GOVERNANCE

金砖国家能源合作与全球能源治理

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Abstract

"Energy cooperation is currently one of the most important areas for pragmatic cooperation among BRICS countries. It has become imperative for member states to actively engage in multilateral governance and strategic cooperation in energy (and energy efficiency). The BRICS countries have steadily increased their presence in the global energy market, solidifying their dominant role in the new and evolving global energy landscape. In the past few years, although their cooperative efforts in the energy sector have mostly been bilateral, there is a growing attention on promoting low-carbon economy and sustainable development more broadly. BRICS countries are now confronting several new challenges. These include the inadequacy of existing global energy market and governance rules and principles in serving member states' development needs, persistent disagreement with developed countries over carbon emissions contributions, and the urgency to address the potential financial risks associated with global energy governance. In all, BRICS countries need to collaborate to develop coping strategies, engage in multilateral strategic cooperation in energy security, technology, financial and legal aspects, and actively participate in the global energy governance rules-making process. Strengthening multilateral cooperation within BRICS and ensuring all member states participate in global energy governance will undoubtedly open up more development opportunities for all involved."

Comments by iGCU

Based on a systematic review of BRICS energy cooperation and the current situation of energy governance, this article provides a detailed summary of the key challenges facing BRICS energy governance and proposes tailored improvement strategies to address the challenges. The authors point out the need to significantly enhance strategic energy cooperation among BRICS countries. Given the current status of BRICS countries in the global energy market, focusing on bilateral cooperation is far from sufficient. However, the authors indicate that BRICS countries have generally come to the realization that now is the time to put more efforts into fostering multilateral cooperation and promote low-carbon economy and sustainable development. Nonetheless, the authors also highlight several practical challenges that potentially hinder the further deepening of BRICS energy cooperation. They add that BRICS countries should actively develop closer ties with one another in energy security, science and technology, finance, etc., to help complement each member states' strengths and continuously improve global energy governance rules. The authors believe that bolstering multilateral cooperation and common governance within BRICS is one of the most effective ways to address the global energy challenge, and the opportunities therein are worth exploring via the joint efforts of all involved.

Reference

Ma, Tao [马涛], Xi Chen [陈曦]. 2022. BRICS Energy Cooperation and Global Energy Governance in BRICS Countries (金砖国家能源合作与全球能源治理). *Contemporary China and World (当代中国与世界)*. 02:85-93+128.

[Published in Jun. 2022]

CHAPTER
03

China and the BRICS



REVIEWING BRICS DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FREE TRADE ZONES IN CHINA

以自贸区建设为支点助力金砖合作的长期战略——“金砖国家发展与中国自贸区建设论坛”综述



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Abstract

"In the post-crisis era, the global economy is undergoing profound adjustments, posing significant challenges for BRICS nations. Quantitative easing monetary and reindustrialization stimulus policies in developed countries have caused a substantial capital outflow from BRICS countries. Additionally, US-led negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) have impacted the existing regional integration efforts. Addressing these challenges involves in-depth discussions on trade imbalances, insufficient infrastructure investment, and finding a balance between financial openness and economic security. Financial innovation and cooperation are key steps in the BRICS cooperation mechanism and are also integral to the construction of the Shanghai Free Trade Zone. Advancing China's financial reforms through financial markets and cooperation can promote the 'going global' of currency and production capacity, benefitting not only BRICS countries but also other developing nations. The intersection of strategies between Free Trade Zone construction and BRICS cooperation presents a strategic opportunity to foster broader development and integration."

Comments by iGCU

This article compiles the keynote speeches of leading Chinese experts delivered at the "Forum on BRICS Development and the Construction of Free Trade Zones in China." The speeches covered various themes, including the prospects of free trade zone development in BRICS countries and the construction of China's Free Trade Zones, short-term opportunities and long-term challenges of economic growth in BRICS countries, the construction of the New Development Bank (formerly known as the BRICS Bank), and hot issues concerning BRICS development and the transformation of the global governance system. The construction of Free Trade Zones, the BRICS cooperation, and the "Belt and Road" development strategy are intrinsically consistent. They are also inherently related to the development of Shanghai's four centers, especially its financial center. The economic development experiences and reform achievements of BRICS countries are mutually beneficial, fostering inclusive growth rather than competition among member states. If the construction of a China (Shanghai) Free Trade Zone can promote deeper reforms and improve market mechanisms, China may play a more significant role in BRICS cooperation. This enhanced role could lead to more effective integration of economic policies and strategies, benefiting not only China but also providing a model for other BRICS countries to strengthen their economic and trade relations.

Reference

Tang, Weiqi [汤维祺], Libo Wu [吴力波]. 2015. Reviewing BRICS Development and the Construction of Free Trade Zones in China (以自贸区建设为支点助力金砖合作的长期战略——“金砖国家发展与中国自贸区建设论坛”综述). Economic Research Journal (经济研究). 01: 183-186.

[Published in Jan. 2015]

CHINA'S PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF BRICS COOPERATION MECHANISM

金砖合作机制下中国参与全球治理模式研究

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Abstract

"As an important member of the BRICS mechanism, China has been seeking out areas of convergence between its national interests, BRICS member states' demands, and the needs for global governance. For China, participating in global governance as a member of BRICS would be alleviate the skepticism of Western countries, enable the healthy development of competitive-cooperative relationship among BRICS countries, and unite developing countries worldwide, providing them the BRICS platform to explore new areas of cooperation. In reality, China encounters numerous challenges that significantly limit its effective participation in global governance through the BRICS mechanism. In recent years, China has explored different global governance models within the BRICS cooperative framework, including subregional cooperation, overlapping institutions, central cooperation, and progressive governance. Simultaneously, the Chinese government has adopted several measures to address the current challenges. These measures include strengthening trade and economic cooperation among BRICS countries base on the mutual economic complementarity, facilitating collaboration between BRICS and the EU in opposing trade protectionism, and effectively combine the 'Chinese proposal' of win-win cooperation for common development with the cooperative spirit of the BRICS."

Comments by iGCU

The author points out that the BRICS member states' differing stages of development inhibits consensus on certain issues among them. Thus, it is essential to advance a pragmatic proposal for the future development of BRICS that could help deepen economic and trade cooperation among its member states. The author suggests that, at present, the U.S. and its Western allies see the BRICS as a destructive force that would negatively impact the existing international order. Therefore, the author reckons the necessity to explore different modes of cooperation and enhance mutual trust among BRICS countries by seeking out their common interests. The author further indicates that China has been striving to achieve common prosperity, actualize economic complementarity of BRICS countries, and take practical actions to reject trade protectionism, providing a solid foundation for the deepening of BRICS cooperation. Likewise, the 'Chinese Proposal' that China offers for BRICS economic and trade cooperation would benefit and strengthen BRICS solidarity. This proposal has also made valuable contributions to improve global governance.

Reference

Yang, Na [杨娜]. 2017. China's Participation in Global Governance under the Framework of BRICS Cooperation Mechanism (金砖合作机制下中国参与全球治理模式研究). *Asia-pacific Economic Review (亚太经济)*. 03: 12-17+192.

[Published in May. 2017]

RESEARCH ON THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AND CHINA'S TRADE POTENTIAL WITH OTHER BRICS COUNTRIES

“一带一路”倡议与中国对金砖国家贸易潜力研究

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Author 02: LI Jieling

School of Economics, Guangdong University of Technology



Abstract

"This paper discusses an expanded gravity model to analyze China's export data to BRICS nations from 2005 to 2015. Using a mixed OLS model, the study examines China's export trade to BRICS countries and designs four simulated scenarios to estimate the growth potential of export trade vis-à-vis the influence of the 'Belt and Road' Initiative (BRI). The author posits that the BRI aims to enhance connectivity with countries along the route, with collaboration with BRICS countries is seen as synergistic and without any inherent contradictions or conflicts. A consensus within BRICS regarding the BRI is deemed essential. By leveraging the strengths of BRICS nations to connect with countries along the BRI, a solid foundation for the advocated interconnectivity can be established. The research findings indicate that improvements in infrastructure quality, such as airports, and reduction in average tariff levels resulting from the BRI, positively impact the growth of China's export trade to BRICS countries. As the BRI progresses, it is expected to accelerate the economic prosperity and social development of the countries along the route, thereby increasing the market demand for Chinese exports and indirectly boosting China's export growth. Consequently, the potential for China's export trade with BRICS nations is projected to increase substantially."

Comments by iGCU

The paper focuses on the role of China's BRI on enhancing connectivity with nations along the route aligns and its alignment with cooperative development among BRICS countries, stressing the absence of any inherent contradictions or conflicts. It addresses central questions regarding the impact of China's vigorous advocacy and promotion of the BRI construction on its trade with BRICS nations and its potential for driving China's economic growth. To answer these questions, the paper first theoretically explores how the BRI influences China's trade potential with BRICS countries, drawing on historical experiences. It then employs a model based on these insights to predict the potential trade effects after the implementation of the BRI. The article suggests that, on the one hand, the implementation and advancement of the BRI will affect the "hard" and "soft" environments of China-BRICS bilateral trade. On the other hand, it anticipates that as the BRI progresses, China and BRICS countries are expected to continually strengthen their connectivity, improve infrastructure development, and lower trade and investment barriers, strengthening the potential for China's export trade with BRICS nations.

Reference

Li, Jun [李军], Jieling Li [李洁玲]. Research on the Belt and Road Initiative and China's Trade Potential with Other BRICS Countries (“一带一路” 倡议与中国对金砖国家贸易潜力研究). Asia-pacific Economic Review (亚太经济). 03:58-62+194.

[Published in May, 2017]



INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING, PEKING UNIVERSITY

ANALYSIS OF COORDINATION OF TRADE INTERESTS BETWEEN CHINA AND OTHER BRICS COUNTRIES

中国与其他金砖国家贸易利益协调分析

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Abstract

"In recent years, trade cooperation among BRICS nations has grown closer. Achieving coordination of trade interests between China and other BRICS countries is pivotal for promoting mutually beneficial outcomes. An analysis from the perspectives of competitiveness and complementarity reveals that China's export advantage lies in capital and labor-intensive industries, while the other four BRICS countries excel in resource-intensive industries. China's global export trade does not encroach on the export markets of other BRICS nations; instead, there is evident industrial gradient difference between China and other BRICS countries, facilitating complementary trade cooperation. However, due to the presence of certain competitive dynamics in manufactured goods trade between China and other BRICS nations, fostering a mutually beneficial economic and trade development pattern necessitates strengthening political mutual trust and strategic alignment. This includes advancing trade facilitation cooperation, establishing mechanisms for resolving trade disputes, promoting the construction of a BRICS Free Trade Area, expanding imports from other BRICS countries, innovating trade cooperation models, and actively participating in the formulation of international economic and trade rules."

Comments by iGCU

The authors suggest that amidst the backdrop of the U.S.-China trade war and the global pandemic, China, a significant manufacturing powerhouse, increasingly grapples with the integrity and reliability of its supply chains. China's manufacturing sector relies on foreign high-quality raw materials and primary products to reduce product costs and enhance competitiveness. Consequently, in recent years, China's diplomatic focus has shifted towards fostering good relations with resource-rich countries. Utilizing reliable and stable methods like settlements in Renminbi, China aims to mitigate the impact of international market fluctuations on its manufacturing industry. Through a robust BRICS cooperation mechanism, mutual promotion between member nations can better meet their respective needs and significantly reduce risks in bilateral trade. However, it is important to note that while data analysis suggests industrial complementarity among BRICS countries, actual international trade often confronts various unforeseen challenges. These include unstable political situations in investment countries, rising trade protectionism, and malicious contract breaches. In response, China needs to focus on cultivating international talent, training professionals who are well-versed in international and local legal systems. This approach is crucial to better safeguard China's developmental interests.

Reference

Lan, Qingxin [蓝庆新], Kai Dou [窦凯]. 2018. Analysis of Coordination of Trade Interests between China and Other BRICS Countries (中国与其他金砖国家贸易利益协调分析). Theory Journal (理论学刊). 06: 39-48.

[Published in Nov. 2018]



LEADERSHIP COMPETITION IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OF BRICS COUNTRIES WITH THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

国际合作中的领导权竞争：以“一带一路”倡议与金砖国家合作的战略对接为例

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Author 02: FU Yuheng (Prof.)

Assistant Professor at the School of International Studies and Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies, Jinan University



Abstract

"From an objective stance, maintaining international cooperation in a state of anarchy would require strong leadership. Generating and sustaining this kind of leadership would involve each country being satisfied with accrued benefits from international collaborations and willingness to pay the relevant costs. Although the competition for leadership is often inevitable, it can be managed by strengthening and synergizing BRICS countries' development strategies. Constructing the 'Belt & Road Initiative' (BRI) is not only China's top-level national strategy but is also an open, inclusive, and mutually beneficial mechanism for international cooperation. The BRICS is a multilateral cooperation mechanism initiated by and designed for non-Western emerging powers, promoting reforms of the current international order to benefit developing countries. Strategically aligning the BRI and BRICS cooperation mechanisms would maximize China's national interests and facilitate the international order's advancement towards a more inclusive end. However, leadership competition would challenge the BRI-BRICS strategic alignment in the short run. China should ensure that the BRI and BRICS cooperation would develop independently and continuously, leveraging their unique strengths. Meanwhile, China should also combine economic incentives with institutional construction to prevent the BRI and BRICS from being estranged or contradicting each other."

Comments by iGCU

The authors point out that the competition for leadership and the resulting institutional design are critical determinants of whether the BRI and BRICS cooperation can achieve strategic alignment. The authors' detailed analysis identifies BRICS countries' differing strategic perceptions and interests towards the BRI cooperation framework and the root causes of the competition for leadership that spur their divergences. The conflict between political and economic priorities between Russia and China, India's balancing act, and Brazil and South Africa's "free-rider" mentality are all obstacles hindering China from achieving the strategic alignment between the two cooperation mechanisms. The authors suggest that a prerequisite for achieving strategic alignment among BRICS countries is similar or compatible interests, adding that BRICS countries have played a positive role in promoting the 'Belt and Road' cooperation mainly through bilateral cooperation. The authors reckon that the BRI provides an enormous platform for BRICS cooperation. They proposed China use its strategic cooperation with BRICS countries as an exemplar and apply it to the Belt and Road cooperation, providing valuable experience to the BRI partner countries for consensus building. Besides, the authors note that BRICS countries' participation in constructing the BRI would diverge since they are at different stages of development and have dissimilar demands for the BRI. Thus, the authors suggest that it is crucial to avoid treating BRICS countries as a single entity when discussing BRICS cooperation under the BRI framework. Instead, they advocate the formulation of tailored development strategies for member states.

Reference

Li, Yiping [李一平], Yuheng Fu [付宇珩]. 2019. Leadership Competition in International Cooperation: Strategic Alignment of BRICS Countries with the Belt and Road Initiative (国际合作中的领导权竞争：以“一带一路”倡议与金砖国家合作的战略对接为例). Southeast Academic Research (东南学术). 03: 118-129+248.

[Published in May, 2019]

FROM QUANTITATIVE TO QUALITATIVE CHANGE? AN ANALYSIS OF TRADE POTENTIALITY BETWEEN CHINA AND THE OTHER BRICS COUNTRIES

量变引发质变？中国与其他金砖国家的贸易潜力分析

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Abstract

"Concerning BRICS cooperation, many express pessimism, citing concepts like the 'fading theory' or 'BRICS differentiation'. They argue that cooperation is challenging among BRICS countries since they do not enjoy strong endowment complementarity. However, when viewed through the lens of cooperation theory and the governance practices of non-traditional security issues, BRICS cooperation appears feasible. Theoretically, cooperation takes exchange-based or collaborative forms. Exchange-based cooperation focuses on complementarity but overlooks other aspects of the current debate on BRICS cooperation in academia. Collaborative cooperation, on the other hand, aims at achieving common interests and building interdependent relationships without solely relying on endowment complementarity. The cooperation practices of BRICS countries outside security issues demonstrate that the transformation of security concepts and agenda as well as governance paths has generated more common interests between countries. In an era of globalization, the complexity of non-traditional security agendas transcends the capacity of any single country to manage alone. Regarding governance practices, BRICS cooperation involves creating an 'action focus' to expand mutual benefits, fostering trust and forging partnerships. In addition, cooperation among the BRICS countries shall attach great importance to inclusive norms, an open posture, and closer ties with other platforms and countries around the world."

Comments by iGCU

In recent years, there has been a growing pessimistic outlook on BRICS cooperation. These perspectives argue that the BRICS countries lack complementary endowments, resulting in mediocre cooperative outcomes, limited growth potential, and possibly leading to the decline or even dissolution of the group. This article aims to counter the 'BRICS fading theory' from both theoretical and practical dimensions. By integrating cooperative theory and the broader governance demands of non-traditional security, it asserts the existence of a driving force behind BRICS nation cooperation and explores theoretical and practical pathways for this collaboration. Cooperation may stem from complementary endowments, but the absence of conditions for exchange-based cooperation does not preclude the possibility of collaboration. Whether willingly or not, the complex security agenda of the globalization era cannot be addressed by any single nation alone, thus creating many potential drivers for cooperation in the expansive field of security. In essence, cooperation encompasses collaborative efforts, echoing the adage, "If there are no conditions, create them." The feasible paths to avoid the 'BRICS fading' include expanding the cooperative domain to enlarge the 'policy basket' of dialogue, fostering concessions and collaboration among member countries; as well as maintaining a group identity, shaping BRICS partnerships, cultivating trust, and enhancing the sustainability and stability of cooperation.

Reference

Shi, Peiran [史沛然]. 2019. From Quantitative to Qualitative Change? An Analysis of Trade Potentiality between China and the Other BRICS Countries (量变引发质变？中国与其他金砖国家的贸易潜力分析). Pacific Journal (太平洋学报). 10: 63-77.

[Published in Oct. 2019]

'BRICS+' COOPERATION MODE AND CHINA'S INNOVATION IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE MECHANISM

“金砖 +”合作模式与中国对全球治理机制的创新

Author: WANG Mingguo (Prof.)

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Abstract

"The 'BRICS+' cooperation model is an innovative contribution to building global governance mechanisms. The theories of mechanism interaction and mechanism correlation, focusing on 'mechanism+', provide a useful analytical perspective for exploring the 'BRICS+' cooperation model. This model emphasizes broadening the geographical scope, adhering to a flexible and gradual approach, and upholding the principle of prioritizing development. China has advanced institutional innovation in promoting the 'BRICS+' cooperation model. Through the practical path of 'mechanism+ cross-regional member countries', China has closely connected cooperation between emerging markets and developing countries. This approach has solidified the collective identity of BRICS countries as emerging market nations, transforming the BRICS cooperation mechanism into an international framework with global influence. Therefore, the innovation and improvement of the 'BRICS+' cooperation model represent a crucial endeavor for China in driving reform in global governance, enhancing institutional discourse power, strategically aligning with the Belt and Road Initiative, and constructing a new type of international relations."

Comments by iGCU

The author suggests that the successful practice of the 'BRICS+' cooperation model signifies the establishment of a mechanized operational approach between BRICS countries and developing nations. The author believes that this development is expected to significantly enhance the cohesion among emerging markets and developing nations, positioning the BRICS nations as exemplary in South-South cooperation and, consequently, driving a profound transformation of the global governance system. Regarding the mechanization process within the BRICS organization, the 'BRICS+' model serves as a novel cooperation mechanism and governance model. This model involves not only the interaction between BRICS countries and other international organizations but also the comprehensive integration of BRICS nations with other developing countries, particularly those of regional significance. China's innovation in the 'BRICS+' cooperation model can serve as an intermediate step toward expanding the BRICS partnership, contributing to the overall influence of BRICS countries. Additionally, the 'BRICS+' cooperation model can act as a bridge and link between the BRICS cooperation mechanism and the institutional development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Reference

Wang, Mingguo [王明国]. 2019. 'BRICS+' Cooperation Mode and China's Innovation in Global Governance Mechanism (“金砖 +” 合作模式与中国对全球治理机制的创新). *Contemporary World (当代世界)*. 12: 19-25.

[Published in Dec. 2019]

A PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS OF BRICS COUNTRIES AND CHINA'S STRATEGIC ROLE

金砖国家发展方向与中国战略作用的关联初探

Author: DING Gong (Dr.)

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Abstract

"The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation. The compounding effect of the 'great changes unseen in a century' and the 'once-in-a-century' pandemic, coupled with the rise of terrorism and extremist ideologies, has made the current global landscape extremely unstable. The process of globalization has encountered significant setbacks owing to certain Western countries actively inciting divisive theories like 'clash of civilizations', 'racial superiority', and 'extreme nationalism', promoting strategies like 'small yard, high fence', and imposing extreme sanctions. These actions have also hindered global integration and exacerbated regional geopolitical tensions. Moreover, the issues have not only brought external uncertainties to the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' but have also posed unprecedented challenges to humanity in general. Meanwhile, after ten more years of evolution and development, the BRICS mechanism is undergoing a transformative phase as it aims to ascend to a higher level. However, BRICS member countries are also facing various challenges, leading to a proliferation of opinions questioning the 'value' of the mechanism and discussing whether its influence is, in fact, fading. The future development of the BRICS cooperation mechanism hinges on the cooperation among member states and their ability to effectively respond to external doubts about its relevance. In this context, it is crucial for China to take a broader global perspective that discerns the objective laws governing human social development. Seizing the opportunity of re-hosting the BRICS summit, China can produce several groundbreaking, leading, and institutional outcomes. These outcomes would provide a new approach and governance solutions for countries worldwide to mitigate and eventually solve global challenges but also offer a clear path for BRICS countries to unite and build a community of shared development interests."

Comments by iGCU

The author places the interaction between China and the BRICS countries at the forefront and analyzes China's methods of promoting and coordinating cooperation with the BRICS nations. Since 2011, China has taken full advantage of its role as the rotating host to set the agenda and actively promote Chinese initiatives in international diplomacy. The author suggests that, given the U.S. advocacy of unilateralism and its active 'withdrawal' from various international agreements, China's proposals of "Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" and the "Belt and Road Initiative" have provided two channels for the BRICS countries to continuously deepen their cooperation under the existing mechanism. The author further proposes that, based on practical considerations, China could explore creating a BRICS Cooperation Ministerial Council and dedicated committee mechanisms. These mechanisms could enhance 'South-South cooperation' and offer a more effective platform for dialogue and collaboration within the BRICS framework. In the current global environment, characterized by the risk of division and confrontation, it is increasingly important to consolidate the existing consensus among BRICS countries, connecting all the positive forces within the international community and using 'hedging' techniques to reduce humanity's exposure to various global risks. The article highlights the significance of these efforts and the potential for evolving 'BRICS+' cooperation into a regular, sustainable model by inviting regional partners to participate in BRICS summits over the years.

Reference

Ding, Gong [丁工]. 2022. A Preliminary Exploration of the Relationship between the Development Directions of BRICS and China's Strategic Role (金砖国家发展方向与中国战略作用的关联初探). South Asian and Southeast Asian Studies (南亚东南亚研究). 05: 1-12+152.

[Published in Oct. 2022]

CHAPTER
04

The Prospect for the BRICS

Challenges & Opportunities



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UNDERSTANDING, PEKING UNIVERSITY

THE BRICS MECHANISM: GROWING IN MATURITY

金砖机制的深化与未来建设的思路

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Abstract

"The BRICS mechanism stands out in the expanding landscape of international multilateral systems. Its successes lies in its ability to adapt to changing global dynamics, timely adjusting its role and positioning, and continuously deepening its institutional framework. By expanding its representativeness in the restructuring of the international order, the BRICS mechanism amplifies the voice of a vast number of developing countries, delves into global governance, and promotes a more open, inclusive, equitable, balanced, and mutually beneficial form of globalization. Over the next decade, BRICS is tasked with establishing itself as the world's most influential 'South-South cooperation' platform, amidst unprecedented challenges and opportunities. There is a need to strike a balance between the immediate benefits of institutional development and its long-term goals. Moreover, enhancing the mechanism's capacity for action, innovation, and sustainable development is crucial. There is also a call to explore the establishment of more groundbreaking cooperative mechanisms and governance institutions."

Comments by iGCU

This article focuses on the development of the BRICS mechanism, examining several important relationships that require effective management in the "New Decade of BRICS," alongside innovative ideas for mechanism building. Since its initiation, the BRICS countries have adapted to evolving circumstances, exerting efforts in multiple directions, thereby deepening the institutional framework. This has not only expanded their representativeness from emerging economies to encompass all developing countries but has also cultivated global governance, shifting from economic cooperation to shaping a new global political and economic order. As the mechanism enters a new deepening phase, the BRICS countries need to manage the relationship between form and substance properly. They should convey unity through "formal" declarations while producing tangible results. Simultaneously, there is a need to balance bilateral and multilateral relationships, as well as the relationships between the BRICS and the G7. The sustainable development of the BRICS mechanism lies in its continuous innovation and enhanced capacity for action. Hence, efforts should be directed towards creating new types of international multilateral financial institutions, striving collectively for veto power in the IMF, creating new pillars of cultural exchange, and establishing the "BRICS Forum on Globalization and Global Governance."

Reference

Wang, Youming [王友明]. 2017. The BRICS Mechanism: Growing in Maturity (金砖机制的深化与未来建设的思路). China International Studies (国际问题研究). 2017 (06): 40-60+2.

[Published in Nov. 2017]

AN OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF BRICS COUNTRIES

当前金砖国家经济形势与未来走势分析

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Abstract

"Since 2019, the economic growth momentum of BRICS countries has generally been decelerating, resulting in shrinking external trade, rising unemployment rate, and manageable inflationary pressures. Also, although BRICS states' financial revenue and expenditure have improved, their governments have had varying degrees of rising debt burdens. The monetary policies of BRICS member states have generally leaned towards an accommodative stance. Amid the increased uncertainty in today's global financial environment, the downward economic pressures on BRICS countries may gradually become more evident. Considering China has close economic and trade relations with other BRICS member states, their economic downturn would not support China's economic recovery and expansion of external demand. It would also introduce more uncertainties in the BRICS cooperation. Hence, it is important to closely track the foreign trade situation of other BRICS countries, strengthen consultation and cooperation, and start collaborating on issues like financial stabilization."

Comments by iGCU

The author highlights that, affected by both internal and external environments, the overall economic development trend of BRICS countries in recent years has not been favorable, posing challenges to their economic cooperation. BRICS was established to respond to the economic opportunities and challenges emerging countries face. Thus, the bloc's economic outlook is crucial to stabilizing the mechanism. The author reckons that it is essential for the BRICS countries to form a comprehensive mechanism to guard against and mitigate financial risks. Additionally, the BRI cooperation and cross-border Renminbi settlements could help ease the negative impacts caused by the global economic environment. Moreover, the author suggests that BRICS expansion could inject new vitality into the economic development of BRICS countries, ultimately enhancing multilateralism and fast-tracking common prosperity.

Reference

Yuan, Qian [原倩]. 2019. An Overview and Analysis of the Economic Situation and Future Prospects of BRICS countries (当前金砖国家经济形势与未来走势分析). China Economic & Trade Herald (中国经贸导刊). 12: 27-29.

[Published in Jun. 2019]

PROGRESS AND PROSPECT OF BRICS AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION

金砖国家农业产能合作进展与未来展望



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Abstract

"Agricultural capacity cooperation is key to improving agricultural productivity, optimizing industry structures, and achieving sustainable development. The BRICS nations, as major emerging economies, play a crucial role in this area. Understanding their recent cooperation and future trends is important for global agricultural cooperation. This study, analyzing data from 2010 to 2018, studies the progress of agricultural cooperation among BRICS countries. It identifies current cooperation shortcomings and suggests future development strategies. The findings highlight significant achievements in agricultural trade, investment, and technology cooperation facilitated by the BRICS 'top-down' mechanism. However, gaps remain in their cooperation mechanisms and environments. The future of BRICS agricultural cooperation is promising. Strengthening it will require improved mechanisms, information systems, and standard synchronization."

Comments by iGCU

The authors emphasize the significant potential for agricultural cooperation among BRICS countries, citing strong complementarity in agricultural resources, technology, and trade, and their pivotal role in global food security governance. However, differences in agricultural policies and technological levels create barriers to agricultural capacity cooperation and increase investment risks. Addressing these challenges requires expediting the synchronization of standards and opening a 'green channel' for agricultural capacity cooperation among the BRICS nations to reduce cooperation costs. Simultaneously, promoting the participation of multiple entities is crucial. Agricultural research institutions, serving as vital links between governments, businesses, and farmers, can enhance BRICS agricultural technology cooperation through joint projects and exchanges among young scientists. This approach can foster the formation of a multi-entity capacity cooperation mechanism, enhancing BRICS stability. Accelerating the implementation of related policies and systems will elevate agricultural capacity cooperation as a benchmark industry in the field of non-traditional security cooperation.

Reference

Chen, Tianjin [陈天金], Xiaohua Ke [柯小华], Yufeng Ren [任育锋], Zhemin Li [李哲敏]. 2020. Progress and Prospect of BRICS Agricultural Cooperation (金砖国家农业产能合作进展与未来展望). Agricultural Outlook (农业展望). 09: 122-127.

[Published in Sep. 2020]

DEEPEN BRICS PARTNERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND COUNTERMEASURES

深化金砖国家伙伴关系：挑战与应对

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Abstract

"As a cooperation mechanism among emerging economies, the BRICS partnership adheres to the guiding principles of sovereign equality, openness and inclusiveness, and mutually beneficial cooperation. The BRICS mechanism takes common development as its basic foothold and is committed to safeguarding world peace and advancing the well-being of humanity. Impacted by the dual impacts of the 'unprecedented changes unseen in a century' and the COVID-19 pandemic, the BRICS partnership faces new challenges, including diminishing strategic mutual trust, waning interest ties among member states, and the emergence of 'collective action problems'. Under such circumstances, further deepening the BRICS alliance is imperative, requiring efforts to strengthen cooperation on issues of common interests within BRICS, fostering innovation partnerships, and enhancing collective action."

Comments by iGCU

The author indicates that against the backdrop of the "unprecedented changes unseen in a century" and the COVID-19 pandemic, security challenges of various sorts have incessantly emerged across the globe. For example, the rise of anti-globalization sentiments, the surge in trade protectionism, the weakening of global economic growth momentum, the eruption of Russo-Ukrainian conflicts, and the rise of geopolitical risks. The author suggests that under the current situation, the BRICS partnership, as a relatively more stable and positive cooperation mechanism, could inject stability and positive energy into the international landscape. However, the author also notes that the problem of balancing the relationship between development and security is still a challenging issue that all BRICS countries would need to face. According to the author, building and implementing the BRICS partnerships during the New Industrial Revolution, deepening BRICS cooperation in digitization and industrialization, and grasping the opportunities the Fourth Industrial Revolution bring might be the key for BRICS countries to construct and develop a high-quality partnership.

Reference

Lu, Jing [卢静]. 2020. Deepen BRICS Partnership: Challenges and Countermeasures (深化金砖国家伙伴关系：挑战与应对). Contemporary World (当代世界). 12: 58-64.

[Published in Dec. 2020]

DIGITAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG BRICS COUNTRIES

金砖国家数字经济合作现状与前景

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Abstract

"Society today, characterized by a complex and volatile global political and economic landscape, the development of BRICS countries' digital economy is relatively well poised to maintain a stable growth momentum. This process has also sustained the development vitality of several emerging technologies, including Big Data (Analytics), Cloud Computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Also, the 'New Retail' and 'New Manufacturing' concepts are reshaping people's daily lives and influencing the values and principles underpinning the social governance of human society. Thanks to the BRICS countries' persistent efforts to improve their existing cooperation mechanism and facilitate innovative development of the digital economy, all member states' progress is now evident. The BRICS digital economy partnership has become an important driving force of global economic growth and a catalyst for reforming the global economic governance system. However, it is worth noting that the development of the digital economy has its practical, distinctive patterns and characteristics, presenting challenges for BRICS countries in deepening cooperation. It is essential for BRICS countries to reassess and re-understand national security risks that might be brought by technological breakthroughs across national borders and the impact of the excessive expansion of digital barons' authority on the global landscape. Regarding the cooperation mechanism's future path, BRICS member states can conduct functional cooperation to ease their differences and divergences, work together to explore the potential of boosting digital interests, and open up a new future for BRICS cooperation in the digital economy."

Comments by iGCU

Based on the review of the development patterns of the digital economy in BRICS countries, the authors conduct an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing BRICS digital economy cooperation and advance approaches to deepen BRICS cooperation in the field. The authors note that the current digital economy landscape has become the new economic growth engine for BRICS countries. Moreover, as the digitalization of social governance accelerates and economic and digital interdependence continues to grow, it is believed that the BRICS cooperation mechanism can further foster the development of member states' digital economies. Despite the many recorded significant achievements, the authors suggest that BRICS cooperation in the digital economy still faces several challenges. These challenges to the cooperation mechanism include the digital divide within the bloc, the changing dynamics of digital transformation processes, cybersecurity risks, and the increasingly concerning power rivalry in the digital economy. The authors reckon that under the current circumstances, a more appropriate strategy to deepen BRICS cooperation in the digital economy would be to adopt an "internal demand-driven" approach. The BRICS digital economy governance mechanism can be further improved by aligning with their different national governments' efforts to facilitate cooperation. Through more frequent functional cooperation, a solid foundation for future BRICS cooperation in the digital field can be gradually laid out. The authors argue that China's leading role will be pivotal during this process.

Reference

Liu, Jinqian [刘锦前], Xiao Sun [孙晓]. 2022. Digital Economic Cooperation among BRICS Countries (金砖国家数字经济合作现状与前景). *Contemporary International Relations (现代国际关系)*. 01: 44-52+62.

[Published in Jan. 2022]



THE 'CHINESE YEAR' OF BRICS: DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

金砖“中国年”：发展机遇与未来挑战

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Abstract

"In an era characterized by the interplay of the COVID-19 pandemic and profound changes unseen in a century, the BRICS cooperation mechanism needs to navigate through risks, uncover opportunities, and transform adversity into advantage. It must achieve this by demonstrating unity in pandemic response, fostering post-pandemic economic revival, and upholding multilateralism to contribute significantly to the collective strength of BRICS. First and foremost, BRICS should establish a pandemic-ready global community of health for all, stay committed and lead the fight against infectious diseases. Secondly, BRICS should emerge as a driving force for post-pandemic economic rejuvenation and the co-creation of a new era of global development. Lastly, BRICS should play a constructive role in practicing multilateralism, enhancing global governance, and promoting the democratization of international relations. Despite the formidable challenges, BRICS is poised to overcome developmental hurdles and Western skepticism. It will deepen its cooperation, refine its mechanisms, and enhance its reputation as a prominent player in South-South cooperation. This will ultimately serve as a beacon of hope and confidence, uniting nations in the fight against pandemics and propelling global economic recovery."

Comments by iGCU

This article, grounded in a precise understanding of the complex backdrop characterized by the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and profound global changes unseen in a century, conducts a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing the BRICS nations. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global supply chains, precipitated governance crises, and spurred the resurgence of "self-centered" and "jungle law" tendencies in international relations that coincide with a world grappling with unprecedented uncertainties. These uncertainties stem from shifts in the balance of power and the dynamics of major nations, which are inevitably bringing about significant disruptions and adjustments. As risks and opportunities invariably coexist, the BRICS cooperation mechanism must actively seek, create, and cultivate opportunities amidst these risks. This approach involves leveraging unity in pandemic response, facilitating post-pandemic economic recovery, and adhering to multilateralism to contribute effectively as a collective force. Nonetheless, overcoming developmental bottlenecks and countering Western skepticism pose challenges that the BRICS nations must confront in the future. Also, considerable disparities exist among member countries regarding national conditions and interests, leading to a relatively loose structural integrity of the cooperative mechanism. Hence, strengthening the mechanism's cohesive forces is essential. Additionally, in the face of Western pressures, it is imperative to maintain a clear understanding and prepare for appropriate responses.

Reference

He, Wenping [贺文萍]. 2022. The "Chinese Year" of BRICS: Development Opportunities and Future Challenges (金砖“中国年”：发展机遇与未来挑战). People's Tribune (人民论坛). 13: 102-107.

[Published in Jul. 2022]



INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING, PEKING UNIVERSITY

ADVANCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN FINANCE IN BRICS COUNTRIES, WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL

发展金砖国家绿色金融 共创可持续发展未来

Author:

Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the International Institute of Green Finance of the Central University of Finance and Economics Research Team (The BRICS Green Finance Cooperation Report)

Abstract

"The report reviews BRICS countries' current situation in developing green finance and proposes five policy recommendations for future cooperation in the field. The authors highlight notable achievements in recent years, specifically the gradual revision of the green finance categorization scheme (or classification system) and the standardization of the climate, environment, and ESG information disclosure mechanism. Moreover, the report underscores the establishment of incentives and restraint structures for green finance based on each BRICS country's unique characteristics, demonstrating their respective domestic situation. Notable examples include China's launch of a new monetary policy instrument – the carbon-reduction supporting tool – to support carbon emission reduction projects and South Africa's establishment of the Green Fund to attract foreign investment and national investment for environmental initiatives. Overall, the report highlights the formation of a green finance market within the BRICS bloc and the initiation of multi-field international cooperation on green finance. Thus, the authors reckon that in the next phase, the central banks and other financial regulators in BRICS countries should implement risk assessment and management measures to resolve climate issues and protect biodiversity within their green finance programs. Each member state's Treasury Department is encouraged to further improve the existing carbon pricing mechanism. The report also proposes the actualization of common green finance standards and the joint construction of an international cooperation mechanism within the bloc. Besides, the authors stress the importance of the BRICS countries leveraging each other's strengths and bolstering policy coordination to raise the overall (technological) capabilities and competitiveness of the bloc and developing countries worldwide in the field of green finance."

Comments by iGCU

The authors report that BRICS countries have made remarkable achievements in promoting green finance. However, BRICS member states should regulate the existing green financial system and enhance their competitiveness (as well as the competitiveness of other developing countries) in developing green finance. The authors suggest that BRICS countries, as representatives of developing countries, have strictly adhered to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and thus should continue the commitment and jointly promote the construction of global ecological civilization, contributing to improving global climate governance. Therefore, the authors highlight the importance of intensifying publicity efforts to demonstrate that BRICS countries are responsible powers. Meanwhile, when implementing specific green finance policies, it is essential to take each country's current carbon emissions level as well as their technological capabilities into consideration, launch a mutual assistance mechanism within the BRICS (in green finance), which can facilitate the diffusion and promotion of green financial technology as well as the relevant tools, and eventually, could help strengthen the intra-BRICS coordination.

Reference

Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the International Institute of Green Finance of the Central University of Finance and Economics Research Team (The BRICS Green Finance Cooperation Report) [中国工商银行与中央财经大学绿色金融国际研究院“金砖五国绿色金融合作报告”课题组]. 2022. Advancing the Development of Green Finance in BRICS Countries, Working Together to Achieve Sustainable Future for All (发展金砖国家绿色金融 共创可持续发展未来). *Modern Finance Guide (现代金融导刊)*. 2022(07): 83-84.

[Published in Dec. 2022]

SPEAKING FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE BASIS AND FUTURE OF EDUCATION COOPERATION AMONG THE MEMBERS OF BRICS

为发展中国家发声：金砖国家教育合作的基石与未来

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Author 02: ZHANG Minxuan (Prof.)

Professor at the Research Institute for Int'l & Comparative Education, SNU
Director of Center for Int'l Education Studies & Consultation, Ministry of Education



Abstract

"Born out of dissatisfaction with the Western-dominated world order and fueled by frustration with Western countries' reluctance to reform and rejections of change, the common goal of voicing out for developing countries is the cornerstone of BRICS cooperation. Over the past years, BRICS cooperation has expanded, with a focus transcending cooperation in financial investment to cover issues in thirty more areas, including health and hygiene, science, culture, counter-terrorism, and energy security. Also, the BRICS cooperation model has evolved, gradually transitioning from heavy reliance on existing international mechanisms. Rather, to a certain extent, BRICS countries have autonomously worked towards shaping a new world order. With the developed countries' dominance being challenged and increasing skepticism about the fairness and efficiency of traditional international organizations, new opportunities have emerged for BRICS countries to engage in global education governance and provide international education public goods. It is critical for all member states to push forward the consensus reached at the 9th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Education held in Beijing in 2022 not only to formulate but also to implement the BRICS Action Plan for Cooperation in Education. This move would improve BRICS countries' collective capacity to facilitate the development of developing countries, enabling the BRICS to move from the periphery to the center of the international education decision-making process."

Comments by iGCU

The author suggests no strong education cooperation exists among BRICS countries. However, their large populations and economic potential indicate that there is still ample room for education cooperation. Facing the pressure of the global economic downturn, the author believes that successfully strengthening education cooperation among BRICS countries requires several key actions. First, BRICS members have to enhance the sustainability of their economic development to provide financial support to the cooperation. Simultaneously, it is also necessary to boost external strategic communications efforts and foster the formation of a collective identity among BRICS countries. As an important part of people-to-people and cultural exchange cooperation, education cooperation is expected to play a more active role in dovetailing with other cooperation areas within the BRICS framework. The author also reckons that to gain support from as many countries as possible, it would be helpful to launch more communication programs accordingly to address each member state's differing educational concerns. Moreover, the author advocates BRICS countries to prioritize pressing and practical issues, including the education funding constraints exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the issue of fairness in education, which the digital divide in the modern era has negatively influenced.

Reference

Ding, Xiaojiong [丁笑炯], Minxuan Zhang [张民选]. 2022. Speaking for Developing Countries: The Basis and Future of Education Cooperation among the Members of BRICS (为发展中国家发声：金砖国家教育合作的基石与未来). Comparative Education Review (比较教育研究). 08: 3-11.

[Published in Aug. 2022]

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF BRICS COOPERATION IN AN ERA OF GREAT CHANGES: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

大变局下金砖合作提质升级空间广阔

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Abstract

"During the 2017 BRICS Summit, China formally proposed the 'BRICS Plus' expansion plan. In 2022, during a high-level dialogue on global development China hosted, 18 leaders from emerging markets and developing countries, including Egypt, Guinea, Mexico, Tajikistan, and Thailand were invited. The 'BRICS Plus' cooperation mode has seen further enrichment, with Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Argentina, and Algeria, formally requesting to join the group. If successful, this expansion would bolster the overall economic strength of the BRICS, enhancing its influence and positive force to shape the global landscape. BRICS countries have exemplified the rise of emerging economies and showcased their success stories of development to the world. Strengthening the BRICS cooperation mechanism would not only inject new impetus into the existing global governance system, but would also help promote a multi-polar world, accelerating the democratization of international relations."

Comments by iGCU

The authors indicate that expanding the BRICS mechanism would benefit member countries by fostering solidarity and increasing cooperation with other emerging markets and developing countries, leading to broader partnerships. It would also provide emerging markets and developing countries invaluable opportunities to contribute significantly to global economic growth. Regarding digital and green development, the authors advocate for BRICS countries to collaborate on energy and digital industrial supply chains to cope with the burdens of rising energy demands and the imperative for green and low-carbon transitions. Concerning supply chain, the authors point out the presence of top manufacturing countries and energy-rich countries within the bloc that possess huge consumer markets with vast potential, suggesting that joint efforts and security cooperation on supply chain could stabilize the global supply chain. Under the current circumstances of certain Western countries advocating for "decoupling" policies and supply chains disruptions, the authors underscore the practical significance of BRICS countries playing active roles in stabilizing the global supply chain.

Reference

Ding, Xiaojiong [丁笑炯], Minxuan Zhang [张民选]. 2023. Speaking for Developing Countries: The Basis and Future of Education Cooperation among the Members of BRICS (为发展中国家发声: 金砖国家教育合作的基石与未来). *Comparative Education Review (比较教育研究)*. 08: 3-11.

[Published in Aug. 2023]



ANALYSIS OF THE BRICS INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE "BRICS SOUTH AFRICA YEAR"

“金砖南非年”视角下的金砖机制建设评析

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Abstract

"The official announcement of the historic expansion of the BRICS mechanism occurred during the BRICS Summit 2023 held in South Africa. As the bloc continues to grow, it has become an important force in shaping the international landscape, poised to profoundly influence the world's developmental process. The 2023 BRICS summit emphasized the interests and agenda of African countries. The ongoing broadening and deepening of the BRICS mechanism will bring new opportunities for global peace and development. More importantly, it will inject a heightened sense of the 'BRICS spirit' and energy into establishing a fair, just, effective, and balanced new global governance framework in the post-COVID pandemic era. Given the new circumstances, BRICS countries urgently need to strengthen exchanges and cooperation to address pressing global and regional issues, improve global financial governance, facilitate people-to-people exchanges, foster mutual understanding among civilizations, and strengthen international communication capacity."

Comments by iGCU

The author begins by highlighting the remarkable collective achievements of BRICS countries since establishing the BRICS mechanism. He then emphasizes the vast development potential of the BRICS mechanism in Africa, summarizing the four key ways to further broaden and deepen BRICS cooperation among BRICS countries. The author notes that BRICS cooperation has demonstrated a robust momentum of outstanding achievements over the past decade, emphasizing positive outcomes in political security, economy, trade, finance, and people-to-people exchanges. The author indicates that the BRICS mechanism, a large-scale comprehensive multilateral mechanism, has gradually evolved into a "three-wheel drive" cooperation mechanism, with political and security, economic and financial, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges forming its pillars. This structure positions BRICS as the largest and most influential global governance platform in the "Global South". Particularly, given the development opportunities and challenges in South Africa and Africa in general, more African issues have been added to the cooperation agenda of the BRICS 'Year of South Africa' 2023, reflecting a response to the demands of South Africa and other African countries. As the world enters a new period of turbulence, the author advocates for strengthening communications and cooperation among BRICS countries on international and regional hotspot issues, expanding cooperation in global financial governance, enhancing exchanges and mutual understanding among civilizations, and deepening cooperation in international communication capacity building. The author reckons that it is always important for BRICS countries to identify areas of cooperation that align with the current trends and further broaden and deepen the existing cooperation to empower the global governance system.

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BRICS EXPANSION DEMONSTRATES OPENNESS AND INCLUSIVENESS

金砖国家网络安全合作：进展与深化路径

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Abstract

"The BRICS expansion reflects successful negotiations among member states, showing the mechanism's openness to addressing all parties' concerns. This expansion demonstrates its inclusiveness, highlighting its resilience and tenacity as a leading representative mechanism of the 'Global South'. Unlike the 'Club of Acquaintances' among Western developed countries, BRICS' inclusivity is built upon the mutual acknowledgment of the member states. As the key members of the Global South and main representatives of emerging market economies and developing countries, BRICS member understand the structural disadvantages of the non-inclusive mechanism of the West. Despite cultural, historical, and other differences, BRICS countries are committed to forging their development paths and achieving mutual goals of modernization. With more like-minded countries from the Global South willing to join the mechanism, BRICS expansion injects vigorous impetus into promoting changes in the global governance system, transforming into a fairer and more rational one."

Comments by iGCU

This article provides an overview of the BRICS expansion, evaluating its organizational characteristics in comparison to the "small cliques" of the West. It also discusses the prospects for the BRICS after the expansion and its significance for global governance. BRICS cooperation is built on principles of equality, consensus, and mutual respect for sovereignty as well as the core interests and concerns of each member. Unlike the Western-led mechanism, BRICS stresses pragmatic cooperation through negotiations rather than following the principle of "majority rule". The BRICS expansion did not happen overnight; it was a result of dialogue and communication, effectively bridging member states differences to reach solutions that ensure safety, comfort, and respect for all parties involved. As a leading representative mechanism of the Global South, BRICS demonstrates flexibility, resilience, and inclusiveness. The author believes that the expanded BRICS mechanism would bring vitality and new hope to the revitalization and transformation of the present system of multilateralism, encouraging all parties to collaborate in addressing global challenges.

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CHINESE PERSPECTIVES ON THE BRICS MECHANISM