

Russia – South Africa, BRICS Format

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The study will represent the analysis of the main features of Russia – South Africa relationship in the BRICS format to clarify the comprehension of the nature of discussion on revival of bilateral interest. To fully address the topic it is essential to understand the history and the nature of South African - Russian relations. The main question to be answered is - what is the right path for fruitful development of bilateral partnership – reliance on historical background or its negation.

It is important to understand the contemporary ambience for bilateral relations. The world order is undergoing significant changes. There is a process of power shift that must be acknowledged. Emerging (and re-emerging) powers are gaining weight and it is not only the BRIC countries, in much broader view, it includes South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, Malaysia and others. Nevertheless, the BRIC format attracts the most attention and gets the main focus of the undergoing processes of change. What are the criteria (economical, political) for inclusion in “the club”? Under such circumstances what is the role of African continent in whole and South Africa in particular in such processes? Is Africa a partner or a terrain for competition? What are the most important features of BRIC policies towards the continent and South Africa in particular? And more important what role SA plays in these processes?

To analyse the bilateral relationship it is important to understand the current Russian imperatives on the world arena, as well as to go through revision of South African foreign policy principles. South Africa has strong and growing ties with Brazil, India and China. The question rests what are the perspectives for Russia.

The main economical and political events of bilateral relations in the last few years should go under revision to understand if there are more than just potential in the bilateral relations and what kind of challenges and opportunities would bring bilateral partnership.

Thus, this paper will focus on the integrity of these issues with the main focus of research on how does this continuity of changes in the world arena influence the bilateral relations between South Africa and Russia and is there a ground for a new level of partnership.