

BRICS: Marking a New Impetus in South Africa's Foreign Policy or Just Another Brick in the Wall?

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South Africa's admission into the BRIC Club has been finally realized by President Zuma's charm offensive. Not only does Bric membership elevate Pretoria's diplomatic ambitions but it also indicates to the rest of the world that SA is the strategic African voice on the global transformative agenda. But apart from the normative view about what SA brings to the BRIC alliance, notwithstanding the economic opportunities that opens up for corporate engagement, it seems somewhat curious about the intention to invite South Africa to join and Pretoria's overwhelming need to be accepted into what is becoming a prestigious entity.

In light of the above and other considerations the proposed paper will attempt to evaluate who gains more out of BRIC: SA or its alliance members. To what extent is admission into BRIC a way to revitalise South Africa's foreign policy and to punch above its weight in a club where Pretoria may incessantly see itself as a junior partner. The paper will conclude by assessing whether SA's own international recognition and activism for global reform and championing the integration and developmental agenda of Africa may compromise Pretoria's independent discourse on the global development narrative and bridging the divide between the North and the South. While further embedding South Africa's ambivalent Africa policy and reinforcing the view that Pretoria does not speak with an African voice.