

Brazil at a BRICS Crossroads

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The research problem proposed in this study is to expound the idea of how BRICS, after its recent expansion, outlines itself in 2026 as a cooperative performer while preserving the foreign-policy sovereignty of highly diverse member states. The relevance of the topic is determined by the institutional transition from the Brazilian chairship in 2025 to the Indian chairship in 2026, by the emergence of a two-tier structure of member states and partner countries, and by growing pressure on the group to clarify whether it is primarily a political counterbalance to the West or a pragmatic manifesto for development-oriented coordination [1, 2].

The main objective of the study is to identify the relationship amidst national interests and conventional strategy in BRICS in 2026. The analysis was conducted by citing recent research works on the expansion of BRICS and informal institutionalism, as well as on the concepts of Brazil's "autonomy through diversification" and "active non-alignment," which help explain why rising world powers seek to expand a wider room for foreign policy manoeuvre without being constrained by rigid bloc discipline [2-4]. Systematically, the work combines the analysis of texts and official works of BRICS documents from 2025–2026 with a comparative assessment of the strategic alignments which may create both cohesion and division amid the member states [5-7].

The analysis indicates that BRICS in 2026 should not be understood as a cohesive anti-Western alliance but as a consensus-based coalition of the Global South states whose members converge selectively around a narrow set of objectives. The major areas of common strategic convergence include reform of global governance, securing policy space for developing countries, development of finance, and larger use of local currency and payment arrangements [2]. This analysis, in addition, also suggests that BRICS cooperation remains highly visible in sectors of finance, health, climate, innovation, and artificial intelligence governance [8, 9].

The presidency of Brazil in 2025 framed these priorities through the discourse of inclusive and sustainable governance. Meanwhile, the presidency of India in 2026 reformulated these ideas around innovation, cooperation, resilience, and sustainability, further indicating substantial continuity rather than disagreement [6, 8]. All together, this expansion has provided a pathway towards an increase of representational weight and has also intensified the costs for coordination [7]. The rule of consensus consolidates the authority of decisions made by BRICS, yet it also reassures the least common denominators and constraints overt geopolitical positioning, making it difficult in case there are disagreements of member interests where their interests do not align [5, 8].

The central idea for the conclusion is that the BRICS self-identification in 2026 is built on "functional plurilateralism". This is the group that seeks to reform unequal international structures but is at the same time trying to avoid the transformation into a formalized military-political

bloc. The common strategy remains worthwhile, resulting in cooperation and generating tangible club goods and low sovereignty costs, which would especially be made possible through the New Development Bank by focusing on climate-finance initiatives, risk-mitigation instruments, and sectoral cooperation [6, 8, 9]. For Brazil, this signifies that participation in BRICS remains a rational strategy so far [10]. The BRICS forum expands, simultaneously expanding the diplomatic autonomy, and this in turn supports issue-based coalition building rather than imposing the binary geopolitical alignment [3, 4]. Therefore, BRICS in 2026 should be interpreted as a flexible institutional mechanism for negotiated multipolarity which is united by demands for reform, yet sustained only through practical and implementable forms of cooperation [8-10].

Источники и литература

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