

## **Economic and Political Factors in Defense Strategy Formulation: a BRICS Country Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*This narrative provides a comprehensive analysis of the economic, political, and diplomatic factors influencing defense strategy formulation within the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) context. Drawing on a wide range of sources, the narrative explores the historical evolution and recent shifts in BRICS defense strategies, highlighting the diverse approaches of member nations. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, systematically gathering secondary data from academic journals, governmental reports, and reputable websites. The analysis focuses on the interplay between economic conditions, political dynamics, and defense strategy formulation in BRICS nations, providing nuanced insights into how these factors shape defense policies. It examines the influence of economic dependency on defense policies, emphasizing the role of economic stability in sustaining robust defense capabilities. Additionally, the narrative delves into the impact of political systems and leadership dynamics on defense strategy formulation, as well as the significance of diplomatic relations and security considerations. The findings underscore the complex interplay between economic, political, and defense factors within the BRICS framework, with implications for regional stability and resilience. The study finds that economic dependency is a pivotal factor in shaping BRICS defense strategies, with economic stability underpinning the capacity for robust defense capabilities. Political systems and leadership dynamics also play a crucial role, with centralized systems facilitating assertiveness and democratic frameworks emphasizing consensus-building. Diplomatic relations and security cooperation are integral to these strategies, highlighting the importance of strategic collaboration in addressing shared security challenges. The expansion of BRICS introduces new dynamics, particularly in energy investment and trade, requiring adaptive strategies to maintain stability and resilience. Finally, the narrative suggests future research directions to further explore these dynamics and enrich our understanding of BRICS defense strategies in the evolving global security landscape.*

**Keywords:** *BRICS Defense Strategies, Economic Dependency, Political Dynamics.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The BRICS group of nations, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, has emerged as a significant force in shaping the global direction in the era of geopolitical uncertainty. The expansion of the group, which now includes Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina, and the United Arab Emirates, has far-reaching implications on the world's energy dynamics and geopolitics (Shaarawy, 2023).

The BRICS group, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, is a geopolitical bloc that exhibits economic diversity and military capabilities, enhancing its overall power globally. The group's expansion, which includes six new member countries (Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), is perceived as a significant challenge to the existing global order, potentially shifting alliances and challenging the established status quo (Du Plessis et al., 2023). However, diverse political systems and agendas within the BRICS nations can complicate efforts to present a unified front on global issues. The BRICS nations respond differently to geopolitical risks, influencing stock market volatility (Mulrenan, 2023). As the group evolves, it will be crucial to monitor how these diverse nations coordinate their actions, address regional conflicts, and navigate the complex intersection of interests and values.

Economic and political factors that distinguish each country influence the defense strategies of the BRICS nations. The BRICS group challenges the existing global order by representing more than 40% of the world's population and offering an alternative economic and governance platform that seeks to create momentum toward diverse representation. However, the group's diverse political systems and agendas can complicate efforts to present a unified front on global issues (Brosig, 2021). The BRICS nations respond differently to geopolitical risks, influencing stock market volatility. The expansion of the BRICS group, which includes six new member countries, is perceived as a significant challenge to the existing global order, potentially shifting alliances and challenging the established status quo. The BRICS group has played a role in preventing unwanted foreign policy outcomes, such as the ousting of Assad and the isolation and sanctioning of Russia. A competition between China and India for influence within the bloc primarily shapes the internal dynamics within the group. While the BRICS group maintains significant aspirations, it also confronts fresh obstacles (Darnal, 2023).

Specific economic and political factors intricately shape the defense strategies of the BRICS nations. The combined contribution of 15% to the world's GDP and a population exceeding 2.8 billion positions the BRICS countries as crucial actors in the global economy, gaining economic and political influence as the share of industrialized nations declines (Narayanaswami, 1897). Challenges such as political instability, social inequality, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, environmental issues, and demographic pressures further influence their defense strategies and international relations (Azahaf & Tischler, 2012). The BRICS nations are motivated by concerns over Western dominance in diplomacy and military technology, driving efforts to balance the influence of developed nations (Troitskiy, 2015). Additionally, the group challenges the existing global order by presenting an alternative economic and governance platform, with its expansion posing a significant challenge to the established status quo. The internal dynamics, particularly the power contest between China and India within the group, further shape defense strategies and international relations (Darnal, 2023). The BRICS nations' responses to military threats and interventions underscore their focus on preventing undesirable foreign policy outcomes and countering Western policy preferences, highlighting the growing integration between defense, economic, and political policies within the group.

On the political front, defense policies are closely connected to internal and external dynamics, involving diplomatic finesse and strategic alliances to establish a robust defense framework. Effective and forward-thinking political leadership is crucial in formulating these policies. The BRICS nations express concerns about Western dominance across various domains, challenging the established global order by proposing an alternative economic and governance model. Internal power dynamics, especially the rivalry between China and India, further mold defense strategies and international relations (Panda, 2023).

The search results provide insights into the complex interplay between economic growth, political dynamics, and defense policies within the BRICS nations. The BRICS group, comprising more than half of the world's population and wielding significant economic influence, has the potential to shape the international security agenda. The group's growing economic and political power has the potential to challenge the interests of other global powers, such as the EU and the United States, in various multilateral forums and on the international stage. Peter Lowe (2016) in his research journal predicts that BRICS countries will gain significant influence in the world's geopolitical landscape in the future. The country with the biggest claim to being recognized as a major player in the world economy is China. Given their relative capabilities, India and Brazil have a good chance of becoming key participants in the increasingly multipolar world that will have emerged in the next two decades. Russia has the most obstacles to overcome before regaining its position in the world, but it is still capable of succeeding, especially if demand for commodities increases. It is likely that South Africa will

continue to be a dominant force in Sub-Saharan Africa and not a major player on the world stage. The success of each nation will also depend on how strong the BRICS alliance is.

In analyzing economic factors, the defense resilience of BRICS can be considered as an indicator of their prosperity and sustainability in facing various global pressures. According to Shameem & Jayaprasad (2020), the BRICS alliance is a recently established alliance with the potential to challenge Western hegemony globally in the context of international political economy. The BRICS economies are more resilient to global shocks thanks to their flexible markets and sound economic policy frameworks, which also promote the development of low-income nations by fostering closer trade and investment ties. A significant factor in their economic expansion and advancement, their FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), commerce, and migration movements have all contributed to their economic growth and development.

Economic diversification is not only a business strategy, but also a critical consideration in maintaining national sovereignty and security. The development of robust military technology capabilities also reflects their commitment to innovation and a strategic role on the global stage (Van Ham, 2015). The necessity for cooperation among BRICS nations in the realm of security, evident at both the inter-state and global levels, presents opportunities across various modern security concepts, each with its unique characteristic. The BRICS nations express concerns about Western dominance across various domains and are developing a so-called 'parallel order' as an alternative to existing Western-dominated international forums (Martynov, 2020).

The dominance of the West across various domains, including diplomatic efficacy, military projection capabilities, and advancements in cutting-edge military technologies, troubles the BRICS nations. Despite their concerns, the BRICS group's political cohesion is brittle, and there are many opportunities for the EU and the United States to engage with the group. The BRICS nations' responses to military threats highlight a commitment to preventing undesirable foreign policy outcomes and countering Western preferences, underscoring the deep integration of defense, economic, and political policies within the group.

In summary, the search results provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic and political factors that shape the defense strategies of the BRICS nations and their potential impact on global security dynamics. The BRICS group's efforts to develop a parallel order and its concerns about Western dominance underscore the group's growing influence and its role as a central player in the evolving global security landscape.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research on "Economic and Political Factors in Defense Strategy Formulation: A BRICS Country Perspective" adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the role of economic and political factors in shaping defense strategies within the context of BRICS countries. Secondary data were systematically gathered from diverse sources, including academic journals, governmental reports, and reputable websites relevant to the study's focus (Sugiyono, 2013). Through meticulous analysis, the research aims to provide insights into how economic and political dynamics influence the formulation of defense strategies among BRICS nations. By employing a qualitative descriptive methodology, the study delves into the intricate interplay between economic conditions, political dynamics, and defense strategy formulation. Drawing from a wide array of scholarly sources and governmental publications, the research seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors shaping defense policies within the BRICS context.

In exploring the nexus between economic and political factors in defense strategy formulation, the research underscores the significance of effective policy implementation and the

need for strategic foresight. By integrating qualitative data and descriptive analysis, the study endeavors to shed light on the complexities inherent in developing defense strategies amidst evolving economic and political landscapes within BRICS countries.

Within the realm of defense strategy formulation, the research emphasizes the importance of integrating economic and political considerations to enhance national security and resilience. By adopting a qualitative descriptive approach, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the strategic decision-making processes of BRICS nations, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamic interactions between economics, politics, and defense within this geopolitical framework.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of BRICS Defense Strategy

#### 1. The Historical Evolution of Defense Strategy

There are several articles discussing the BRICS alliance and its historical trajectory of defense strategies. The BRICS alliance consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (Käkönen, 2014). Each member nation has contributed to the collective evolution of BRICS defense strategies, shaped by its unique historical context. Brazil has emphasized regional stability and has historically navigated a path of balanced deterrence. Russia has exhibited a strategic focus on technological innovation and asymmetric capabilities, drawing from its imperial legacy. India has nuanced its defense strategy to reflect a balance between regional security and global cooperation, guided by its non-aligned principles. China has strategically expanded its defense capabilities, emphasizing maritime and technological prowess, propelled by economic ascendancy. South Africa has contributed a distinct African perspective to the BRICS defense narrative, with its emphasis on peacekeeping. The historical narrative underscores the adaptability of BRICS defense strategies, molded by geopolitical shifts and the pursuit of national interests (Greene, 2023).

The main geopolitical challenges faced by BRICS countries include divergent geopolitical interests, lack of common ideology or shared political values, and suspicion among the member states. The members of the bloc agree on opposing Western hegemony but have different political and economic expectations, making sustainability a significant problem for BRICS. The bloc was established mainly for pragmatic and conjunctural reasons, and the members come from different historical backgrounds and civilizations, making it difficult to maintain a common ideology or shared political values.

#### 2. Recent Shifts in Defense Strategy

The emergence of hybrid warfare, cyber threats, and non-traditional challenges has compelled BRICS nations to recalibrate their defense postures. Recent adjustments in the defense strategies of each BRICS nation include:

Country	Action taken
Brazil	Invested in cyber capabilities and border security
Rusia	Emphasized strategic deterrence and technological advancements
India	Diversifying its defense collaborations and modernizing its armed forces
China	Shifted its emphasis to naval capabilities, space, and cyber domains



South Africa	Defense strategy resonates with continental stability, contributing to peacekeeping efforts and regional cooperation
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Sources : Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2023

These adjustments underscore the agility of BRICS nations in responding to contemporary security challenges, showcasing a commitment to cooperative security frameworks and technological advancements as pillars of their evolving defense strategies. The recent expansion of BRICS to include six new members, including Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, has prompted questions about the future of the bloc. The expansion could have important implications for energy investment and trade, as it brings together large mineral resource holders and major oil producers, as well as some of the fastest-growing energy consumers (Baskaran & Cahill, 2023).

### **Future Trajectory and Collaborative Prospects**

#### **1. Anticipated Trends in BRICS Defense Strategies**

As the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, several trends are anticipated to shape the future trajectory of BRICS defense strategies. These include:

- Emphasis on technological superiority and innovation, with investments in artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, and autonomous systems gaining prominence.
- Maritime security, driven by global trade dynamics, is likely to be a focal point for defense strategies, particularly evident in the strategies of China and India.
- Multilateral collaborations, within BRICS and beyond, are expected to intensify, with joint exercises, agreements on information sharing, and collaborative research efforts laying the groundwork for a unified security framework.
- As hybrid threats continue to morph, the adaptive nature of BRICS defense strategies will become increasingly vital, necessitating a holistic approach that integrates military capabilities, economic resilience, and diplomatic agility.

BRICS nations possess the potential to positively impact regional and global security through their military capabilities, involvement in peacekeeping endeavors, counterterrorism efforts, and humanitarian aid contributions. Additionally, they can leverage emerging technologies to address societal issues, enhance productivity, and stimulate economic growth. By fostering an innovative environment, BRICS can establish itself as a hub for technological advancement, drawing investment and talent globally. Nevertheless, they encounter challenges from other influential global players, including geopolitical competition and economic protectionism. To overcome these hurdles, BRICS must develop astute and adaptable strategies (Putri & Santoso, 2023).

#### **2. Collaborative Prospects for BRICS Defense Cooperation**

BRICS countries exhibit significant potential for collaborative defense cooperation, offering a constructive pathway towards bolstering stability and resilience amidst shared challenges. Leveraging their military strengths, these nations can actively contribute to various peacekeeping endeavors, counterterrorism initiatives, and humanitarian assistance efforts, thus playing a pivotal role in maintaining both regional and global security (Putri & Santoso, 2023). The recent 7th Meeting of the BRICS High Representatives for Security Issues underscored the importance of multilateral security cooperation, emphasizing discussions on counterterrorism, cybersecurity, energy security, and practical security collaboration, including the establishment of a BRICS Intelligence Forum. However, while the prospects for ambitious multilateral security cooperation among the largest BRICS members may seem constrained, initiatives such as the Xiamen Declaration and the emphasis on strengthening defense capabilities in response to global financial crises underscore the group's commitment to enhancing collective security and resilience.

Despite the promising prospects for BRICS defense cooperation, the group's future trajectory remains subject to geopolitical shifts and internal dynamics. Questions regarding the group's expansion and its evolving role and objectives loom large, necessitating adaptive strategies and diplomatic approaches. The search results highlight the importance of these strategies in navigating global influences and effectively addressing shared security challenges. Through collaborative efforts and a proactive stance, BRICS countries stand poised to not only enhance their defense capabilities and technological innovation, but also to fortify economic resilience and assert their influence on the global stage.

### **Economic Factors in BRICS Defense Strategy**

#### **1. Economic Dependency as a Driving Factor**

Economic dependency serves as a pivotal driving force in shaping defense strategies of BRICS nations, underscoring the intricate interplay between economic prosperity and national security imperatives. The economic prowess of each member nation within the BRICS alliance influences strategic decision-making processes, as economic stability underpins the capacity to sustain robust defense capabilities (Streltsov et al., 2021). The strategic calculus of BRICS defense strategies thus reflects a nuanced understanding of the economic underpinnings that shape national security priorities, highlighting the centrality of economic dependency as a driving factor in defense strategy formulation (Singh & Singh, 2023).

China's economic ascendancy has significantly influenced its strategic expansions in defense capabilities, particularly in maritime and technological domains. This reflects a symbiotic relationship between economic prosperity and military modernization. Similarly, South Africa's emphasis on peacekeeping efforts is closely intertwined with its economic aspirations. Stability within the African continent is perceived as conducive to economic growth and regional influence. The economic underpinnings that shape national security priorities of BRICS nations are evident in their strategic decision-making processes. The economic strength of each member nation within the BRICS alliance plays a crucial role in shaping defense strategies, as economic stability is fundamental to sustaining robust defense capabilities (Duggan et al., 2022).

Overall, the strategic calculus of BRICS defense strategies reflects a nuanced understanding of the economic factors at play. Economic dependency serves as a driving factor in defense strategy formulation, highlighting the intricate connection between economic prosperity and national security priorities within the BRICS context. As such, the search results provide valuable insights into how economic considerations shape the defense policies of BRICS nations, illustrating the centrality of economic stability in guiding strategic decision-making processes (Streltsov et al., 2021).

#### **2. Potential Impacts of Economic Crisis on Defense**

The potential impacts of economic crises on defense within the BRICS framework present complex challenges, underscoring the vulnerability of defense capabilities to economic fluctuations. Economic downturns, characterized by fiscal constraints and budgetary austerity measures, have the potential to undermine defense, expenditure and procurement, limiting investments in critical defense infrastructure and modernization efforts. Brazil, for example, faced challenges in sustaining defense spending amidst economic recessions, leading to delays in procurement programs and resource constraints in maintaining operational readiness. Similarly, Russia's defense modernization ambitions have been impacted by economic sanctions and oil price volatility, necessitating prioritization and resource optimization within defense budgets (Putri & Santoso, 2023).

The strategic approach of BRICS defense strategies demonstrates a deep understanding of the economic factors that shape national security priorities, emphasizing the significant role of economic dependency in formulating defense strategies. Insights from various sources highlight the economic challenges faced by BRICS nations and their potential impacts on defense

capabilities. These include the aftermath of the global financial crisis, which prompted BRICS countries to bolster their defenses against perceived US power, positioning themselves as aspirational nations capable of sustained economic growth (Duggan et al., 2022). Furthermore, there's a recognition of the need for BRICS to develop adaptable strategies to navigate the dynamic global landscape effectively. The BRICS Summit Xiamen Declaration underscores this by endorsing initiatives like the establishment of a BRICS Intelligence Forum. Overall, the economic strength of BRICS nations profoundly influences their strategic decision-making processes, highlighting the centrality of economic dependency in shaping defense strategies.

### **Political Factors in BRICS Defense Strategy**

#### **1. The Influence of Political Systems and Leadership**

The influence of political systems and leadership dynamics significantly shapes the defense strategies of BRICS nations. Brazil's democratic framework emphasizes civilian control over the military and decision-making through consensus-building. Russia's centralized political system drives assertiveness and geopolitical pragmatism in defense strategies, with leadership directives guiding military modernization efforts. India's pluralistic democracy fosters a strategic approach that balances regional security imperatives with multilateral engagements, reflecting a commitment to non-alignment principles and diplomatic maneuverability (Duggan et al., 2022).

The BRICS group's success and its ability to deepen collaboration despite challenges have been attributed to its institutional dynamics and structural leadership (Gallagher & Papa, 2023). Political changes and the ability to clarify objectives and overcome internal challenges influence the future of BRICS. The expansion of BRICS prompts questions about its future role and its potential to push for concrete proposals for reform of international governance (Darnal, 2023). Leadership dynamics within BRICS influence the space-related implications of the expanded alliance, including the potential for new collaborative space projects. The BRICS group is seen as a rival to the G7, with both blocs seeking influence and support on the global stage, reflecting the geopolitical implications of their respective leadership dynamics (Smith, 2023).

China's authoritarian regime, facilitating a centralized approach to defense policymaking, enables swift responses to emerging security challenges and the pursuit of long-term strategic objectives aligned with its vision of national rejuvenation. The regime's control extends to the internet, with the "Great Firewall" serving as a model for other authoritarian regimes and posing an international threat by prioritizing national security and social stability over individual freedoms (Foley, 2023). On the other hand, South Africa's democratic transition has led to a strategic focus on regional stability and multilateral cooperation, reflecting a commitment to African solidarity and peacekeeping efforts. The diverse political landscapes of BRICS nations underscore the complexity of defense strategy formulation, highlighting the need for leadership cohesion and political consensus to effectively navigate evolving security challenges. The search results provide insights into the contrasting approaches to defense strategy formulation in authoritarian and democratic contexts, emphasizing the implications for national security and international relations.

#### **2. Diplomatic Relations and Security in Defense Strategy Formation**

Diplomatic relations and security considerations form integral components of BRICS defense strategy formulation, reflecting the imperative of strategic collaboration and geopolitical alignment in safeguarding national interests. The diplomatic landscape of BRICS nations, characterized by diverse bilateral and multilateral engagements, shapes defense strategies through strategic partnerships, alliance formations, and security cooperation frameworks (Han & Papa, 2022).

BRICS defense strategy formulation encompasses distinct approaches from member nations: Brazil prioritizes South-South cooperation and regional integration to bolster stability within Latin America, while Russia emphasizes strategic alliances and security arrangements with

neighboring states to project influence across regional and global security arenas. India's strategy focuses on engagements with like-minded democracies and emerging powers to foster interoperability and address shared security challenges. These diverse approaches underscore the significance of diplomatic networks, alliances, and cooperation frameworks in navigating evolving security landscapes within the BRICS context (Putri & Santoso, 2023).

The strategic collaborations and geopolitical alignments of its member states influence the diplomatic and security dynamics within the BRICS framework. China's proactive diplomacy and assertive regional posture have shaped its defense strategies through the cultivation of strategic partnerships, economic diplomacy, and engagement in multilateral fora, expanding its security footprint and influence. South Africa's diplomatic initiatives within the African Union and regional blocs have contributed to peacekeeping efforts and conflict resolution, reinforcing its defense strategy's emphasis on regional stability and collective security. The intertwining of diplomatic relations and security imperatives underscores the strategic importance of fostering cooperative frameworks and strategic partnerships in addressing evolving security challenges within the BRICS framework (Putri & Santoso, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

### Summary of Research Findings

The research findings highlight the significant influence of economic factors on the defense strategies of BRICS nations. Economic dependency emerges as a pivotal driving force shaping defense strategies, underscoring the intricate interplay between economic prosperity and national security imperatives. The economic strength of each member nation within the BRICS alliance profoundly influences strategic decision-making processes, as economic stability underpins the capacity to sustain robust defense capabilities. Insights from various sources underscore the challenges and opportunities posed by economic factors, including the potential impacts of economic crises on defense capabilities and the imperative of economic diversification in maintaining defense resilience. Overall, economic considerations play a central role in shaping defense policies, reflecting a nuanced understanding of the economic underpinnings that guide strategic decision-making processes within the BRICS context.

Political factors also significantly shape BRICS defense strategies, with the influence of political systems and leadership dynamics playing a pivotal role. The diverse political landscapes of BRICS nations, characterized by varying governance structures and leadership styles, underscore the complexity of defense strategy formulation. While democratic frameworks emphasize civilian control over the military and consensus-building, centralized political systems facilitate assertiveness and geopolitical pragmatism. Diplomatic relations and security considerations form integral components of defense strategy formulation, reflecting the imperative of strategic collaboration and geopolitical alignment in safeguarding national interests. The search results provide insights into the contrasting approaches to defense strategy formulation in authoritarian and democratic contexts, emphasizing the implications for national security and international relations.

### Implications for the Future

The findings have several strategic and policy implications for the future of defense strategy formulation within the BRICS context. Firstly, there is a need for BRICS nations to continue prioritizing economic stability and diversification to bolster defense resilience amidst global uncertainties. Strategic investments in military technology, human resources, and defense research should be aligned with broader economic development goals. Additionally, enhancing diplomatic alliances and security cooperation frameworks is crucial for navigating evolving



security landscapes and addressing shared challenges effectively. Developing adaptive strategies that integrate economic, political, and defense policies is essential for promoting regional stability and resilience within the BRICS alliance.

Future research endeavors should focus on further exploring the intricate interplay between economic, political, and defense factors within the BRICS framework. Comparative analyses of defense strategies across member nations could provide valuable insights into the impact of different political systems and leadership dynamics on defense policy formulation. Additionally, investigating the role of emerging technologies and hybrid warfare in shaping defense strategies within the BRICS context would contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary security challenges. Furthermore, longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of BRICS defense strategies over time could offer valuable insights into the adaptive responses of member nations to changing geopolitical dynamics and economic realities. Overall, future research efforts should aim to enrich our understanding of complex dynamics influencing defense strategy formulation within the BRICS alliance.

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