

The background of the cover features a stylized map of the African continent in a light green color. Overlaid on this map is a network of white dashed lines that connect various points across the continent, suggesting a global or regional connectivity theme. The title text is prominently displayed in the center-left area, with 'Africa's' and 'BRICS' in a dark red color, and the remaining words in a bold, black sans-serif font.

# Africa's Strategic Partnerships with **BRICS** and other Emerging Countries

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# Africa's Strategic Partnerships with BRICS and other Emerging Countries

**Siphamandla Zondi & Hellen Adogo (Eds.)**

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Our contemporary conjuncture is characterised by increasing inter- and intra-national inequities, escalating polycrises, and geopolitical turmoil. The primary contradictions of the global capitalist mode of production bedevil prospects for progressive economic integration as national policy sovereignty is surrendered and ecological precarity expands exponentially.

Notwithstanding spectacular improvements in the development of productive capacities and capabilities amongst some countries on the periphery and semi-periphery of world systems, the advanced and more developed capitalist economies remain hegemonic and continue to seek to maintain and reproduce their hitherto dominance. It is into this contested temporal and contextual space that Siphamandla Zondi and Hellen Adogo have produced an interesting and challenging book entitled *Africa's Strategic Partnerships with BRICS and other Emerging Countries*, which has been published by Jacana Media.

According to Professor Zondi, the book is about the strategic partnerships developed between various countries and Africa in the post-cold war period.

The book is extensive, comprises a total of 23 chapters and is divided into two parts. The first part includes a conceptual introduction and 11 chapters that present critical analyses of the continent of Africa's relationships with Brazil, Russia, India, China, Nigeria, Egypt, and other African countries. The second part is made up of nine country-level studies of some Caribbean states, Iran, Turkey, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, and Türkiye, followed by a generalised concluding chapter. The 415 pages of substantive text collates a combined authorship of approximately 29 individual scholars with the majority being affiliated with the University of Johannesburg.

With such a wide variety of authors, the even wider diversity of the countries constituting the continent of Africa, and the contested

terrain of development, the book offers extremely interesting and critical perspectives regarding contemporary geopolitical dynamics and multilateral strategic partnerships for and from Africa.

Professor Zondi defines strategic partnerships as "... country relations characterised by significant shared interests, strong mutual benefits, and close cooperation in areas considered to be strategic" (Zondi & Adogo, 2025. p. 9). The escalation in polycrises and the dire impacts of the unilateral executive orders issued by the 47<sup>th</sup> president of the largest economy in contemporary world systems, the United States of America, however, challenges the very notions of shared mutualities and cooperation in our contemporary conjuncture. Whilst the turmoil in global trade, uncertainties in international relations, climate change denialism, and escalating military violence are indelible hallmarks of the current Trump regime, the root causes of these elements of the polycrises had their root causes predetermined in the persistence of unequal exchanges following colonial, post-colonial, neo-colonial, and other imperialist phases of capitalist expansion, expropriation, and exploitation.

The transformation from a forum of Brazil, Russia, India and China at the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 into a voluntary assemblage of countries and an inaugural Heads of State Summit in Ekaterinburg in west-central Russia in 2009 heralded a significant change in international geopolitical relations. The inclusion of the continent and peoples of Africa was achieved through South Africa joining BRIC to form the better-known acronym of BRICS at the end of 2010.

Fifteen years later, Brazil hosted 11 member- and nine partner-countries to the 17<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit under the theme: "Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance" (BRICS, 2025).

The book presents analyses and perspectives collated from scholarly work drawn from the BRICS member countries and the countries constituting the continent of Africa. Collectively, the book provides significant details regarding their respective political economies and the dynamics evident in our contemporary conjuncture. The individual chapters of the first part of the book are, however, not premised upon a common or 'shared' critique and methodology, therefore resulting in uneven coverage of the terrains of struggle and the balance of forces. This unevenness does not, however, detract from the usefulness of the collated information and the sense-making of the data.

The second part of the book, whilst sub-titled 'other emerging countries perspectives,' includes Japan and South Korea which are

designated by the World Bank as high-income economies. The ten chapters in this part provide rich narrative histories as well as contemporary dynamics to add to the vast literatures on socio-economic and political development. The international perspectives presented are contextualised within national circumstances and historically periodised. This approach encourages comparative learning and presents valuable lessons about local and regional dynamics that impact upon wider multilateral positions.

Revelations about the autonomy of North Korea's positionality during the Cold War help illuminate the real dynamics of multipolarities emerging well before our contemporary conjuncture and the current balance of forces.

Zondi concludes the book by returning to the consequences or impacts of the strategic partnerships between Africa and the countries studied and that emerged, evolved, and were engineered across time. Zondi summarises the future of these strategic partnerships along five presumptive vectors: economic cooperation and South-South trade; technological collaboration and innovation; geopolitical alignment and regional security; diplomatic solidarity and multilateralism; and culture and people-to-people ties.

Whilst acknowledging the need for further and continued research, it is also necessary to critique the five vectors so as to better appreciate the primary contradictions driving the current dynamics in the capitalist mode of production, and especially its present manifestations. It is also important to pay attention to the root causes of conflicts, the objective outcomes of neoliberal reformations, and the dawning material realities of our shared ecological precarities.

The book is therefore a welcome addition to our global knowledge commons and those concerned with international relations have much to gain from engaging critically with the texts collated in the volume.

## **REFERENCE**

BRICS. (2025). Joint Declaration of the 17th BRICS Summit, Rio de Janeiro.