
ABSTRACT

As the debate around a multipolar world order, and the blurring of the previously clear divide between the global north and south become ever more prevalent, the world becomes increasingly interested in what is known as BRICS. The international forum between Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa is considered a potential source for new ideas to be infused into the global economy and international politics. This research report seeks to understand how the BRICS state have engaged with a human-centred, 21st century developmental state model since the forum's unofficial birth in 2006.

This research report uses South Africa and China as case studies of the BRICS nations, and compares their developmental strategies and priorities over the period of 2006 – 2015. The objective of this report is to identify how these two sample countries have engaged with the developmental state model, and whether any patterns of convergence or divergence are present over the past decade. The developmental state model in question is based on three central pillars; 1) the building up of human resources and improving human capabilities; 2) the development of a knowledge economy; and 3) improving state legitimacy and capacity. Considering these pillars, this research analyses policies around building up human resources and capabilities through education, and developing a knowledge economy through policies around building up national systems of innovation. This research report discusses how both South Africa and China, as sample countries of the BRICS forum, have actively engaged with the developmental state model since 2006 – as reflected in their policies and developmental strategies.