



THE RISE AND GROWING COORDINATION OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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completed the DLG program at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna this year and is now continuing her Master's studies there. Her academic efforts are now focused on the topic of studying and analyzing international conflicts through the prism of cultural studies and international communication, as well as developing a methodology for their early prevention. The geopolitical aspect of her research is primarily concerned with the emergence and distribution of spheres of influence and how they change. The regional research vector aims to provide key incentives for all parts of Europe (including post-Putin Russia) in shaping the future pan-European security structure.

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The phrase “Global South” is increasingly employed in the information space, which introduces certain modifications to the traditional understanding of the “East-West” division model of the world. While concerns about the global order and the role of the Global South have been debated for decades, China’s assertive ambitions and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have sparked renewed discussions about the Global South’s geopolitical significance. Some experts even note that it is the representatives of the Global South, as the owners of the “golden share”, who may ultimately decide the fate of the further arrangement of international relations.

The term “Global South” was coined to the general public in 1969 by the American political activist Carl Oglesby. It refers to regions of the world often characterized by lower levels of economic development, historical colonial influence, and geographic location predominantly in the Southern Hemisphere. Countries in the Global South are frequently associated with socio-economic challenges such as income inequality, limited industrialization, and weaker political influence in global governance structures. Traditionally, the ‘old’ narratives surrounding the Global South focused on these characteristics, framing these nations primarily as recipients of aid or as dependent economies within a Western-dominated world order. However, the term now carries an ideological component, reflecting new narratives that emphasize the agency, resilience, and aspirations of these nations in shaping the global geopolitical landscape.

The current global geopolitical transformation has created fresh narratives centered

around the Global South, highlighting its rising importance in international relations. As the United States seeks to maintain its position as the world’s superpower, China’s growing economic and political influence, and Russia’s challenges to the existing international order through its conflict in Ukraine, have stimulated discussions about the Global South’s important role. This importance stems from the region’s collective potential to act as a counterbalance to traditional power centers, its vast markets, and its increasing contributions to global trade, energy, and technological innovation. The current geopolitical tensions



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have given new momentum to debates about the credibility of the Western order and the growing ambitions of emerging powers.

The development models emerging from the Global South, shaped by their strong economic, financial, and industrial positions, challenge existing global capitalist trajectories. These models raise important questions about whether elites in the Global South will seek to revise the current international system by strengthening their influence within it or challenge its underlying structures altogether. This evolving dynamic underscores why the Global South’s growing significance demands attention in global policy discussions.

Attention to African states is increasing, especially given Russia’s intensified engagement

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and China's established influence on the continent. While China is expanding its multilateral and bilateral engagement with African states through its Belt and Road Initiative, as well as with applying its rhetoric of South-South cooperation, asserting itself as part of the Global South, Russia is also advancing its agenda in African states. In Europe, Russian aggression has stimulated an unprecedented level of unity and awareness of the need to diversify its strategic needs in foreign policy, security policy, and economic priorities. However, the sanctions imposed against Russia have not met much support from the Global South. This is particularly evidenced by the fact that the majority of abstentions (51%) in UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion are from African countries. US interests in Africa are also growing, as seen by US Secretary of State Blinken's statement that "Africa is a major geopolitical force" in 2023. Despite Europe losing influence and competition for Africa and the Middle East to Russia and China, the foreign ministers of Germany, France also visited fourteen African countries in the first two months of 2023, along with their Chinese, Russian and American counterparts and the EU high representative. Consequently, African states that are part of the Global South are now attracting more geopolitical attention and stimulating more interest in African affairs.

Developing countries are trying to adjust their development trajectory. The Global South has long been the world's majority (85% of the world's population), but now, thanks to rapid economic growth in the largest countries, it has also become the world's middle class, demanding greater participation in decision-making. Hence there are increasingly insistent demands for reforming global governance institutions (as evidenced by Brazil's presidency of the Group of Twenty) as well as the expansion of

BRICS and its growing network of partners. Cape Town Conversation, one of the key political and economic forums of the Global South, has gained even greater significance in 2024 due to the transition of the G20 presidency from Brazil to South Africa. Internal goals and priorities remained virtually the same as in 2023: ensuring access to capital, new energy, adaptation to climate change, blue economy, digital public infrastructure, rational use of own subsoil, grassroots innovation (including digital start-ups), orderly urbanization, removal of trade barriers, and involvement of women in economic activity. Today, the countries of the Global South face challenges - economic instability, political instability, climate change - which, therefore, without active involvement in world affairs and reorientation of financial flows to the Global South, it is impossible to resolve. Therefore, the reform of global taxation and reform of global financial institutions were at the center of the agenda. This was the focus of Brazil's G20 presidency, and these same themes will continue during South Africa's presidency. It is noteworthy that while in 2023 the events in Ukraine were discussed mainly in the context of food and energy security issues, last year they were discussed mainly as a critical moment of Europe's weakening. It gave the impression that there are only two alternatives: either Europe turns to the Global South and China, and restores relations with Russia, or finally falls out of world affairs. But in general, participants seemed to view the future of Europe seems to the participants as uncertain.

What has changed over the year is the hardening stance towards the West and the amount of discussion about BRICS. The BRICS, which was initially viewed with skepticism, is now gaining more political credibility and positioning itself among the new and leading actors in the Global South. With the BRICS

countries officially overtaking the G7 countries in terms of GDP in PPP terms and projection to grow further, the BRICS framework serves to consolidate not only political weight but also economic power within the structures of global governance. Against the backdrop of threats of 100% tariffs on BRICS countries for trying to “move away from the dollar” and replace the American currency in international trade, the newly elected President Trump president is not welcomed at all - he is seen as a threat to multilateralism, which the countries of the Global South need. At the same time, despite the fact that President Biden’s rhetoric was different, he is also not very popular due to the measures that have the effect of undermining global institutions, including protectionism and industrial policy, sanctions, blocking the work of the WTO Appellate Body, self-removal from providing climate aid, abuse of the dominant role in the Bretton Woods institutions. Many countries of the South mistrust in the West and doubt the likelihood that they will receive help from the West when they need it; they advocate neutrality and demonstrate “strategic autonomy”, which also plays into the hands of Russia’s ambitions in global geopolitics.

Looking ahead, it can be assumed that if Mr. Trump and the West continue in the same vein, this could have the effect of further consolidating the Global South, especially since it also has a leader around whom it can unite - the presence of 35 countries at the BRICS summit in Kazan, Indonesia’s accession and expansion to 11 countries, the emergence of a new category of partners and a number of applications for membership from other countries are clear evidence that BRICS is becoming the full-fledged voice of the Global South. The participants feel a certain freshness and drive in it, although no one really understands what to do with them. Perhaps, this year its fate will become clearer...



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