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Market, Global Players and Empirical Evidence

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Interdisciplinary research bridging from economics to international relations

Covers quantitative evidence as well as case studies

Provides a comprehensive approach to the challenges of climate change for the international system

About this book

About the authors

This book presents new research related to climate change policies and effects. It discusses the implications of climate change on issues pertaining to international relations and economic development, and the question of how climate change could jeopardize the international system as we have known it until today. It aims to provide an empirical basis and epistemological framework to discuss the effects of climate change on economic growth, social development and welfare as a global phenomenon influenced by policies carried out transnationally and by national governments. Case studies from around the globe are presented.

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# The BRICS Commitment on Climate Change: Process Towards an Effective Approach in the Path of Sustainable Development



Marco António Baptista Martins

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**Abstract** Since 2008, the countries of the group known as the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) have acted as strategic partners with a twofold purpose: to change the architecture of international relations and to rearrange the balance of powers to soft balance world's largest military power, the United States. Countries that are today classified as 'growing economies' are undoubtedly the highest global consumers of energy, emitting polluting agents such as those from natural gas, oil and coal, which are all responsible for the greenhouse effect. The present chapter analyzes and examines whether, within the international context, the BRICS have sought to respect the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) (that is, the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol), and to establish new commitments for the period 2013–2020 under the Paris Agreement (2016). To that end, we note important political and economic aspects of the BRICS that converge—and sometimes diverge—as member countries pursue the climate change agenda, and we look at how these same aspects strengthen the decisions of the different governments of each BRICS. Of note in this examination is the role of the New Development Bank, known as the BRICS Bank, which is recognized as the

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driving force behind clean energy financing and for its contribution to sustainable development.

**Keywords** BRICS · Climate change · Sustainable development · Clean energy · Soft balance

## 1 Powers in Cooperation

The emergence of new players in international relations, known as the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China), tended to combine member powers and minimize their differences in the face of the global challenges of climate change. In fact, these states are located in geopolitically strategic regions, where they claim a position of world leadership by which they may stem the continued hegemonic intentions and influence of the United States, as it transmits and applies unidirectional policies. The idea of 'leadership' connotes an actor's ability to influence the course of international relations. The actor may not only aspire to lead but must also be capable of enacting domestic governmental mechanisms, establishing institutions and a form of government, put forth an economic policy, practice cultural diplomacy and various policies for the energy sector (Langenhove et al. 2016). All this reflects the degree to which the actor is involved in the international arena and its interactions there.

The BRICS, as a group of regional powers, lies within a context and varying structural dimension, as it adapts to the international reality, as it attends to sensitive and problematic issues, such as security, respect for human rights, the environment and global warming and energy; not less important is the agenda related to financial and international trade sectors.

Each of these states develops its respective political agenda, taking into account the geopolitical space it occupies in a dynamic of participation at various levels. For example, China's macro-regional location allows it to participate in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the group Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). With Russia and the countries of Central Asia, China has a complex relation with Europe and its bordering countries, in addition to the United States and its spheres-of-influence, namely, the Commonwealth and its allies. South Africa, in its post-apartheid logic, affirms its regional identity, promotes sustainable development and aims to reduce poverty and guarantee the security of the region. To this end, this country reinforces the role of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), demonstrating evidence of its agenda for a greater multilateral diplomatic commitment in Africa to resolve the crises that plague the continent (Soko and Balchin 2016). For its part, Brazil relies on intra-regional cooperation through Mercosur and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to boost its economy and promote its social and human development. As a partner and actor in bilateral relations with its neighbours and economic partners, Brazil strengthens political dialogue to achieve greater

