BRICS+: Current Agenda
2025, *1*(1), 68–77
DOI: 10.22363/2025-1-1-68-77
EDN: FGFVTP
http://bricsplus-j.rudn.ru

HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Review / Обзорная статья

Artificial Intelligence: The Chinese Experience and Its Implications for the BRICS+ Countries

Anastasia A. Zabella

RUDN University, *Moscow, Russian Federation*
zabella-aa@rudn.ru

Abstract. Learning about China's approach to AI development and implementation is crucial for BRICS+ due to its significant advancements and strategic focus on becoming a global leader in the field. Understanding China's AI landscape provides valuable insights for international collaboration, competition, and the broader global impact of AI. The importance of the topic is predetermined by the following: 1) the geopolitical context; 2) economic component; 3) technological and digital sovereignty; 4) defense and cybersecurity; 5) training of personnel; 6) forming alternative AI norms. The methodology was based on documentary analysis. China's strategy is assessed along four structuring axes, which can be adopted by BRICS+: 1) computational infrastructure; 2) data; 3) specialized workforce; and 4) research and development (R&D). The findings indicate that China distinguishes itself through its pursuit of global AI leadership through massive investments. Beijing is willing to work with BRICS partners to deepen pragmatic cooperation, China open to win-win AI cooperation through Belt & Road. International cooperation of China in the field of AI with the BRICS+ countries in the field of creating a common infrastructure, developing uniform standards and legislation, data exchange, and educational programs will serve as an impetus for the development of AI in the countries of the association.
Keywords: China, BRICS, artificial intelligence, international agreements

For citation: Zabella, A.A. (2025). Artificial Intelligence: The Chinese Experience and Its Implications for the BRICS+ Countries. *BRICS+: Current Agenda*, *1*(1), 68–77. http://doi.org/10.22363/2025-1-1-68-77 EDN: FGFVTP

Introduction

The development of artificial intelligence has become a key factor in global competitiveness, economic growth, and technological sovereignty. AI opens up new opportunities, new areas of cooperation, and also creates challenges and complexities that require a joint response. The development of AI is becoming especially relevant during the fourth technical revolution and is becoming the driving force of technological progress. The ability to produce new technologies is becoming a critical condition for economic development. Based on McKinsey estimates, the automation of individual work activities enabled by AI technologies could provide the global economy with an annual productivity boost of 0.5 to 3.4 % from 2023 to 2040 depending on the rate of automation adoption — with generative AI contributing to 0.1 to 0.6 percentage points of that growth [1].

According to the Global AI Index 2024 [2], which includes 83 countries investing in AI, only one BRICS country, China, entered the top 3, ranking second after the United States: U.S. (scores 100), China (scores 53.88), Singapore (scores 32.33). The following BRICS countries are also represented in the index: India — 10th place (scores 23.82), UAE — 20th place (scores 16.99), Brazil — 30th place (scores 12.4), Russia — 31st place (scores 12.07), Indonesia — 49th place (scores 8.61), Egypt — 52nd place (scores 8.25), Iran — 60th place (scores 6.61), South Africa — 69th place (scores 5.41), and Ethiopia — 83rd place (scores 1.82). However, it is worth noting that the indicators for Russia and China are not reflected entirely reliably, do not reflect the real role of our countries in the development of AI, since some of the data in Russia is closed, including in the context of the Special military operation, and China, due to the cooling of relations with the West, selectively publishes information.

Funding. This research received no external funding.

Informed consent statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest. The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Article history: submitted July 1, 2025; revised July 22, 2025; accepted August 18, 2025.

Boi note:
Anastasia A. Zabella, PhD in History, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Theory and History of International Relations, RUDN University, 10 Miklukho-Maklaya St, bldg 2, Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation.
ORCID: 0000-0001-7082-5073
E-mail: zabella-aa@rudn.ru

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AI has a significant impact on people's production and lifestyle, as well as on global governance reform. However, the benefits of AI development inevitably come with new challenges and threats. Information globalization has not only simplified communication between people, but has also provoked an increase in cybercrime, cyberattacks, the spread of terrorist and extremist ideas, and data leaks, including confidential data. BRICS+ countries, which represent emerging economies, are increasingly paying attention to AI cooperation and building a unique model for AI co-development. The author believes that deepening AI cooperation will become a new growth point for the BRICS cooperation mechanism, inject new impetus into South-South cooperation, and propose a "BRICS vision" for global AI governance.

In recent years, more and more studies have been published on the topic of AI development in China. There is a whole pool of scientific studies by Russian experts on this topic [3–6], by Chinese experts [7–10] by other experts [11–13]. In addition, recently there have been more and more works devoted to the development of AI in the BRICS countries + [14–17].

Materials and Methods

The study is written within the framework of the world-systems analysis developed by the American historian I. Wallerstein. The study considers China as a key example of a country that is gradually moving from a peripheral or semi-peripheral position towards the core. The rapid development of AI in China, as well as the country's leading positions in a number of AI areas, indicate such a transition. The theory helps explain why China actively cooperates with the BRICS countries, including in the field of AI. According to the world-systems analysis, the Global South corresponds to the periphery or semi-periphery, which advocates alternative paths of global development, where the voice of the South will be heard.

Results and Discussion

AI Development in China: State Strategy and Policy

In 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping set the goal of turning China into a great power. This is according to the national strategy "Made in China — 2025" [18], a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial modernization requires a transformation of China's economic growth model. According to the "four comprehensive plans" (四个全面), which include: 1) achieving a moderately prosperous society (小康社会); 2) comprehensively deepening reforms; 3) comprehensively governing the country in accordance with the law; 4) comprehensively strict governance of the Party; China will be able to implement the strategy of creating a manufacturing power (制造强国), realizing the "Chinese dream" (中国梦). China sees the development of R & D as the key to its further prosperity. According to the above strategy, the penetration rate of digital R & D design tools in 2025 should be 84%.

Important for the development of the AI industry was the adoption of the "Outline of Operations to Stimulate the Development of Big Data" [19] (2015), which indicate the direction of AI development in China.

In 2016, the DeepMind-trained AI system AlphaGo defeated the world's best Go player Lee Sedol in Seoul [20]. The AI's victory in the game of Go convinced the Chinese side of the prospects of AI, and became a turning point in the development

of AI in China thanks to the determination of Xi Jinping. In July 2017, the State Council of China published the "Development Plan for the Next Generation of Artificial Intelligence" (新一代人工智能发展规划). According to the document, the artificial intelligence industry has entered the high end of the global value chain. The new generation of AI is widely used in smart manufacturing, smart healthcare, smart cities, smart agriculture, national defense, and other fields. The core AI industry has surpassed 400 billion yuan in scale (approximately $55.2 billion), driving the growth of related industries to exceed 5 trillion yuan (approximately $690 billion). China should become the world leader in the field of AI by 2030, monetize AI into an industry with a turnover of one trillion yuan (approximately $150 billion), and also play a decisive role in the formation of ethical norms and standards for AI [21]. "The Big Data White Paper 2019" [22] was an important step for the future of AI regulation.

According to the UN Technology and Innovation Report Inclusive AI for Development 2025, in 2022, 40 percent of business-funded R&D globally was carried out by 100 companies, of which about half were U.S.-based, and about 13 percent of companies, led by Huawei and Tencent, were headquartered in China, up from 2 percent in 2012, allowing China to overtake traditional R&D leaders such as Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United Kingdom [23].

The Second Belt and Road Forum launched the AI Global Governance Initiative [24], which is based on 3 principles: "joint discussion, joint construction and joint use".

In October 2023, China established the State Data Administration to promote the planning and construction of digital China, digital economy and digital society. Later, the China Digital Commerce Action Plan (2024–2026) was published) [25], which aims to accelerate the development of digital commerce infrastructure, covering areas such as e-commerce, digital payments and digital logistics.

In March 2024, China became the first country to issue the "Basic Requirements for the Security of Artificial Intelligence Generative Services" [26] created a system for regulating AI technologies by categories and classifications.

In September 2024, the Framework Document on Artificial Intelligence Security Governance was developed to implement China's "Global Initiative on AI Governance" [27] in order to promote safe AI, the development direction is "people-centered and good-serving intelligence" (以人为本, 智能向善). In September 2024, during the first high-level meeting on strengthening international cooperation in building AI capacity at the UN, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi emphasized that China, as an important player in global AI development, is developing AI for people and for the good of people, and the goal is to improve people's well-being, promote economic and social development, and prevent misuse or abuse of AI technologies [28].

To overcome the digital and intellectual divide, the Chinese side proposed the "Inclusive AI Capacity Building Program" [29], which focuses on cooperation with developing countries in the areas of infrastructure, value chain development, open source communities, and AI training. China's DeepSeek neural network not only provides open source code, but also focuses on high performance with low power consumption. The network does not solve all linguistic problems, but it has seriously damaged the U.S. position in AI.

On August 14, the 2025 World Humanoid Robot Games, the world's first comprehensive sports event featuring humanoid robots, officially opened.

280 participating teams from 16 countries gathered in Beijing. The opening ceremony of the 2025 World Humanoid Robot Games, themed "Intelligent Competition for the Future," showcased the intersection of artificial intelligence and sportsmanship through the integration of technology and humanity. Moreover, the hosting of the games demonstrated China's interest in developing cooperation in the field of AI. Research published by Morgan Stanley predicts that China is likely to have the highest number of humanoid robots in use by 2050, at 302.3 million, trailed by the U.S. at 77.7 million [30].

Infrastructure and Data Management

China is a global leader in terms of AI infrastructure. A key element of this leadership is the development of state-of-the-art data centers, machine learning applications and big data processing. China's most advanced AI data centers are:

Alibaba Cloud's Zhangbei data center is one of the most technologically advanced facilities and plays very important role in supporting Alibaba's AI-driven services, is one of the most sustainable, because using cooling systems to reduce energy consumption and improve efficiency. According to Alibaba Cloud plan to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, integrates renewable energy sources to minimize its environment.

China Mobile's AI data center in Inner Mongolia focus on supporting the telecommunications AI, big data and cloud computing operations, is one of the largest AI data centers in China, using cooling systems to reduce energy consumption and improve efficiency (using the cold climate of Inner Mongolia to reduce power consumption). It is AI-driven 5G integration center.

In order to lay a solid foundation for the growth of the digital economy and promote the construction of a "digital China," China's leadership plans to complete the construction of a national data infrastructure by 2029. According Data infrastructure blueprint [31], China will optimize and upgrade traditional network facilities, push ahead with 5G-A deployments from 5G, as well as speed up the research and development of 6G technology.

GDS Beijing Data Center Campus is one of leading data center which support AI-intensive applications, offering high-density computing power and low-latency network connections. This center characterized by high-density AI workloads, use cooling mechanisms to optimize energy usage.

Tencent's AI data center in Tianjin is designed to support Tencent's cloud services, AI-driven gaming and research in machine learning. This center characterized by massive AI computing power.

China pay attention on developing supercomputing, because is a key technology that can broader value in terms of socioeconomic progress and open the door to humanity's next stage of technological evolution. China's biggest national-level supercomputing centers in major cities, including Tianjin, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Xi'an.

The National Supercomputing Center in Shenzhen (NSCS) is one of China's most powerful AI-focused supercomputing facilities.

Shanghai Supercomputer Center (SSC) is the first public service platform for high performance computing in China, dedicated to providing high-end computing service for national science and technology progress and industrial innovation.

In May 2025, China has launched twelve satellites to start building the world's first supercomputer in orbit.

Regulation of AI technologies (2022 to present). AI governance in China is based on the following documents:

"Provisions on the Management of Algorithmic Recommendations in Internet Information Services 2021" [32] (entered into force on March 1, 2022). The document aims to prevent monopolistic behavior of AI platforms, cyber threats, deepfakes and other AI challenges.

"Provisions on the Administration of Deep Synthesis Internet Information Services" [33] 2022 (entered into force on January 10, 2023) sets requirements for the provision of deep synthesis services for the creation of images, video, audio and text. That is, the publication of content created by artificial intelligence is prohibited without special marking.

"Measures for the Management of Generative Artificial Intelligence Services (Draft for Comment)" [34] came into effect on August 15, 2023, and aims to ensure that providers of AI services ensure safety, comply with moral and ethical standards, and prevent malicious use of AI.

On August 15, 2023 came into force the Interim Measures for the Management of Generative Artificial Intelligence Services [35], which is the first administrative regulation on the management of Generative AI services.

From September 1, 2025, new 'Labeling Rules' [36] will come into effect, making it mandatory for AI-generated content to be implicitly labeled, and explicitly labeled where applicable.

From November 1, 2025, three standards [37] aimed at enhancing the security and governance of generative AI will come into effect (the State Administration for Market Regulation and the Standardization Administration of China jointly released) The three standards are: 1) security requirements for data labeling processes used in training generative AI models; 2) criteria for ensuring the security of datasets used in the pre-training and fine-tuning phases of generative AI development; 3) security requirements for generative AI services, encompassing user data security assessments, data protection measures, and the safeguarding of training models and datasets.

Some Practical Industry Cases

China is focusing on smart city development for a number of reasons. First, urbanization in the country, like the rest of the world, is accelerating. According to the UN, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, and this proportion is expected to increase to 68% by 2050, with Asia and Africa accounting for almost 90% of this growth. Together, India, China, and Nigeria will account for 35% of the world's projected urban population growth between 2018 and 2050 [38]. In China, urbanization has increased to 65% by 2024, up from 16% in 1960 [39]. Second, urban migration contributes to economic growth, but also poses environmental challenges (air and water pollution, waste disposal issues, etc.). Third, smart city development is in line with sustainable development goals and is an important factor in improving socio-economic conditions.

In 2012, China launched a pilot program called "Smart City". The program aims to promote the integration of new technologies into urban planning and

management processes. The pilot cities were: Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Beijing. Shenzhen, or as it is often called the "Silicon Valley of China", has implemented a comprehensive intelligent transportation system, including intelligent traffic management, real-time public transport information and charging stations for electric vehicles. In particular, thanks to the integration of AI and big data analytics based on the "City Digital Twin" (UDT) and "City Information Modeling" (CIM) technologies, it is possible to solve optimal traffic management options in order to prevent traffic jams. In addition, in response to the demands of green development, the city actively uses electric buses and taxis. Hangzhou actively uses the digital urban management platform "City Brain" (城市大脑), developed by Alibaba Group. The platform's goal is to optimize urban processes, including through traffic light control, navigators, etc. Beijing has been betting on new technologies to ensure environmental sustainability. A comprehensive air quality monitoring system has been created to provide residents with real-time data. Beijing has also been focusing on reforestation and the transition to renewable energy. The success of these pilot projects demonstrates China's interest in developing "smart" cities.

In addition, China's megacities are focusing on developing an extensive public transportation network to reduce dependence on private cars and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Chinese authorities are rapidly building new subway lines, introducing electric buses and taxis, and promoting bike-sharing programs.

China is actively implementing AI developments in healthcare. Artificial intelligence and its developments have had a revolutionary impact on society, and healthcare is no exception. China has made huge strides in integrated healthcare using AI and continues to do so by introducing AI tools to hospitals across the country. In 2024, Tsinghua University opened the world's first AI hospital, Agent Hospital, which integrates clinical care and AI virtual agents. These AI doctors can treat nearly 10,000 virtual patients — an endeavor that would take human doctors approximately two years — the virtual doctor surpassed the best existing methods on the MedQA dataset's respiratory disease subset, achieving an accuracy of 93.06% [40].

China is focusing on the convergence of AI and agriculture to ensure food security. AI-powered intelligence is opening up new possibilities in crop breeding and engineering. As per Market Research Future Report analysis, the China Applied AI in Agriculture Market Size was estimated at 237.65 (USD Million) in 2023.The China Applied AI in Agriculture Market is expected to grow from 307.48(USD Million) in 2024 to 5,142.5 (USD Million) by 2035 [41].

Training and Educational Initiatives

China has placed great emphasis on the use of AI in education. A guideline on accelerating the digitalization of education jointly issued by the Ministry of Education and eight other departments emphasizes the construction of an AI-based education system that integrates intelligent technologies into teaching, learning, assessment and scientific research [42]. From September 2025, schools in Beijing, China, will introduce AI courses. Each student will receive at least eight hours of AI training per year. The initiative is in line with China's goal of becoming a world leader in AI. China has now built the world's largest intelligent education platform. China aims to build a world-class education system by 2035.

The author believes that expanding global education cooperation will contribute to this goal.

In addition, the Chinese side pays great attention to the development of R&D, as well as cooperation with other countries in this area. According to a McKinsey analysis, the potential annual economic benefit that could be gained from using AI to accelerate R&D innovation ranges from $360 billion to $560 billion [43].

A Framework for BRICS AI Cooperation

Since Russia's 2015 BRICS presidency, the AI development agenda been formalized as an independent area of cooperation. During this summit Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation has been signed. In addition, other important documents were also signed at subsequent BRICS summits: in 2020 — BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy until 2025, in 2022 — Beijing Declaration of the XIV BRICS Summit. The 14th BRICS Summit in 2022 resulted in the Beijing Declaration, which expressed concern about the risks and ethical dilemmas associated with AI. The declaration calls on BRICS countries to work together to address these concerns, share best practices, conduct comparative studies on this issue to develop a common governance approach that will guide BRICS countries on the ethical and responsible use of AI, promoting the development of AI technologies. In 2024 Kazan Declaration of the XVI BRICS Summit has been signed, which mentioned key areas of cooperation in the field of AI on the BRICS platform: 1) ethical standards of AI, key risks and measures to mitigate them; 2) practical cases of using big data and AI in public administration; 3) Expanding cooperation in the field of evaluating AI solutions. In 2023, the BRICS countries agreed to create an AI Study Group. In July 2024, the China-BRICS Center for Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation was launched. The 17th BRICS Summit 2025 in Rio de Janeiro highlighted AI as one of the six priority themes, with a special focus on global AI governance solutions. Among other things, BRICS members are actively cooperating in the field of AI as part of China's Digital Silk Road.

China's AI Cooperation Proposals with BRICS+

Intelligence is becoming a catalyst for a new stage of global scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation. New technologies provide new opportunities for development, new business models, applications, and expanding areas of joint cooperation. Open source has become an important aspect of AI development. The Chinese side is ready to cooperate to promote the inclusive development of AI for the benefit of people, and opposes technofascism.

On July 26, 2025, the opening ceremony of the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence was successfully held in Shanghai. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the China-BRICS Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation Center jointly proposed the "International Open Source AI Cooperation Initiative". The initiative is based on five pillars: 1) leading Innovation and Driving Technological Breakthroughs; 2) cultivate an ecosystem and explore new paths for co-governance; 3) empower transformation and accelerate new application processes; 4) protecting Rights and Interests and Respecting Innovation and New Value; 5) openness and Sharing: a New Global Future of Inclusive Benefit [44]. The initiative aims to deepen cooperation in open source AI, with the goal of building a China-led open source AI ecosystem coordinated by BRICS countries that has a global impact.

Conclusions

The author concludes that studying the experience of AI development in China is extremely useful for all BRICS+ countries, since China has made significant progress in this area and continues to increase the pace. The author believes that China's experience will be particularly useful for the BRICS+ countries in the following ways: 1) adapting the Chinese strategic planning model; 2) investing in digital infrastructure and data centers; 3) creating national ecosystems (clusters, hubs); 4) developing human resources through joint programs and grants; 5) creating a single market space and standards. In the context of growing contradictions around the world, against the background of the fact that some countries continue to play with zero sum in the field of AI, the countries of the global south, including BRICS, face obstacles due to limited computing power, infrastructure, financial resources, data, and human resources. The author believes that BRICS+ countries have great potential for AI cooperation to lead the global south in strengthening cooperation on AI governance.

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Искусственный интеллект: опыт Китая и его значение для стран БРИКС+

А.А. Забелла

Российский университет дружбы народов, *Москва, Российская Федерация*
zabella-aa@rudn.ru

Финансирование. Настоящее исследование не получало внешнего финансирования.

Заявление об информированном согласии: не применимо.

Конфликт интересов. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 1 июля 2025 г.; отрецензирована 22 июля 2025 г.; принята к публикации 18 августа 2025 г.

Сведения об авторе:
Забелла Анастасия Александровна, кандидат исторических наук, доцент, старший преподаватель кафедры теории и истории международных отношений, Российский университет дружбы народов, Российская Федерация, 117198, Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 10, копр. 2.
ORCID: 0000-0001-7082-5073
E-mail: zabella-aa@rudn.ru

Аннотация. Изучение подхода Китая к развитию и внедрению искусственного интеллекта (ИИ) имеет crucial importance для стран БРИКС+ в свете его значительных достижений и стратегической цели стать мировым лидером в данной области. Понимание экосистемы ИИ в Китае предоставляет ценную информацию для международного сотрудничества, конкуренции и оценки более широкого глобального влияния технологий ИИ. Важность данной темы предопределена следующими факторами: 1) геополитическим контекстом; 2) экономической составляющей; 3) технологическим и цифровым суверенитетом; 4) вопросами обороны и кибербезопасности; 5) подготовкой кадров; 6) формированием альтернативных норм в сфере ИИ. Методология исследования основывалась на анализе документов. Стратегия Китая оценивается по четырем структурообразующим направлениям, которые могут быть одобрены странами БРИКС+: 1) вычислительная инфраструктура; 2) данные; 3) специализированные трудовые ресурсы; 4) научные исследования и опытно-конструкторские разработки (НИОКР). Результаты исследования показывают, что Китай выделяется стремлением к глобальному лидерству в сфере ИИ за счет масштабных инвестиций. Пекин готов углублять прагматичное сотрудничество с партнерами по БРИКС и открыт к взаимовыгодному взаимодействию в области ИИ в рамках инициативы «Пояс и путь». Международное сотрудничество Китая в сфере ИИ со странами БРИКС+ в области создания общей инфраструктуры, разработки единых стандартов и законодательства, обмена данными и реализации образовательных программ послужит импульсом для развития ИИ в странах объединения.
Ключевые слова: Китай, БРИКС, искусственный интеллект, международные соглашения

Для цитирования: *Zabella A.A.* Artificial Intelligence: The Chinese Experience and Its Implications for the BRICS+ Countries // БРИКС+: актуальная повестка. Т. 1. № 1. С. 68–77. http://doi.org/10.22363/2025-1-1-68-77 EDN: FGFVTP