

The reform of world order? BRICS in an Interpolar world

by

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DEDICATION

To God who strengthens me and guides me every step of the way

ABSTRACT

International relations has recently seen new developments which are unpredictable and in their infant stage. The causes of these developments are plentiful, the consequences stemming from waning unipolarity to the emergence of new fora creating their own spaces. Whatever the case, international relations is not as it was in the period just after the Cold War. As a result, the terms of global governance established after 1990 have come under serious scrutiny. This transition has the makings of a new world order, an inter-polar world order.

This study asserts that we no longer live in a unipolar world, nor do we live in a world which can only be described as multipolar. It makes the argument that although multipolarity is a crucial element of the world, it only offers a partial description of today's order. The study asserts that it is inter-polarity which is closest in accounting for today's world. Not only does it describe the world as multipolar, it also describes it as interdependent. To this end, the study provides a detailed account of what is meant by an inter-polar world order and how differently it explains international events. It also provides an account of factors which can develop in an inter-polar world. One of these includes allowing room for emerging powers to create their own spaces in efforts of avoiding co-option while continuing to realise the importance of operating within a context of continuity. This means that emerging countries create their own spaces but they also realise the importance of working with already established regimes such as the G20. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is used as a case study to indicate one of the new developments afforded by an inter-polar order-the emergence of new fora. The study asserts that although BRICS is rife with internal dissimilarities, it has indicated some degree of political will in one aspect; that is; advocating for the reform of the terms of global governance, advocating for more representative forms of global governance. The study thus explores factors of a world whose contours are gradually changing but which are unpredictable and in flux.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
G5	Group of 5
G20	Group of 20
G77	Group of 77
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ICC	International Criminal Court
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IO	International Organisation
IR	International Relations
IS	International System
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NDB	New Development Bank
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War Two

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The current international context

Two observations can be made about international relations today; that it is changing and that this change is unpredictable and in flux. These observations of course incite a number of questions about the nature of the transition itself, i.e. what it means to say that the world is changing in the current context of international relations. Also, how can this said transition be accounted for? What factors are driving it? What direction is it taking, and most importantly what world order is suggested by it?

The “what factors” question is certainly not an easy one to respond to but a case can be made that there are new centres of power who can potentially play an important role in exploiting the global trading system and play a meaningful role in the international system, particularly in challenging existing terms of global governance (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325; Cooper and Mo, 2013: 2). These new potential centres of power include countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey, to name a few (Cooper and Mo, 2013: 2).

Some of these countries, like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (now known as BRICS) have taken their potential of becoming meaningful centres of influence in world politics to heart and have started to economically cooperate with each other. In doing so, they have started to politically cooperate, a process which has started to give them a profile independent of the financial markets. Through this process of political cooperation, BRICS is manoeuvring the international environment, something which allows space for emerging powers. In its efforts of establishing a political existence and a diplomatic profile, BRICS has indicated that it is not just an economic grouping (as they were initially understood)¹ but

¹ These countries were identified by investors as possessing the necessary economic trajectories to become meaningful centres of influence in world politics. Their economies are of recognised economic importance to the financial and economic markets.

one that is dedicated to being a source of ideational variety and reform. As indicated by Cooper and Antkiewicz (2008: 2) “because of the centrality of emerging powers—as both drivers of structural change and claimants for elevated diplomatic recognition—there is a selective, even exclusive quality to the design of the new global architecture”.

The eagerness of emerging powers for elevated diplomatic recognition can also be seen in other examples, not just BRICS. Some of these examples include IBSA’s role in the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change and India and China’s role in the World Trade Organisation². This tells us that there is more to the story than just economics.

1.2 Polarity

Part of the argument for why the world is changing relates to recent power reconfigurations and the impact thereof on global governance. We thus need to turn to ‘the distribution of power’ as an important concept of analysis. In this case it assists in the efforts towards understanding how power is shared among states within the international system. It can also describe whether the system is unipolar-dominated by a single super power, bipolar-dominated by two great powers or multipolar- dominated by multiple significant powers (Donovan, 2004: 2). At present, none of these three scenarios are individually sufficient for describing today’s world.

The picture is complex because there are features of the unipolar moment that are still prevalent even though the world is no longer entirely unipolar. All this needs to be understood in relative terms because the United States is still the world’ biggest economy³. Therefore, the argument is not that unipolarity is waning because the United States has no importance at the global stage but because there are other players on the rise who could potentially play an important role and “exploit the global trading system that the US helped to create and helps to maintain”, players whose general role is to reform the terms of global governance that have been conducive to the US’s unipolar moment (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325). It is thus not a matter of the US being insignificant, it is rather about the diversification of power/capabilities. Most importantly, “as other actors become more

² Hurrell in Baylis, 2014: 90

³ <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf>

capable, they may become more active. If they become more active, the US room to manoeuvre will diminish” (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325)

However, this idea of waning unipolarity (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325) and signs of multipolarity (Grevi, 2009:9) is not enough to account for the complexity of the international order as it exists today. There is a crucial element which cannot be left out in the discussion around what informs international relations, that is interdependence. It should however be highlighted from the onset that to talk of interdependence as a feature in today’s world is not to suggest that it is new but to highlight that today’s interdependence is not only economic, it is also functional, systematic and complex. Economic interdependence refers to a “particular kind of international relationship that emerges when countries are economically linked by interactions that can be both costly and beneficial” (Gasirowski, 1986: 4).

Functional interdependence is the sense that “the fates of most actors are intertwined in global institutions with proper competences and enforcing capacities. These include the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and many more. Functional interdependence is more of a contemporary phenomenon given that the Concert of Nations and the likes did not have a comparable level of institutionalization and legal power” (Renard, 2009: 15).

Systematic interdependence refers not only to the fact that we all depend on planet earth for both renewable and non-renewable resources but also that “as opposed to the past, the system is fundamentally endangered today” by factors such as climate change (Renard, 2009: 15). This of course exposes the fact that there is a need to question ‘global governance by a few’, not only because of representation but credibility as well (Cooper and Antkiewicz, 2008: 2). As has been put by Cooper and Antkiewicz (2008: 2-3) “the issue that jumps out in starkest fashion, nonetheless, has been the acknowledgement that the G8 is incapable of creating a relevant strategy for climate change without the participation of major carbon dioxide emitters, such as India or China, or leading alternative energy suppliers, such as Brazil”. As such, global governance has to be guided by the idea that states are not single entities, they are caught in a complex web of interdependence. To understand this further, we look to the idea of complex interdependence.

Complex interdependence “refers to a situation among a number of countries in which multiple channels of contact connect societies (that is states do not monopolise these contacts)” (Keohane and Nye, 1987: 731). Complex interdependence can best be understood as a concept premised on varying characteristics, however, only two are important for this study. Firstly, complex interdependence points to the fact that interstate relations consist of a variety of issues which are not always arranged hierarchically or in a clear consistent hierarchy. Keohane and Nye (2001: 22) highlight the need to use complex interdependence as an analytical tool to critique the idea that states are “single entities”. Complex interdependence therefore highlights the idea that states should be treated as a complex combination “of different groups and interests” (Keohane, 1989: 24 -25). Secondly, complex interdependence emphasizes the minor role played by military force, especially in the prevalence of heightened interdependence (Nye and Keohane, 2001: 20-23).

How then do we account for an international system which is characterised by waning unipolarity, multipolarity and a simultaneously economic, functional, systematic and complex interdependent context? A term which closely accounts for the world today is interpolarity. The term interpolarity is originally defined as “connecting or being between two poles (dictionary.reference.com/browse/interpolar) or as “extending between two poles” (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interpolar). Scholars of International Relations have now begun to use the term interpolarity to describe today’s world order. They call this order an interpolar world order, a world where polarity is understood in relation to the different types of interdependence. Renard and Biscop (2010: 2) and Grevi (2009: 9) define interpolarity as an order where multipolarity coexists with heightened interdependence. It is this definition that is used in this study.

An interpolar world order suggests the need for a multilateral approach in global governance (Grevi, 2009: 31), including emerging powers at the core of decision making. Secondly, an interpolar world highlights that at present geopolitics and global politics is such that ‘enemies’ are faced with the reality that they are economically connected in ways that have seldom been seen before. Lastly, that because capabilities are not only in the hands of established countries, emerging countries are creating their own spaces and this has

implications for global governance, international regime⁴ creation and international institutions of global governance. Forums such as BRICS⁵ are testament to this.

1.3 Research goals and methodology:

This dissertation seeks to engage with the following subject of critical investigation and research goals:

- Explore why interolarity rather than unipolarity or multipolarity alone can increasingly best explain the current world order
- Describe what type of forum BRICS is and what it seeks to achieve
- Explore the extent to which BRICS can and/or has potentially contributed to reforming global governance mechanisms or bodies
- Explore factors that could potentially inhibit the forum's solidarity and the extent to which these can hinder BRICS vision of a post-Western world order
- Provide a multidimensional theoretical analysis of interolarity and BRICS in its dual qualities (being a reformer and a reformation) through using neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism.

The structure of the study is as follows:

Chapter 2 unpacks how an interolar world looks like and what kind of global governance is necessitated by it and accommodates it. The chapter offers a perspective on how an interolar world order can be accounted for and why unipolarity does not sufficiently account for the

⁴ International regimes are defined as “principles, norms, rules and decision- making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue area” (Krasner, 1983: 2; Tudoroiu; 2012: 27).

⁵ Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs was one of the first people to recognise the economic potential of the BRICS countries. He coined the term BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) which at the time did not include South Africa. He did this to highlight the importance of investing in these countries because of their “rising or emerging economies” (www.brics.utoronto.ca/about.html). For instance, the population of the BRICS countries is 43% of the total population of the South and contributed 20 -25 per cent of global GDP in 2012 (Economic Development Growth 2012: 9). According to Cui (2013: 53) “BRICS accounted for about 6% of the global economy, increased up to 9% in the 90s, and reached 18% in 2010. In international trade, the world export share of the BRICS increased from 7% in 2000 to 14% in 2010”. However, the economic strength of BRICS countries only tells part of the story. If we are to make an argument for why BRICS has implications for global governance, it is important to highlight other roles that BRICS plays in international affairs which include attempting to provide leadership, challenging marginalisation, advocating for the reform of established international institutions as well as advocating for collective bargaining. These are constant efforts by BRICS to translate their economic power into “international influence” (Haibin, 2012: 1).

world in transition. It also makes the argument that although multipolarity is a feature of the changing world, it only provides a partial picture of what factors are driving this transition.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of BRICS in its dual qualities of being both a reformer (i.e. a forum committed to the transformation of prevailing global configurations of power) and a “reformation” (an outward manifestation of the changing status quo). It makes the argument that BRICS is not merely an economic grouping but one that also has political significance. It argues that following this ideational alignment of these states for the purposes of alerting investors to their economic potential, BRICS countries have forged diplomatic, political and economic links which have seen them increasingly seeking to have a bigger say in the management of the global economy and international institutions of global governance such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), United Nations (UN) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Chapter 4, using neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism, provides a multidimensional theoretical analysis of interolarity in the context of BRICS. The chapter makes the argument that the current international context which is in flux, complex and fluid, makes the task of theoretically accounting for the current world difficult (Grevi, 2009: 26). Consequently, the chapter makes the argument that, even though all International Relations theories provide conceptual tools which scholars can use to analyse a variety of events, at times describing, explaining and possibly predicting some events and developments necessitates what Keohane refers to as a multidimensional approach. By multidimensional, Keohane refers to an approach “that incorporates several analytic frameworks” (1989: 60).

Chapter 5 provides concluding remarks, summarising the key arguments of the study.

CHAPTER 2

CHANGING WORLD ORDER: TOWARDS INTERPOLARITY

2.1 Introduction

“There is something misleading in our belief that everything is new, just as it is equally misleading to think that everything remains the same”

Thomas Renard (2009)

Thomas Renard’s statement that ‘the world is changing’ incites a number of questions about the nature of this transition: what does it mean to say that the world is changing in the context of international relations? How can this said transition be accounted for? What factors are driving it? What direction is this transition taking, and most importantly what world order is suggested by it? World order is defined by Bull (1977: 20) as “those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of human life as a whole”. It is thus something more than just international order which merely refers to “order among states” (Bull, 1977: 20). World order is “wider than international order because to give an account of it we have to deal not only with order among states but with order within the wider world political system of which the state system is only part of” (Bull, 1977: 22). By state system, Bull refers to a scenario where the actions of two or more states impact each other’s decisions (1977: 22). A world political system on the one hand can be understood as “the worldwide network of interaction that embrace not only states but also other political actors, both above and below the state” (Bull, 1977: 276).

This shows that international relations is more than just about state to state relations, it also encompasses relations between states and non-state actors; relations among non-states actors

as well as people-to-people relations. This is not to say that the state is not an important unit of analysis in world politics. In fact, although scholars agree that world order is wider than just relations between states they still put much emphasis on the distributions of power among states to account for polarity, different international state systems as well as world order (Evens and Newnham, 1998: 34). The concept of polarity is important in that it is a useful concept in the analysis of how power is distributed in different international systems and the implication thereof for world order and global governance. Polarity “implies that within a definable system certain actors are so important that they constitute ‘poles’ against which other actors have to respond (by joining coalitions or remaining non-aligned)” (Evens and Newnham, 1998: 34). As such, in the context of polarity, a “polar actor is one which is so significant that its removal would alter the contours of the system. Conversely, a new polar actor would be one which, by entering the system, also altered the contours” (Evens and Newnham: 34). There is therefore, an overlap between polarity, power and the idea of power distribution or power capabilities. In cognisance, polarity is often used in juxtaposition with the term power. For instance, in describing a bipolar system, polarity denotes a system where there are two significant powers, in a unipolar system, polarity alludes to one considerably significant power and in a multipolar system, polarity highlights the fact that there are multiple significant powers (Evens and Newnham, 1998: 34). As such, if one is to account for polarity there are two things that are important.

Firstly, accounting for how change within the system (for example, a reconfiguration or change in power distributed among states) has an impact on polarity. Secondly, how all this in turn impacts the nature of world order and global governance⁶ (Ikenberry et al, 2011: 6). For instance, if one seeks to provide an analysis of polarity in relation to power and the impact thereof on the practice of global governance, one could point to the United States (US)’s unipole status since the 1940’s and what implications this has had for global governance (Drezner, 2007: 34). This connection can highlight how the “U.S.-dominated global institutions that have been in place since the 1940s” (Drezner, 2007: 34). Also, the fact that the US was the undisputed hegemon of the Western world when the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and NATO

⁶ Global governance can be defined “as an inter-subjectively recognized, purposive order at the global level, which defines, constrains, and shapes actor expectations in an issue domain” (Biersteker; 2009:4). Chapter 3 of this work will focus on the concept and practise of global governance.

were created in the late 1940s (Drezner, 2007: 35). However, an analysis of current developments in the twenty-first century points to a different scenario. This different scenario is one where the emergence of other countries (which are not traditional polar actors) is not only influencing the way scholars write about polarity but also about how a reconfiguration in power/capabilities can influence global governance. Take for instance China and India's emergence as economic and political "heavyweights" (Drezner, 2007: 34). He goes on to say:

China holds over a trillion dollars in hard currency reserves, India's high-tech sector is growing by leaps and bounds, and both countries, already recognized nuclear powers, are developing blue water navies. The National Intelligence Council, a U.S. government think tank, projects that by 2025, China and India will have the world's second- and fourth-largest economies, respectively (Drezner, 2007: 34).

These changes in the distribution of capabilities are starting to have implications for "existing international institutions, most of which were established within the bipolar, Cold War system under US leadership" (Young, 2010: 4). Some of these implications for global governance are already evident, "[t]here have been calls— not least from Brazil, China and India – for the reform of formal institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)" (Young, 2010: 4). This is the gradual "tectonic shift" which Drezner (2007) and Haass (2008) refer to. This shift is twofold.

Firstly, it refers to the economic emergence of countries outside the West. Secondly, it refers to the fact that global governance is no longer one where only traditional big powers can establish norms and policy (Haass, 2008: 44). This begs the question of what type of world order is suggested by present patterns, processes and developments in international politics. Do they suggest a unipolar, bipolar or multipolar world order? Or is it perhaps changing into a non-polar world as suggested by Haass (2008)? Haass (2008:44) makes the argument that:

The principal characteristic of twenty-first-century in international relations is turning out to be nonpolarity: a world dominated not by one or two or even several states but rather by dozens of actors possessing and exercising various kinds of power

Haass's argument is useful in that it highlights multipolarity as a feature of the world to-date. Haass's notion of non-polarity also captures the fact that multipolarity is not limited to state power only but that it also includes various other actors with various kinds of power. This analysis is important in a globalising and interdependent world where there are powerful non-

states actors which are inserting themselves to shape change too. Therefore there are two ways in which power is diffused.

First, between states, where emerging powers are also inserting themselves as seen in the case of India and China above. Secondly, power is diffused in the sense that non-state actors also have proven to impact upon international politics. A case in point is Al Qaeda's US attacks on September 11. With the events of September 11 "it was realized better how states were vulnerable to the threats of non-state actors" (Sumer, 2012: 9). This has implications for the security debate. The events of September 11 indicated how a non-state actor has demonstrated how it could challenge a superpower. Although we cannot deny the state a place in the security debate, the events of 9/11 are important in the debates around the diffusion of power distribution and what this means for states as well as IR theory.

Furthermore, there is a plethora of other actors which can be regarded as important in international relations in general and global governance in particular (though to differing degrees) such as, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) (Dingwerth and Pattberg, 2005: 191). For example, "multinational corporations control the vast majority of international trade. 500 corporations control 70% of world trade. For example Cargill, one of the world's largest global food trading corporations, reported profits of \$2.1 billion in 2005- almost five times those of 2000. Cargill and similar multinationals (based mainly in the US and EU) fiercely lobby to globalise free trade through World Trade Organisation agreements, in particular to increase their access to profitable markets in emerging economies" (<http://www.stwr.org/imf>). Others include supranational actors, examples of which are the United Nations European Commission; judicial actors, International Criminal Court (ICC); intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Bank to name a few, all of which indicate to a world of multiple power centres (Dingwerth and Pattberg, 2005: 191). This makes for the diffusion of power away from states, where power has to be shared; it also makes for less power for the dominant states, where power has to be shared among states.

Today's world order can thus be understood as Bull (1977:22) defines it, as "wider than international order because to give an account of it we have to deal not only with order among states but with order within the wider world political system of which the state system is only part of" (Bull, 1977: 22).

However, Haass's idea of a non-polarity only provides a partial picture of the processes, patterns and developments in international politics; that is; only describing it as a system of multiple significant powers (Haass, 2008: 44). As has been indicated before, there is more to the debate than just power distribution. Therefore, although Haass' argument forms part of the search by scholars in the field of IR for a "conceptual language to depict and place in historical and comparative perspective the distinctive political formation that has emerged since the Cold War" and realises that "there are many more power centres" which are not nation-states, it does not necessarily engage further with the international environment within which the tectonic shift away from the past is occurring (Ikenberry et al; 2011: 3; Haass, 2008: 45). A sound account of world politics requires not only an analysis of what is happening around the world but also the factors influencing these activities and their implication for global governance. Beyond a discussion of the existence of multiple actors is a need to discuss interdependence as a crucial feature of international politics to-date. Interdependence refers here to "a particular kind of international relationship that emerges when countries are linked by interactions that can be both costly and beneficial" (Gasirowski, 1986: 4). This makes for an inter-polar world order, a world which cannot simply be accounted for by multipolarity alone.

This chapter unpacks what is suggested by inter-polarity, what kind of global governance is necessitated by it and accommodates it and more importantly how differently it shapes global governance. It offers a perspective on how an inter-polar world order looks like and why unipolarity does not sufficiently account for the world in transition. It also makes the argument that although multipolarity is a feature of the changing world order, it only provides a partial picture of what factors are driving this transition.

2.2 Questioning unipolarity in the changing world

Firstly, before we discuss unipolarity and multipolarity in a changing world, one needs to unpack what is meant by the idea of 'a world in transition'. As mentioned previously, the transition refers to a world which no longer resembles the old international political and economic order that was predominantly a 'hub-and-spoke' system, where North America and Western Europe unquestionably dominated international affairs and institutions of global governance. (Melchior, 2011: 16). The shift thus speaks to the fact that there are other

emerging countries⁷ which have attained an economic capacity and an increased interest towards advocating for their recognition. These countries include countries such as India, China, and Brazil among others. Perhaps a poignant testament to this is that since the financial crisis of 2008, BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) have accounted for half the global growth (Armijo and Roberts, 2014: 3). Melchoir (2012:1) states that “measured in PPP (Purchasing Power Parity, which accounts for price level differences), the share of Western Europe + North America in world GDP⁸ fell from 51% in 1990 to 42% in 2010, whereas Asia’s share increased from 23 to 34%”. These changes in the distribution of capabilities have had implications for “existing international institutions, most of which were established within the bipolar, Cold War system under US leadership” (Young, 2010: 4). Some of these implications for global governance are already evident, “[t]here have been calls– not least from Brazil, China and India – for the reform of formal institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)” (Young, 2012: 4). Does this suggest an end to unipolarity?

Unipolarity refers to a world where only one state meets the following criteria: “(a) commands an especially large share of resources or capabilities states can use to achieve their ends and, (b) excels in all component elements of state capability, conventionally defined as size of population and territory, resources endowment, economic capacity, military might and organizational-institutional competence” (Ikenberry et al, 2011: 9). For decades, the United States has been given the title of a ‘unipole’ state because it meets most of the above criteria. However, although one cannot deny the fact that the United States still has a significant military and diplomatic presence (suggesting that the world does not yet represent full multipolarity), it has declined economically relative to other countries and this has implications for its unipole stature. As seen from the following table:

⁷ According to Gratius (2008: 1), “an emerging country is, per se, a country which finds itself in a transformation process from one international position to a higher one”.

⁸ GDP (Gross Domestic Product) refers to “the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period, though GDP is usually calculated on an annual basis. It includes all of private and public consumption, government outlays, investments and exports less imports that occur within a defined territory” (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gdp.asp>).

Table 1: GDP Growth (Annual %) – 2004 to 2013

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Country	Annual GDP Growth as percentage										AVG
											(%)
US	3.8	3.4	2.7	1.8	-0.3	-2.7	2.5	1.8	2.8	1.7	1.5
Brazil	5.7	3.2	4.0	6.1	5.2	-0.3	7.5	2.7	0.9	2.5	3.75
China	10.1	11.3	12.7	14.2	9.6	9.2	10.4	9.3	7.8	7.7	10.23
India	7.9	9.3	9.3	9.8	3.9	-1.5	3.1	3.5	2.5	3.0	5.08
Russia	7.2	6.4	8.2	8.5	5.8	-7.8	4.5	4.3	3.4	1.5	3.86
SA	4.5	5.2	5.6	5.5	3.6	-1.5	3.1	3.5	2.4	1.8	3.37

Source: <http://databank.worldbank.org> AND <http://www.oecd.org/eco/outlook>

As a result, unipolarity is therefore also waning. However, this needs to be understood in relative terms because the United States is still the world's biggest economy. Therefore, the argument is not that unipolarity is waning because of the United States' declining economic dominance; rather that there are other players on the rise who could potentially play an important role and "exploit the global trading system that the US helped to create and helps to maintain" (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325). Most importantly, "as other actors become more capable, they may become more active. If they become more active, the US room to manoeuvre will diminish" (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325). Furthermore, it is these same actors who could and have started to challenge the existing terms of global governance which have promoted global governance by a few. This is seen in the BRICS case (to be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3).

Having established the inadequacy of unipolarity in explaining changes in the international political and economic order, what of multipolarity? While multipolarity is indeed a feature

of world order today, it alone also does not sufficiently capture the nature of international politics to date. The three significant features of multipolarity indicate its partiality in describing the world to-date. These are its emphasis on “superpowers”, the idea of “balance of power by other states” and the “scope for collective action” (Grevi, 2009: 23). Put differently, multipolarity puts emphasis on how power is dispersed among three or more superpowers such that none among them is unassailable (although it acknowledges that some states might have more power -military and economic- than others) (Grevi, 2009: 23). Consequently, the scope of balance of power is primarily that which is between superpowers and their co-existence through coalitions, alliance and possibly war in defence of their interests (Grevi, 2009: 23). Furthermore, in multipolarity, there is an emphasis on the necessity of superpowers’ involvement during any efforts at collective action (Grevi, 2009: 23). Therefore, although multipolarity captures the idea that power has been more dispersed, its emphasis on superpowers and their relative power does not sufficiently account for the changing context of interstate action and the changing nature of interdependence (Grevi, 2009: 23) As put by Grevi (2009: 23) “the problem with the multipolarity argument is not that it is wrong but that it is partial” (Grevi, 2009: 23).

If we accept that unipolarity is not completely over and that multipolarity is a partial feature of today’s world, why then do we not call it a uni-multipolar world order as does Huntington? By uni-multipolarity, Huntington (1999: 36) describes the world as one “with one superpower (America) and several major powers in which the settlement of key international issues requires action by the single superpower but always with some combination of other major states”. Uni-multipolarity as used by Huntington is however problematic because as much as it recognises US significance, “it fails to take into account two major elements of our system: non-state actors and interdependence” (Renard, 2009: 17). As noted above, in a globalising and interdependent world, there are powerful non-states actors inserting themselves to shape change too. This leads one to make the argument that interolarity with its emphasis on the coexistence of multipolarity and interdependence and the acknowledgement of non-state actors, comes closer to describing world order to-date. One which indicates the fact that world order is “wider than international order because to give an account of it we have to deal not only with order among states but with order within the wider world political system of which the state system is only part of” (Bull, 1977: 22). One where “the worldwide network of interaction embraces not only states but also other political actors, both above and below the state” (Bull, 1977: 276).

2.3 An inter polar world order

The term inter polarity is originally defined as “connecting or being between two poles (dictionary.reference.com/browse/inter-polar) or “extending between two poles” (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interpolar). Scholars of International Relations have now begun to use the term inter polarity to describe today’s world order. They call this order an inter polar world order, a world where polarity is understood in relation to interdependence. Renard & Biscop (2010: 2) and Grevi (2009: 9) define inter polarity as an order where multipolarity coexists with heightened interdependence. The point about interdependence here is not that it is a new phenomenon but that today’s interdependence is not only economic, it is also functional, systematic and complex.

Economic interdependence refers to a “particular kind of international relationship that emerges when countries are economically linked by interactions that can be both costly and beneficial” (Gasiorowski, 1986: 4). “Interdependence is functional in the sense that the fates of most actors are intertwined in global institutions with proper competences and enforcing capacities. These include the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and many more. Functional interdependence is more of a contemporary phenomenon given that the Concert of Nations and the likes did not have a comparable level of institutionalization and legal power” (Renard, 2009: 15).

Systematic interdependence refers to the fact that we all depend on planet earth for both renewable and non-renewable resources. However this is not the main point, the main point is that “as opposed to the past, the system is fundamentally endangered today” by factors such as climate change (Renard, 2009: 15). This necessitates cooperative efforts towards addressing environmental degradation. Here complex interdependence is of importance. Complex interdependence can best be understood as a concept premised on varying characteristics, however only two are important for this study. Firstly, complex interdependence points to the fact that interstate relations consist of a variety of issues which are not always arranged hierarchically or in a clear consistent hierarchy. Keohane and Nye (2001: 22) highlight the need to use complex interdependence as an analytical tool which also serves as a critique to the idea of treating states as though they are “single entities” rather than treating them as a complex combination “of different groups and interests” (Keohane, 1989: 24 -25). Secondly, complex interdependence emphasizes the minor role played by military force, especially in the prevalence of heightened interdependence (Nye and Keohane, 2001: 20-23).

The four “previously identified forms of interdependence never coexisted as they do today, creating a very complex web of interdependent relations” (Renard, 2009: 15). This complex web of interdependent relations presented by an inter polar world has created space for some new developments in international politics. The following section identifies three phenomena created by an inter polar world order. Firstly, that an inter polar world order suggests the need for a multilateral approach in efforts towards international regime⁹ development (widening of in existing regimes) and, secondly, the creation of new international fora¹⁰ (Grevi, 2009: 31).

Thirdly, an inter polar world highlights that at present geopolitics and global politics is such ‘enemies’ are faced with the reality that they are economically connected in ways that have seldom been seen before.

2.4 An inter polar world order: change in continuity

Interdependence silently spins ties between what were potential rivals and geopolitical enemies. Interpolarity suggests the need for a multilateral approach in the efforts of international regime creation (Grevi, 2009: 31), including emerging powers at the core of decision making in those regimes to reflect the changes in the distribution of power. Emerging regimes potentially are building blocks for a more diffused world, where not only the big powers establish norms and policy. The purpose of regimes is to facilitate agreement and cooperation (Krasner, 1982: 187). They are also a “means to reach global governance” (Schneider, 2011:8).

The goal of international regimes is the realisation of certain policy ends, through a process of establishing instruments by which to coordinate and cooperate, as well as to elaborate on internationally established normative recommendations (Nilsson et al, 2009: 341). This “approach emphasizes a functional perspective of shared needs and interdependent interests by states that brings about more or less permanent cooperative arrangements based on common norms and institutions” (Nilsson et al, 2009: 341). In his paper “The Demand for International Regimes”, Robert Keohane, outlines this concept of international regime to account for a variety of issues. Firstly, he outlines international regimes “as devices to

⁹ International regimes are defined as “principles, norms, rules and decision- making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue area” (Krasner, 1983: 2; Tudoroiu; 2012: 27).

¹⁰ Because capabilities are not only in the hands of established countries in an inter polar world, emerging countries are creating their own spaces and this has implications for global governance, regime creation and international institutions of global governance.

facilitate the making of substantive agreements in world politics, particularly among states” (Keohane, 1982: 354). It is principally within the context of international regimes, though not solely, where the facilitation of agreements through the provision of “rules, norms, principles, and procedure” is made (Keohane, 1982: 354). In this sense, “regimes make it easier for actors to realize their interests collectively” (Keohane, 1982: 354). One should note that these interpretations do imply an underlying coordination of interests in world politics (Keohane, 1982: 355). Secondly, regimes can be utilized for two intentions. That is, being utilised for the pursuit of “particularistic” and narrow interests, “as well as more widely shared objectives” (Keohane, 1982: 355). An inter-polar world suggests the need for the latter. The efforts of including the G5 countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South) and ultimately the G20 are efforts at multilateralism towards regime creation. However, the picture does not end with the widening of membership in existing regimes; there is also room for the birth of new fora, creating opportunity for converging interest around alternative principles, norms, rules and decision- making procedures.

Because capabilities are no longer exclusively in the hands of established countries in an inter-polar world, emerging countries are creating their own spaces. This has implications for global governance, regime creation and international institutions of global governance. The BRICS¹¹ forum¹² is testament to this. BRICS’ first initiative was seen at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006, where foreign ministers from Brazil, Russia and India met for the first time. This meeting is frequently seen to be “the embryonic form of the BRIC summit we see today” (Cui, 2013: 51). Following that meeting, the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and China held a BRIC ministerial meeting which was hosted in

¹¹ Jim O’Neill of Goldman Sachs was one of the first people to recognise the economic potential of the BRICS countries. He coined the term BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) which at the time did not include South Africa. He did this to highlight the importance of investing in these countries because of their “rising or emerging economies” (www.brics.utoronto.ca/about.html). For instance, the population of the BRICS countries is 43% of the total population of the South and contributed 20 -25 per cent of global GDP in 2012 (Economic Development Growth 2012: 9). According to Cui (2013: 53) “BRICS accounted for about 6% of the global economy, increased up to 9% in the 90s, and reached 18% in 2010. In international trade, the world export share of the BRICS increased from 7% in 2000 to 14% in 2010”. However, the economic strength of BRICS countries only tells part of the story. If we are to make an argument for why BRICS has implications for global governance, it is important to highlight other roles that BRICS plays in international affairs which include attempting to provide leadership, challenging marginalisation, advocating for the reform of established international institutions as well as advocating for collective bargaining. These are constant efforts by BRICS to translate their economic power into “international influence” (Haibin, 2012: 1).

¹² A forum refers to “a meeting or medium where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged” (Bischoff, 2011: 11).

Yekaterinburg, Russia on May 16, 2008. “In 2008 the outbreak of the international financial crisis brought opportunities for further cooperation between the BRIC countries” (Cui, 2013: 51- 52). In September 2008 and May 2009, the BRIC foreign ministers had two meetings where they had decided “to carry out comprehensive cooperation among the countries on international issues such as the millennium development goals, South-South cooperation, energy and food security, and climate change among others” (Cui, 2013: 52). In November of 2009, BRIC finance ministers held another meeting in Sao Paulo (Brazil) where they deliberated on how to cooperatively survive at the time of the economic crisis, they thus agreed that there is a need for the “reform of the international financial system” (Cui, 2013: 51 - 52). All this is important as it highlights that there is an ongoing conversation among BRICS about the necessary changes in global governance. This has potential implications for the direction of global governance. That is, challenging the terms of global governance as created and maintained in the hub-and-spoke system (Cui, 2013: 51-52.).

Furthermore, there are several other activities that determine BRICS’ political influence. Firstly, two of its members-Russia and China – participate “as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)” (Lukov, 2012: 1). Even though this has been the case since post-WWII, this platform can still be used by these BRICS members to advance BRICS’ reformist position. Secondly, members of the forum “are active participants of the leading international organizations and structures (the United Nations, the G20, the G8, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the G77” (Lukov, 2012: 1). BRICS’ “successful leveraging of increased voting rights within IMF and their securing of permanent Security Council seats for India, Brazil, and South Africa indicate the developing world’s increased representation in global governance structures” (BRICS Sanya Declaration, 2011).

The emergence of BRICS is important for two reasons. Firstly, for the different challenge it poses to existing terms of global governance and secondly, its implication for the “issue of scope in contemporary global governance” (Cooper and Alexandroff, 2010:1-3). The different challenge to global governance pertains to the fact that BRICS countries “neither accede to a West-centric order nor view themselves as beneficiaries” of hub and spoke order (Cooper and Alexandroff, 2010: 1).This however does not mean that BRICS reject the established system completely and does not imply the emergence of a new set of state institutions which would serve the interest of rising as well as established powers (Cooper and Alexandroff, 2010:1). BRICS is reformist, not revolutionist. BRICS is important as it can be argued to be playing a crucial role in one of the main challenges of the current world order

which is “finding a synthesis” between the changing distribution of capabilities and “the governance of interdependence” (Grevi, 2009: 5).

Moreover, BRICS as a forum contributes to interolarity. Firstly, it contributes by being an addition significant player in international affairs (contributing to multipolarity) and in turn contributes to shaping an interolar world. BRICS does this by playing a role in the transitioning of world affairs through its advocacy for the reform of institutions of global governance (such as the WB, IMF and WTO) and as such also contributes to norm redefinition. Norm redefinition refers to efforts from states to redefine established norms in international politics (Van Kersbergen and Verbeek, 2009: 217). This norm redefinition is seen in BRICS challenging the norm of a Western-led world and Western dominance in institutions of global governance, challenging the makings of a world order which resemble the hub and spoke system, where Western Europe and North America dominated global governance and co-shaped international affairs outcomes. BRICS rather seeks to contribute to a paradigm “of fairness, inclusiveness, and diversity”, with Eastern and Southern countries increasingly seeking to co-shape the unpredictable interolar world order (Panova, 2014:1). This is seen in BRICS’ recent efforts and “motivation for establishing a BRICS bank to be a counterpart to the World Bank and IMF, and promote a vision of development driven by developing countries” as well as advocating for the reform of the World Bank and the IMF (Institute of Development Studies, 2013: 1-2).

Moreover, alongside the birth of new a forum in the world, another feature of an interolar world is that at present geopolitics and global politics are such that ‘enemies’ are faced with the reality that they are economically connected in ways that have seldom been seen before. This is illustrated in how China and America (*Chimerica*) relate to each other. For instance these two countries’ relations are not guided by one stable issue which overrides all others. As it stands “the two countries have developed broad and overlapping interests in maintaining regional and global peace and security, managing financial crisis, promoting trade and investment, and protecting the environment and dealing with climate change” (Zhao and Liu, 2010: 19) Consequently, “managing” their multifaceted relations has to a large extent made it necessary for both countries to attain a great degree of “compromise and cooperation”. Perhaps in unison, “as the largest holder of U.S. Treasury notes, China naturally cares about the health of the U.S. economy because any deterioration in the U.S. economy may negatively affect the value of China’s assets” (Zhao and Liu, 2010: 19). Furthermore, America realises that its economic relations with China hold more prospect than

impediment, for instance “the annual gains to the United States from increasing economic interaction with China are substantial—about \$70 billion, or \$625 per household” (Zhao and Liu, 2010: 12). *Chimerica* is a manifestation that in an interpolar world, where economic interdependence is a core feature, cooperation is key and the management of conflict and competition is necessary. As such, *Chimerica* has shown how economic interdependence has increased the need for cooperation in the midst of a plethora of reasons for conflict (Zhao and Liu, 2010: 12).

2.5 Conclusion

The world order is in transition. This transition is driven by two phenomena, a diffusion in the distribution of power and heightened interdependence which result in an interpolar world order. As a result of the extent of interdependence in an interpolar world order, it necessitates integration and socialisation between states with differing values into a “web of regimes, treaties and institutions” (Biscop and Renard, 2010: 12). This integration and socialisation is a prerequisite because collective action in addressing global challenges is a vital component of power in an interpolar world (Biscop and Renard, 2010: 13). As put by Le Roy (2012), “globalised economic structures have served to foster a system characterized by interdependence”. Such heightened interdependence necessitates “compromise, and cannot expect to determine outcomes simply by virtue of their power” (Smith, 2013: 117). This nature of interdependence does not imply a complete overhaul of confrontation in international relations but it specifically highlights the importance of cooperation in a world order characterised by economic, functional, systematic and complex interdependence (Smith, 2013: 116), the reconfiguration of relations between states (Lazerou, 2011: 4) and the increasing recognition advocacy by emerging states (Peterson, Alcaro and Tocci, 2012:1). Lastly, given that an interpolar world opens the space for emerging powers to create their own spaces, it is important to analyse how and to what extent these emerging powers have begun to shape world politics and global governance. The following chapter speaks to this.

CHAPTER 3

BRICS: A VEHICLE FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE REDRESS?

“The tectonic plates of global politics are certainly shifting, but their movements are yet not predictable”
(Pant, 2013: 103).

3.1 Introduction

As indicated in chapter 1 and 2, the world is one where there is a coexistence of multipolarity and interdependence-making it interpolar. Contributing to multipolarity as a feature of an interpolar world is the growth of new potential centres of power¹³. These potential centres of power are important for two reasons. Firstly, they can potentially play an important role in exploiting the global trading system. Secondly, they can play a meaningful role in the management and/or reform of the international order (Posen in Ikenberry et al, 2011: 325; Cooper and Mo, 2013: 2). They (the new potential centres of power) include countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey, to name a few (Cooper and Mo, 2013: 2). Some of these countries, like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS)¹⁴ have taken to heart the fact that they possess the necessary economic

¹³ These are countries which have been identified by investors as possessing the necessary economic trajectories to become meaningful centres of influence in world politics. These economies are of recognised economic importance to the financial and economic markets.

¹⁴ “Since 2008, the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India and China — the BRIC countries — have met annually to discuss issues of global significance. . . . The four foreign ministers met on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly in the fall of 2006. Their leaders' first meeting was held in Sapporo on the eve of the G8 Toyako-Hokkaido Summit in 2008, and their first standalone summit was the following year in Yekaterinburg, Russia. Since then, the BRICs ministers responsible for foreign affairs, finance and the economy, trade, agriculture and health have met. At the officials' level, there have been meetings held to discuss science and technology, national security, competition and statistics” (<http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/about.html>)

trajectories to become meaningful centres of influence in world politics and have started to economically cooperate with each other¹⁵. In doing so, they have started to politically cooperate, a process which has started to give them a profile independent of the financial markets. Through their process of political cooperation, BRICS countries are exploiting the international environment, which allows space for emerging powers.

Although BRICS' economic stability is important for its prospects as a meaningful actor in world politics, its existence should not be limited to that (economic might). Another crucial component of BRICS' existence is its ideas¹⁶ about the need for multipolarity and how best to achieve its generic role or its role as a reformer. Ideas should be taken seriously in "social processes" that have "structural quality" because "power and interests have the effects they do in virtue of the ideas that make them up" (Nel, 2006:110). The execution of ideas is however twofold. It can advance and/or also undermine power or cause others to undermine the power and/or foreign policies of the state from which the ideas emanate (an example would be the Bush administration declaring war on Iraq, a decision which caused many to question US power and legitimacy). Ideas are also important in that they "suggest ways of looking at the world that can either close up or open avenues for fundamental transformation" and serve as "instruments in the struggle to establish or challenge hegemony" (Nel, 2006:110). This is applicable to BRICS. Although BRICS ideas are not geared at fundamentally transforming the international system, they are contributing to the opening up of avenues towards reform and towards championing the struggle to challenge US hegemony and Western dominance in international affairs. BRICS reinforces the fact that reform is largely influenced by foreign policy ideas about how the existing order needs to be challenged (Hurrell in Baylis, 2014: 87).

Challenging the prevailing order is unlikely to solely result from "calculations of hard power and material interests" but also necessitates a set of ideas around how and why this prevailing

¹⁵BRICS are meeting at summit level, on issues of finance, trade, agricultural and health ministerial level. In addition they are also holding academic forums to come up with actual plans of operation, hosting sherpas meetings, comprised of expert working groups. They are also meeting at senior official level on the issues of the environment and climate, science and technology as well as competition (Ying in Kornegay & Bohler-Muller; 2013: 58). BRICS is also comprised of sub-forums that deal with "urbanisation, friendship cities and local government cooperation", a contact group on economic and trade issues as well as expert meetings around the prospect of their new Development Bank (Ying in Kornegay& Bohler-Muller; 2013: 58)

¹⁶ "a concept whose explication is intimately tied to its cognate....including casual and evaluative beliefs and desires" (Wendt in Nel, 2006: 110)

order needs to be challenged (Hurrell in Baylis, 2014: 87). Moreover, BRICS's agency reinforces the idea that social life can be made and remade through human agency (Baylis, 2014:5). It also serves as a critique of theories where the world is seen as fixed, undermining human progress as a possibility (Baylis, 2014:5). Commenting on BRICS, Acharya (2014:1) stipulates that although it is still early to treat these developments as the 'new status quo', "they at least serve as a reminder that the era of Western and American dominance of the world is ending, giving way to a more complex and diversified world order: the multiplex world. The move by BRICS, though outwardly economic in nature, has serious geopolitical undertones" (Acharya, 2014:1) Therefore, what would be interesting to witness is what kinds of further developments are likely to materialize from an interpolar order where rising powers such as BRICS want a bigger piece of the pie in the management of the international affairs, especially in the global financial system.

This chapter seeks to analyse BRICS in its dual qualities of being both a reformer (i.e. a forum committed to the transformation of prevailing global configurations of power) and a "reformation" (an outward manifestation of the changing status quo). It makes the argument that BRICS is not merely an economic grouping but one which also has political significance. It argues that following this ideational alignment of these states, for the purposes of alerting investors to their economic potential, BRICS countries have forged diplomatic, political and economic links which have seen them increasingly seeking to have a bigger say in the management of the global economy and international institutions of global governance such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), United Nations (UN) and World Trade Organisation (WTO). It also makes the argument that even though BRICS is indeed a reformation and a reformer, there are several challenges it faces, ones which affect the forum's structural impact. Two challenges could be prevalent in the formation of a new forum. Firstly, the gap between its aspirations and its actual structural impact and secondly, the prevalence of intra-group differences which could hinder progress. This chapter will also show that BRICS is not immune to these challenges.

The chapter starts by outlining what BRICS is and providing an intra-BRICS lens. Secondly, it outlines the economic story, which is an important (though not sole) point of reference for why the idea of a 'BRICS group' was conceived. The second section argues that there is a recognition by BRICS that reliance on their combined economic might, would by itself not be enough to effectively leverage any meaningful engagement in international affairs. For this reason, BRICS countries have sought to forge closer diplomatic, political and economic ties,

which contribute to multipolarity in two ways; as a new force in the international system and as a buzzing source of ideas which challenge the status quo regarding global governance and more specifically global financial governance. The argument made by BRICS is that “the prevailing global governance architecture is regulated by institutions which were conceived in circumstances when the international landscape in all its aspects was characterised by very different challenges and opportunities” (BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation eThekweni Declaration Durban, South Africa, March 27, 2013).

BRICS’ commitment is geared at discovering different ways in order to achieve a development which is more equitable as well as a global growth which is inclusionary (BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation eThekweni Declaration Durban, South Africa, March 27, 2013). This is of course not without its challenges. Perhaps a critique one could make from the onset is that the emergence of BRICS carries the “risk of creating a new global elitism” (Acharya, 2014: 78). For instance, being born out of dissatisfaction of exclusionary forms of global governance, BRICS and its institutions (to be discussed in greater detail below) will definitely strive at much more inclusive forms of governance and development. However, it is still uncertain how differently (from established institutions) BRICS will relate to non-members. Further BRICS challenges (such as areas where BRICS has been less cooperative and how this could affect the group) are analysed herein. The last section outlines concluding comments.

3.2 What is BRICS?

As has been argued before, BRICS can be understood as a forum in world politics. A forum refers to “a meeting or medium where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged” (Bischoff, 2011: 11). Forums are excellent for dialogue around common interests especially for BRICS whose summit diplomacy is centred on a certain degree of cooperative dialogue around the variety of issues discussed in previous chapters. The main objective of the BRICS forum is to serve the common interests of its members and those of other emerging and developing countries (Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries' Leaders Yekaterinburg, Russia, June 16, 2009). “The rationale is simple: the economic architecture put in place after WWII is obsolete because institutions like the IMF and the World Bank conferred a disproportionate amount of decision-making power to the United States and Europe. It is time, according to the BRICS, to restructure them by enhancing the participation of developing countries through the increase of their shares in the quota system of both

institutions”(Mielniczuk, 2014:1). Thus, BRICS is both a reformer, a forum committed to the transformation of prevailing global configurations of power and a “reformation”, an outward manifestation of the changing status quo. BRICS can thus be understood as a new avenue for the “reform and adaptation of multilateral frameworks and instruments” (Grevi, 2009: 30).

3.3 The intra-BRICS story: The importance of BRICS for its members

A country does not become part of a forum which does not promote its foreign policy objectives or national interests. This is why the work of neoliberals whose theory is interest based and recognises the role on international regimes in the realisation of common interests is crucial. Although some argue that BRICS members “are dissimilar, do not share common political interests and are not a natural trading bloc” (Sinha and Dorschner, 2010: 88) and others that they are not a coherent bloc (The Economist, 2010), BRICS members do have some common interests that led to the construction of the BRICS forum (Tudoroiu, 2012: 34). Firstly, beyond their notable growth rate, the similarities between BRICS include their extended history of questioning the pre-eminence of the West. Secondly, their vision for an international system which is characterised by multipolarity, where an increased role for BRICS in world affairs is possible (Tudoroiu, 2012: 34). Thirdly, it “retains a large measure of respect for the American power and resiliency and does not reject openly the present structure of the international system” (Tudoroiu, 2012: 34). Fourth, BRICS rejects the violation of other state’s sovereignty (Lavron, 2012: 12).

Apart from the need to collectively advocate for the reform of existing international institutions of global governance and terms of global governance, there are other BRICS benefits for its members. Let us analyse these in detail:

3.3.1 Brazil

Brazil has had the ambition of being a significant country in global issues since the beginning of its republican period, “a role that many Brazilian statesmen understand to be “natural” due to the country’s great geographic extent, numerous population and abundance of natural resources” (Lima and Hirst, 2009: 43 in Utzig 2014). Brazil is also an active participant in South America’s regional integration, it is a member of vital organizations such as the Mercosul and the Unasul. Brazil also seeks an increased role in international organisations such as the UN, where it yearns for a permanent seat in the Security Council (Lima and Hirst, 2009: 45 in Utzig, 2014). Therefore, although Brazil is part of the trilateral alliance IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa), in BRICS (which has greater political recognition, including

two permanent members of the Security Council, three nuclear powers, and two non-democratic powers), it can be part of the a forum which can and has¹⁷ advanced for Brazil's greater role in prominent international institutions (Utzig, 2014: 6). Brazil is also "the representative of Latin America" in the BRICS. Furthermore, for Brazil, "the BRICS as an intermediary political circle in between the West – and particularly the United States, with which it enjoys close relations –and Latin America, which forms its natural economic and political sphere of influence" (Laidi, 2012:11).

3.3.2 Russia

Russia does not fall into the category of emerging powers, it is a former super-power whose status was dented by the Soviet Union's downfall at the end of the 1980's (Utzig, 2014: 7). BRICS is important to Russia in that it is a forum that speaks to Russia's foreign policy which is largely driven by the need to recover the power it lost with the demise of the Soviet Union (Utzig, 2014: 7). Even though Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, its membership in BRICS aligns it with countries such as South Africa, Brazil and India, countries which Russia had not traditionally partnered with (Utzig, 2014: 7). Similarly to all BRICS members, Russia therefore sees BRICS as a forum where its powers can be "multilateralised", particularly in areas and/or issues where its position is not that strong (Laidi, 2011:7). Furthermore, BRICS can be understood as a way of affirming Russia's importance in global politics, an issue which lies at the heart of Russia's foreign policy (Utzig, 2014: 8).

3.3.3 India

Given its geographic and demographic weight as well as its economic development (GDP of US\$ 1.8 trillion as reported by the World Bank in 2011), India also sees itself as vital and seeks increased "participation in global decision-making forums" (Utzig, 2014: 8). Furthermore, India's foreign policy has constantly emphasises "autonomy and independence" (Utzig, 2014: 8). Consequently, in 1955 former Indian Prime-Minister Nehru together with other state heads initiated the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). This served as

¹⁷ "We reiterate the importance we attach to the status of India and Brazil in international affairs, and understand and support their aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations" (2nd BRIC Summit of Heads of State and Government: Joint Statement Brasília, April 15, 2010)

“landmark in the assertion of an independent foreign policy by countries that, during the Cold War” had no interest in being part of “the American nor the Soviet influence zone” (Utzig, 2014: 8). For India, BRICS is a forum through which it can assert its recently earned status as a global emerging power (Utzig, 2014: 9). Secondly, through BRICS, India can expand its relations to its powerful neighbours (Utzig, 2014: 9). As noted by Utzig (2014: 8), “it is worth remembering that besides the BRICS, India narrowed its relations with Brazil and South Africa through the IBSA”. Furthermore, in addition to having powerful neighbours such as China and Russia, BRICS might be seen by Indian leaders as a possibility of bringing these neighbours to their cause, “meaning convincing them that its development is not a threat” (Utzig, 2014: 9). This means that it is dedicated to a peaceful rise.

3.3.4 China

China’s global economic status (US\$ 7.3 trillion GDP as reported by the World Bank in 2011 and being the world’s second most powerful after the American economy), has led China to seek a bigger role in decision making on issues related to global economic governance (Utzig, 2014: 9). Many have focused on the fact that China is the most powerful within BRICS and have predicted that China will inevitably have a bigger say in the forum. However, although we cannot deny that BRICS is to China a useful forum for possibly obtaining its superpower position with the support of more allies, through BRICS China is also attempting to portray that its rise is peaceful (Utzig, 2014: 10). Thus, BRICS is to China what it is to other BRICS members, a way to advance some of its national interests. Narratives around China’s likelihood to dominate in BRICS sometimes fail to account for the fact that the world is interpolar (multipolar and interdependent), a world where multipolarity is twofold- in the form of ideas and power (Mielniczuk, 2014: 3). Therefore, despite China’s economic might, it is not alone in the world (Mielniczuk, 2014: 3). China exists in a context of economic, functional, systematic and complex interdependence. This necessitates a different kind of development, one which is not driven by a hegemonic type of rise (Mielniczuk, 2014: 3). As such BRICS is a forum which is driving the debate around the need for a reformed order among its members, not a “puppet” of Chinese interests (Cormier, 2012: 29).

3.3.5 South Africa

One of South Africa’s main strategic objectives is the protection and the promotion of its national interests and values through bilateral and multilateral interactions (<http://www.dfa.gov.za/department/index.html>). BRICS is therefore a forum (among other

avenues), through which South Africa can advance its multilateral diplomacy. Through BRICS, South Africa also seeks to intensify its objective of being a global player, being among countries seen as having the potential to be global leader (Utzig, 2014: 11). Usually, the view that South Africa is China's gateway to Africa is overstated in analysing South Africa's place in the BRICS. Although South African players have openly said they want to be a gateway or a platform from which others invest and export (hence China bought a share in Standard Bank), there are other factors which are important in analysing South Africa's place in BRICS. These include some similarities that BRICS countries share with South Africa. For instance, South Africa as well as the rest of "Africa's colonial history and post-colonial experience at the hands of Western powers and its continuing underdevelopment and economic marginalisation resonates well with the Chinese approach and makes for strong relations between China and African governments" (Schoeman, 2011: 35). Also, "the process of colonization was a source of blatant disrespect for indigenous cultures and norms, especially in Brazil and South Africa, and the creation of the UN only furthered that disrespect in the sense that states belonging to the so-called 'Third World' were excluded from being considered for rotational non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. This mainly drove South Africa's and Brazil's commitments to promoting equitable multilateralism in the aim of gaining esteem" (Lecomte, 2013: 1). Therefore, similarly to all BRICS countries, South Africa is dissatisfied with the terms of global governance in a 'hub-and-spoke' system, where North America and Western Europe dominated international affairs and institutions of global governance. South Africa thus shares the call by BRICS countries for a reformed order.

3.4 BRICS: The Economic Story

Jim O'Neill, Chief economist at Goldman Sachs was one of the first people to recognise the economic potential¹⁸ of the BRICS countries. This led him to coin the term BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) which at the time did not include South Africa¹⁹. O'Neill did this as a

¹⁸ "The key underlying argument behind these predictions is that China and India will arise as the world's principal suppliers of manufactured goods and services, while Brazil and Russia will become similarly dominant as suppliers of raw material. What the countries also have in common is that they all have an enormous potential consumer market, completed by access to regional markets and to a large labour force" (Hurrell in Baylis et al: 2014: 84)

¹⁹ O'Neill did not include South Africa for the reason that South Africa's economy is relatively smaller than the rest of the BRICS countries

way of highlighting the importance of investing in these countries because of their “rising or emerging economies” (www.brics.utoronto.ca/about.html).

Since the financial crisis of 2008, BRIC countries have accounted for half the global growth (Armijo and Roberts, 2014: 3). Combined, they (BRIC) account for about 50% of the total global foreign exchange reserves (Hurrell in Baylis et al: 2014: 85). The population of the BRICS countries constitutes 43% of the total population of the South and contributed 20 -25 per cent of global GDP in 2012 (Economic Development Growth 2012: 9). According to Cui (2013: 53) BRICS’s share of the global economy increased from 6% in the 1970’s, to 9% in the 90s, reaching a high of 18% in 2010. Similarly in international trade, BRICS’s world export share increased from 7% in 2000 to 14% in 2010 (Cui, 2013: 53). Melchoir (2012:1) states that “measured in PPP (Purchasing Power Parity that accounts for price level differences), the share of Western Europe + North America in world GDP fell from 51% in 1990 to 42% in 2010, whereas Asia’s share increased from 23 to 34%”²⁰.

While some may take this to mean a definite power shift from the West to the South/East, this is not the stance taken in this study. It would be premature to speak of a definite power shift and an irreversible US/Western economic decline. As has been highlighted by Armijo and Roberts (2014, 3) the dominance of the US in the institutions of global governance (such as the WB, IMF and the WTO) has indicated a great deal of resilience for the first twenty years post World War II, into the 21st century. Therefore, an analysis of the rising/ emerging economies relative to existing established economies should be devoid of any rigid dichotomies which suggest any kind of unilinear international politics and geopolitics (Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: xxi). What we are instead witnessing is a gradual yet complex variation in the strategic landscape, where the world has become a more fluid place (Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: xxi). Scott (2013: 32) contends that emerging patterns in international relations are “not so much a matter of fixed permanent alignments. Rather, this post-Cold War multipolarity involves diffused and fluid alliances of the moment coalescing around different issues and with differential power capacities across the hard power–soft power spectrum”. What remains to be seen is the form this changing strategic landscape and fluidity will amount to. BRICS has given us a glimpse of the new developments that this fluidity and change affords.

²⁰ This is all important since “economic size is a power resource in its own right” (Young, 2010: 6).

The following section shows how BRICS has begun to manoeuvre the changing, fluid multipolar strategic landscape through ideas which challenge the status quo, attempting to provide leadership in collective bargaining and in challenging marginalisation. The objective is to see a change in the global economy, particularly through the reform of international financial institutions. This process then necessitates that emerging and developing economies be allowed a greater voice and representation in international financial institutions. (Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries' Leaders Yekaterinburg, Russia, June 16, 2009). BRICS is trying to gradually translate its economic resourcefulness into political resourcefulness, where it tries to exert an influence on “politico-economic processes” in the international system (Sahle, 2010: 17). This is necessary for its efforts at championing the reform of the global economy, through advocating for a reform of global financial institutions, where greater representation is afforded to emerging and developing countries (Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries' Leaders, Russia, 2009). Aspiration is however nothing if not matched with actual structural impact. The following section will analyse this aspect and extent of BRICS' political significance.

3.5 BRICS Political Significance: Championing Multipolarity?

Following the ideational and strategic convergence of BRICS countries, in pursuit of attracting greater foreign direct investment (FDI) to advance the economic potential of this forum, BRICS countries have forged closer diplomatic, political and economic links. As a result, this has seen them increasingly strive for a bigger say in the management of the global economy and international institutions of global governance, such as the IMF WB, UN and WTO. Given this scenario, it can be argued that the economic strength of BRICS countries only tells part of the story. As put by Kornegay and Bohler-Muller (2013: 1) “the economics of ‘BRICS laying’ is but the tip of the iceberg”. If we are to make an argument for why BRICS has implications for global governance, it is important to analyse how BRICS has tried to build its international symbolic and political profile. As such, this analysis will take a closer look at the ‘roles’ that BRICS advocates for and those it has started to actualise. These include attempting to provide leadership in challenging marginalisation, advocating for the reform of established international institutions as well as collective bargaining (Haibin, 2012: 1). These roles also help delineate BRICS generic role, which is, advocating for and essentially reforming a system which is significantly Western and which has informed international relations and global governance for centuries. The idea of a reformed system of

global governance, particularly a reformed global economy and reformed international financial institutions is a recurrent theme in their summits²¹.

The concept of global governance is very useful in the discussion around BRICS as an agent of reform, particularly in understanding why BRICS feels it is necessary for global governance to be inclusive. Although, I concur with Dingwerth and Pattberg (2006: 189) that “at this point in time, global governance is still more of a vision than a description of the actual state of the international system”, it is still however a useful concept in the analysis of the idea of collective management in international relations. It (global governance) introduces us to the political programme of ‘cooperation’ as problem solving mechanism and its analysis also exposes the failures of such a programme. Global governance also denotes the idea of management, and more related to this study, the idea of exclusion in the ‘management’ of world affairs and the effects of this exclusion (Dingwerth and Pattberg, 2006: 189). The idea of exclusion is of particular importance in this study as it sheds more light around the issue of why BRICS felt the need to cooperate politically, symbolically and strategically. Exclusion breeds contention, which in turn results in the imagination of an alternative management arrangement by those who feel excluded (Dingwerth and Pattberg, 2006: 194). This feeling of exclusionary global governance has to a large extent influenced the emergence of the BRICS forum. For instance, BRICS feel that the ‘hub-and-spoke’ system with North America and Western Europe at the centre and dominated by Western institutions (WTO, WB and the IMF) is exclusionary (see Melchior, 2011: 16; Hurrell in Baylis 2014: 81). BRICS therefore advocates the need for a reformed system, which is multipolar, decentralised, representative, democratic and equitable (Toh, 2010:2).

²¹ “We are committed to advance the reform of international financial institutions, so as to reflect changes in the global economy. The emerging and developing economies must have greater voice and representation in international financial institutions, whose heads and executives should be appointed through an open, transparent, and merit-based selection process. We also believe that there is a strong need for a stable, predictable and more diversified international monetary system” (Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries' Leaders Yekaterinburg, Russia, June 16, 2009)

“The prevailing global governance architecture is regulated by institutions which were conceived in circumstances when the international landscape in all its aspects was characterised by very different challenges and opportunities. As the global economy is being reshaped, we are committed to exploring new models and approaches towards more equitable development and inclusive global growth by emphasising complementarities and building on our respective economic strengths” (BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation eThekweni Declaration Durban, South Africa, March 27, 2013)

Several activities could improve BRICS chances of direct involvement in the processes of global governance, increasing BRICS's chances of exerting some political pressure. Firstly, two of its members (Russia and China) have permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (Lukov, 2012: 1). Secondly, members of the forum actively participate in prominent international organizations and structures, these include the United Nations, the G20, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the G77 (Lukov, 2012: 1). However, because the category of rising powers is not homogenous nor their foreign policies, membership in the same clubs wherein various issues are discussed may also reveal and potentially intensify differences, especially if the issue(s) of discussion are not within the contours of BRICS' generic role/aspirations. This becomes even worse when the issues of contention are ones that are actually within BRICS' generic role/aspirations. For instance, although the forum excels in advocating for increased representation of the developing world and membership²², the debate around representation and membership is complex.

The failure of BRICS members (China and Brazil) to propose a possible successor of Dominique Strauss-Kahn for the Head/Chief of IMF position (despite the perfect chance to propose a successor who would not be from Europe, something which would support their advocacy for the rejection of European domination in IMF leadership position) reveals this complexity (Laidi, 2012: 624). For instance, "the Chinese knew that a Chinese candidacy was premature and unacceptable to everyone. They therefore had the choice to either support another candidate selected by emerging countries or secure the number two IMF position as well as a rapid increase in China, they chose the second option" (Laidi, 2012: 6). One can argue that BRICS countries assume different identities at times when the needs or objectives of the individual countries diverge from those of the forum. This sometimes results in the individual BRICS countries deliberately being free riders- largely accepting global governance outcomes without being actively involved in the process- as seen in the 'IMF leadership position' case (Foot and Walter, 2011: 10). One could also agree with Laidi (2012: 7) that BRICS has "no difficulty individually getting along with this same West to secure a particular national advantage, even at the cost of weakening the collective position of emerging countries". The inability (at times) to act in solidarity undermines their ability to "structurally impact" upon the international system (Laidi, 2012: 7). This again proves that

²² For instance, "successful leveraging of increased voting rights within IMF and their securing of permanent Security Council seats for India, Brazil, and South Africa indicates the developing world's increased representation in global governance structures" (BRICS Sanya Declaration, 2011).

“declaratory policy is not indicative of operational policy” (Woods, Betts, Prantl and Sridhar, 2013: 8).

Furthermore, BRICS is particularly divergent when it comes to the issue of collective security. The UNSC resolutions of a no-fly zone in Libya for the protection of Libyan civilians from Moammar Gadhafi’s armed forces revealed this divergence (Pant, 2013: 95). China and Russia did not veto against or in favour of the resolution which automatically resulted in a “de facto yes”, India and Brazil also abstained while South Africa voted in favour of the resolution (Pant, 2013: 95). The reaction of BRICS countries to this intervention revealed two challenging factors. Firstly, BRICS countries are both strategic and selective in how they relate with the West. Secondly, the fact that, although these countries form part of a forum, they have individual interests and differing governing systems and this could mean that at times there is a clash between their national/ individual values and their international strategic interests (Pant, 2013: 95). For instance, in the Libya intervention example, “the democracies found it difficult to have a common voice as they struggled with tough choices in trying to strike a balance between their values and strategic interests in crafting a response” (Pant, 2013: 95).

More recently, the BRICS as a group has proposed for Israel and Palestine to engage in a self-determined dialogue. However, the member countries’ individual responses have indicated divergence. India, Russia and China have remained neutral while Brazil and South Africa are more explicitly critical of Israel. While India supports Palestine (though not Hamas explicitly), it still maintains relations with its trade partner Israel, which happens to be its second largest supplier of arms (Wilson, 2014:1). India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj commented: “India fully supports the Palestinian cause while at the same time maintaining its ties with Israel” (Wilson, 2014:1). Similarly, Russia has also maintained a neutral stance, with Russia’s foreign minister stating, “now we need to urgently bring an end to the suffering of peaceful Palestinians and Israelis and the destruction of civilian infrastructure” (Wilson, 2014:1). China has also followed the trend of neutrality with its President Xi Jinping stating the following, “we support the mediation efforts by the United Nations, regional countries and the Arab League” (Wilson, 2014:1). While China offered its support to the Palestinian resolution at the United Nations General Assembly, for Palestine to be offered a non-member observer state status within the UN, China still seeks to maintain ties with Israel, its “second-largest supplier of military arms and technology”, to which China is “second-biggest export market and third-largest trading partner” (Wilson, 2014:1). The

Brazilian and South African government have however been explicitly critical of Israel. The Brazilian government stated the following, “we urge the Israeli forces to strictly respect their obligations under the International Humanitarian Law. Furthermore, we consider it necessary that Israel put an end to the blockade on Gaza immediately” (Wilson, 2014:1). The president of the Republic of South Africa, President Jacob Zuma, also “condemned Israel’s disproportionate use of force in the Gaza offensive” (Wilson, 2014:1). Perhaps in some of these responses (i.e. China and India) we see a situation where commitments to self-determination and non-interference offer an opportunity for deliberate and strategic lack of actual involvement, in order to nurse individual interests (i.e. economic interests), under the guise of self-determination and non-interference or maybe a situation where both scenarios are at play.

The Syrian example also leads one to wonder about the extent to which BRICS and its new norms of inclusivity, independence, representation and recognition advance Bull’s goal of world order²³ better than the neo-liberal Washington Consensus governing global governance? In other words, is BRICS going to contribute to a world order that meets human needs? Although it is still early to make any conclusive assertion on this matter, these examples have indicated some kind of limitations to BRICS norms. At the moment, they only speak to the international state system context.

Additionally, these countries differ in terms of the political system each represents (Post-Think Tank Workshop, 2013). For instance, China is a one-party state, Russia’s government is greatly centralised while Brazil, India, and South Africa are democracies, where a significant amount of corruption and/or ethnic contention have yet to be meaningfully addressed (Post-Think Tank Workshop, 2013). On the global level, the BRICS countries also differ in ranking (Post-Think Tank Workshop, 2013: 12). Russia and China can be put in the category of “established global powers”, both occupying permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). On the other hand other, members such as India, Brazil and South Africa aim for influence at the global level but at present have individually been seen more as powerhouses in their respective regions than at the global level (Post-Think Tank Workshop, 2013: 11). This inevitably leads to a variety of differing interests and differing positions taken at the geopolitical level.

²³ World order is defined by Bull (1977: 20) as “those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of human life as a whole”.

Moreover, since international relations affords the coexistence of domestic, regional and global affairs, the challenge lies in how and to what extent BRICS member states' individual objectives contradict at those three levels to an extent that their vision suffers. However, it is still too early to make any conclusive assertions about whether or not these inconsistencies suggest a gradually collapsing BRICS. What we have however been witnessing so far is BRICS' ability to intensify integration in other areas which inform their generic role. Integration here refers not to homogeneity or assimilation but to the idea of different countries being able to strive at a cohesive existence which works around their internal economic disparities and political differences- their "group realities" (Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: 7). Additionally, what we are witnessing is a complex and fluid strategic landscape where countries pursue their foreign policy objective in different ways, through different avenues where there are no fixed permanent alignments (Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: xxvii). This strategic landscape involves dispersed and fluid alliances around different issues (Scott, 2013: 32). It therefore becomes a question of how far BRICS will develop in the other different areas of cooperation it has set down.

BRICS has also been particularly good at interpreting the reality of the international environment²⁴ and thinking of ways to manoeuvre this environment. BRICS member countries have long held the vision of reform but were mindful of the obstacles to its realisation if countries were to pursue it individually, especially in a context of Western dominance. BRICS also realised that they cannot reform the system outside existing global institutions, they still see the usefulness of these institutions as organs of cooperation. The first objective stated in their first declaration in Yekaterinburg, Russia (2009) states the following "[w]e stress the central role played by the G20 Summits in dealing with the financial crisis". Global governance international regimes such as the G20 are crucial at fostering cooperation, policy coordination and political dialogue regarding international political, economic and financial matters. For instance, in their first summit, BRIC member states insisted on the reform of international financial institutions. A few months after their summit, a consensus was reached in the G20 Pittsburgh summit to increase the quota shares as well as the voting power of developing and emerging countries in the WB and in the IMF (Ying in Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: 57).

²⁴ "the international environment is characterised by economic interdependence, technological change and informational hyper-connectivity" (Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: 2).

Furthermore, BRICS also indicates commitment to work together in the UN to continue their “cooperation and strengthen multilateral approaches in international relations based on the rule of law and anchored in the Charter of the United Nations” (Ethekwini Declaration, 2013). Thus, in establishing their political significance, BRICS states are also making strategic choices on how to achieve their vision of a reformed international system, that is, choosing when, in which institutions and how to cooperate with the West. We also need to remember that BRICS is not anti-Western per se, its ideas of reform does not “preclude the emergence of new institutions that can serve the interests of both traditional powers and rising powers” (Alexandroff and Cooper, 2010: 1), however, the collective pursuit of these emerging powers is to seek a reformed international political and economic order, one that is premised on the principles of multipolarity, justice, fairness and democracy (Haibin, 2012: 6).

At the same time, BRICS also realises that an additional yet complementary kind of global governance is necessary, a global governance of *re-dress and redistribution*. Their efforts at establishing a New Development Bank (NDB) gives life to this idea. On July 15, 2014 at Fortaleza-Brazil, an Agreement on the New Development Bank was reached where the forum declared that:

We have agreed on the establishment of the New Development Bank. The Bank shall mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development. To fulfil its purpose, the Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments. It shall also cooperate with international organizations and other financial entities, and provide technical assistance for projects to be supported by the Bank (Agreement on the New Development Bank July 15, 2014, Fortaleza, Brazil).

Reflecting on the NDB, Rousselin (2014:1) states that:

Tired of waiting for U.S. congressional approval for IMF reforms required to offer them representation commensurate with their newfound global economic weight, the BRICS have created the embryo of a parallel system that will present a counterweight, if not an alternative, to a system the foundations of which were laid during the Second World War, and at a time when the economic balance among nations was very different than it is today.

The new BRICS bank which is meant to fund different kinds of projects not currently catered for by that the World Bank provides the ground for a global governance of redress. “The BRICS powers provide alternative sources of trade, investment, loans, aid and arms from traditional Western partners” (Rousselin, 2014:1). Whereas Western countries and the

institutions that they have historically controlled, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have often insisted on free-market economic reforms and (sometimes) electoral democracy, this is not the case for the BRICS (Carmody, 2013:1). BRICS has extended the scope of global economic governance in championing and “mobilising for an agenda setting momentum in the politics of redress” (Kornegay& Bohler-Muller; 2013: 5).

However, as put by Acharya (2014:1) “it is too early to say whether these mechanisms will challenge the role of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) or the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which have been the bedrock of the Bretton Woods system under U.S. hegemony. But they at least serve as a reminder that the era of Western and American dominance of the world is ending, giving way to a more complex and diversified world order: the multiplex world. The move by BRICS, though outwardly economic in nature, has serious geopolitical undertones”.

BRICS are becoming a voice which actively contributes to multipolarity as a feature on an inter-polar world. They are a voice which opposes the West’s unilateral approach to global affairs. In March, the BRICS Foreign Ministers met separately during the Nuclear Security Summit held in The Hague. They voiced their opposition to the restrictions on the participation of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G-20 Summit in Australia in November 2014 in a high-profile statement (Stuenkel, 2014). This according to Acharya (2014:1) showed that the BRICS does “not buy the Obama administration’s move to punish Russia for its actions in Ukraine by isolating it internationally”. BRICS thus exists as a source of ideas which challenge the status quo - a structure of global economic and political governance established and dominated by the United States. Perhaps we are also witnessing a process whereby BRICS is presenting its ideas, its political and economic interests of a reformed world order (informed by values of decentralisation, representativeness and equitability) as necessary (Sahle, 2010: 11).

There are existing institutions that are re-adapting to the changing international landscape. The World Bank is an example of re-adapting institutions. In April 2010, the eleventh President of the World Bank Robert Zoellick, stated that: “We are now in a new, fast-evolving multipolar world economy – in which some developing countries are emerging as economic powers, others are moving towards becoming additional poles of growth”. He also argued that “the World Bank Group must reform to help play the role demonstrating real

results and can be held accountable when they falter” (Zoellick, 2010:1). Current World Bank President Jim Kim also welcomed the BRICS New Development Bank in a positive way by stating: “[w]e welcome any new organizations ... We think that the need for new investments in infrastructure is massive and we think that we can work very well and cooperatively with any of these new banks once they become a reality” (www.dailymail.co.uk). Also, in a meeting with Narendra Modi (India’s new prime minister) on July 23rd, Jim Kim reaffirmed the World Bank’s positive response, by stating that “the World Bank welcomes a \$100 billion development bank founded by the BRICS nations and is ready to provide it with technical assistance” (Kalra et al, 2014: 1).

These events indicate that the World Bank is responding to the changing nature of the international order, where emerging powers are demanding a seat at the table, so to speak. Although BRICS alone cannot represent the individual needs of all developing countries, the forum helps highlight that the current international environment is one where “geopolitics as usual” (where North America and Western Europe have the most say and influence) is no longer sufficient for the exigencies of global governance in the 21st century (Zoellick, 2010:1). As put by Vieira (2014), “while Western nations beef up economic sanctions and NATO discusses what stance to take toward Russia, BRICS is maintaining tacit support for Moscow despite the Ukraine crisis. This is not entirely unexpected. Yet, it suggests that the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) grouping’s commitment to the reform of the international system is to be taken seriously. And the Ukraine crisis has provided the group with a powerful opportunity to voice its shared opposition to Western powers’ self-assigned role as the custodians of the international community”

Perhaps one could also argue that BRICS is strategically manoeuvring the context through ‘soft power²⁵ means’. While BRICS cannot be said to have the dominant ideology or culture that informs all aspects of world politics, its reformist ideas are a sign of some ideological

²⁵ Soft power is the ability of a country or countries to influence the attitudes of other countries around certain issues (Nye, 1990: 166). Unlike hard power where countries use military prowess and ability to coercively “order” other countries as a defining mechanism, soft power is characterised by a country’s or countries’ ability to communicate ideas in a manner attractive to others (Nye, 1990: 166). Therefore, “the ability to set the political agenda and determine the framework of debate in a way that shapes others’ preferences” is very crucial in determining whether a country possess soft power or not (Nye, 1990: 166). Legitimacy is also a crucial component, “if a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes” (Nye, 1990: 166). A country’s or countries’ soft power will also be bolstered by the attractiveness of the ideology that informs it, its culture and the type influence it exerts within international institutions (Nye, 1990: 167).

diversity. Through its summits and recent developments such as the NDB, BRICS has begun to set the political agenda and determine the framework of debate around the need for reformed global economy management structures. BRICS is also tactfully playing the ‘legitimacy card’ to its advantage, arguing that the 2008 financial crisis exposed two problems about existing institutions of global financial governance. Firstly, that they were ineffective in preventing the crisis. Secondly, that emerging countries are still underrepresented in these institutions despite having experienced a ‘good crisis’ and accounting for half the global growth since the crisis (Stuenkel, 2013: 614).

BRICS has thus begun to set the political agenda and determine the framework of debate around the need for reformed existing institutions of global financial governance and in that way is a source of ideological diversity. Although it is plausible and probable that there are some who would be opposed to the idea of BRICS representing a completely new model of cooperation, it definitely is significantly different from traditional international groups (Ying in Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: 51). Unlike traditional international groupings, these countries do not form an alliance to bolster military strength, have no clear indication of an obvious “common enemy” and it is not a democratic group, as per Western standards (Ying in Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: 51). Thus, BRICS countries have forged diplomatic, political and economic links which contribute to multipolarity (as a feature of an inter-polar world) in two ways, as a new force in the international system and as a source of new ideas regarding global governance, more specifically global financial governance (an example of which is the idea of establishing the NDB). BRICS has thus been very cooperative in the area of global economic reform.

BRICS’ ability to further translate its aspiration of a reformed world order could also be achieved by using the G20. Acharya (2014: 65) also maintains that “the G20 is perhaps a more credible agent of reshaping global governance”. The G20 accounts for 80% of the world’s population, 90% of the global GDP, 80% of world trade and 90% of the “world’s finance” (Acharya, 2014: 65). The G20 is also “credited with implementing the largest coordinated macroeconomic stimulus in history, which has successfully arrested a potentially deep global recession” (Acharya, 2014: 65). More importantly to the BRICS plight is that reform of global institution is also part of the G20 agenda (Acharya, 2014: 65). The G20 “gave new lease of life to debate over reforms of global institutions like the IMF and the WB, including the initial step taken in 2010 by the IMF member to adjust its members’ voting quotas marginally in favour of the developing countries (which places Brazil, China, India

and Russia among the top 10 shareholders of the IMF) and move toward a fully democratically elected executive board” (Acharya, 2014: 65). As would be expected, the G20 has also faced difficulty in democratising global institutions, this is certainly the case when it comes to the issue of the expansion and reform of the UNSC, particularly “its veto system” (Acharya, 2014: 65). Nevertheless, the G20 is a competitive platform for rising countries to push the reform agenda, especially because the after the 2008 crisis the G20 was understood to be a group that would play the role in “fashioning the global response to the crisis, but also create opportunities for them to shape the debate over the future of global governance and world order” (Acharya, 2014: 64).

3.6 Conclusion

BRICS faces a number of challenges, the consequences stemming from their different political systems and clashes between national interests and the forum’s interest. This causes a gap between aspiration and meaningful political engagement. However, while the apparent intra-BRICS inconsistencies cannot be denied, it can still be argued that BRICS is no longer just a catchy acronym, it is a forum with political and symbolic weight. BRICS is a manifestation of forged diplomatic, political and economic links which has seen its member countries increasingly seeking to have a bigger say in the management of the global economy and international institutions of global governance. Its advocacy for reform and its actions as a reformer have begun to give us a glimpse of what we can expect in the changing international landscape, where emerging powers are determined to have a bigger voice. The BRICS New Development Bank is a new development where these countries seek to have more autonomy in their economic paths but still operating as complementary developments to existing institutions of global financial governance. What we are witnessing here is a manifestation of developments that can be born out of an interpolar world. Firstly, cooperation in a simultaneously interdependent and multipolar context. This mutipolarity is twofold, it is in the form of ideational diversity and new centres of power who want to have a say in the rules and structures of global governance, particular global economic finance. In this process, BRICS takes on dual qualities, being a reformer (i.e. a forum committed to the transformation of prevailing global configurations of power) and a “reformation” (an outward manifestation of the changing status quo). In this way, BRICS is no longer merely an economic grouping or just an ideational novelty but is a forum that also has political significance. However, our analysis should treat these developments as new and in flux, they are incomplete, unpredictable and can take any form.

Going forward, two factors will determine BRICS's place in the international system. Firstly, continued economic growth in the coming decades. Secondly, BRICS will need to use their increased wealth to gain influence internationally so that they can establish themselves as "confident, modern, responsible and credible actors on the international scene" (Oddur, 2010: 39).

CHAPTER 4

A THEORETICAL TAKE- BRICS IN AN INTERPOLAR WORLD

“The complexity of the emerging international scene does not lend itself to easy dichotomies”
(Grevi, 2009)

4.1 Introduction

As noted above, international relations to-date are in flux, complex and fluid. This makes the task of theoretically accounting for the current world a difficult one (Grevi, 2009: 26). World politics is, simultaneously, interest-based and problem-driven, where change is occurring in continuity, where the realisation of individual interests can be through a strategic cooperative constellation of interests and where competition and cooperation also occur simultaneously. Consequently, even though all International Relations theories provide conceptual tools which scholars can use to analyse a variety of events, at times describing, explaining and possibly predicting some events and developments necessitates what Keohane refers to as a multidimensional approach. By multidimensional, Keohane refers to an approach “that incorporates several analytic frameworks” (1989: 60).

This section seeks to provide a theoretical conclusion of the context within which BRICS emerges. It sees BRICS as a product of interolarity, as possessing dual qualities- a reformer and a reformation- through a multidimensional approach, using tools from neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism.

This is because BRICS emerges in a context which necessitates “several analytic frameworks” in describing, explaining and predicting events, development, processes and institutional practises (Keohane, 1989: 60).

4.2 Why Neorealism/ Structural realism, Neoliberalism and Constructivism?

4.2.1 Neorealism as a limited but useful tool of analysis

Although one cannot completely agree with the neorealist preoccupation with self-reliance/ self-help in today’s interolar world, neorealism is still relevant in that it provides a structural

analysis of events within the international system. Structure here refers to “the ordering principle of the international system, which is anarchy and the distribution of capabilities across units, which are states” (Lamy in Baylis et al, 2014: 127). According to neorealists, foreign policy choices are shaped by the structure of the international system. This is applicable in the BRICS case for three reasons.

The first is that the structure of the international system no longer reflects a unipolar world, as argued above, it is interpolar as indicated before. BRICS emerges out of this context, where power configurations indicate multipolarity, creating space for emerging powers. Secondly, there are new developments (such as the BRICS forum), which have been developed without the assistance of the US as a unipole (Young, 2010:23). Thirdly-still on the issue of structure- BRICS in a way is a typical case in international relations of your place within the international system determining your ability to exploit or manoeuvre the system. BRICS’ ability to exploit a crisis meant that it is able to have some demands about the terms of global governance and emerging power representation within institutions of global governance. The fact that from 2008, BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) accounted for half the global growth, “reaching up to 54% of the world GDP by 2010” (Rolland, 2013:164), (Armijo and Roberts, 2014: 3). Melchoir (2012:1) states that “measured in PPP (Purchasing Power Parity that accounts for price level differences), the share of Western Europe + North America in world GDP fell from 51% in 1990 to 42% in 2010, whereas Asia’s share increased from 23 to 34%”. These changes in the distribution of capabilities has had implications for “existing international institutions, most of which were established within the bipolar, Cold War system under US leadership” (Young, 2010: 4).

Some of these implications for global governance are already evident, “there have been calls— not least from Brazil, China and India – for the reform of formal institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)”. This mainly has to do with membership or representation of emerging and developing countries in those institutions. BRICS members’ cooperative effort towards advocating for their increased representation in institutions of global governance was influenced by their relative economic position after the 2008 crisis. This is why neorealists argue that, “the distribution of power and any dramatic changes in the distribution of power help to explain the structure of the international system” (Lamy in Baylis et al, 2014: 127). Therefore, the changing distribution of power is an important theme if one is to understand the processes and patterns of the current international system. By

providing scholars with an understanding of where power lies, neorealism thus also helps with showing how power distribution is changing, what implications the change might have for how actors interact with each other and what international outcomes can be expected from this.

However, although international hierarchies and the distribution of power/capabilities tell us a lot about world politics, the means highlighted by neorealists as crucial power indicators (economic and hard power), undermine the potential of other possible power indicators like soft and institutional power (Barnett in Baylis et al, 2014: 156; Hurrell in Baylis et 2014: 88). Soft power²⁶ and institutional power²⁷ are very important especially in the context of complex, systematic, functional and economic interdependence. For instance, the US did not sustain its power only through material coercive power, it was able to use its soft power and more importantly its institutional power within key international institutions such as the UN, IMF, WB and other institutions to remain relevant. Unlike hard power, where countries use military prowess and the ability to coercively “order” other countries as a defining mechanism, soft power is characterised by a country’s or countries’ ability to communicate ideas in a manner attractive to others (Nye, 1990: 166). Therefore, “the ability to set the political agenda and determine the framework of debate in a way that shapes others’ preferences” is very crucial in determining whether a country possesses soft power or not (Nye, 1990: 166). Legitimacy is also a crucial component, “if a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes” (Nye, 1990: 166). A country’s or countries’ soft power will also be bolstered by the attractiveness of the culture and ideology that informs it and the type of influence it exerts within international institutions. The other side of this argument is that, even though the US is still materially strong, its questioned legitimacy and the questioned legitimacy of Western-led institutions could be crucial for the future success or influence of emerging countries, especially if international institutions could be re-established and initiate representativeness, for example, by reforming the UNSC (Hurrell in Baylis et 2014: 90).

²⁶ The ability of a country or countries to influence the attitudes of other countries around certain issues (Nye, 1990: 166).

²⁷ “The control actors exercise indirectly over others through diffuse relations of interaction” (Barnett and Davull, 2005:43)

Therefore, understanding power purely through material means is not sufficient. This argument also relates to the ‘rise’ of emerging powers. Hurrell in Baylis (2014: 90) argues that “it is difficult to understand the sources of emerging power dissatisfaction purely within a world of material and systematically given incentives”. A material-based reading of BRICS largely focuses on two factors: that China will be dominant in the group and that the growth of these emerging powers is now slowing down²⁸, leading some to argue that BRICS is irrelevant. This analysis does not tell us much about BRICS’s efforts towards reformist leadership. The materialist reading does not put much emphasis on the cooperative side of states. Although BRICS’ economic stability is important for its further prospects as a meaningful actor in world politics, its existence should not be limited to that (economic might). BRICS reinforces the fact that reform is largely influenced by foreign policy ideas about how the existing order needs to be challenged (Hurrell in Baylis, 2014: 87). Challenging the prevailing order is unlikely to solely result from “calculations of hard power and material interests” but also necessitates a set of ideas around how and why this prevailing order needs to be challenged (Hurrell in Baylis, 2014: 87).

4.2.2 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism captures the cooperative nature of states, focusing on states’ ability to cooperate even in an international system which is anarchic and competitive. Neoliberalism also explains “why even self-interested, rational egoists would pursue multilateral cooperative behaviour” (Lamy in Baylis et al, 2014: 127; Viotti and Kauppi, 1999: 216). What neoliberals highlight, is the “constellation of interests”, even in an anarchic system which is characterised by divergent state interests (Tudoroiu, 2012: 28). Numerous bodies such as the UN, EU, the G20, BRICS and many others at both the regional and global level, indicate that states are able to cooperate even though the issues of convergence at times lead to clashes in interests. “For neoliberals, foreign policy is about managing complex interdependence and various processes of globalisation. It is also about responding to problems that threaten the economic well-being, if not survival, of people around the world” (Lamy in Baylis et al, 2014: 135). As such, the neoliberals capture the interplay between interests and cooperation, by recognising that states are willing to enhance their individual interests through cooperative means (Lamy in Baylis et al, 2014: 135). Neoliberalism more closely captures BRICS’ approach, as a forum of common interests for the management of

²⁸ See <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21582257-most-dramatic-and-disruptive-period-emerging-market-growth-world-has-ever-seen>

“issue-areas where states have mutual interests”. This is why Tudoroiu (2012: 37) argues that “BRICS countries may have certain diverging interests, but these are unimportant for the development of the group as long as none of them concerns the fields covered by the BRICS regime”. The BRICS international regime²⁹ here refers to their generic role towards and ideas around an increased participation in international institution and more generally, the reform of the global economic system.

Neoliberalism’s relevance here also lies in the fact that it “recognises that a profound disjuncture between the balance of power and existing institutions can prompt reform or replacement of those institutions” (Stein, 2008: 215 in Young, 2010: 4). As indicated before, BRICS’ relative position after the 2008 crisis is not the only determinant of their advocacy for global governance reform, it is also related to their general dissatisfaction-before the crisis- with Western exclusion³⁰ and domination³¹.

BRICS however acknowledges that change needs to occur in continuity³². BRICS acknowledges the importance of existing institutions³³, but also, the importance of creating new ones. Neoliberalism accounts for this scenario of “institution-building, regime creation and the search for ‘absolute’ rather than ‘relative’ gains as mitigating strategies in a quasi-

²⁹ International regimes are defined as “principles, norms, rules and decision- making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue area” (Krasner, 1982: 185; Krasner, 1983: 2; Tudoroiu; 2012: 27).

³⁰ For instance “the process of colonization was a source of blatant disrespect for indigenous cultures and norms, especially in Brazil and South Africa, and the creation of the UN only furthered that disrespect in the sense that states belonging to the so-called ‘Third World’ were excluded from being considered for rotational non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. This mainly drove South Africa’s and Brazil’s commitments to promoting equitable multilateralism in the aim of gaining esteem” (Lecomte, 2013: 1).

³¹ Particularly, with the terms of global governance in ‘hub-and-spoke’ system, where North America and Western Europe dominated international affairs and institutions of global governance.

³² Chapter 2 and 3 provide a more detailed account of BRICS being a reformist rather than a revolutionary forum. BRICS seeks the reform of exclusionary terms of global governance, particularly the reform of global institutions of governance to reflect more representation of developing and emerging countries in those institutions, not a fundamental change of the entire system.

³³ “We stress the central role played by the G-20 in combating the crisis through unprecedented levels of coordinated action. We welcome the fact that the G-20 was confirmed as the premier forum for international economic coordination and cooperation of all its member states. Compared to previous arrangements, the G-20 is broader, more inclusive, diverse, representative and effective. We call upon all its member states to undertake further efforts to implement jointly the decisions adopted at the three G-20 Summits. We advocate the need for the G-20 to be proactive and formulate a coherent strategy for the post-crisis period. We stand ready to make a joint contribution to this effort” (2nd BRIC Summit of Heads of State and Government: Joint Statement Brasília, April 15, 2010)

anarchic arena” (Evens and Newnham, 1998: 2008). However, the complexity of international relations to-date makes the dichotomy between relative and absolute gains a difficult one to make, because of the fluidity of interstate relations. It is possible for states to evaluate which situations can afford them “mutually acceptable distribution of gains, even when they are concerned about relative gains” (Andreatta and Koenig-Archibugi, 2010: 11). However, even though neoliberalism and to some extent neo-realism understand that ideas³⁴ and norms can be constraining in the pursuit of state interests, neither of the two theories ponder the possibility for interests to define ideas and norms (Barnett in Baylis et al, 2014: 157). Constructivism can assist in that regard.

4.2.3 Constructivism

The constructivist view is that “the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interpretation depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world” (Adler, 1997: 3). Constructivism takes seriously the role of human consciousness in international life. (Adler, 1997: 158). A crucial component of constructivism is the notion of inter-subjectivity. Inter-subjectivity is premised on the idea that “we live in a world we build, in which we are the main protagonists and which is a product of our choices” (Nogueira and Messari, 2005: 162 in Utzig, 2014).

Constructivists highlight the fact that ideas should be taken seriously in “social processes” that have “structural quality” because “power and interests have the effects they do in virtue of the ideas that make them up” (Nel, 2006:110). The execution of ideas is however twofold. It can advance and/or also undermine power or cause others to undermine the power and/or foreign policies of the state from which the ideas emanate (an example would be the Bush administration declaring war on Iraq, a decision which caused many to question US power and legitimacy). Ideas are also important in that they “suggest ways of looking at the world that can either close up or open avenues for fundamental transformation” and serve as “instruments in the struggle to establish or challenge hegemony” (Nel, 2006:110).The latter (opening avenues for fundamental transformation and serving to challenge hegemony) is applicable to BRICS. Although BRICS does not necessarily advocate for the system’s fundamental transformation, its reformist ideas are an effort towards opening up avenues for a reformed type of global governance, a more representative and equitable type global

³⁴ “a concept whose explication is intimately tied to its cognate....including casual and evaluative beliefs and desires” (Wendt in Nel, 2006: 110)

governance. BRICS is also championing the struggle to challenge Western hegemony in existing institutions of global governance. Having been borne out of an inter-polar world and influencing its shape, BRICS reinforces the idea that social life can be made and remade through human agency (Baylis, 2014:5). It also serves as a critique to theories where the world is seen as fixed and in doing so undermines human progress as a possibility (Baylis, 2014:5). Such argumentation reinforces the constructivist idea that the agent/structure debate is premised on the idea of a co-constructed agent/structure relation, where “there is no ontological antecedence of neither one nor the other” (Nogueira and Messari, 2005:163 in Utzig, 2014).

Related to the constructivist view, that ideas can open avenues for fundamental transformation and serve as instruments in the struggle to establish or challenge hegemony, is the notion of norm redefinition. Norm redefinition refers to efforts from states to redefine established norms in international politics (Van Kersbergen and Verbeek, 2007: 219). This is seen in the recent efforts and “motivation for establishing a BRICS bank to be a counterpart to the World Bank and IMF, and promote a vision of development driven by developing countries” as well as advocating for the reform of the World Bank and the IMF (Institute of Development Studies, 2013: 1-2). The purpose of the bank is to “mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development”³⁵. Its functions are to “support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments. It shall also cooperate with international organizations and other financial entities, and provide technical assistance for projects to be supported by the Bank”³⁶. The BRICS bank is a manifestation of the dissatisfaction by BRICS with existing institutions of global governance and is a challenge to a global governance where the co-option of developing and emerging powers is the norm. The process of challenging co-option is two-fold. Firstly, it is based on a different economic premise, that is, offering a substitute financing mechanism to both developing and emerging economies. For instance, the BRICS bank is an indication of the member countries’ discontent with the existing institutions of Bretton Woods “and the corresponding disappointment to address some of their key demands” (Preet,

³⁵ <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/140715-bank.html>

³⁶ <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/140715-bank.html>

Sapra & Mehdi, 2014: i). Secondly, even though the BRICS bank is not the first institution to be dedicated towards the development of developing and emerging countries, it is the first of its kind. Not only does it intend “to promote greater cooperation”, it does this “while removing dependency on the developed” (Preet, Sapra & Mehdi, 2014: i). However, even with that said, the bank is a complementary rather than a rival to the existing institutions such as the World Bank. The norm BRICS is seeking to redefine here is that, global institutions do not necessarily have to be the brainchild of Europe and America. It is also about offering a different approach to development, offering an alternative “financing mechanism to developing and emerging countries” (Preet, Sapra & Mehdi, 2014: i). It is also about assuming autonomy, the BRICS bank is a Southern-led bank and member countries have much more autonomy than they would in the Bretton Wood Institutions (Preet, Sapra & Mehdi, 2014: 3). However, the bank is not the only institution to be developed without the American hand, the International Criminal Court is also another example (Young, 2012:4). BRICS efforts and institutions are thus projecting two important norms, self-determined yet complementary forms of development (less reliance on the West and challenging Western hegemony while realising the importance of working with Western institutions such as the G20) and, in the process, contributing to the second norm, that is, territorial integrity.

BRICS efforts at norm redefinition or their efforts at reforming the old hub and spoke order, contributing to a paradigm “of fairness, inclusiveness, and diversity” (Panova, 2014:1), can also be understood as a process of norm subsidiarity. Norm subsidiarity is “a process whereby local actors create rules with a view to preserve their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation, or abuse by more powerful central actors”. (Acharya, 2011: 97). Although Acharya refers mainly to norm subsidiarity in the context of regional organisations, the theoretical tools offered by norm subsidiarity can be extended to interregional actors. Furthermore, the functionality of norm subsidiarity should not only depend on rule making, it can also be through interest convergence, such as in the case of BRICS.

BRICS is not necessarily making rules around how it is a group needs to challenge the existing order, but it is dedicated to the process of converging ideas on how they can challenge the existing order- through advocating for reform and creating new yet complementary institutions. As discussed in Chapter 3, these ideas are mainly around the reform of the terms of global economic governance, representation of emerging and developing countries in institutions of global governance and on development. BRICS institutions and the convergence of interests around the issue of reform are efforts towards the

preservation of their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation, or abuse by more powerful central actors. I therefore want to extend Acharya's application of norm subsidiarity from the local to intraregional³⁷ context and apply it globally. The argument is that, 'the global' is a term for all and that non-Western ideas do not necessarily have to only be challenged at the 'local' level or by 'intra-regional groups' only. BRICS is a first, it is an example of where Western norms are being challenged at the global level. Not at the local or intra-regional level. (Such) interregional groupings are of course informed by local foreign policies which are also influenced by their regional contexts, emphasising the importance of understanding the interplay between the local, regional and global in international relations and more specifically foreign policy.

Consequently, a crucial question then is to what extent is BRICS a "norm-shaper" (Xiaoyu, 2012: 354). BRICS still has a long way to go in terms of being a norm-maker but the forum is well on its way as an indication of the possibility for ideational diversity, that is, it is challenging the supremacy of ideas from the West relative to other parts of the world (Xiaoyu, 2012: 357). One example is that, in March 2014, the BRICS Foreign Ministers met separately during the Nuclear Security Summit held in The Hague, where they tabled a high-profile statement in which their opposition to the restrictions on the participation of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G-20 Summit in Australia in November 2014 was voiced (Stuenkel, 2014: 1). This according to Acharya (2014:1) showed that the BRICS does "not buy the Obama administration's move to punish Russia for its actions in Ukraine by isolating it internationally". BRICS thus exists as a source of ideas which challenge the status quo (a structure of global economic governance established and dominated by the United States). They are a voice which opposes the West's unilateral approach to global affairs. It is however still too early to make conclusive deductions about the future of BRICS and its further challenge to existing norms.

It can be argued that, if BRICS is to become a resilient norm provider within the international system, there are three norm characteristics which it should work towards. These are "norm longevity, norm bindingness and enforcement" (Foot and Walter, 2011: 12). Norm longevity refers two factors. The first refers to a long held view by a reasonable number of actors that the "global normative framework" is legitimate (Foot and Walter, 2011: 12). The second,

³⁷ "Norm subsidiarity was thus a means toward regional autonomy, a condition in which intraregional "actions and responses predominate over external influences and which allows regional groups to "keep outsiders from defining the issues that constitute the local agenda" (Acharya, 2011: 100)

referring to the fact that the system and its global normative framework is no longer dominated by a single state or a couple of states (Foot and Walter, 2011: 12). Longevity is important but not enough, norm bindingness and enforcement are crucial. As put by Foot and Walter (2011:12), “the extent to which global normative frameworks are binding on actors may be important because they are associated with higher levels of behavioural convergence”. However, all this might not be carried out if enforcement is a missing component.

Constructivism is therefore useful as it captures the inter-subjectivity nature of the world, the idea that “we live in a world we build, in which we are the main protagonists and which is a product of our choices (Nogueira and Messari, 2005: 162 in Utzig, 2014). Also, it highlights the fact that ideas should be taken seriously in “social processes” that have “structural quality” because “power and interests have the effects they do in virtue of the ideas that make them up” (Nel, 2006:110). BRICS was once just an idea, so was the BRICS bank. Now, a “new financial architecture is being set up by the BRICS that promises transition to new poles of growth and demand, and offers an alternative financing mechanism to developing and emerging economies” (Preet, Sapra & Mehdi, 2014: i). Moreover, “the creation of a Southern-led BRICS Bank, and with it, the promise of reforming the global development architecture, offers a real and concrete opportunity for governments of the BRICS countries to ensure that development financing is sensitive to the needs of those who are poorest and most marginalised” (Preet, Sapra & Mehdi, 2014: ii).

4.2.3.1 Understanding why BRICS contributes to norm subsidiarity rather than norm localisation

Norm subsidiarity should be seen differently from norm localisation. The latter refers to the “active construction (through the projection of discourse, framing, grafting, and cultural selection) of foreign ideas by local actors, which results in the latter developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices” (Acharya 2004:245). The two both promote local agency but they do not offer the same understanding of norm creation or recreation. While norm subsidiarity is “outward looking” and focuses on the relation between local and external actors, with the focus of challenging domination by the ‘local’, norm localisation is “inward looking” with the aim of aligning the norms and ideas that inform foreign policies with “local cognitive priors” (Acharya, 2011: 98). As opposed to being norm takers (such as the case with norm localisation), norm subsidiarity can be a process of norm making or norm redefinition (Acharya, 2011: 98). Furthermore, the process of norm localisation involves the

importation of global norms for the purpose of local utilisation only, while norm subsidiarity involves the process of externalising or “universalising” locally constructed norms and “may also involve using locally constructed norms to support or amplify existing global norms against the parochial ideas of powerful actors” (Acharya, 2011: 98). “In localization, local agents redefine foreign norms, which they take as generally good and desirable, but not fully consistent with their existing cognitive priors (hence the need for their redefinition). In subsidiarity, local agents reject outside ideas (of powerful central actors), which they do not view as worthy of selection, borrowing, and adoption in any form” (Acharya, 2011: 98).

BRICS however does not reject all outside ideas about how the system should function but particularly those of Western predominance in global governance which do not reflect representation. Again, the idea is not the complete overhaul of the system and its norms but the extension and redefinition of their scope and meaning to reflect the conditions of those initiating the process of norm subsidiarity, as is the case of BRICS (Acharya, 2011: 100). BRICS thus initiate norm subsidiary for one main reason, to challenge their exclusion or marginalization from global norm-making processes. Institutions dominated by great powers do not always reflect the ideas, interests, and identities of ‘weaker’ states. In such cases, norm subsidiarity is a response by the latter to challenge the “tyranny of higher level institutions (formal or informal, including multilateral organizations or great power security management regimes) in global governance” (Acharya, 2011: 100)

4.3 Conclusion

Theory is a crucial tool in this process of “making sense of the world” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1999: 3). It is “an intellectual construct that helps one to select facts and interpret them in such a way as to facilitate explanation and prediction concerning regularities and reoccurrences or repetitions of observed phenomena” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1999: 3) Using theory is important, as “without it we would be overwhelmed and immobilised by an avalanche of mere fact” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1999: 3). The complexity of world politics necessitates analytic tools to assist in the process of ‘making sense’ of the world. BRICS emerges in a context where a multidimensional approach in theorising seems necessary, an approach which necessitates “several analytic frameworks” in describing, explaining and possibly predicting certain events, development, processes and institutional practises. Given the fluidity and complexity of international relations, the task of theoretically accounting for the world which is simultaneously interest-based, problem-driven, competitive and cooperative is a difficult one (Grevi, 2009: 26).

This chapter indicates the relevance of a multidimensional approach to understanding an interpolar world, using tools from neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism. The argument is that all theories are relevant in their own respects but all can still miss certain elements that the next theory provides analytic tools for. For instance, although neorealism's emphasis on material power can be challenged, it is still relevant for its provision of analytic tools for a structural analysis of events within the international system. Furthermore, although Neoliberalism undervalues the strength of having material capability, its emphasis on the cooperative nature of states is crucial for understanding "why even self-interested, rational egoists would pursue multilateral cooperative behaviour" (Lamy in Baylis et al, 2014: 127; Viotti and Kauppi, 1999: 216). Lastly, even though neoliberalism captures the cooperative nature of states it says very little about the potential of ideas and inter-subjectivity in foreign policy making. Constructivism focuses on those issues (ideas, intersubjectivity and norm re-definition). Constructivism reinforces the idea that the agent/structure debate is premised on the idea of a co-constructed agent/structure relation where "there is no ontological antecedence of neither one nor the other" (Nogueira and Messari, 2005:163 in Utzig, 2014). This allows the debate to be extended to issues of agency as discussed under norm redefinition and norm subsidiarity above.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Change

The world is changing and this change is unpredictable and in flux. Although some may argue that no significant change has occurred, it can be argued that international relations is not the same as it was during the immediate post-Cold War period. There is much more vibrant opposition to the terms of global governance which were established during the post-Cold War period. There are economic giants like China which are ready to play a part in efforts towards reform. This reform calls for more representation of developing and emerging countries in global governance.

Moreover, the birth of new fora, like BRICS, indicates a world characterised by multipolarity and interdependence: an interpolar world order. Multipolarity, as a feature on an interpolar world, is twofold; it is in the form of more actors and in the form of ideational diversity. The second element of an interpolar world- interdependence, is crucial for a discussion around what informs international relations. Interdependence highlights the fact that states are intertwined such that what happens in one country can have an effect on others. This can have unintended consequences between states, even between states where there is plenty of room for conflict. However, interdependence does not suggest that states are blindly cooperative. Rather, it presents states with a context where states need to think of cooperative ways towards advancing their individual interests. Therefore, it is not a case of states being happily cooperative in their nature or having common goals, it is more a case of strategically converging around issues which advance their respective interests.

5.2 The change has a name: its name is interolarity

How then do we account for a world which is simultaneously multipolar and interdependent? As indicated before, a term which closely accounts for the world today is interolarity. The term interolarity is originally defined as “connecting or being between two poles (dictionary.reference.com/browse/interpolar) or as “extending between two poles”

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interpolar). Scholars of International Relations have now begun to use the term interolarity to describe today's world order. They call this order an interpolar world order, a world where polarity is understood in relation to the different types of interdependence. Renard & Biscop (2010: 2) and Grevi (2009: 9) define interolarity as an order where multipolarity coexists with heightened interdependence. Furthermore, describing the world as interpolar, recognises that while unipolarity is waning, multipolarity as a feature of an interpolar world, also only offers a partial account of the current order. Understanding the world as interpolar recognises the importance of interdependence and the fact that multipolarity does not exist in a vacuum, that it exists in an age of economic, functional, systemic and complex interdependence. With that said, accounting for the world as interpolar does not exclude the fact that states are driven by interests, in fact it accommodates this analysis of states. Also, because it suggests compatibility between an interpolar world and multilateralism, it still realises that the challenge of "finding a new synthesis between the shifting balance of power and the global governance of interdependence" still exists (Grevi, 2009: 5). It is this search for a new synthesis which is likely to present further change and further complexity in international relations, as new powers seek to extend the scope of global governance while established powers seek to maintain their status and also try to respond and adjust to current changes.

There are three phenomena presented by an interpolar world order. Firstly, that at present, the state of geopolitics and global politics is such that 'enemies' are faced with the reality that they are economically connected in ways that have seldom been seen before. Take for instance the Chimerica example, showing that although China and America have plenty of room for conflict, their economic interdependence begs for their peaceful relations.

Secondly, because a multipolar context (as a feature of an interpolar world) is a sign that capabilities to effect change are not only in the hands of established countries, emerging countries are exploiting this context by creating their own political and economic spaces. BRICS is testament to this. BRICS is geared at discovering different ways in order to achieve a development which is more equitable as well as a global growth which is inclusionary (BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation eThekweni Declaration Durban, South Africa, March 27, 2013). This is of course not without its challenges. Perhaps a critique one could make from the onset is that the emergence of BRICS carries the "risk of creating a new global elitism" (Acharya, 2014: 78). For instance,

BRICS being born out of dissatisfaction from emerging and developing countries with exclusionary forms of governance will definitely strive at much more inclusive forms of governance and development. However, it is still uncertain how differently (from established institutions) BRICS will relate to non-members.

What is certain is the fact that BRICS seeks a reformed order and more specifically a reformed type of global governance. That is, an additional yet complementary kind of global governance, a global governance of re-dress and redistribution. Their efforts at establishing a New Development Bank (NDB) gives life to this idea.

Reflecting on the NDB, Rousselin (2014:1) states that:

Tired of waiting for U.S. congressional approval for IMF reforms required to offer them representation commensurate with their newfound global economic weight, the BRICS have created the embryo of a parallel system that will present a counterweight, if not an alternative, to a system the foundations of which were laid during the Second World War, and at a time when the economic balance among nations was very different than it is today

The new BRICS bank which is meant to fund different kinds of projects not currently catered for by that the World Bank, provides the ground for a global governance of redress. “The BRICS powers provide alternative sources of trade, investment, loans, aid and arms from traditional Western “partners” (Rousselin, 2014:1). Whereas Western countries and the institutions that they have historically controlled, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have often insisted on free-market economic reforms and (sometimes) electoral democracy, this is not the case for the BRICS (Carmody, 2013:1). BRICS has extended the scope of global economic governance in championing and “mobilising for an agenda setting momentum in the politics of redress” (Kornegay and Bohler-Muller; 2013: 5). However, as put by Acharya (2014:1) “it is too early to say whether these mechanisms will challenge the role of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) or the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which have been the bedrock of the Bretton Woods system under U.S. hegemony. But they at least serve as a reminder that the era of Western and American dominance of the world is ending, giving way to a more complex and diversified world order: the multiplex world. The move by BRICS, though outwardly economic in nature, has serious geopolitical undertones”.

Therefore, although BRICS has indicated some internal dissimilarities, it can still be argued that BRICS is proving to be a source of ideational diversity. BRICS does this in its dual qualities of being both a reformer (i.e. a forum committed to the transformation of prevailing global configurations of power) and a reformation (an outward manifestation of the changing status quo). Following the ideational alignment of these states for the purposes of alerting investors to their economic potential, BRICS countries have forged diplomatic, political and economic links which have seen them increasingly seeking to have a bigger say in the management of the global economy and international institutions of global governance such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), United Nations (UN) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The third phenomenon presented by an interpolar world order is that, there is a need for more multilateral forms of cooperation and global governance, including emerging and developing countries at the core of decision making. Therefore, apart from creating their own institutions, there is a need for emerging powers to be included in institutions of global governance. This has started to happen, with the expansion of the G20 as one example. Also, BRICS' "successful leveraging of increased voting rights within IMF and their securing of permanent Security Council seats for India, Brazil, and South Africa indicate the developing world's increased representation in global governance structures" (BRICS Sanya Declaration, 2011).

An interpolar world order suggests the need for a multilateral approach towards global governance, not only for the sake of representation and legitimacy but credibility as well. I share Cooper (2008: 2-3)'s sentiments that "the issue that jumps out in starkest fashion, nonetheless, has been the acknowledgement that the G8 is incapable of creating a relevant strategy for climate change without the participation of major carbon dioxide emitters, such as India or China, or leading alternative energy suppliers, such as Brazil". Emerging powers are also crucial in international trade governance. The events of WTO in the July 2008 talks indicated an increased sophistication in the proposals emerging powers put forth as well as more confidence in negotiations between them and their coalition allies as well as with other actors. This was sparked by the fact that in the July 2008 WTO talks, China and India, joined "in blocking the deal that was on offer", one which encompassed developing countries' preference (Narlikar, 2010: 719). Reporting on the blockade, Stephen Castle and Mark Landler of the New York Times stated that "after nine consecutive days of high-level talks, discussions reached an impasse when the United States, India and China refused to

compromise over measures to protect farmers in developing countries from greater liberalization of trade”. They also report quite correctly that, “world trade talks collapsed after seven years of on-again, off-again negotiations, in the latest sign of India’s and China’s growing might on the world stage and the decreasing ability of the United States to impose its will globally” (Castle and Landler, 2008)

There are other developments that can contribute to BRICS’ further political pressure in the international system. Firstly, two of its members (Russia and China) have permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (Lukov, 2012: 1). Secondly, members of the forum actively participate in prominent international organizations and structures, these include the United Nations, “the G20, the G8, the Non-Aligned Movement, the G77” (Lukov, 2012: 1). BRICS’ “successful leveraging of increased voting rights within IMF and their securing of permanent Security Council seats for India, Brazil, and South Africa indicate the developing world’s increased representation in global governance structures” (BRICS Sanya Declaration, 2011). These are indications that emerging countries are not satisfied with being norm takers—those who are excluded from the processes of global governance, they constantly want to be more involved in the process of norm provision/norm making which refers to “those who are directly involved in the process of global governance”(Foot and Walter: 2011: 10).

The inter-polar world order thus suggests the need to utilise existing and new regimes for the pursuit of “more widely shared objectives rather than “particularistic” and narrow interests (Keohane, 1982: 354). The efforts of including the G5 countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South) and ultimately the G20 are efforts at multilateralism towards regime creation. The goal of international regimes is the realisation of certain policy ends, through a process of establishing instruments through which to coordinate and cooperate, as well as to elaborate on internationally established normative recommendations (Nilsson et al, 2009: 341). This “approach emphasizes a functional perspective of shared needs and interdependent interests by states that brings about more or less permanent cooperative arrangements based on common norms and institutions” (Nilsson et al, 2009: 341). It is principally within the context of international regimes, though not solely, where the facilitation of agreements through the provision of “rules, norms, principles, and procedure” is made (Keohane, 1982: 354). In this sense, “regimes make it easier for actors to realize their interests collectively” (Keohane, 1982: 354).

Therefore, as a result of the extent of interdependence in an inter-polar world order, it necessitates integration and socialisation between states with differing values into a “web of regimes, treaties and institutions” (Biscop and Renard, 2010: 12). This integration and socialisation is a prerequisite because collective action in addressing global challenges is a vital component of power in an inter-polar world (Biscop and Renard, 2010: 13). As put by Le Roy (2012), “globalised economic structures have served to foster a system characterized by interdependence”. Such heightened interdependence necessitates “compromise, and cannot expect to determine outcomes simply by virtue of their power” (Smith, 2013: 117). This nature of interdependence does not imply a complete overhaul of confrontation in international relations but it specifically highlights the importance of cooperation in a world order characterised by economic, functional, systematic and complex interdependence (Smith, 2013: 116), the reconfiguration of relations between states (Lazerou, 2011: 4) and the increasing recognition advocacy by emerging states (Peterson, Alcaro and Tocci, 2012:1).

In closing, a crucial issue to engage with, is the extent to which BRICS and its reformist agenda/norms of a global governance of reform and redress, inclusivity, independence, representation and recognition advance Bull’s goal of world order³⁸ better than the neo-liberal Washington consensus governing global governance? In other words, is BRICS going to contribute to a world order that meets human needs? Although it is still early to make any conclusive assertion on this matter, the Syrian example has indicated some kind of limitations to BRICS reformism. At the moment, it speaks more to the international state system context, to global economic governance than the prioritisation of human needs.

³⁸ World order is defined by Bull (1977: 20) as “those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of human life as a whole”. It is thus something more than just international order which merely refers to “order among states” (Bull, 1977: 20). World order is “wider than international order because to give an account of it we have to deal not only with order among states but with order within the wider world political system of which the state system is only part of” (Bull, 1977: 22).

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