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BRICS Institutionalization & Macau

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Macau: The Missing Link of a BRICS-*Politik*

Carmen Amado Mendes, José Guimarães *

Abstract: Initially a mere acronym, BRICS became an essential name in the modern international relations vocabulary. It represents the aspirations and sheer potential of a defiant Global South seeking a recognition and representativeness that reflects the changing balance of power. The institutionalization process further consolidates the BRICS international stand, but is hindered by internal competition and perception gaps. Ultimately, the intent of this study is to broaden the spectrum of analysis of a comprehensive BRICS policy architecture and possible institutionalization, on new lines of analysis and useful policy steps. In order to become more than the mere sum of its parts and project its influence in more efficient ways, the members of the group should articulate a coherent strategy in a “BRICS-*Politik*.”

On the one hand, the paper will provide an overview of the group political identity and stress the advantages of deepening its institutionalization process, as well as the existing obstacles, presenting the main pillars of the

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BRICS-*Politik*. On the other hand, it will highlight what Macau can offer to attract a permanent structure of the BRICS: A centre of services with good infrastructures in a small and concentrated area located in one of the BRICS (China) but sharing common characteristics with other two (Brazil and India) – Lusophone specificities and a case of retrocession, like Goa. The benefits that Macau could obtain if involved in this process are also analyzed: Diversification of its economy; positive image and international recognition; success of the one country, two systems formula. Finally, the paper suggests that the EU is likely to support this institutionalization in Macau and would benefit from engaging BRICS countries as a grouping, rather than individually.

Keywords: BRICS, Institutionalization, Identity, Macau, Lusophony, EU

Introduction: From BRIC to BRICS

Since the term BRIC was first coined by Jim O'Neil, chairman of Goldman Sachs asset management in 2001, the rise of new powerful actors in the international stage has become one of the favorite discussion topics in academic circles and in civil society in general, with an ever-increasing amount of literature on the subject to match. The appeal of the acronym derived largely from its powerful underlying message: A new international order was lurking on the horizon, and a group of seemingly underdeveloped nations was destined to be important bricks in its construction. In a moment in history when the United States (US) was still living its unipolar moment,^① a multipolar international order seemed all too distant, let alone one heavily influenced by the Global South—all developing and emerging countries.^② And yet, the first decade of the 21st century has

① Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1, America and the World, 1990/1991, pp. 23-33.

② See, for example, the "Declaration by the Group of 77 and China on the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference at Doha, Qatar," Geneva, October 22, 2001, <http://www.g77.org/doc/Doha.htm>.

signaled that history indeed seems to be moving in a favorable direction for the developing nations. Shifts in the global landscape, reinforced by the economic crisis, helped the BRIC to raise its profile, replacing informal gatherings in the sidelines of UN meetings by ministerial and high level summits.^① And the acronym has come to materialize. The first important indication towards the formalization, or at least the operationalization, of the group was the 2009 BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg, attended by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Dmitry Medvedev, Manmohan Singh and Hu Jintao. With the inclusion of South Africa in 2010, the group stretched over four continents and was renamed BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa. This was, so far, the only strategic enlargement of the original group, although other developing countries have been mentioned. South Africa was, especially for China, a natural choice as the representative of the vast and developing African continent, due to its economic strength, diversified natural resources, strong banking sector and renowned entrepreneurship.^②

Acronyms are not, in themselves, sufficient to materialize a specific idea. In the peak of the European financial crisis, the term “PIIGS” was popularized in economic and financial circles,^③ to describe the economies of Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain. Widely regarded as pejorative, no state manifested interest in associating with the very idea of economic inefficiency, much less in institutionalizing it. The BRICS conveyed a diametrically opposed message: It meant change, and its members worked hard to convince the international society that it would be for the best. This very appealing concept proved very useful

① Liang Fook Lye and Zhang Yang, “China in the BRICs: Pursuing Closer Cooperation, Not Hegemony,” *East Asian Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 4, October-December 2010, p. 70.

② Renu Modi, “BRICS and Bilaterals: Synergies and Contestations,” in Li Xing ed., *The BRICS and Beyond: The International Political Economy of the Emergence*, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014, p. 76.

③ See, for example, Sarah Krouse, “Investing in PIIGS: Portugal,” *Financial News*, 19 March 2012.

for public diplomacy purposes of BRICS countries. The very same crisis that shook the Western foundations brought the BRICS countries closer, increasing the profile coordination and frequency of their meetings and actions.^① However, despite the increasing common interests uniting the group, vested interests remain considerable and exert a decisive influence in its conduct.

I . The Political Identity of the BRICS

In Alexander Wendt's view, identity represents a relatively stable inter subjective structure within which an actor defines its own interests, role and expectations, in interaction with relevant *others*. This perception of the *self* shapes interests. Therefore, identity defines interests and generates motivational and behavioral dispositions.^② The BRICS political identity can be better analyzed through a combination of theoretical approaches, drawing from constructivism, liberalism and realism. History and discourse depend on where we are located within the global process and culture is the projection of a past, translated into the present.^③ Consequently, states with different characteristics have different patterns of expected behavior, determined by an actor's own conceptions of appropriate behavior and the expectations of other actors. More than other branches of politics, foreign policy produces external images of the polity that can then feed back into the domestic self-identification process.^④ The decision-making process on the (non) adoption of a normative foreign policy is mainly influenced by the

① Lye and Zhang, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

② Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 21, 224.

③ Jonathan Friedman, "Myth, History, and Political Identity," *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7, No. 2, May 1992, pp. 194, 196.

④ Sonia Lucarelli, "European Political Identity, Foreign Policy and the Others' Image," in Furio Cerutti, and Sonia Lucarelli, eds., *The Search for a European Identity Values, Policies and Legitimacy of the European Union*, New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 30-32.

domestic political context and interests at stake, the internal capabilities and foreign policy means, and the external environment on which the foreign policy will operate.^①

The most relevant type of identity to political action is political identity.^② The contrast in the BRICS' historical experiences originated five very different political identities that shape their perceptions, priorities and, ultimately, their foreign policies. From a realist perspective, states as actors can maximize their global objectives collectively without ceding power to the global bodies.^③ The BRICS is a group founded out of self-interest, as its members share a common understanding that considerable (individual) gains can be achieved through common action. In this view, the BRICS constitutes a means to an end, as behind each Summit's declarations and action plan lays important individual agendas. In the pursuit of their shared interest, BRICS countries have gradually drifted towards institutionalization, recognizing the effect of international organizations on international politics as privileged forums to increase their influence. Following the liberal rationale, growing institutionalization influences the conduct of the group members.^④ The BRICS represents the Global South strong and united, not only articulating a particularly severe judgment of the West's international behavior but also presenting an alternative, interdependent, roadmap for global action.^⑤

In order to be effective, norms must acquire a degree of shared legitimacy

① Nathalie Tocci, "Profiling Normative Foreign Policy: The European Union and its Global Partners," in Nathalie Tocci, ed., *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor?: The European Union and Its Global Partners*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008, pp. 15-20.

② Lucarelli, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

③ Jagannath Panda, *BRICS and the China-India Construct — A New World Order in Making?* Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi: Monograph Series, No. 24, September 2013, p. 13.

④ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⑤ See, for example, "Delhi Declaration," Fourth BRICS Summit, New Delhi, 29 March 2012, <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120329-delhi-declaration.html>; Jagannath Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

for a significant group of negotiating actors. This shared validity of norms is established through communicative action in which different socio-culturally determined preferences are adapted and changed based on the willingness to be persuaded by the better argument. Norm validation then is a result of deliberation in transnational or supranational negotiations. Norms draw on distinct socio-cultural contexts that reflect different cultural experiences and representations. Therefore, in politics, norm transfer between actors that belong to different political arenas often results in interpretation conflicts, caused by differences in normative baggage.^① Genuine dialogue or consensus requires reciprocity of understanding, in the sense that it is not only up to others to understand one's perspective. Ideally, it would lead to a "fusion of horizons," i.e., a convergence of perspectives through reciprocal learning, instead of the assimilation of the actors involved.^②

Values are validated through practices of particular cultural lifestyles.^③ They can belong to a single individual; norms cannot.^④ As a consequence, the stronger the shared frame of reference, the more likely is the successful implementation of the norm. This is the case of contexts in which States share universally held values, like Western countries. Outside such specific community environments, strategic action is required to enforce norm implementation,^⑤ by the so-called norm entrepreneurs.^⑥ For instance, within the BRICS, China is behaving as a norm entrepreneur and strategic action is required to implement new norms related to South-

① Antje Wiener, "The Dual Quality of Norms and Governance beyond the State: Sociological and Normative Approaches to 'Interaction'," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 47–69, March 2007, pp. 52–53, 63, 65.

② F. Gadamer, Dallmayr, "Conversation across Boundaries: Political Theory and Global Diversity," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 30 (2), 2001, p. 341.

③ J. Habermas, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 April 2003, p. 23.

④ Richard T. Morris, A Typology of Norms. *American Sociological Review* 21, 1956, p. 610.

⑤ Wiener, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⑥ Martha Finnemore, and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization*, 52 (Autumn), 1998, pp. 893, 895; David A. Locher, *Collective Behavior*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.

South cooperation, non-interference and a multipolar world order. The BRICS stated objective of reshaping international relations through benign interaction draws from those constructivist maxims, stressing the advantages of different approaches and the solutions offered by functional multilateralism, despite value differences and competition in bilateral relationships.^① Although norms may be perceived as being well established and dully recognized in a particular point in time, they tend to evolve rather than crystallize.^② In this multicultural world in which Western norms are not shared by all and new powers fight to defend their interests and perceptions, the eurocentrism of normative constructivism risks being self-defeating.^③

Distinctive, yet complementary, characteristics, strengths, weaknesses and geopolitical potentials of the BRICS have increasingly been combined in a policy of active engagement. Considering the group's declarations and official documents, this paper argues that this policy acts as a political compass for institutionalization. We called it a BRICS-*Politik*, signaling the realist influence in the formulation of the group's political identity, through the concept of *realpolitik* that emerged in 19th century Germany^④ and inspired Hans J. Morgenthau's political realism. This theoretical approach considers that the rational, objective and unemotional considerations behind a nation's interests, defined in terms of *power*, are not to be subordinated to the abstract and emotional dimensions that bind people's moral laws.^⑤ Notwithstanding, in a time of close interaction between states

① Uwe Wissenbach, "The EU, China and Africa: Working for Functional Cooperation?" in Jing Men and Benjamin Barton, eds., *China and the EU in Africa: Partners or Competitors?*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2011, p. 262.

② Audie Klotz, "Can We Speak a Common Constructivist Language?" in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Joergensen, eds., *Constructing International Relations. The Next Generation*, Armonk NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2001, p. 229.

③ Wiener, *op. cit.*

④ Haslam, Jonathan, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli*, London: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 168.

⑤ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, pp. 4-15.

and ever intensifying globalization, the BRICS-*Politik* also highlights that the current international relations are less about classical concepts of power than deciphering their increasing complexity and managing interdependence.^①

II. A BRICS-*Politik*

A BRICS organization must have a bank, demand reforms of international decision-making bodies, require institutionalization, set up a new consensus and define a *politik* for the South. This BRICS-*Politik* is based in five pillars:

B ank

R eform

I nstitutionalization

C onsensus

S outh

1. Bank of the South

The establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank, formalized during the Fortaleza Summit, in July 2014, represents an institutionalization of the group's economic agenda, countering the existing structures of international trade and finance, in which its members are under-represented. The real impact of this bank remains to be seen, but its potential to develop critical sectors in the developing world, on account of the BRICS' financial and non-financial capabilities, is acknowledged and welcomed in the South.^② In fact, some view the bank as an important complement of the existing international financial institutions, like the World Bank, rather than a competitor, as many developing countries still struggle to find financing sources to meet

① Wissenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

② Modi, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

their needs.^① Early that month, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov recognized the importance for BRICS countries to “have a kind of mini-IMF.”^② The establishment of the New Development Bank constitutes a decisive watershed in the BRICS international stand, indicating the first important sign of the group’s transition from a concept, whose influence remained for a time unclear, to an institution that is gradually materializing for all to see.^③

Each country holds a voting power equaling its subscribed shares in the bank’s capital stock and membership is open to all members of the United Nations (UN) and to borrowing and non-borrowing members.^④ This is in line with the group’s official rhetoric, which favors inclusivity. However, the bank’s efficiency is both dependent on the inter-operability between the BRICS and of their capacity to streamline the bank’s administrative procedures. China, on account of its comprehensive experience and expertise in providing aid to developing countries, is likely to play a particularly important role in its management, despite evident efforts in balancing the importance of the different BRICS members’ roles.^⑤ The headquarters of the Development Bank are located in Shanghai and Johannesburg (South Africa) which was chosen for the first regional centre.^⑥

① Shi Bai, “Making a Financial Statement — Will the New BRICS-Led International Development Lender Become an Alternative to Bretton Woods Institutions?” *Chinafrica*, Vol.6, August 2014, p. 16.

② “RICS Business Council Discusses Trade, Investment in Fortaleza Meet,” *The BRICS Post*, July 14, 2014, http://thebricspost.com/brics-business-council-discusses-trade-investment-in-fortaleza-meet/#.VNveM_nF_UW.

③ Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

④ BRICS, “Agreement on the New Development Bank,” Fortaleza, Brazil, July 15, 2014, <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/140715-bank.html>.

⑤ Martyn Davies, “Cementing BRICS — A Case of Capital or Values?” *Chinafrica*, Vol. 6, August 2014, p. 19; The Beijing Axis, “BRICS Unite for Development Bank,” *Chinafrica*, Vol. 6, August 2014, p. 47.

⑥ Ravni Thakur, “Institutionalizing BRICS: The New Development Bank and Its Implications,” *Issue Brief*, Delhi Policy Group, August 2014, pp. 1-2.

Analyzing China's foreign policy, we see that the creation of the New Development Bank is consistent with China's current pattern of promoting new institutions, such as the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific or the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which has been called the "Chinese version of the Asia Development Bank and World Bank." These new initiatives are distinguished by being not only inclusive and multilateral in nature, but also by the dominant role China plays in them. The success of China's ongoing massive financial — and gradually institutional — investment will be measured by the amount of influence the country will (or not) reap in the end, in both regional and global affairs. It is plausible that countries of the South will also adopt a strategic stance and seek to secure the US goodwill on security issues while welcoming China's infrastructure and remaining development projects. Influence-wise, these actions would cancel each other out, reminding us that influence is less about money than about devising ways to make others share our perspectives and values.^① Still, China's repeated interest in creating new financial institutions suggests that the New Development Bank might also not be the BRICS sole undertaking of its kind.

2. Reform of international institutions

Discussions regarding international development and governance models are often polarized between the so-called Washington and Beijing Consensus. The Washington Consensus holds a colonial connotation and is accused of imposing to the Global South specific models of development through institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This expansion of neoliberalism in the developing world, promoted by the US since the 1980s', was considered an economic disaster in many African

^① Wang Zheng, "China's Alternative Diplomacy," *The Diplomat*, 30 January 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/chinas-alternative-diplomacy/>.

and South American countries.^① This pushed emerging countries to look for an alternative model of cooperation among the Global South, refusing the norms that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries want to impose and fighting for more visibility in the international stage. The most visible doctrine that emerged within this framework was the Beijing Consensus, inspired by China's differentiated approach, characterized, in theory, by principles of non-interference^② and by not imposing to other countries a specific model of development,^③ stating that each State should govern itself in accordance with its specificities. China's no-strings-attached alternative strategy is evident in resource-rich countries, obtaining vital natural resources, such as oil, in exchange for carrying out infrastructure projects in that country, following what came to be known as the "Angola model."^④

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,^⑤ first set out by the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and ratified at the Bandung Conference in 1955, framed a strong Afro-Asian cooperation in the pursue of the interests of the Third World. The Non-Aligned Movement, found by China and India, was an important platform to influence international relations after the decolonization process following the Second World War, which resulted in a large number of newly independent States. It was an independent

① Giovanni Arrighi and Lu Zhang, "Beyond the Washington Consensus: A New Bandung," in Jon Shefner and Patricia Fernández-Kelly, eds., *Globalization and Beyond: New Examinations of Global Power and Its Alternatives*, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2011, pp. 26, 32.

② *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

③ Wei Dan, "China e Brasil num Mundo Globalizado," in Wei Dan, coord., *Os Países de Língua Portuguesa e a China num Mundo Globalizado*, Coimbra: Edições Almedina, 2009, pp. 295-317.

④ Ana Cristina Alves, "Chinese Economic Statecraft: A Comparative Study of China's Oil-backed Loans in Angola and Brazil," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 42, 1, 2013, pp. 99-130.

⑤ The "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" are: mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful co-existence. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "China's Initiation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence," http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18053.shtml.

line of action from the Soviet and Western blocs in which a group of sovereign states declared to follow an alternative path to maximize their leverage.^①

When the “Three Worlds Theory” was first advanced in the 1970s by Mao Zedong,^② all BRICS countries, except Russia, were part of the so-called Third World. Nowadays they represent the emergence of the new Second World, rapidly moving away from the periphery.^③ The BRICS’ rhetoric echoes this context, in a united front to create a more equal, peaceful and fairer international society governed by principles of non-interference. Good examples of the built-in Western resistances in recognition of this new state of affairs are the limited share of BRICS voting power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and their lack of representation in the G7. This lack of recognition, resulting from “an archaic vision of the international system,” compels the BRICS to sidestep existing institutions and create new ones. Being increasingly powerful economic players in the world stage, the group demands more political weight in the international institutions, in order to reflect the new balance of power.^④

3. Institutionalization

The BRICS group already held six summits, at least one in each of its member countries, with increasing coverage and importance, reflecting the

① Alexander Orlov, “The Non-Aligned Movement: 40 Years After,” *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations*, Vol. 48, Issue 1, 2002, pp. 49-50.

② Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Chairman Mao Zedong’s Theory on the Division of the Three World and the Strategy of Forming an Alliance Against an opponent,” http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18008.shtml.

③ Modi, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

④ Amy Jean Studdart, “Strengthening the Existing Order,” *Global Forecast 2015*, November 13, 2014, p. 81; Ely Ratner, “Making Bank: Why China’s New Infrastructure Bank Represents a Challenge to the Global Order,” *Foreign Policy*, 23 October 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/23/making-bank/>.

evolution of its institutionalization.^① Currently, the group's activities and areas of dialogue range from finance to security. On trade and economics, there are five initiatives of particular relevance: First, the Contact Group for Economic and Trade Issues, which issues recommendations to the BRICS Ministers of Trade on institutional framework and concrete measures to further develop cooperation. Second, Finance and Trade Ministers meet on a fairly regular basis since the outbreak of the 2008 financial crisis, not only within the context of BRICS Summits, but also at the margins of the G-20 and the WTO Ministerial meetings. Third, the Financial Forum brings together, since 2010, the Presidents of the BRICS national Development Banks during Summits, further enhancing financial cooperation. Fourth, the Business Forum promotes, since 2010, the expansion and diversification of trade and investment. Fifth, the Business Council, established in 2013 and gathering five CEOs of companies of each country, submits recommendations on trade and investment to the leaders at Summits.^②

Other dialogues at ministerial level are conducted on science and technology, for example on oceanographic, polar research, and health. The BRICS Framework for the Collaboration in Strategic Health Projects was adopted in 2013 and the group is planning the creation of a Technological Cooperation Network to promote actions such as the transfer of, and access to, technologies that would allow increased availability and lower prices of medicines in developing countries. Cooperation in the agricultural field is coordinated under the Action Plan 2012-2016. On security issues, the Working Group on Cybersecurity assesses developments and coordinates the BRICS' approach in the field.^③ According to the Fortaleza Declaration,

① Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

② BRICS, "Main Areas and Topics of Dialogue between the BRICS," VI BRICS Summit, Fortaleza and Brasília, 14-16 July 2014, <http://brics6.itamaraty.gov.br/about-brics/main-areas-and-topics-of-dialogue-between-the-brics>.

③ BRICS, "Main Areas and Topics of Dialogue between the BRICS," VI BRICS Summit, Fortaleza and Brasília, 14-16 July 2014, <http://brics6.itamaraty.gov.br/about-brics/main-areas-and-topics-of-dialogue-between-the-brics>.

other areas of cooperation are being studied, including mutual recognition of higher education degrees and diplomas, social security and social inclusion policies, and foreign policy planning dialogue.^①

The BRICS Think Tanks Council, formalized in 2013 at the eThekweni Summit (Durban), gathers renowned research institutions from the five BRICS countries: The China Centre for Contemporary World Studies, the Observer Research Foundation (India), the National Committee for BRICS Research (Russia), the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Brazil) and the Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa). The BRICS Think Tanks Council acts as an important policy advisor for the group and addresses recommendations to the leaders.^② The role and voice of civil society is not overlooked and is currently represented at the BRICS Academic Forum, bringing together a large number of distinguished academics from all member countries, meeting annually and prior to the Summits.^③

4. Consensus of the BRICS

A BRICS Consensus appears to be promoted in the international system, imbued with influences from North and South and the two above-mentioned consensus. On the one hand, the BRICS declared objectives that do not differ significantly from the norms and rules prevailing in the Western rhetoric: the importance of peace and sustainable development, commitment to international law and condemnation of terrorism, respect for the authority of the UN, reduction of poverty and inequality, promotion of quality jobs. On the other hand, the BRICS reaffirms some of the Beijing Consensus

① BRICS, "Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan," Fortaleza, Brazil, 15 July 2014, <http://brics6.itamaraty.gov.br/category-english/21-documents/223-sixth-summit-declaration-and-action-plan>.

② South African BRICS Think Tank, BRICS Think Tanks Council (BTCC), <http://www.sabrics-thinktank.org.za/interface.php?p=crumb&type=419>.

③ BRICS, "Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan."

maxims: the recognition of different development models, reform of the IMF and establishment of a more representative international economic governance, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, constructive dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights on the basis of respect of each country's conditions.^① The new consensus promoted by the BRICS, while remaining remarkably coherent, suggests that the further the group advances towards institutionalization, the more likely it will gradually adopt many of the Western norms, along with the more *revisionist* aspects.

Bridging different perceptions on topics recurrently mentioned by the BRICS such as South-South cooperation, aid, multilateralism or global governance is, nevertheless, an important and inevitable step towards genuine comprehension and to make the BRICS-*Politik* stable and substantial. The BRICS internal perception gap occurs mainly at the political level, making the challenge of bridging perceptions greater for some BRICS countries than others. This gap is caused by differences in norms and worldviews that continuously disrupt intra-BRICS relations. One of the most important gaps one can identify in the BRICS, however, occurs between the rhetoric and reality of the group's emphasis on multilateralism, as words cannot conceal the difficulties of striking a balance between bilateralism and multilateralism.^② Not surprisingly, the BRICS Think Tanks Council referred in 2013 to the importance of reaching an "intra-BRICS consensus" on issues of major importance when dealing with multilateral institutions and fora,^③ and intellectuals of several BRICS members, echoing the group's official position, actively praise the

① BRICS, "Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan."

② Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

③ BRICS, "A Long-Term Vision for BRICS: Submission to the BRICS Academic Forum," 2013, http://orfonline.org/cms/export/orfonline/modules/report/attachments/bricsvision_1376295709857.pdf.

benefits of multilateralism over unilateralism.^① The truth, however, is that countries such as China, Brazil and India continue to show a clear preference for bilateral engagement and show no signs of reversing their preferred approach.

5. South-South cooperation

The South is an important part of the BRICS-*Politik*. South-South cooperation is defined by opposition to North-South relations, in which the concept of aid emerges as a way of compensating the South for decades of exploitation. Cooperation for mutual benefit, presented as one of the BRICS' main goals, represents, somehow incongruously, a major challenge amongst this particular group of countries. The evolution of the group's dynamic shows that the impetus has originated mainly from their economic relations.^② The horizons of intra-BRICS cooperation are often narrower than one might expect and its legacy will be determined, to a large extent, by the capacity to strike a balance between cooperation and competition, enabling members to reach common goals and overcome historical tensions.^③

The BRICS communication strategy indicates that, while advocating a new, more equitable, international order, the BRICS countries also want to be perceived as responsible actors, attaching great importance to environmental issues and tackling international terrorism while creating a favorable economic and financial environment and promoting multilateralism. Researchers from different BRICS countries draw growing attention to the group's common challenges, including domestic challenges, such as the increasingly numerous middle classes that are becoming, more and more, a focal point of the countries' social and political

① Ravni Thakur, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

② *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

③ Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 118.

stability.^① During the July 2014 Fortaleza Summit, the Think Tanks Council presented the document “Towards a long-term strategy for BRICS: Recommendations by the BRICS Think Tanks Council.” Urging BRICS leaders to intensify cooperation, it proposed a strategy based on five pillars: promoting cooperation for economic growth and development; peace and security; social justice, sustainable development, and quality of life; political and economic governance; and progress through knowledge and innovation sharing.^②

III. Institutionalization and Macau

1. The road to institutionalization

Huntington defines institutionalization as “the process by which organizations acquire value and stability,” facilitating their recognition.^③ Institutions provide a stable framework and a privileged channel for action, offering their members the ability to communicate and cooperate. This is one of the non-structural systemic factors that may lead to a redefinition of interests and priorities. According to Kehonane and Nye, systems have two dimensions: Structure, i.e., the distribution of capabilities between units; and process, which refers to patterns of interaction. If states’ preferences will make them opt for some strategies rather than others, strategic considerations will also be influenced by the existing systemic opportunities and constraints.^④ The level of institutionalization is directly

① Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), “Acadêmicos discutem desafios das novas classes medias,” 19 March 2014, http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21758&catid=6&Itemid=4.

② BRICS, “Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan,” Section 66.

③ Samuel S. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 12-13.

④ Robert O. Keohane, and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1977, pp. 281-282.

related to the organization's level of adaptability: The more adaptable, the more institutionalized; the less adaptable, the more resistant it will be to institutionalization. Furthermore, rigidity is more likely to occur in younger organizations.^① The BRICS is therefore expected to show rigidity and resistance to institutionalization.

Additionally, the current international system favors tactical flexibility and diversification, and states are more prone to pursue groupings on an ad-hoc basis.^② In other words, it is equally simpler to do and undo coalitions. In a globalized world with growing economic and social interchanges, institutionalization is not perceived as a compulsory step towards an active international engagement. BRICS countries are not necessarily keen in relying on multilateral platforms and indirect engagement. Moreover, with the exception of Russia, they underwent, to a variable extent, colonial experiences that live in their collective memories. Jeopardizing hard-won sovereignty in the name of global governance, especially if it this might entail a decisive transfer of this sovereignty to a supranational entity in the future, restricts their ability to pursue their national interest.^③ Individual strategic aims also play an important role. For instance, BRICS allows China to position itself closer to other emerging powers and better control their links to the West.^④ By promoting the entry of South Africa in the BRICs, Beijing sought to reduce the significance of IBSA,^⑤ which excludes China and Russia, while securing an essential link to the African continent, the heart of its resource-driven diplomacy.^⑥

① Huntington, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

② Deepa Ollapally, "India and Russia: Renewing the Relationship," in Harsh Pant ed., *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2009, p. 208.

③ Leonid L. Fituni, "From Boulders to Ashlars — BRICS of a New World Order: Hierarchies of Power and Degrees of Freedom in the Emerging World System of the Twenty-first Century," in Li Xing (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 107.

④ Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⑤ Dialogue Forum gathering India, Brazil and South Africa.

⑥ Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

A BRICS institutionalization process can occur in two different stages, starting from economics before moving to “strategic cooperation at the international agenda.” A greater engagement at the economic and trade levels is possible and desirable, due to the complementary characteristics of the BRICS economies and resources and can constitute the basis from which to build further progress on institutionalization. Achieving cooperation at the strategic and security level is, however, a considerably more difficult undertaking because of the BRICS existing bilateral relations with other countries, which translate into conflicting interests.^① Other factors, such as old strategic rivalries, especially between China and Russia, and between China and India, are likely to constrain BRICS cooperation at a security level. Another aspect that cannot be overlooked is the fact that most of the BRICS countries trade relations are conducted with non-BRICS countries.^②

China’s cooperation with Brazil almost resumes to trade and investment, and China’s presence in Africa, particularly in the Lusophone countries, poses a direct threat to Brazil’s national interest.^③ Brazil’s approach to Africa, though sharing with China common non-interference principles, pursues its own agenda and presents an alternative to the resource-driven investment model. Sino-Indian cooperation also reflects a convergence on very specific, and therefore limited, issues, rather than a permanent arrangement.^④

The real capacity of BRICS to act as an influential homogeneous bloc on

① Ravni Thakur, “Theorizing BRICS: Institutionalization and Cooperatives Agendas,” in Francis A. Kornegay and Narnia Bohler-Muller, eds., *Laying the BRICS of a New Global Order: From Yekaterinburg 2009 to eThekweni 2013*, Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013, pp. 197-200.

② Lye and Zhang, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

③ Joseph Marques and Anthony Spanakos, “South-South Relations and the English School of International Relations: Chinese and Brazilian Ideas and Involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 57, 2014, pp. 150-151.

④ Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

the process of building a new international order remains debatable. They are a considerably heterogeneous group of emerging nations at different stages of development and variable political and economic influence, with different political systems and views on global issues. While China and Russia hold a permanent seat at the UN Security Council, the other three members have fully consolidated democratic political systems and a lower value-gap with the West; they are less interested in promoting a confrontational stance with the EU and the US.^① This results in the need to overcome aspirational gaps at the group-level. Russia sees the BRICS as a platform for strengthening and enhancing its international stance and is eager to translate the group's potential into concrete action and increasing impact. The other members adopted a more conservative position and seem less interested in aggressively overthrowing the established order.^② Though united by the 'cause of the developing world', the BRICS have important internal differences, including with regard to terms of ideology and objectives, which erode their cohesion as a group. The development of a coherent identity based on common values and interests would represent an essential step, not only towards moving beyond identifying themselves by opposition to the West,^③ but also in the road towards institutionalization.

Besides coping with the existing contradictions and divergences in their foreign policies to converge on specific issues, BRICS countries will also have to overcome their different interests and perceptions about institutionalization.^④ Russia, whose political will was decisive in bringing the BRICS together as a group, has been the most enthusiastic member

① Paulo Roberto Almeida, "O Bric e a substituição de hegemonias: um exercício analítico (perspectiva histórico-diplomática sobre a emergência de um novo cenário global)," in R. Baumann, ed., *O Brasil e os demais BRICS: Comércio e Política*, IPEA, Brasília, 2010, p. 136. Marques and Spanakos, *op. cit.*, pp. 140, 145.

② Lye and Zhang, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

③ Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

④ Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

favoring further institutionalization and establishing a permanent secretariat. The country has proved to be a particularly active advocate of multilateral development projects and bilateral trade and cooperation.^① This becomes all the more important for Russia on a politico-economic level because of the diplomatic isolation and heavy sanctions inflicted by the EU, due to the crisis in Ukraine.^② On Russia's initiative, the BRICS Business Council was set up in 2013. Currently one of the group's most important cooperation mechanisms, it guarantees a regular dialogue between governments and business communities within the group, representing key industries and sectors.^③ Also deserving special attention is the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) project "Partnership between Russia and Brazil in technology and innovation for development of SMEs." Sergey Korotkov, Director of the UNIDO Centre for International Industrial Co-operation in the Russian Federation, described this initiative as a "first step" towards the institution of a BRICS Business Innovation Network, which would greatly enhance technological cooperation and innovation.^④

China explores the economic and political reach of the BRICS to project its own interests, considering that the further the US power declines, the stronger the BRICS can become.^⑤ The group is also an increasingly important foreign policy pillar and public diplomacy tool, allowing China to present its agenda in a favorable light with less resistance in the international arena. By coupling its image and status to the developing world, China

① Fituni, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

② Thakur, "Institutionalizing BRICS: The New Development Bank and Its Implications," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

③ About the BRICS Business Council, <http://www.brics-info.org/about-the-brics-business-council/>.

④ Sergey Korotkov, "Linking BRICS Innovation Potential through Innovation Networking Platform," Presentation, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Centre for International Industrial Co-operation in the Russian Federation, Moscow, 2014.

⑤ Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 51-53.

projects a misleading sense of vulnerability that also conceals its long-term goals, such as the promotion of its currency.^① Internally undermined by corruption, alarmingly high levels of pollution and social inequalities, China's leadership risks becoming a prisoner of their own rhetoric^②, under mounting pressure to deliver the goods. More than his predecessors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, whose strategy was clearly investment-oriented, Xi Jinping needs to strike a balance between various political, economic and social factors.^③

India's situation exemplifies the existing complexity in the BRICS relationship. Due to the specificities of its foreign policy, which prioritizes freedom of maneuver on strategic issues over association on rigid structures, India favors positive engagement with both the developed and developing countries. It also understands that this balancing game will only remain sustainable if it successfully avoids antagonize either side, and for this reason favors cooperation centered on economic issues. Ideally, this approach would allow India to reap benefits in terms of trade relations and economic cooperation while staying clear of political sensitive issues, but it may compromise India's political leadership within the BRICS.^④ Although it has been granted the New Development Bank's first rotating Presidency,^⑤ India harbors higher ambitions.

On research, Brazil's BRICS Policy Research Institute in Rio de Janeiro stands out as one of the world's best think tanks, welcoming cooperation and information exchange between researchers from the various BRICS countries.^⑥ The country also shows interest in broadening the areas covered

① Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 60, 82-83.

② Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 18.

③ Sebastian Veg, "China's Political Spectrum under Xi Jinping," *The Diplomat*, August 11, 2014.

④ Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88, 95.

⑤ Thakur, "Institutionalizing BRICS: The New Development Bank and Its Implications," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⑥ BRICS, "Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan," *op. cit.*

by the BRICS Business Forum to include small and medium enterprises and tourism.^① In a somehow characteristic approach, Brazil demonstrates a preference for bilateral, rather than collective approach to the BRICS countries, which can explain the absence of further efforts toward a deeper institutionalization of the group. This approach was summed up by Rubens Ricupero, a former Brazilian diplomat, who wrote that “BRICS is an important concept, but Brazil should not organize its foreign policy around it. BRICS is a concept of limited utility.”^②

South Africa is the BRICS country with the most sophisticated banking and capital market sector of any of the BRICS economies. It is also well aware of its strategic importance for the other group members, especially China, as an entry door to the African continent. The choice of Johannesburg to receive the first regional centre of the New Development Bank constitutes an important indicator of this. South Africa is likely to use its privileged conditions to its own advantage by trying to align the other BRICS interests in the continent with its own objectives.^③ The South African BRICS Think Tank, currently the country’s representative on the BRICS Think Tanks Council, is tasked with advising the Government on BRICS-related matters.

The creation of permanent structures is a cornerstone in the development of a BRICS-*Politik* for several reasons. First, it sends a powerful signal of continuity: Institutionalization means that the BRICS is here to stay. Second, it creates permanent communication channels that facilitate intra-group coordination. Institutionalizing cooperation within a common platform eases procedures and bridges perceptions. As all institutions, a BRICS organization requires a distinctive set of rules and

① BRICS, “Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan,” *op. cit.*.

② Jason Miks, “Brazil Sees BRIC Limitations,” *Global Public Square*, 5 September 2013, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2013/09/05/brazil-sees-bric-limitations/>.

③ Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

norms and the establishment of a normative framework pushes member-states to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. Third, permanent structures prompt positive dialogue with third parties. Some BRICS countries often assume skeptical or confrontational stances when dealing with the West. The definition of common official positions forces individual countries to contain nationalism and more assertive approaches, smoothing external coordination with other institutions and poles of the system, namely the EU. Fourth, the BRICS can use public diplomacy for more visibility and international influence, collectively pursuing common interests as a like-minded group. Public diplomacy aims at influencing the behavior of foreign publics in order to advance foreign policy goals,^① through an attractive image that eases suspicions regarding interests and improve prospects of obtaining the desired outcomes.^② A very important asset for public diplomacy is credibility, which is not achieved by simple propaganda; and group credibility can hardly be achieved without institutionalization. A BRICS public diplomacy division could promote its image as the pole of the system in charge of leading the transition to a multipolar world order.

IV What Can Macau Do for the BRICS?

The Macau handover to China in December 1999 ended nearly 500 years of Portuguese presence in the enclave through an unusual process of retrocession. Sino-Portuguese talks, which resulted in the 1987 Macau Joint Declaration, were framed by Deng Xiaoping's "one country, two systems" formula. Following Hong Kong, Macau became a Chinese Special Administrative Region (SAR) and its laws and socio-economic system

① Ingrid d'Hooghe, *China's Public Diplomacy*, Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2014, p. 102.

② Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011, pp. 101, 104-106.

would remain unchanged for a period of fifty years.^① The formula offers the Special Administrative Regions a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign policy and defense. Macau was hosting the permanent secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-Speaking Countries, created in 2003. Known as the Macau Forum, it brings to Macau representatives from Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and East Timor; San Tomé and Príncipe retains an “observer” status due to its relations with Taiwan.^②

Thus, apparently there are no legal obstacles for Macau to host a permanent structure of the BRICS. It would contribute to diversifying the economy and promoting its international image of leisure and services centre, beyond gambling. Xi Jinping’s idea of “Chinese Dream” might also present an important opportunity, and motivation, for a choice of Macau to receive the BRICS Permanent Secretariat, as it would not only significantly increase the political clout of the Macau SAR, but also promote a harmonious image of the BRICS in the mainland. This, in turn, would be in line with the Chinese Communist Party propaganda, which over the past decades has been evolving while remaining remarkably coherent, advocating the building of a “harmonious society,”^③ through “peaceful development”^④ which will ultimately lead to the fulfilment of the Chinese Dream.^⑤

Several arguments could support a Macau bid to receive, for instance,

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- ① For more information on the one country, two systems formula, see Carmen Amado Mendes, *Portugal, China and the Macau Negotiations, 1986-1999*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013.
 - ② Carmen Amado Mendes, “Macau in China’s Relations with the Lusophone World,” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 57, 2014, pp. 229-230.
 - ③ Chan Kin-man, “Harmonious Society,” in Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, New York: Springer, 2009, pp. 821-825.
 - ④ Guo Sujian, *China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ in the 21st Century: Domestic and International Conditions*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, pp. 1-2.
 - ⑤ “‘Chinese Dream’ Is Xi’s Vision,” *China Daily*, 18 March 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013npc/2013-03/18/content_16315025.htm.

the permanent secretariat of the organization. This would recover and build on the idea of instating a BRICS “virtual secretariat,” announced in September 2013, which would enhance “coordination in global affairs among the member countries.”^① Although this idea has not yet progressed, its underlying principle and stated objectives remain valid: A secretariat would have a direct bearing on the BRICS future political, and institutional, stability. First, a prosperous and secure territory seeking no prominence, Macau, with its five-century history of being a bridge between East and West, is a uniquely qualified meeting point. Second, its special status as a Special Administrative Region, depriving it of foreign policy autonomy, renders it the most neutral territory within the BRICS. Third, the presence of representatives from the Lusophone world on a permanent basis in Macau offers first-hand contacts with countries where the BRICS have strategic interests. This would particularly benefit India, Russia and South Africa, which are not members of the Macau Forum. The important role of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) is acknowledged in the Fortaleza Declaration, namely its importance for the political stability of Guinea-Bissau.^② Brazil is the only BRICS member that belongs to the CPLP, but China has an indirect connection with these countries through one of its Special Administrative Regions. Macau was administered by the country where the Community headquarters are based: Portugal. Fourth, Macau offers a special link to Europe, backed by centuries of contacts since the Portuguese arrived in 1553 and reinforced by the 1992 Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU. The EU-Macau office in Hong Kong is an attentive observer of local politics, for instance regarding respect for autonomy, and the 2014 EU-Macao Legal Co-operation Project aims strengthening the local legal

① “BRICS secretariat to be launched within months,” *BRICS Post*, 5 September 2013, http://thebricspost.com/brics-secretariat-to-be-launched-within-months/#.VN8PbfnF_UV.

② BRICS, “Sixth BRICS Summit — Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan,” *op. cit.*, paragraph 29.

system.^① Thus, a permanent structure of the BRICS in Macau would benefit from close contact and possible EU support. Fifth, the local government has the financial capacity and other resources to support the initiative, due to the high revenues and infrastructures offered by the gambling industry. The amount of initiatives that have been organized and supported by the Macau Forum, during the past decades, testifies to the Territory's expertise in hosting international events.

Belonging to one of the BRICS but having previously been administered by an EU member state, which is also part of CPLP, Macau has unique connections with Europe and the Lusophone world, while benefiting from a high degree of autonomy from Beijing. Moreover, its previous administrative ruler is a small country, with no interest in challenging emerging powers, which allows China to welcome and preserve the Portuguese language, culture and architectural landscape in the enclave. Portugal would most likely welcome the establishment of a BRICS institution in Macau. On the one hand, it would contribute to the success of the negotiated transition from Portuguese to Chinese administration. On the other hand, it would bring positive foreign policy assets, highlighting the importance of its language and cultural legacy, like the Macau Forum arguably did, while reinforcing contacts with the BRICS. Portugal and Brazil have close and friendly relations and can open doors for BRICS within the CPLP, an actor with increasing international influence in the international system, great economic potential and over 250 million people. At the moment, only China is benefiting from this, maintaining friendly relations with Portugal and growing ties with Lusophone Africa, pushed by the need for natural resources. The following section will highlight that Portugal is also a gateway to Europe, while Macau can be a link in the EU connection with the BRICS.

① "The 19th EU-Macao Joint Committee," Joint Press Statement, Brussels, 15 July 2014. http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/hong_kong/documents/press_corner/20140717_en.pdf.

V. The BRICS and the “Rest”: Managing the EU’s Expectations

1. The EU normative engagement

The EU has been described as a civilian power, a soft power or, more recently, as a normative power. Inspired in the constructivist idea that values and norms shape interests,^① the civilian power categorization considers Europe a different international actor in the globalized world. “Civilian Power Europe” would be a strong economic power with a somehow limited armed force, emphasizing interstate multilateral cooperation and seeking to spread social values such as equality and tolerance.^② However, this vision of a Europe that rejects power politics has become increasingly difficult to promote, as the EU is actually struggling to acquire instruments enabling it to project hard power.^③ The second concept, soft power, is also focused on multilateral cooperation, relying on the power of attraction and co-optation.^④ The third definition of the EU as a normative power refers to the power of shaping what is regarded as “normal” in world politics (rules and values) without resorting to coercion.^⑤ Regarding the democratic political principles inherent to the European identity, the Lisbon Treaty (2007) clearly states that the very “functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy.”^⑥ Consequently, the EU suggests to other

① Martin Beck, “The Comeback of the EU as a ‘Civilian Power’ through the Arab Spring?” *GIGA Focus International* (Edition English), No. 2, February 2013, p. 2.

② F. Duchêne, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence,” in M. Kohnstamm and W. Hager, eds., *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the European Community*, London: Macmillan, 1973, pp. 19-20.

③ Joachim Alexander Koops, *The European Union as an Integrative Power: Assessing the EU’s ‘Effective Multilateralism’ with NATO and the United Nations*, Brussels: VUB Press, 2011, p. 184.

④ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004, p. 5.

⑤ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, 2002, pp. 235-258.

⑥ European Union, “Treaty of Lisbon,” 13 December 2007, Title II “Provisions on Democratic Principles”, Art. 8, A (1), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12007L/TXT&from=EN>.

nations' values such as democracy, human rights and good governance, based on its own historical — and largely successful — experience.

But what are normative and non-normative foreign policy goals and, more importantly, do normative goals exist in opposition to strategic ones? If the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and human rights are considered normative goals, then strategic goals such as commercial interests or energy security are not, by definition, “un-normative”; in fact, the former may act as a cover for the later. International regimes, organizations or international law can be used as means to reach foreign policy normative goals, as they bind the conduct of all actors involved. Positive incentives including aid, diplomacy or technical assistance are not perceived as intrusive to sovereignty, being important instruments in the promotion of normative goals, such as human rights and democratic standards. They also help retain and open new political channels, opening the door to gradually exert greater influence.^① Thus, ideas and values can be assimilated more efficiently through an indirect and co-operative approach. Europe should avoid a game-changer behavior and seek to achieve comparative advantages.

In the wake of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union has become an international actor, facing major external challenges, which reinforced the need to develop a strategic vision in the emerging multi-polar world. The European Council's December 2008 Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy urged the EU to think and act strategically to influence events in a world of growing complexity.^② Like the BRICS, Europe must engage in a successful transition from a US-dominated post-1945 international system, towards a new 21st century order that is accommodating the Global South.^③ Europeans have been increasingly

① Tocci, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-10, 21.

② European Council, “Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy — Providing Security in a Changing World,” S407/08, Brussels, 11 December 2008.

③ European Commission, “The World in 2025: Rising Asia and Socio-Ecological Transition,” Brussels, 2009.

frustrated by the readiness of rising powers to use the UN and other institutions as a means to counter Western ambitions. The EU situation has been described as a “slow motion crisis,” whose main symptom is a loss of power to influence international events at various levels. Non-Western powers have increasingly blocked initiatives on human rights in the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council and refused to cooperate in some of the most prominent conflicts of the past decade.^①

This reveals the EU difficulty in projecting itself externally in ways which can influence and impact outcomes,^② and securing its position in a world full of increasingly able competitors. Different worldviews, and lack of trust, continuously disrupt the relationship between the EU and the BRICS countries. Despite the gap between the EU and various BRICS countries on a number of issues, from energy to intellectual property rights,^③ some of the differences are manageable. For instance, the idea of multipolarity is compatible with the European vision of multilateralism. The multipolarization of the international system has not only stimulated a strategic rethinking of multilateralism in North-South dynamics, but also of new ways of implementing it. Though related, multipolarity and multilateralism are different concepts, which also translate differently into the international system. The former implies a large concentration of power in a limited number of countries, placing them on a superior level compared to the rest of the world. This polarization of power will, in turn, result on a polarization of interests. Multilateralism, however, entails that nations need to reach a common understanding, regarding norms and rules of conduct, and operate within these rules, regardless of the place they occupy in the power

① Richard Gowan and Franziska Brantner, “A Global Force for Human Rights? An Audit of European Power at the UN,” *European Council of Foreign Relations*, 2008, http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR-08_A_GLOBAL_FORCE_FOR_HUMAN_RIGHTS-_A,_N_AUDIT_OF_EUROPEAN_POWER_AT_THE_UN.pdf.

② Jolyon Howorth, “The EU as a Global Actor: Grand Strategy for a Global Grand Bargain?” *JCMS (Journal of Common Market Studies)*, Vol. 48, Issue 3, June 2010, pp. 455-474.

③ Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-44.

hierarchy.^①

Emerging powers, somewhat paradoxically, need a strong Europe, as globalization gave birth to dynamics that challenge established views of hegemony and demands a multipolar world.^② Ultimately, this engagement would draw BRICS countries closer to the EU, benefiting bilateral relations. Europe cannot prevent the BRICS from becoming stronger, but can attempt to shape the development of BRICS countries in more favorable terms. Rather than seeking to understand the true commitment or intentions of the BRICS countries' leaders in reaching their announced goals, the EU should adopt several initiatives with a cautious approach.

2. BRICS institutionalization: An European perspective

Though maintaining bilateral partnerships and agreements as well as holding Summits with the BRICS countries, the EU has so far refrained from engaging with the BRICS on an institutional level. The establishment of official links with the group is, however, seen as advantageous by European policy makers, for the countries involved are simply too central and vital to ignore.^③ As the existing normative gap can hardly be overcome, if the two actors do not interact at the institutional level, an efficient and continuous bilateral dialogue would benefit from the existence of a BRICS organization or some kind of permanent structure. This would arguably lead Europeans to give a strong support for institutionalizing the group. Moreover, institutionalization implies defining common rules, a normative setting that clearly states what the group considers "normal" in its internal and external actions. In part, this would answer to OECD pressure for definition of South-South cooperation norms and make BRICS countries more receptive to absorb the Western best normative inputs. They

① Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

② Li Xing, Óscar García Agustín, "Constructing and Conceptualizing 'Interdependent Hegemony' in an Era of the Rise of the BRICS and Beyond," in Li Xing, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 53-74.

③ Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

prioritize specific areas of European recognized expertise, *normative niches* that should be explored as a small first step that can leverage further, and benign, normative action. The EU can exert considerable influence by offering its experience on several issues, such as food safety, economic disparity, corporate social responsibility and the development of social protection at the pace of economic reforms.

The establishment of a BRICS office in Macau would offer the EU an institutional channel in a Territory that maintains unique links with one of its member states. Portugal's geopolitical potential, though peripheral from a European point of view, is exponentially higher from a global perspective. One of the first European countries with a Global Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with China, signed in 2005, Portugal is considered a Chinese "friend" within the EU. History shows that smaller states are active in attempting to influence the European Commission in sectors where they have interests involved, despite being somewhat reactive in others. Their officials have greater room for maneuver than those of the larger states, which tend to be more confrontational, and more flexible and efficient domestic decision-making process due to the informality of contacts.^① Portugal enjoys this strategic flexibility and has political and economic leverage in Macau, Brazil and the other Lusophone regions, which are represented in the Chinese enclave. A BRICS organization in this Special Administrative Region would therefore bring comparative advantages to the EU.

Portugal, being a small state, is not necessarily a weak state, despite being often portrayed as such. *Small* and *great* are distinctions referring to quantity, while *strong* and *weak* refer to quality.^② Unlike the great powers, much

① Baldur Thorhallsson, "The Role of Small States in the European Union," in Ingebritsen Christine et al., *Small States in International Relations*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006, pp. 224-226.

② Iver B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöhl, "Liliputians in Gulliver's World?" in Ingebritsen Christine et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

of the strength of the weak states is *derivative*, rather than intrinsic.^① The capability to manipulate, induce, seduce, or help other nations is not a monopoly of the stronger states.^② No state is all-powerful or completely weak, as power can be addressed within specific issue areas.^③ If power varies from one issue area to another, then small states can well possess issue-specific capabilities in an increasingly interdependent world. Weak states can influence great powers through systemic factors, such as the structure of the international system and international norms, especially sovereign equality, and due to its specific qualities, such as geography, resources and reputation.^④ The historical period and the structure of the international system in which the position of weak states is examined are of great importance.

VI. Conclusion

The mere appearance of the BRICS suggests that the international system's tectonic plates are in movement and that important structural changes are taking place, both politically and economically. Looking back in history, we might be tempted to simply dub it as a new Non-Aligned Movement, but this assessment misses the point entirely. The 1950s' movement sought an alliance to strengthen its members' international weight; but none of them, at the time, resembled what is commonly acknowledged as a developed country, much less a super-power-in-the-making, as it is the case of present-day China, sided by countries with the capacity of becoming great powers

① Michael Handel, "Weak States in the International System," in Ingebritsen Christine et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 150, 190.

② Marshall R. Singer, *Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships*, New York: The Free Press, 1972, p. 60.

③ Keohane and Nye, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-45.

④ Ulf Lindell and Stefan Persson, "The Paradox of Weak State Power: A Research and Literature Overview," *Cooperation and Conflict*, June 1986, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 79-97.

themselves, such as Brazil and India.^① It is undeniable that South-South relations are rapidly evolving and that a new international context, in which the North-South equilibrium is undergoing a rebalancing, also demands new approaches and policies. The BRICS-*Politik* springs from these new demands: a single, comprehensive, strategy that individually benefits its members, while also serving the interests of the BRICS as a whole.

Though partners, the BRICS' countries are also great competitors in the global arena and there are tensions amongst them. Further institutionalization of the grouping will therefore have to be effected in this complex internal environment, which is a constant balancing-game that should be handled tactfully and where the commitment of its members will be put to the test. Discrepancies in growth trajectories is another decisive factor in the existing power imbalances, and one that might become a source of future internal conflict, as the Chinese economy overshadows the other BRICS.^② Since 2010, BRICS countries underwent a slow-down in growth and a decrease in their performance in terms of labor and human capital^③ except China, which even in the midst of the global economic and financial crisis managed to maintain a remarkable growth trajectory.

Although the group's potential is constrained by ongoing tension among members, who remain too divided and reluctant to collective action, this merely underlines the fact that the BRICS organization, in order to increase its influence, must think strategically and act pragmatically. A combination of common interests, cooperation habits, greater scope for compromise and a flexible working framework^④ is in place. Because the political, social, economic and financial stability of the BRICS countries is deeply intertwined, existing strategic rivalries should

① Panda, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

② *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 38.

③ Rob Minto, "China: Leaving other BRICS for Dust in New Index," *The Financial Times*, September 16, 2013.

④ Ingebritsen Christine, "Norm Entrepreneurs," in Ingebritsen Christine et al., *op. cit.*, p. 275.

not be mutually perceived as obstacles but rather key points to create new opportunities for wealth and development. The globalization that promoted their emergence and rapid socio-economic development also originates from common concerns, such as growing demands from an increasingly informed population that challenges political authority and puts growing pressure on the leaders' legitimacy. If the state's domestic institutions do not adapt in conformity with the ongoing changes of its society, political havoc can follow.^① Therefore, the BRICS phenomena cannot be dissociated from its member's internal common challenges, which should be addressed within an institutional framework capable of harmonizing the different aspirations of the BRICS countries while implementing an effective, diversified and innovative dialogue with other actors, such as the EU. Failing to do so might prove fatal to the project, leading to a dead end on the group's evolution.

The BRICS formulated a vision, but members have refrained from setting formal structures. More than a coalition of countries, the group needs to form a coalition of values,^② and further institutionalization is a decisive step to achieve this. It promotes stronger coordination and streamlines procedures, and provides greater influence, while easing existing tensions between the member states.^③ Institutionalizing with success implies giving members equal access to the decision-making process and top positions and select a consensual location for permanent structures. This paper argued that the Special Administrative Region of Macau offers domestic conditions and gathers external support for the establishment of a secretariat, for instance. It shares specificities with Brazil and India, besides being part of China. Xi Jinping's firm leadership and assertive diplomacy are likely to consider that the BRICS institutionalization process strengthens China's global influence,

① Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

② Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

③ Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 112.

besides enhancing Macau's political clout: Its international status contributes to the success of the one country, two systems formula and its applicability to Taiwan. A Macau-based option will remain under the watchful eye of Portugal and the European Union, which can prompt support from the "rest" of the North.

In conclusion, the BRICS successfully changed the mindset of the international system regarding North-South and South-South relations. However, despite all the accomplishments, it still lacks the level of institutionalization required to become a game-changer in international affairs. The international crisis that also hit the BRICS economies, along with all the above-mentioned structural handicaps, challenges the current format in which the group operates. Yet, in this context, intra-BRICS solidarity is not only more welcomed, but also more likely to occur, and this can provide the necessary impetus towards institutionalization to address the current crisis. For instance, Russia has the stronger drive of the group towards a higher level of institutionalization, as its economic vulnerabilities become more apparent.^① If the BRICS successfully strengthen its multilateral engagement in the global stage, it may pursue enlargement towards Asia, Africa and South America and extend cooperation to other developing countries.^②

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① Thakur, "Theorizing BRICS: Institutionalization and Cooperatives Agendas," *op. cit.*, p. 196.

② Panda, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 46.

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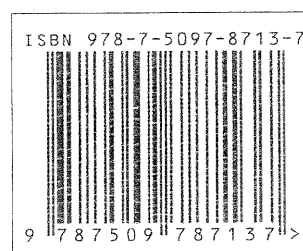
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The conference invited scholars and analysts from all BRICS countries, and the themes were how best to strategize, structure, and implement BRICS institutionalization and concrete initiatives taken in Macau. Meanwhile, academics from the five BRICS countries and Macau SAR made exchanges with students and staffs in MUST on topics of "BRICS Institutionalization & New International Regime", "BRICS Institutionalization & Cooperation", "BRICS Institutionalization & Country Perspective", and "BRICS Institutionalization & Macau".

BRICS, an international organization of five major emerging economies, namely, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is witnessing and experiencing the big change of world order and Macro-environments after the first decade of the 21st century. This book serves as a bridge for scholars from BRICS, esp. Macau as a platform. And it also provides suggestions on how BRICS can strengthen their cooperation by institutionalization and raise their global status from theoretical and policy-making perspective for the BRICS members.



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