An Analysis of the Legitimacy of the BRICS in the International System

by

Avianne Gilbert

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MA International Relations

in the Department of Political Sciences at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: SITHEMBILE MBETE

March 2019

Declaration

I, Avianne Gilbert, declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree MA International Relations at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another university. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements. I am aware of University policy and implications regarding plagiarism.

Abstract

The emergence of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) as a coalition acting within the global governance architecture has been met with great levels of scepticism, pessimism and guarded enthusiasm. However, after ten years in existence, the BRICS countries have continued to consolidate relations among themselves, strengthen and expand their cooperation structures, institutionalise their operations and engage other members of the international community in achieving the mission of BRICS. The journey of the BRICS has been one of establishing its legitimacy as a relevant actor and carving out a space for it to act out its corporate identity. This study therefore explores the question of how BRICS went about establishing its legitimacy as an actor in the international system and the reception it received from other members of the community.

Using a qualitative desktop study, the research is undergirded by a constructivist theoretical framework, as laid out by Wendt (1992) and an English School framework described by Bull (1977). Two of the underlying assumptions based on these two theoretical foundations are that actors are engaged in constant activities to legitimise their existence and that the identity of the BRICS grouping requires validation by other members of the international system in order to assume legitimacy. The study develops a set of criteria to assess legitimacy based on the literature concerning constructivist thought, as well as the English School's depiction of a society of states and definitions of legitimacy spelled out by Clark (2005) and Hurrell (2005). The four criteria used are: acts of legitimation, social agreement, framing and changing the rules.

The study reveals the non-linear and negotiated process engaged in by the BRICS to establish its legitimacy, highlighting the deliberate acts undertaken to carve out an identity and to elicit agreement on the acceptable range of its conduct in global affairs. The study brings together literature on the BRICS with literature on legitimacy to shed light on the application and significance of issues of legitimacy in international relations.

KEYWORDS Legitimacy, BRICS, International System, Global Governance, Constructivism, Society of States, Framing, Acts of Legitimation, Agenda Setting, Social Agreement, Contestation, Delegitimation,

Dedication

To my husband and our children.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank:

- My supervisor, Dr Sithembile Mbete, for her support and timely advice and guidance.
- The librarians at the University of Pretoria, for providing a wealth of resources and guidance and for their persistent willingness to assist.
- My husband, for his unending support, feedback and encouragement and for accompanying me on this journey.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	African Union
BASIC	Brazil, South Africa, India, China
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
COP	Conference of Parties
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Union's Statistical Office
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
G77	Group of Seventy-seven
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDCs	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDB	New Development Bank
NIEO	New International Economic Order
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RwP	Responsibility while Protecting
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSMIS	United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The rise of emerging powers has been a key feature of the international system in the 21st century. In particular, the emergence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of countries has garnered significant attention owing to the implications of its rise for global governance, and the distribution of power across the nations of the world. These states challenge the international system by shifting the balance of power, and bringing to the fore alternative notions of the international order, the rules of the system and the responsibilities of those within it. New actors are allowed to have a voice and carve out a space for themselves in a system that was previously dominated by traditional great powers. The rise of these emerging powers allows them to participate in setting the agenda in an international environment that was formerly not favourable to their points of view. The very existence of this international system, characterised by states with varying degrees of power, reinforces the importance of legitimacy as states seek to demonstrate or increase their influence in this unequal system (Hurrell 2005).

This study explores the extent to which the BRICS can be considered a legitimate actor in the international system. Prevailing ideas on the BRICS declare the entity to be both superficial and artificial, likely to be short-lived and another failed project led by the developing world. Cynicism about the BRICS questions the legitimacy of the group and contradicts efforts made by its members to solidify its role in the global order. As the BRICS countries work towards deepening the level of their coordination, and more concretely through the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), I investigate the sources of legitimacy available to the BRICS in the international system that allows it to operate in a particular way. The aim of this research is to investigate the extent to which the BRICS has gained legitimacy in the international system and the factors that have facilitated its legitimisation.

The research design is a qualitative desktop study and employs a constructivist approach, as laid out by Wendt (1992). He argues that the decisions and actions of actors in the international system are driven by the meaning that actors ascribe to those decisions. Some of the underlying assumptions based on social constructivist

theory are that the identity of the BRICS grouping requires validation by other members of the international system in order to assume legitimacy. The responses of other actors to the BRICS provides insight into the behaviour of the BRICS states and the range of options available to them in international politics.

This research concerns issues of power relations as these are understood from a constructivist point of view. Power is not static and based solely on material types of power; rather, it can be socially understood based on the interplay of perceptions and interpretations. In terms of the understanding of power relations based on constructivist theory, Reus-Smit (2009: 233) states that 'power, it seems, is also constituted by non-material factors, most notably legitimacy, and legitimacy is in turn conditioned by established or emergent norms of rightful agency and action.' I argue that understanding the BRICS and its power to act therefore rests on considering the community within which such agency is situated, and the norms of that community that make particular actions permissible.

1.2 Overview of literature on BRICS

In order to set the context for the relevance of this study, the gap in the literature and the context of the research question, this section will discuss the existing literature on the BRICS. It is divided into six general categories, which provide insight into the general points of focus of the literature concerning the BRICS. From this overview, it becomes evident that the literature on the BRICS has hinted at questions of the legitimacy of BRICS, but has not addressed the issue directly.

1.2.1 Defining the BRICS

The acronym BRICs was introduced by Goldman Sachs' Jim O'Neill in November 2001 in the Global Economics Paper, 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICs' (O'Neill 2001). This paper forecast that the economic growth of Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) in 2001 and 2002 would surpass growth rates in the Group of Seven (G7) countries[1], and as a result, global economic governance structures should be revised to reflect this shift in the global economy. O'Neill proposed that the G7 should perhaps be substituted with a Group of Nine (G9), which would allow the BRICs countries, which represent key drivers of the global economy, to

[1]The Group of Seven consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

participate in global governance structures. At the invitation of the Russian president, the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India and China decided to meet in 2006 on the side-lines of the Group of Eight (G8) Outreach Summit and at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meeting later that year in New York, the group was formalised (Roberts 2010). In 2010, at the BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting, it was decided that South Africa would be included as a member of the BRICs, thus changing the acronym to BRICS.

BRICS development can be divided into three distinct stages (Stuenkel 2016b). The first occurred from 2001 to 2007, when the then 'BRIC' was an acronym linked to an investment category created by Goldman Sacs. The second period dated from 2008 to 2014, marking the phase in which the BRICS countries established themselves as a political entity, meeting regularly at high levels to pronounce on a wide range of political and economic issues. The third stage spans the period 2015 onwards, in which the BRICS began an institutionalisation process, establishing its own development bank, the NDB. The advance of the BRICS represents a movement from an arbitrary grouping of emerging powers to increasing substantiation and institutionalisation of its association. The question remains whether the above-mentioned progress represents a movement toward greater levels of legitimacy, and by extension increased influence in global governance.

There is no general agreement on how the BRICS should be classified. Nayyar (2016: 582) refers to it as a 'strategic alliance of countries.' Ghori (2014:205) comments that BRICS could be described as an 'interest/pressure group.' Brutch and Papa (2012: 3) define the BRICS as a 'bargaining coalition with limited objectives.' With this classification, it is suggested that the alliance of the BRICS states is utilitarian at the core, with the five countries able to mobilise their resources jointly to achieve specific shared purposes. Armijo and Roberts (2014: 508) refer to the BRICS as a 'club', which benefits a few members but also provides trickle-down benefits to non-members through lobbying efforts on behalf of other emerging and developing countries. Flemes (2013: 1023) classifies the group as 'network powers', meaning its members are nestled among a range of foreign policy networks consisting of three or more states that relate to one another in a structured way but without an arbitration mechanism in case of disagreements.

The level of institutionalisation of the BRICS, or lack thereof, is often commented on in terms of its impact on the effectiveness of the BRICS and its ability to surge ahead in reforming the systems of global governance. The BRICS is portrayed as an unstable entity, without the necessary institutional mechanisms to keep it together and coherent. Ghori (2014) argues that unless BRICS forms itself into a treaty-based organisation, its sustainability would be tenuous and it would be ineffective. A common view, as expressed by Bacik (2013), is that nothing is truly holding the BRICS together without institutionalisation. These views point to a question of whether, in its current configuration, BRICS could be considered a legitimate actor. Furthermore, with the establishment of the NDB as the first formal institution of the BRICS, the question is asked whether this has enhanced the legitimacy of the BRICS and therefore empowered it to be a key power broker in the global order.

1.2.2 The Question of Membership

Another contested aspect of the BRICS grouping is the issue of its membership composition, specifically which states are included and which are excluded. Arguably, in terms of current membership, the two countries whose membership are questioned most often are Russia and South Africa. It has been argued that South Africa does not qualify for inclusion based on its economic standing; its inclusion is therefore widely considered to be a political manoeuvre to ensure representation of an African country. Bacik (2013: 765) for example, in describing South Africa's admission to the BRICS and considering the possibility of the addition of Turkey, comments that 'joining the BRIC is both a highly political and a fussy process.' Nayyar (2016), in referring to the BRICS, specifies that he only counts Brazil, India, China and South Africa, not Russia. Macfarlane (2006) and Cooper (2006) also question whether Russia should be considered part of the group. Russia's exclusion is a result of its historical status as a superpower, its level of industrialisation, high income and advanced development, which places it largely outside the camp of an emerging market.

Stuenkel (2013), however, articulates that the inclusion of South Africa in the group in 2011 marked a significant shift, moving past an acronym coined as an investment category to a political entity, fully endorsed and owned by the countries. The BRICS therefore took the rein on defining its membership, rather than having its member composition be externally driven. The exclusion of other emerging markets, such as

Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Turkey and South Korea, begs the question of which countries should be included in BRICS to enhance its legitimacy. For Makin and Arora (2014), the composition of countries that form part of BRICS is arbitrary. It has been reported that Egypt, Turkey, Argentina, Nigeria and Indonesia actively sought membership of the group (Singh 2013; Stuenkel 2016), but the group opted to fortify its existing structure instead of extending its membership.

China's membership of the BRICS has also come under scrutiny in so far as it is claimed that the seeming rise of BRICS is in reality only the rise of China (Pant 2013; Khalid 2014). China's dominance in the group overshadows the other members (Roberts 2010) and the geopolitical strivings of China could well jeopardise the sense of safety of the others inside the coalition, causing them to explore other alliances. Given its position in the global economy as an economic powerhouse, China can wield a great deal of power in the group, which can skew the balance of relationships. The legitimacy of the group therefore partially rests on China keeping a low profile (Abdenur 2014).

Sharma (2012) points out that over the period 1987 to 2002, the portion of global gross domestic product (GDP) contributed by developing countries dropped from 23 per cent to 20 per cent. However, in the case of China, its contribution to global GDP doubled over the period. It can therefore be said that in terms of the rise of emerging markets, China was the exception and not the rule. With China's slowdown, therefore, the impact on the so-called rise of emerging economies can be severely hampered. It would be worthwhile to consider whether these factors challenge in a substantial way the legitimacy and power of the BRICS grouping.

In a similar vein Katz (2015) underscores the importance of making a distinction between China and other emerging economies. While China, in view of its significant role in the global economy, integration into the value-added supply chain and robust manufacturing sector, can be classified as 'core,' the other emerging countries, such as Brazil and South Africa, can be grouped in the 'semi-periphery' category, specialising in the export of raw materials, distinctly separate from the low-income developing countries on the periphery but still unable to transcend the structural limitations of its economic structure. The hodgepodge of different countries, with varied economic structures, histories and pathways, grouped together

in convenient acronyms, does not elucidate the true economic character of these countries.

1.2.3 Incoherence and internal tensions in BRICS

A wide body of research comments on the incoherence of, and internal tensions between, the countries comprising the BRICS, discussing the challenges that this poses for the future sustainability of the group. The differences and tensions among BRICS countries include trade disputes, uneven trading relationships, competing economies, vastly different political and economic structures and distinct political ideologies, which place the countries on divergent ideological foundations (Rolland 2013; Müller 2011; Khalid 2014). In addition, Bacik (2013) points out that BRICS diverges on issues that form the core of the rationale for the grouping, in terms of, for example, the broadening of participation in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). While Brazil and India are competing for inclusion, Russia and China are not desirous of expanding the group, based on their own national interests.

Furthermore, the geopolitical differences between the countries create tensions in their ability to adopt joint approaches to critical international issues. Rolland (2013) cites the example of the variance in the five countries' position on Syria. Pant (2013) touches on the difference among the countries in their approach to the United States of America (US). He mentions Russia and China's anti-US sentiment and Brazil and India's desire to maintain good relations with the US. It is also often commented that BRICS countries are competitors in key areas such as energy production, in the case of Brazil and Russia. As a result, Tyler and Thomas (2014) point out that BRICS countries have limited common platforms or identities around which to converge.

Rolland (2013), however, warns against over-stressing the perceived incoherence among the BRICS countries, noting that historically the US and Europe diverged on a range of political and economic matters but were jointly able to be the agenda and rule setters in the international economic system. Rolland also highlights a strength of the BRICS grouping in its ability to navigate and weave between multilateral and regional circles, which is not typical of developing countries, but has worked to the advantage of developed countries such as the US and European powers. The loose arrangement of the BRICS group is thought to be of benefit to the group (Cooper &

Farooq 2013; Nogueira 2012; Abdenur 2014); it allows them to embrace both their commonalities or points of interest and their differences, and facilitates cooperation without the limitations of a fixed institutional structure.

Similarly, a range of academics contend that despite the perceived differences, BRICS should not be discounted. According to Brutch and Papa (2012), it is not mandatory that BRICS countries have the same values and interests; it is sufficient for them to converge around shared objectives. The BRICS countries share a common view of a world order that differs from the currently existing structure and that commonality provides the glue that holds them together (de Coning *et al*. 2015). Specifically, in the BRICS world view, no one country should be allowed to exercise control, dictate the rules or impose its ideas on all other states, which de Coning *et al.* refer to as a 'strategy of coexistence' (2015:3). The BRICS countries therefore converge on the importance of reining in hegemons and their dominance of the international system. The BRICS also creates an opportunity to minimise conflicts between the member countries, through creating a platform for the members to meet and conduct dialogue (Keukeleire & Hooijmaaijers 2013; Stuenkel 2017). Rather than exacerbating or highlighting the tensions therefore, the joint membership of the BRICS wards off the building up of tensions. Furthermore, despite the perceived limitations of the BRICS group it is strengthening itself, and on that basis, it should not be underestimated (Armijo & Roberts 2014).) The BRICS is indeed an influential group, capable of affecting the global order (Sornarajah 2014).

1.2.4 New Economic Order and Global Governance

Another major theme across the literature as it pertains to BRICS and its legitimacy is the issue of BRICS's role in contributing to the new economic order and global governance. Armijo and Roberts (2014: 504) state, '… the group of countries that arguably has had the most discernible impact in challenging the existing global governance architecture and creating expectations for real, if incremental, change is also the most improbable coalition: the BRICs.' A similar sentiment is expressed by Stuenkel (2015:40), who argues that the process of the establishment of the BRICS, coupled with the establishment of the Group of 20 (G20), which took place in the same year, was 'the most significant innovation in global governance in almost two decades'. Among the emerging economies, the BRICS countries stand out as a

special group. It is often stated that the group represents 43 per cent of the world's population, 30 per cent of the world's GDP and 17 per cent of global trade.

The BRICS has identified, and is seeking to rectify, the apparent gaps in the existing international financial architecture and global governance system, which have traditionally shut out or limited the participation of developing countries and emerging economies. A key accomplishment of the BRICS has been to put forward an alternative view of global governance, which calls for the participation of developing countries (Nogueira 2012). Without overhauling the existing system, the BRICS has introduced or reconsidered fundamental ideas that would represent essential reform of the system. This includes a greater voice for and representation of the developing world, equal participation in the management of the international economic system, a new approach to international development financing, including ownership of the process by developing countries and commitment to addressing major issues confronting the developing world, such as infrastructure deficits (Zhu 2015; Qobo & Soko 2015). De Coning *et al.* (2015) highlight the inherent contradiction in BRICS pushing for reform of the global order, given that the members' success as individual countries is due to the nature of the current global economic system, which facilitates open trade and market access for the BRICS economies.

In establishing the NDB, with its focus on infrastructure development, the BRICS is placing the spotlight on an issue that is under-resourced and directly affects the pace of development of the developing world and of the respective BRICS countries. In so doing, the BRICS contributes to set the agenda for the pillars of development for the developing world, 'creating a niche for itself' (Singh 2013:394) in reforming the international financing system. The introduction of the BRICS into the development financing landscape rattled the power structures, which had been dominated by the US and Europe, acting through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This changing dynamic is also supported by the perceived lack of legitimacy of the Bretton Woods institutions, which are commonly thought to have sabotaged development efforts of developing countries, through for example the Washington Consensus and Structural Adjustment Programmes. These initiatives demonstrated duplicity in dealing with the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis, which severely affected the US and Europe, versus the 1997 East Asian financial crisis (Singh 2013).

The journey of the BRICS cannot be divorced from the historical attempts in the developing world to join forces to overcome perceived injustices meted out by the developed world, which contribute to systemic underdevelopment and a disadvantaged position in the international system (Lumumba-Kasongo 2015). Desai (2013) sees the emergence of the BRICS as the first challenge to Western hegemony in the global economy since the 1970s. Put in the context of previous movements stemming from the developing world in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the push by developing countries for a new international economic order (NIEO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), BRICS nations are not simply emerging economies rehashing the reform attempts of those eras. Rather, they are the elite group of emerging economies, who see themselves as being the 'defender and promoter of the interests of the developing countries' (Anon. 2012).

At the same time, Sornarajah (2014) argues that the rise of the BRICS could be recognised as a revival of the NIEO movement led by the developing world. A key difference between previous movements and the BRICS-led movement is the level of financial resources available to the BRICS to bolster its efforts at global governance reform. Sornarajah (2014) also links the rise of the BRICS to the weakening of the US's power in global affairs. Nayyar (2016) flags the emergence of the BRICS to the 2008 financial crisis and resulting global recession, as a trigger to the subsequent process of reordering of the balance of power towards developing countries. Challenges to the legitimacy of existing governance structures, such as the G20 and the international financial institutions (Qobo & Soko 2015), create an opening for new actors to be deemed legitimate as traditional powers are delegitimised.

1.2.5 The New Imperialism

In opposition to anti-imperialist rhetoric propagated by the BRICS is a body of literature that singles out the imperialist nature of BRICS member countries. Among the arguments is the belief that BRICS reinforces the systems of imperialism established by Western powers (Bond 2016; Amisi *et al.* 2015; Calderon-Saks 2014). The general line of thought is that the BRICS has sought to maintain the status quo of the global order, but to secure a better place for its individual countries in the system. Further, national interest guides the BRICS group rather than a deeper

commitment to the reconfiguration of global power relations. For example, China has been able to secure greater voting rights in the IMF, but the institution fundamentally remains unchanged (Bond 2016). A variant of this argument does not ascribe imperialist tendencies to the BRICS countries, but states matter-of-factly that the BRICS countries are simply status quo actors, not intent on reform of the global governance system, but interested in securing their participation in the system (Kahler 2013).

Criticism levelled at the BRICS points to evidence that BRICS member countries perpetuate colonial tendencies by extracting natural resources for individual gain, while ignoring the impact on people within the society, the environment and the long-term sustainability of the source country (Amisi *et al* 2015). Member countries take advantage of weak state and regulatory structures to raid the resources of developing countries, especially in Africa, engaging in corrupt practices and mismanaging projects through spiralling costs. These authors share the view that the BRICS engagement with Africa harkens back to the 'scramble for Africa', which took place towards the end of the 19th century.

In referring to the BRICS as sub-imperialists (Bond 2015; Amisi *et al* 2015), attention is drawn to a premise of accumulation by dispossession, which has several facets. It includes extracting resources from less developed areas and in so doing stifling the productive capacity of these territories, while at the same time channelling the profits earned to their own financial centres and eventually to the capital cities of imperial powers in the West. In addition, the sub-imperialist BRICS powers assume a place of regional dominance and use this influence to propagate the global neoliberal regime, pushing for ever-increasing access to markets and endorsing neoliberal institutions in their regional domains. This inevitably leads them to support both existing neoliberal institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, and the tenets of the Washington Consensus and to spearhead new institutions in their regional spheres. BRICS member countries invariably adopt the responsibility to maintain stability in their regions, avoiding escalations of conflict. These practices prompt the call for citizens and civil society to be activated to challenge the BRICS and stop the BRICS from further exploitative activity (Amisi *et al* 2015).

This line of reasoning challenges the notion of the legitimacy of BRICS as an actor that can assume a pivotal, anti-imperialist role in the changing world order. In this view, the activities of the BRICS in the developing world are questionable, and cannot be deemed legitimate. The BRICS members have no interest in reforming the global order, but rather in maximising their gains from the neoliberal order and moving closer to the core. It follows that it would be important for them to uphold the existing neoliberal regime and ensure that they are inserted into the governance structures that allow influence of the rules of the system and participation in decision-making. The irony of the socio-economic tensions internal to the BRICS countries, which includes high levels of poverty and inequality and the silencing of internal dissidents, puts a damper on the belief in the ability of the BRICS to play a leadership role in global governance (Wallerstein 2015; Amisi *et al* 2015). Considering that legitimacy in the international system of states is based on trust and social understanding between the members of the international community, accusations of neo-colonialism, or sub-imperialism, undermine the legitimacy of the BRICS. In this light, the BRICS is undifferentiated from Western powers.

1.2.6 A Fleeting Phenomenon?

The scepticism concerning the future of the BRICS is a dominant thread in the literature. Wallerstein (2013) succinctly says, 'the BRICS may turn out to be a passing phenomenon'. This is a commonly expressed view. Wallerstein (2013) expresses great doubt that the BRICS will be an enduring entity, especially in an unstable geopolitical and economic environment. Calderon-Saks (2014) advises against over-enthusiasm concerning the BRICS, bearing in mind the ever-changing and fast evolving global economic system. Economic growth in the BRICS countries has slowed and Brazil and South Africa have faced political turmoil, ranging from corruption scandals to impeachment proceedings. Furthermore, it is thought that the BRICS struggles to harness economic strength and translate it into political strength.

Nossel (2016) anticipates the demise of the emerging economy concept and the failure of the BRICS to reform global governance, while also noting that the decline of the US as a superpower is presumptive and Europe remains a key player in global power relations. Sharma (2012) adopts a similarly pessimistic view, paints a historical picture of the rise and decline of emerging markets and in so doing, emphasises that it is unlikely that emerging economies such as the BRICS would be

able to sustain high growth rates for more than 10 years. Sharma (2012) further anticipates that the West will rebound and the excitement about emerging markets, like the BRICS, will diminish. BRICS will simply remain an acronym.

A recurring thread is a great deal of uncertainty as it pertains to the outlook of the BRICS grouping. Reference is often made to the previous attempts of developing countries to rewrite the international economic order, such as the NIEO, NAM and UNCTAD, which were either short-lived or minimally impactful, and which signal a warning to the BRICS. Conversely, it is argued that far from being a fleeting phenomenon, the emergence and solidifying of the BRICS represent a shift in the global order and global power relations. The BRICS cannot simply be side-stepped. Rather, the group represents the new powers in the international system, able to challenge US hegemony and insert itself as an influential global player (Armijo & Roberts 2014; Rolland 2013; Bijarnia 2013; Falk 2009; Robinson 2015).

1.3 Research Problem

Literature on the BRICS generally diverges along two lines. The first highlights the unsustainability of the incongruent alliance between member countries. The second focuses on the potential of the BRICS to rewrite the rules governing global issues and challenge Western hegemony. BRICS is typically considered in the context of shifting global power relations and its potential to shape global politics. The literature on the BRICS ranges from pessimism at the outlook and viability of the BRICS, to guarded optimism that BRICS can emerge as a significant actor in the international system. Concerns are raised about its perceived incoherence, the composition of its membership, its tendency towards new imperialism, its long-term sustainability, and its capacity to lead. When these arguments are unravelled, a core issue that emerges is that of the legitimacy of the BRICS. The literature skirts around the notion of the legitimacy of the BRICS, but does not address it directly. Missing from the literature therefore is an assessment of the power dynamics at play, interpreted through perceptions of the legitimacy of the body, which may empower or disempower the group within the international system.

In order for the BRICS grouping to have influence in matters of global governance, it requires power, which is associated with legitimacy:

> The concern with power, after all brings attention to global structures, processes, and institutions that shape the fates and life chances of actors around the world. We become concerned with the legitimacy of particular governing arrangements, who gets to participate, whose voice matters, and whose vote counts. An examination of international institutions, accordingly, concerns not only whether they are efficient but also whether they are fair and legitimate (Barnett & Duvall 2005: 8).

In the context of a multipolar world with a range of new actors, the BRICS exists in a space of contested legitimacy. In order for the BRICS to be effective, it is imperative that it enjoys some degree of legitimacy within the international community. I set out to identify the underpinnings of BRICS legitimacy. In so doing, I seek to resolve the question: How has the BRICS tried to gain legitimacy in the international system and what factors have contributed to this legitimisation process? Related questions to be addressed include the following: Who are the other actors that have bestowed legitimacy upon the BRICS? Are there attempts by major powers to delegitimise the BRICS?

I argue that the journey of the BRICS is a movement to greater levels of legitimacy in the international system. My aim is to provide a new lens to interpret the dynamic interactions between key emerging powers, and the shifting power dynamics taking place in the global order. The unit of analysis will be the BRICS as a corporate entity. While some scholars have evaluated the BRICS from the point of view of individual member states, there is value in evaluating the BRICS as an entity or organisation, with its own identity and potential dimensions of power. Key concepts include agency, transformation, legitimacy, the international system, power, and the authority of emerging powers.

In an increasingly globalised world, in which boundaries between states are contested, the question of who in the global society has power and the ability to influence the outcomes for other states and ordinary citizens in those states is significant. Global governance is defined as 'the complex set of interlocking institutions and norms, both formal and informal, governmental and non-governmental, that serve to make the rules for the global order' (Clark 2003: 76). In essence, governance concerns authority structures and rulemaking in the international system. With reference to the BRICS entity, I focus on the potential role that the BRICS could, or does, play in dictating or influencing the rules governing the

international states system. A reason why the BRICS receives such a great deal of attention in academia, foreign policy circles and in the media stems from the relative unknowns the group represents. A specific issue lies in whether the BRICS is truly able to pose a challenge to the hegemony of the US and Western powers in matters of global governance. To occupy such a place of influence in the international community, the issue of legitimacy of the BRICS as an institution becomes central. Hurd (2000: 82) captures it succinctly when he states, 'power needs legitimacy' and 'international organisations, if they are to be effective, need to be perceived as legitimate by certain important audiences' (Hurd 2000: 77).

Stuenkel (2016) touches on the legitimacy of the BRICS as an element of the group's soft power, underscoring the nuances in the perception and interpretation of the actions of BRICS countries in the global arena. Stuenkel (2016) considers how the actions of individual BRICS countries are perceived by other members of the international community and he also refers to the establishment of the NDB, allowing for greater levels of legitimacy to be enjoyed by the BRICS. Stuenkel's writings therefore serve as a launching pad for an in-depth analysis of the legitimacy of the BRICS as an entity. This paper seeks to address the gap in the literature by focusing on the notion of legitimacy in the international order, and how the emergence of the BRICS fits into this framework.

Considerations of legitimacy are fundamental to the Global South, in which the BRICS grouping is embedded, the Global South being a political concept defining an unjust system marked by inequalities and unequal playing fields. For decades the Global North has taken the charge in crafting an international order which privileges the countries of the North while keeping the South in a position to serve the interests of the North. From colonialism, through to economic neoliberalism, unequal power relations have persisted resulting in the distinction between the two camps, those who make the rules and those who must accept them. Essential to this distinction is the relational interplay between the Global North and Global South where the requirement for the latter classification is premised upon the existence of the former. The significance of this relational juxtaposition lies in the core-periphery dynamic. The BRICS exists in relation to a core that seeks to maintain its position and that seeks to maintain particular boundaries so that BRICS countries stay in a more peripheral position. The concept of legitimacy is pivotal given the ebb and flow of

countries in this unequal system, trying to negotiate better positions for themselves, and seeking the agreement of other members of the community on redefining their proper place within the community.

1.4 Research Methodology

To explore the above-mentioned research questions, I engage in a qualitative desktop study. It is an evaluative study of the BRICS, which employs an in-depth analysis of BRICS as an institution within the wider context of the shifts taking place in the international system and considering the BRICS membership in the wider international community. This analysis also tracks the shifts taking place within the BRICS body.

Qualitative research typically involves the use of 'thick description' (Geertz 1973:6) to give a comprehensive portrayal of some social phenomenon. In my application, I endeavour to establish rapport with the text contained in the various documents under review, in order to understand the meaning attributed by various actors to similar activities, regulated by agreed upon norms. Different interpretations and outcomes can be ascribed to and derived from the same action. Understanding the interplay between an initiator, a responder and a wider audience caught up in an activity is critical to the analysis. With thick descriptions, the researcher is able to provide insight into an actor's behaviour but also, importantly, the environment that frames an actor's behaviour. This fits in with a constructivist framework, as will be described below, as actions and behaviours acquire meaning within the social context in which they are executed and actors are ascribed legitimacy in the midst of social interactions in a given community.

Given the possibility of diverse constructions of reality as a feature of qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba 1985), this study will employ thick descriptions to depict various aspects of the BRICS context and actions. It is envisaged that the approach will provide readers with sufficient evidence of the claims being made, as advocated by Hammersley (1992 cited in Bryman 2012), and in so doing, will strive to ensure integrity between the claims being made and the data presented.

In order to ensure that the 'validity of [the] claims' (Hammersley 1992 cited in Bryman 2012: 396) is maintained, the process of coding of the data was important.

The validity of a claim rests on the degree to which a close match is maintained between the evidence provided and the claim to be proven. The coding took place in three stages. Firstly, a scan of the literature was undertaken to identify general themes concerning the BRICS as an actor in the international system. A number of core themes were identified for further elaboration on the basis that they were most applicable to the research question of the legitimacy of the BRICS. Secondly, within these thematic categories, I looked at samples of available documents to ascertain which documents would provide the data necessary to answer the research question and sub-questions. Thirdly, a review of the selected documents, excerpts and quotations was undertaken to ensure that they were the best selection to describe the phenomenon at hand. As part of this process, supplemental documents were also sourced and examined to address any gaps in the data. For example, public documents by individual BRICS member states are used to supplement documents produced by the BRICS and ascertain underlying motivations and rationales behind corporate action.

In order to conduct my empirical analysis, I look at snapshots of BRICS initiatives, cooperation activities and projects within international fora and in the international system over the period 2006 to 2018. The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2013) defines a snapshot as 'a piece of information or short description that gives an understanding of a situation at a particular time'. The goal here is to capture the identity of the BRICS as an actor, including the member countries' positions on various foreign policy matters and the foreign policy actions undertaken by the group. I use the year 2006 as the starting point of the BRICS institution. The goal is to determine whether over the period from 2006 to present it has enjoyed increasing levels of legitimacy in its engagement in the international community. I assess the endeavours undertaken by the BRICS that have been deemed successful. Success has been determined by the ability of the BRICS to push through reforms in international institutions, positive views of the BRICS held by other members of the international community and regional groupings, the ability of BRICS to establish norms and standards and shape the global political and economic agenda.

The data sources used are documents available in the public domain, mostly available via the internet. The documents under review include academic texts,

official speeches of senior government representatives, interview transcripts, policy papers, BRICS summit statements, official publications pertaining to BRICS institutions such as the NDB, digital newspaper articles, resolutions of international organisations and official government websites.

In undertaking this type of document analysis, the arguments made by Atkinson and Coffey (2011) are useful. To begin with, documents serve a particular purpose (Bryman 2012). With a particular audience in mind, documents are intended to communicate specific information to that audience. Documents do not necessarily give insider information on the inner workings of an organisation or grouping such as the BRICS or provide an official account of background processes within that organisation. Instead, they paint the picture that the authors desire, communicating a specific image of the authors or organisation (Atkinson & Coffey 2011). Furthermore, documents relate to one another, which is referred to as intertextuality (Atkinson & Coffey 2011: 90). The interplay among documents resembles a conversation, with documents interacting with one another, responding to one another and providing inputs to one another.

These considerations are important in the analysis of the BRICS undertaken in this study. The documents used illustrate how the BRICS coalition wishes to be perceived, the identity it seeks to portray and how it is received by other actors. The documents therefore serve as pertinent data to analyse the research problem.

The trustworthiness of this study is dependent upon how the researcher engages with the data and uses that data to make claims about the social reality being examined. I employ a range of strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, paying particular attention to the quality of data, the communication of that data to the reader, and the interpretation of the data. Given the importance of language in framing aspects of political life, including the stated motivations of actors, direct quotations are provided throughout the paper to give the reader access to the raw data used to arrive at conclusions and interpretations. In addition, multiple examples or pieces of evidence are provided to substantiate a claim.

I strive to ensure that conclusions and interpretations of data are consistent with both the data used and literature. In that regard, I use the definitions provided in the literature review and the analytical framework as guiding principles for interpretation

of the data. In that sense, I work towards establishing direct correlations between the theoretical and analytical framework, the findings and the conclusions. Considering the difficulty in verifying information found on the internet, the data selected for this study are from reliable sources, such as the official websites of government ministries, BRICS websites and official websites of international organisations.

I do not conduct interviews for this study and therefore, ethical considerations associated with human subjects are not applicable.

1.5 Limitations

As I am predominantly English-speaking, the research is limited to the use of documents and texts in the English language. Local content, generated within BRICS countries, written in their native languages, Portuguese, Mandarin, and Russian for example, which was not translated into English, could not be included as sources for evaluation. The representativeness of the documents may therefore constitute a limitation to the study.

For the purpose of this study, I focus on a few selected themes to provide an in-depth look at how legitimacy is experienced by the BRICS. However, the exploration of other themes, not addressed in this paper, is also feasible. That would include, for example, an examination of the role of the BRICS in the World Trade Organisation and the World Health Organisation or the views of selected other members of the international community on the BRICS.

1.6 Structure of the Study

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one has dealt with introducing the research theme and problem, supported by the literature on the BRICS. Chapter two provides an overview of the arguments presented in the literature pertaining to constructivism and the society of states, with a view to understanding the concept of legitimacy in international society. This section introduces definitions of legitimacy that will guide the analysis of the BRICS's legitimacy in subsequent chapters. It also includes an analytical framework that outlines the four core principles from the literature that will be used to assess the extent of legitimacy achieved by the BRICS in the international community.

Chapters three to six present three snapshots of BRICS's agency as an actor within the international order and one snapshot of the response to the BRICS by selected members of the international community. The first snapshot chosen is a historical overview of the emergence of the BRICS as an entity and the values, principles, ideas, and organisational structure that characterise the group. The geo-political context that facilitated the establishment of the BRICS is also discussed, in as much as it reveals noteworthy details about the significance of the timing of the BRICS's emergence. This section also includes a description of the BRICS's agency within the IMF.

The second snapshot chronicles the participation of the five BRICS countries in the UNSC in 2011 and 2012, during which time the two major international security issues being addressed were the situations in Libya and Syria. It affords the opportunity to peer into the capacity of the BRICS to frame the discussion on the responsibility to protect (R2P) norm and to act as a unified political force within a global governance institution. The third snapshot presents the engagement of the BRICS on the issue of climate change, highlighting the approach taken by the group to present a joint position on the issue despite diverging perspectives. Lastly, a snapshot is provided on the EU's response to the BRICS, conveying the perspectives of the EU towards the group and the interpretation by the EU of BRICS activities.

Chapter seven entails a discussion on the findings that emerge from the four snapshots listed above, and the ways in which they are corroborated by the literature on legitimacy in the international system.

CHAPTER TWO: Theoretical Framework and Review of Relevant Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will lay out the theoretical framework that guides consideration and understanding of the concept of legitimacy in this paper. This chapter focuses on two core theoretical concepts: constructivism and the society of states as defined by the English School. Based on these concepts, definitions of legitimacy emerge that are consistent with the basic tenets of these two conceptual frameworks. By exploring constructivist and English School thought, this chapter sets the context for understanding state behaviour and the interplay of interactions between states. By so doing, the importance of legitimacy as a premise of relations between states is unveiled.

After introducing definitions of legitimacy, an analytical framework is delineated, which becomes the measuring tool for assessing the legitimacy of the BRICS. The analytical framework translates the core tenets of legitimacy that emerge from the literature into specific tools for evaluating the BRICS. More specifically, it establishes the criteria used in this study to assess the legitimacy of the BRICS. A focused lens is provided to facilitate interpretation of the data presented on the BRICS and the way it links to the notion of the group's legitimacy.

2.2 Constructivism

It is useful to discuss the BRICS' legitimacy in the context of both constructivist thought and the English School's views on international society. Constructivists maintain that, in international relations, beyond material power, ideas, values and beliefs shape the behaviour of states and their identity (Reus-Smit 2009). Material resources on their own would not predict an actor's behaviour. Actors are social beings and are moulded by the social environment in which they find themselves and they undertake the task of ascribing meaning to their resources and environment. Through their practices, actors are constantly dictating meanings, inside a social environment. Common knowledge arises out of a social process in which ideas are shared and become established, and this sets the context for what is considered legitimate (van Ham 2010). In this setting, the space in which actors operate is fluid, but more importantly, ideational structures can contribute to dramatic shifts in the

system. ‘Paradigm shifting events’ (van Ham 2010: 11), which can be thought of as major events that shape the political and economic international environment, can cause disruption to common knowledge and open a doorway for new ideas and norms to enter the social space and become widely accepted.

For constructivists, the identities of states are significant, shaped by history and culture, and made up of a state’s preferences and behaviour. The identity of a state dictates how it views other states, and is formed and reinforced through an iterative process (Hopf 1998). Recognising a particular country as a threat, or alternatively, as an ally, or as an ‘other,’ is based on this very notion of identity and how states understand one another. A state’s identity then is a central factor in influencing its propensity to cooperate with other states. When states find some common point of identity or connectedness, this can contribute to institutional stability, transcending the evolution of interests and positions of the individual states. Identities of states offer a degree of stability that allows for consistent expectations of how a state may respond in given situations. Notwithstanding this, states tend to be defined by a multiplicity of identities, rather than one set identity. In this context, Hopf (1998) poses that constructivist thought facilitates going beyond binary categorisation of states, enabling a more fluid conception.

The BRICS process fits within a constructivist frame of reference because fundamentally, ideational factors create the bond among the BRICS countries and their identities and interests continue to be shaped through their membership of BRICS (Qobo & Soko 2015). At the same time, as Hopf (1998) affirms, the role of identities and ideas cannot be considered in isolation from the availability of military and economic power to allow actors to maintain and enforce the structures within which such identities and ideational principles are reinforced.

Connected to the constructivist elements of the BRICS association is the notion of social power, which is defined by Van Ham (2010: 8) as ‘the ability to set standards, and create norms and values that are deemed legitimate and desirable, without resorting to coercion or payment’. While power has traditionally been automatically cast as a realist issue based on one’s material resources, van Ham (2010) and Hurd (2000) underscore that power in international relations is inherently a social concept, based on relationships between different entities. Barnett and Duval’s (2005: 8)

definition of power as 'the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate', also highlights the social dimension of power relations.

For the purpose of analysing the BRICS, the essential point is the link between social power and legitimacy, in effect, through enhancing legitimacy, one can increase one's social power. Within this association, it is useful to ponder on the issues of framing as one component of social power. Frames carve out the lens through which actors conceive their environment, consider which issues warrant attention and the options for action available (van Ham 2010). In the global political environment, actors are in a constant struggle to define the frames that should be dominant and how these should be addressed. This is done through discourses, acts of persuasion, agenda setting, norm promotion and public diplomacy, among other strategies.

Barnett and Duval (2005) endeavour to reintroduce issues of power in their discussions on global governance. They argue that in the post-Cold War era, considerations of power were divorced from the literature pertaining to global governance. The literature tends to revolve around institutions, norms and values, to the detriment of the power dynamics at play, which favour particular political, economic and social configurations in the global system.

Considerations of power and governance have to include the normative and discursive underpinnings that enable or constrain particular actions by specific actors at a given period in time (Barnett and Duval 2005; Bernstein 2012). These norms provide the architecture for understanding what is considered appropriate action and which actors or institutions are deemed legitimate, and in that sense, they guide the behaviour of states (Bernstein 2012).

2.3 The Society of States

Linklater (2009: 93) points out that legitimacy and norms in global politics form an important meeting point between the English School and constructivism. The meaning that actors ascribe to particular actions in the international system and how states relate to one another can be seen in tandem. From a theoretical point of view, it is useful to consider the legitimacy of the BRICS in the framework of Bull's concept of a society of states, which forms part of the English School's theoretical foundation.

Bull (1977:13) defines a 'society of states', as 'when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions'. Within this society of states, individual states assume certain key responsibilities, which allow the community to be sustained and maintain some semblance of order, given that there is no central authority. Those responsibilities include establishing the rules, implementing them, making them agreeable, revising rules as the context in which they were made changes, and maintaining a stable system where the rules can be implemented.

Bull (1977) also underscores that in this society of states, the system by which rules are made and revised is arbitrary, as no established system exists to change the rules governing the international system systematically. In that regard, given that the establishment of rules is a social process that warrants consensus from key members of the international community, the customary practice for the revision of rules involves states indicating their decision to no longer support such rules and articulating new rules that they would support. The operations of the BRICS should be considered in the context of belonging to a society of states that defines the actions that may be considered legitimate, and decides whether proposals for new rules by the BRICS group would be deemed legitimate.

The English School also notes that the battle for legitimacy, both in the domestic and international domain, shapes international politics. Considering that states adhere to a wide range of distinct ideologies, any degree of consensus on what constitutes appropriate behaviour is based on a negotiated agreement. States gain validation by looking to other members of the community (de Coning *et al.* 2015). In an international society, legitimacy has to be understood from the point of view of states and their willingness to deem legitimate the activities of other states or international entities.

The English School also provides a useful framework for considering the BRICS approach to reform of global governance structures. Given the premise that states commit themselves to share the burden of managing the international system of states, and considering the imbalanced power dynamics that favour the voice of

stronger powers over others, states take responsibility to secure the system, ensuring that it is stable. Literature on the BRICS often emphasises the interest of the entity in maintaining a stable international system.

The English School posits that diplomacy enjoys a critical role in bridging the gap between societies that may appear quite different in terms of interests and identities, and also in overcoming the fallout that results from the imbalance in global power relations. Beyond diplomacy, states also seek to manage conflicts, temper disillusionment among those who may feel disadvantaged, and allow for stronger powers to negotiate privileged positions, along with the associated responsibilities, in the international system (Bull 1977). Trust then becomes important. If states believe that other states are acting on the basis of common values and pursuing actions that are in the interests of everyone, the actions of such states may be deemed legitimate (van Ham 2010).

2.4 Definitions of Legitimacy

Legitimacy must be understood as a political process. In an international state system with unequal power relations, it can be utilised by weaker states to advance their positions against more powerful states; concurrently, it can be utilised by more powerful states to justify their actions. Two definitions of legitimacy are helpful in this discussion. Firstly, Hurrell (2005:16) states, 'legitimacy implies a willingness to comply with rules, or accept a political order, even if this goes against specific interests at specific times'. Hurrell adds that this compliance and acceptance are tied to either a common normative belief or to the successful acts of 'persuasion' by an actor. Secondly, Clark (2005: 2) states, 'the core principles of legitimacy express rudimentary social agreement about who is entitled to participate in international relations, and also about appropriate forms in their conduct'. This process is intimately connected to power relations in the international society and results in a complex array of political games. This is further highlighted by Clark (2005: 4) when he says that legitimacy is a 'contested political process', which Hurrell (2005: 16) describes as a 'strategic move in a political game'. Compromises can emerge as states negotiate between existing rules, norms and principles and new ones, which will find consensus among other members of the community. Noting the social nature of relations among states, these political games are played out within a

society of states and become deeply embedded in the identity and practices of states.

An actor's capability to act, from a particular identity, is premised on recognition by its community of the appropriateness of that action by that actor and the relevance of that action and actor to the encompassing social environment (Hopf 1998). Reus-Smit (2007:163) expresses a similar sentiment in stating, 'when actors make judgements about the legitimacy of another actor's identity, interests, or actions, they necessarily do so with reference to social norms that specify how that kind of actor, in that kind of situation, ought to project itself, define its preferences, and translate those into actions'. An assessment of legitimacy is therefore predicated on the norms governing society and is negotiated through discursive practices.

Hurrell (2005) outlines five elements of legitimacy, namely procedural legitimacy, that is, the importance of right process; substantive legitimacy, that is, the significance of the values and substantive agenda of an institution; the role of specialised and specialist knowledge in legitimising an institution; the value of the effectiveness of an institution in enhancing its legitimacy; and lastly, the role of persuasion as a tool to promote the legitimacy of an entity. Hurrell (2005) highlights the overriding value of persuasion in the legitimacy debate because the other four elements become activated inside the acts of persuasion. This paper focuses on two dimensions of legitimacy, the procedural dimension and the notion of persuasion. These two elements were selected because they most resonate with the ways in which the BRICS has pursued legitimacy within the international system.

In discussing legitimacy in international society, and the invoking of the R2P principle in the 2011 Libyan crisis as a case study, Ralph and Gallagher (2015) coherently argue that a clear distinction should be observed between issues of procedural legitimacy, compared to issues of substantive legitimacy. In the former case, the key focal point revolves around the question of 'who decides how international society should meet its responsibilities' (Ralph and Gallagher 2015: 554). In other words, who decides how the rules should be interpreted? Conversely, substantive legitimacy centres on what is perceived as right and just. A major part of the issue of legitimacy in international society then pivots on the legitimacy of the actors within the community, and their permissible range of actions within the geopolitical and

economic contexts that define the global community. In challenging the norms and seeking to redefine the interpretation of those norms, amid a plurality of actors and perspectives, the process through which norms are reconceptualised becomes important.

Turning to the notion of persuasion as a fundamental element of legitimacy, the point here is that actors must justify the logic or rationale for an action or political arrangement, which has to be portrayed as relevant and appropriate (Hurrell 2005). Hurrell goes on to underscore the importance of identifying the right audience and institutional context that would facilitate one's acts of persuasion and the need for common language that serves as a tool of persuasion.

The international community consists of an array of state, non-state, multilateral and civil society actors from whom legitimacy is derived. In pursuing legitimacy, an actor must identify the appropriate audience to appeal to, the reasons for this and the most effective way of engaging that audience. Once this has been established, the actor must turn attention to the vessel, or the institutional setting, that would allow it to advance its claims. Existing institutions, which serve a wide variety of purposes and which may have their own internal challenges, present a ready platform for presenting reasoned arguments that justify one's claims.

Language, according to Hurrell (2005:25), is key to 'imposing some minimum rationality on the chaos and contingency of political life and to understanding the perverse internal logics of power and the destructive role of rhetoric in political affairs'. In a society of states, part of the process of legitimacy is providing rational reasons for one's position, action or existence and using language to dispel other, perhaps previously accepted, arguments. In putting forward a claim, an actor is able to go beyond the raw data, presenting instead a well-crafted argument based on sound reasoning.

2.5 Analytical Framework

Reus-Smit (2007) outlines two points of consideration in conceiving of legitimacy. Given that legitimacy is a social concept, the issue of the domain within which actors operate and the specific community within which an actor seeks legitimacy is pertinent. Reus-Smit (2007:164) defines these as 'the realm of political action', and 'the social constituency of legitimation' respectively, both of which must converge for

legitimacy to be secured. For the BRICS, the realm of political action would be the wider international community consisting of a range of international actors, including nation-states, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and civil society. The social constituency of legitimation for the BRICS would be global governance institutions, since the BRICS seeks to leave its mark on the systems of global governance.

In this section, I introduce an analytical framework that would serve as a tool for assessing the legitimacy of the BRICS. The literature on legitimacy in the international system, as outlined above, stipulates key undergirding principles, which are necessary for consideration of the legitimacy of an actor. These principles, or dimensions of a legitimation process, are employed to assess BRICS's strategies and determine the degree of legitimacy the group enjoys within the international system. They are acts of legitimation, social agreement, framing and changing rules.

2.5.1 Acts of Legitimation

Acts of legitimation refer to specific activities singled out by the BRICS, to portray the group as a legitimate actor or entity in the international system. One understands from Clark (2005) and Reus-Smit (2007) that actors occupy themselves with undertaking a range of activities that seek to legitimise their existence and their actions. Clark (2005:3) refers to these as 'strategies of legitimation'. Often, procedural legitimacy, that is, engaging in the right process, prevails over substantive legitimacy, in that actors and members of the community are concerned with how they go about gaining recognition and acceptance and not solely their values or positions. As a newly formed entity, the BRICS had to pursue activities that would allow it to be perceived as legitimate. The choices made by the BRICS in this regard, in terms of the structure of the group and the tools it used to implement its core purpose, illustrates how it sought to legitimise itself in the international community. Chapter three will explore the beginnings of the BRICS as a group and how it sought and continues to seek to define itself.

Also, importantly, I will describe the context in which the BRICS emerged, particularly in terms of the global politico-economic environment that was prevalent at the time. As van Ham suggested, 'paradigm shifting events' (2010:11) cause a disconnect between what was perceived as general knowledge and a newly

emerging reality. As a result, these events provide a gateway for knowledge to be formed and new ways to understand the world. The global financial crisis served as an enabling environment to give voice to new actors and new configurations of power, following the collapse of common knowledge and confidence in the existing financial system. This development, coupled with the BRICS economic success during the global economic downturn, which allowed it to stand out as an exception, provided the context for a shift in knowledge and the introduction of new ideas and powers in the international community. As stated earlier, to allow members of a community to accept an actor or institution as legitimate, they must either be convinced or provided with adequate reason to do so, or there must be some common normative basis. Consequently, the purpose behind examining the politico-economic context is to shed light on the initial justifications or compelling argument in favour of the BRICS.

2.5.2 Social Agreement

In order for an actor to be considered legitimate, there must be agreement in the community that the actor is recognised and authorised to take part in the activities of the community and also, agreement on the type of behaviour or activities in which it can acceptably be engaged. Using this legitimacy principle, I will expound on the reception of the BRICS in the international community, by focusing on the official views expressed by the EU, by way of a resolution adopted by the European Parliament. The EU was selected because of its position as a significant pole of power and importantly, because it recognised the need to adopt an official position towards the BRICS.

I will also provide insight on the acceptance of other members of the international community, in particular developing states, which have not necessarily articulated official policies on the BRICS, but have recognised the group or the institutions of the group, such as the NDB, in one way or another.

2.5.3 Framing

In order to assess the extent to which BRICS has been enjoying legitimacy in the international community, another significant component to analyse is the success of the BRICS in framing issues in the global governance agenda. Inside a social space comprising a community of nations and non-state actors, actors are perpetually

seeking to define the issues that should be prioritised and how those issues should be conceived and relayed. It is a political space where actors attempt to cast themselves as relevant through their ability to frame the agenda and determine what is important.

It would be essential therefore to define the ways in which the BRICS has sought to identify and promote dominant issues with a view to influencing the global agenda and debate. Two examples will be used: the influence of the BRICS in shaping the discourse on R2P through the positions taken on UN resolutions on Libya and Syria, and the approach of the BRICS to the global climate change agenda. I will pay attention to how the BRICS is able to shape the issues that were brought to the fore, ascribing meaning to particular courses of action, or using its own institutions to determine the appropriate response to global challenges.

2.5.4 Changing the Rules

The last principle to be applied in assessing the legitimacy of the BRICS relates to the ability of the group to change the rules or application of rules in the international system, in line with its own interests and some common purpose that it is pursuing. This process must to be understood as a political negotiation taking place in the context of a political game between various actors, a negotiation between maintaining the existing rules and standards, and negotiating a new set of rules to which all relevant actors must adhere. Inherent in the concept of legitimacy is the disposition of one set of actors to agree to a new set of rules proposed or introduced by a particular actor, in spite of the fact that it may not be in the interest of those actors to do so.

In such a circumstance, it is evident that an actor could become more legitimised by its capacity to negotiate successfully, in the midst of competing interests and institutionalised arrangements, an outcome that would not only redound to its benefit, but an outcome accepted by the other actors in the political game. This successful negotiation outcome illustrates that the actor is recognised by others in the system as being qualified to make particular demands. The role of the BRICS in contributing to the reform of the quota system in the IMF is an example.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the primary theoretical principles that form the underlying platform for this research. The theories of constructivism and the English School's society of states are considered mutually related and provide a lens to understand state behaviour. The consideration of legitimacy as a factor that influences relations among states has been presented within this framework. Constructivist thought has revealed that states interact within a social environment, which dictates appropriate action by ascribing meaning to such action. In this socially iterative process, the behaviour of states is shaped by the environment, including the feedback received from others in the community. The English School speaks of a society of states as the primary definer of the relations among states in a system of anarchy. The rules that govern the community are formed through a social process in which members express agreement or withdraw support and propose alternative rules. The key point that emerged is the importance of some level of consensus among members of the community on which activities and actors are deemed acceptable.

The definitions presented above for legitimacy are undergirded by the principles from the constructivist school and the English School. They revolve around the propensity towards compliance with rules or systems because these are deemed legitimate and also social agreement on the constitution of legitimate actors or actions. These definitions provided the entry point to formulating an analytical framework, which allows for the development of criteria to assess legitimacy. The analytical framework is summarised in the table below:

Table 1

Analytical Framework for Assessing Legitimacy

Criteria for Assessment	**Definition of Criteria**	**Examples of manifestation**
Acts of Legitimation	Activities undertaken to legitimise an actor's existence and actions.	• Formation and proclamation of an identity • Use of well-established and understood diplomatic tools • Establishment of an institutional structure

		consistent with accepted norms • Expansion of an entity to secure buy-in from other members of community • Use of persuasion
Social Agreement	Agreement that an actor is recognised and authorised to take part in the activities of the community and agreement on the type of behaviour or activities in which the actor can acceptably be engaged	• Official recognition of an actor or actor's activities • Communication on appropriateness of an actor's action
Framing	Defining the issues that should be prioritised and how those issues should be conceived and relayed	• Development of alternative frames to interpret events • Interpreting an issue to advantage one's own position or circumstance
Changing the Rules	Disposition of one set of actors to agree to a new set of rules proposed or introduced by a particular actor, in spite of the fact that it may not be in the interest of those actors to do so	• Negotiation of new rules to privilege one's circumstance • Agreement by members of a community on new rules to be enacted

The categories outlined above are not isolated. Rather, there is an inter-weaving in how an actor is able to negotiate legitimacy by incorporating multiple aspects of the strategies listed above.

The next chapter will be the first of the data presentation chapters and will examine the general activities engaged in by the BRICS in order to legitimise itself as an actor in the international society.

CHAPTER THREE: BRICS's Pursuit of Legitimacy

3.1 Introduction

An important component of analysing the legitimacy of the BRICS is examining how the BRICS group perceives itself as an actor in international relations and how it deliberately seeks to legitimise its existence through various 'acts of legitimation.' This chapter delves into the ways in which the BRICS seeks to legitimise itself and secure agreement from the international community on its role as an actor within the global governance framework. The chapter starts by describing the process of identity formation of the BRICS, which involves the BRICS countries working out their shared values. This is important because before the BRICS countries are able to project their joint identity and purpose to the community to which they belong, they must find common points of agreement and a rationale for the existence of the group. Any interaction with the international community is based on their collective identity. This formation of a collective identity is therefore the first step in their journey towards legitimacy and one of the acts of legitimation engaged in by the BRICS.

The chapter subsequently introduces the institutionalisation process of the BRICS, which allowed the group to project and proclaim its identity to other members of the international community. Its efforts at establishing its legitimacy encompassed both the internal dimension of identity formation and the external dimension of projection to secure social agreement. The chapter therefore also discusses the outward projection and communication of its values, interests and goals through visible acts of diplomacy, including the hosting of summits and dissemination of summit declarations.

Next, a description of the economic success of the BRICS countries is provided, with a view to providing the context for recognition by other members of the international community of the appropriateness of the BRICS's participation in issues of global financial governance. Its economic accomplishment provided the opportunity for the group to project itself as relevant to global governance discussions, and also to change the rules governing the global financial architecture, in particular as these pertain to participation in the IMF.

Lastly, this chapter discusses the outreach activities of the BRICS designed to expand its orbit and sphere of influence, and in so doing, to garner recognition and acceptance of its activities, values and goals from other members of the community. In examining the four issues above, the three criteria that are used to discuss the BRICS's legitimacy are its acts of legitimation, social agreement and changing the rules.

3.2 Identity Formation of the BRICS

At the 2017 BRICS Summit, hosted by the government of China, Chinese President Xi Jinping described the BRICS as a 'leaders-driven cooperation framework that covers wide-ranging areas and multiple levels' (Jinping 2017). The BRICS members describe themselves as a 'dialogue and cooperation platform among Member States which together account for 30 per cent of global land, 43 per cent of global population and 21 per cent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 17.3 per cent of global merchandise trade, 12.7 per cent of global commercial services and 45 per cent of world's Agriculture Production' (BRICS 2015: 3) **,** and whose goal is to 'promote peace, security, prosperity and development in [a] multipolar, interconnected and globalised world' (BRICS 2015: 3). They view themselves as having a significant role in the global economy and being a major driver of global economic growth, in the context of post-global financial crisis economic recovery. Through their collaborative efforts, they aim to secure 'a more just, equitable, fair, democratic and representative international political and economic order' (BRICS 2017a). The description represents an institution that evolved from its first point of initiation in 2006 to its 2018 edition.

When they decided to establish the BRIC (South Africa was not yet a member), Brazil, Russia, India and China considered the usefulness of jointly discussing a number of international issues. The four countries started meeting in September 2006 on the margins of the UNGA; however, in May 2008, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BRIC countries held their first stand-alone meeting, issuing a joint communiqué. It should be considered that prior to the first meeting of the BRICs in 2008, various interactions took place among different configurations of the five countries, for example, Russia-India-China, and India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA). The May 2008 communiqué served as the first public statement from the BRICs, which highlighted several core pillars of the BRICs engagement. The Ministers of

Foreign Affairs emphasised the need to reform the international system, and the premium place of multilateral diplomacy and international law in adjusting the system (BRICs 2008a). They underscored the importance of each nation having an equal chance at development. In this initial communiqué, the ministers also pointed to the necessity of transformation of the United Nations (UN) system to respond to present-day issues.

The press release at the conclusion of the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BRICs, which took place on 25 September 2008 on the margins of the UNGA in New York, indicates that the BRIC Ministers discussed contemporary international issues, underscoring the importance of finding agreement 'on common approaches for all four countries to topical world development problems, including the state of affairs in global finances, the food crisis, climate change and cooperation within the Heiligendamm Process of the G8 and its partners' (BRICs 2008b). They also considered furthering the interaction among the four countries by hosting regular meetings not only among Ministers of Foreign Affairs, but also among other sectors, such as Ministers of Finance.

The BRICS members define themselves by a core set of values, which describes their foreign policy perspectives and creates a bond among the five countries. Among those values is the premium placed on multilateralism, as opposed to unilateralism, and on respect for international law. The group converges on the belief that no individual country, or a hegemon acting unilaterally, may decide upon the fate of any one country or group of countries. They also underscore the prerogative of each nation to identify and pursue its own development path. The BRICS countries reiterate that their cooperative platform is grounded on the principles of solidarity, mutual trust, openness and equality. A crucial aspect of the BRICS ideology from the onset is the centrality of the UN in addressing challenges that pertain to peace and security, human rights and development and in maintaining a 'fair, just and equitable international order based on the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations' (BRICS 2018a). At the same time, they consistently call for reform of the UN system, to make it more responsive to the evolving geo-political realities and to boost representation of developing countries.

The BRICS also opposes the notion of 'civilizational inequality - aimed at dividing people into "leaders" and "slaves",' and the depiction of some nations as superior and others as inferior (BRICS First Parliamentary Forum 2015). Bearing in mind the history of colonialism that would have afflicted a number of BRICS countries, they are cognisant of the impact of unequal power relations that elevate some countries as rule-makers and relegate others to being rule-takers, that facilitate violating the rights and boundaries of states and that undermine local development efforts. The BRICS generally takes issue with its perception of duplicity on the part of developed countries, through efforts to impose rules on the behaviour of other states in the international system, while operating according to a separate set of unwritten rules. The emphasis by the BRICS on mutual respect and equality among states appears to be shaped by this historicity.

Upholding the principle of the sovereignty of the state, the BRICS tends to be vigorously opposed to the use of force and external intervention in the internal affairs of states. However, faced with the need to respond to increasing numbers of internal crises requiring some level of intervention to restore peace and stability, the BRICS, while still rejecting the use of force, inserts the caveat that 'unilateral coercive measures' should not be implemented 'outside the framework of the UN Charter' (BRICS 2018a).

The emergence of BRICS as an international actor can be viewed in the context of historical initiatives of the Global South, which sought to negotiate a path for developing countries, in global system governed by rules and institutions established by the Global North. Zondi (2015) discusses the Group of 77 (G77) in the 21st century, by highlighting the dilemma faced by developing countries not only to identify their place in a post-Cold War context, but to exercise some degree of agency. Zondi illustrates tension within developing countries, on the one hand expressing objection to the status quo of imbalanced global power dynamics, and on the other hand attempting to engage with the actors and institutions of the system in order to effect change.

The three waves of initiatives in the Global South, epitomised by NAM, the G77 and the call for a NIEO, and UNCTAD, ultimately did not possess the critical mass required to transform the global political and economic order. Such movements

were overshadowed by economic developments of the time, such as the Third World debt crisis and the rise of neoliberalism, which disadvantaged developing states and made them more vulnerable to counter-actions on the part of developed states to maintain the status quo (Gray & Gills 2016).[2] Developing countries remain bedevilled by structural relationships that limit their voice and participation in international institutions.

In many ways, the BRICS has been cast in the light of emerging South-South collaborative initiatives geared towards propelling the interests of developing countries, thus invoking questions of its legitimacy. A 2010 Economist article captures this in the following statement: 'that inaugural summit, which produced almost nothing concrete, appeared to be a one-off event and could be ignored' (Anon 2010). Southern agency, in an environment dominated by rules and institutions instituted by the Global North, is viewed by the author with scepticism. Positions vacillated between hopefulness at what could be thought of as a new wave of Third Worldism, which challenged the systems of global governance that privileged the Global North, and cynicism that the emerging countries driving the initiative appeared compromised, subsumed into the neoliberal order, and as a result had no genuine motive to present a challenge (Gray & Gills 2016).

After ten years of cooperation and collaborative ventures, the evolution of the BRICS must be appreciated. Stuenkel (2015) provides a historical overview of the BRICS from the inception idea to full manifestation as an international institution. Over the ten-year period, the number of sectoral areas on which BRICS states collaborate has continued to expand. By 2018, during the course of one year, the BRICS had convened more than 100 sectoral meetings, in areas encompassing national security, counter-terrorism, customs cooperation, health, science and technology, education, finance, information and communication technology, food and agriculture, and climate change, among many others (BRICS 2018b).

As Saran (2017) highlights, the first decade of the BRICS cooperation platform could be viewed as a period of establishing a solid foundation upon which it could achieve

[2] Through institutional mechanisms such as the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund, the Global North continued to negotiate terms that would be beneficial to itself, while subjecting developing countries to harsh prescriptions such as Structural Adjustment Programmes or prescriptions that kept them in an inferior and disadvantaged position.

its goal. The process emphasises the enhancement of relations among the BRICS states, including economic links among them, as well as ascertaining the commonalities in their positions that would allow them to advance their agenda; said in another way, the focus has been on building internal strength and capacity in order to project externally. Another area of focus is increasing the depth of the cooperative mechanisms among the five countries, through engaging domestic entities on a range of levels, government-to-government interactions, interactions between government-affiliated institutions such as state-owned enterprises and business councils, people-to-people exchanges and civil society interfaces. This modus operandi is embodied in South Africa's description of the BRICS in the lead-up to the 10th BRICS Summit 2018. It states, 'the BRICS approach is informed by the need to deepen, broaden and intensify relations within the grouping and among the individual countries for more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development' (South Africa 2018).

As evidenced in the Xiamen Declaration, significant attention is paid to enhancing contact and exchanges between the people of BRICS countries, with the goal of deepening the bonds among the BRICS states and securing buy-in from their respective populations. The Declaration states,

> We will expand people-to-people exchanges in all dimensions, encourage all fabrics of the society to participate in BRICS cooperation, promote mutual learning between our cultures and civilisations, enhance communication and mutual understanding among our peoples and deepen traditional friendships, thus making BRICS partnership closer to our people's hearts. (BRICS 2017a).

Similarly, during the 2018 Johannesburg Summit, people-to-people exchanges were identified as one of the key areas in which to advance BRICS cooperation. The declaration noted the countries' intention to strengthen cooperation in three core pillars: 'economy, peace and security, and people-to-people exchanges' (BRICS 2018a: 2). It underscored that people are at the heart of development, and as a result BRICS would continue to enhance contact among the peoples of the respective states, through cultural activities, film, sport and tourism.

Emerging powers, as they attempt to negotiate their place in an evolving geo-political context, are frequently challenged by their own domestic constituencies (Gray & Gills 2016). BRICS governments are faced with having to respond to internal socio-

economic realities, which, if not managed, have the potential to evoke discontent and challenge the leadership of the ruling government. They seek to encourage unity domestically in the perception of value of the BRICS to their respective countries. In the parliamentary democracies that form part of the BRICS - India, South Africa and Brazil - the respective governments are often called upon to justify their positions and affiliation with the BRICS before Parliament and the media.

I consider this aspect, of BRICS member countries widening the base of participation among the peoples of their respective countries, and also among their government agencies, as an act of legitimation. In as much as external recognition is important, it has also been essential to build up its constituency base among domestic audiences.

Chidley makes an important distinction between 'alignment,' and 'co-operation' (2014: 154). Chidley classifies the BRICS mechanism as an alignment of identity, based on Hopf's constructivist framework. In essence, the binding factor for the BRICS is based on identity and a collective sense of the shared commonalities among the countries. Chidley (2014: 154) writes, 'alignment is not synonymous with co-operation. Alignments are formed in pursuit of co-operation, for the purpose of co-operation, but it is not co-operation itself.' Concerns expressed about the differences among the BRICS, and the linking of this discourse to the lack of legitimacy of the BRICS, tend to overshadow the more fundamental point of the unity in a BRICS' identity, which directs the commitment of member countries to co-operation.

From a constructivist point of view, identities, being inter-subjectively configured, are not static. The tendency to claim a crisis of identity of the BRICS, defined by the lack of commonalities among the group, failure to match up to the economic level of the other members, as in the case of South Africa, the misrepresentation of Russia as an 'emerging power,' and the dominance of China over the others as a global economic super weight, misses the social dimension of identity formation and reformulation, which is a dynamic process. A state's national interests are articulated on the basis of the state's identity, but they are also formed through social interactions.

Wendt describes identity as a 'continuum' (1994: 386), ranging from negative to positive identification. He argues that positive identification is likely to produce a sense of solidarity and trust, as well as unity in the way that states express their interests. The rationalist conception of calculation of interests is superseded by a more intrinsic sense of collective identity. States do not need to base their behaviour on perceived individual wins and losses, but can be driven by a deeper sense of identification with the goals, missions and perspectives of others. The meanings that BRICS members ascribe to one another influence their behaviour toward one other. Through the consultative mechanism that BRICS represents, the members are constantly engaged in acts of deliberation, persuasion and exchange of ideas, which mould their understanding of their interests and influence their foreign policy behaviour. One of the important ways that the BRICS has endeavoured to establish its legitimacy is therefore through the formation of a collective identity that both binds the countries into one unit and provides a nexus for interfacing with members of the international community.

3.3 Institutionalisation

The structure of the BRICS and the tools it employs both feed into its legitimation activities. One of the most evident diplomatic practices engaged in by the BRICS is the annual hosting of summits of the heads of states. The 'summit' has become 'the most visible form of diplomacy' and it serves a variety of purposes (Melissen 2003: 14). Leaders or international institutions may incorporate summits to boost their image, to draw media attention to their cause and to enhance public opinion. Melissen (2003) likens the summit to a performance, full of showmanship and grandeur, with much attention paid to media capture and display of the event.

Rather than an isolated event, the summit is the most publicly manifested aspect of a broader process of diplomacy, and informs future diplomatic engagements. For the BRICS, its annual summit represents the focal point of high-level engagements and meetings of technical officials across a range of sectoral areas throughout the year. The incorporation by BRICS of annual summits as the centrepiece of its diplomatic calendar validates the group, provides an opportunity to be cast into the international limelight, and raises public awareness of its activities and positions. Prior to the first BRIC heads of states' summit in 2009, the group held meetings of its Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the side-lines of the UNGA in 2006 and 2007, and subsequently, a

stand-alone Ministers of Foreign Affairs' meeting in 2008, in Russia. At an informal meeting on the margins of the G8 summit in Japan, the BRIC leaders decided to convene a leaders' summit the following year (Stuenkel 2014). The convening of its first leaders' summit in 2009 constituted a shift for the BRICs, a move to a greater level of institutionalisation and visibility.[3]

The annual summits, which usually culminate in the adoption of a summit declaration, elucidate and publicise BRICS positions on a wide range of matters, and disseminate the values and views of the group among the international community. The 2009 Summit, for example, received widespread media attention from leading international news media, including the New York Times, The Economist and Forbes magazine (Anon 2009; Kramer 2009; Roubini 2009). Subsequent summits continue to be widely publicised, underscoring the achievements of the BRICS leaders and the highlights of the summits. Although met with a large degree of scepticism in some quarters, the BRICS summitry is a significant part of the entity's efforts to solidify its identity, and proclaim its relevance to global politico-economic developments.

Mention must also be made of the informal club structure of the BRICS, which lends itself to a great degree of flexibility. Often this structure is viewed critically, as it exposes fundamental differences between BRICS states, which share common positions on some issues, while entertaining widely divergent views and approaches on other matters. BRICS membership is not contingent on the achievement of consensus. Members exercise latitude in deciding the situations and issues of specific importance to their respective national interests. Alignment typically emerges out of the overlaps in their respective positions, and examples of stark divergence can be found. Differences are evident on issues as prominent as climate change, the UNSC's response to the situation in Syria, and energy policies, for example, since some BRICS states are energy exporters while others are energy importers. Though the BRICS meets regularly to identify and build upon common points of agreement, and the group endeavours to coordinate positions where

[3] Stuenkel (2014) points out that the first BRICs leaders' summit was hosted a day prior to the 9th Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), in Russia. In that regard, he considers that the first summit was more of a trial. Three of the four leaders (China, Russia and India) were participating in the SCO meeting and were already present in Russia and available to meet.

possible, it is not hemmed in to attaining consensus on every issue. This flexible structure, which allows its members to weave between various international partnerships and individual foreign policy initiatives, allows states to maximise the gains to be made from cooperation, while avoiding relinquishing or reducing their independence (Ciorciari 2010).

The seemingly loose, almost non-committal approach to BRICS's multilateralism is indicative of what Schaefer and Poffenbarger (2014) and Stuenkel (2015) describe as hedging behaviour, typical of emerging powers as they strive to negotiate their place in an evolving global order. On the one hand, the BRICS seeks to maintain and build upon its relationships with traditional major powers, and on the other hand, it appreciates the space that is being created for new actors to contribute to global governance flows and to form alternative coalitions. In a post-Cold War polycentric global order, as 'states are expected to rely less on coercion and more on negotiation to manage asymmetric relations' (Strüver 2016: 4), states are taking advantage of the opportunity to seek out and develop a diverse array of relationships. In his speech to the BRICS Business Forum 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping acknowledged that 'the next decade will see faster changes in the international landscape and the international alignment of forces' (Jinping 2018).

Amid their differences, it has been baffling for some to understand the mechanism that allows the BRICS to function as a co-operative unit that has sustained its momentum for almost ten years. This has to a large extent been a source of contention regarding the BRICS's legitimacy. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov explains the BRICS's undergirding platform as follows:

> Our Group is a unique example of building partnerships between States that differ greatly in terms of culture and civilisation. And this is exactly why it is so strong and united. The cooperation between the five countries is based on mutual respect and mutual benefit, as well as strict consideration of each other's interests. BRICS countries represent a major stabilising factor promoting sound multilateral initiatives in global affairs (Lavrov 2018).

While questions have been raised about the composition of the BRICS membership and the unbalanced strength of the individual members, the BRICS considers its union a matter of strength in unity. Wang Yi, Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, quotes President Xi Jinping as saying, 'the BRICS countries are like five fingers,

short and long if extended, but a powerful fist if clenched together' (Yi 2017). In considering this statement, the apparent weakness of countries such as South Africa and Brazil is not a factor that invalidates the group. Rather, the unique joining of the five members, which are regional powers in their own right, provides credence to a collective identity that supersedes the identities of individual members.

It appears to be important for the BRICS to acknowledge the relevance of existing multilateral institutions, while highlighting the deficiencies of these organisations. Institutions provide a context for structured interactions among its members, and provide a framework to indicate which actors and actions are legitimate based on the architecture and rules of the institution. The legitimacy of the BRICS is therefore linked to its ability to operate from within established institutions such as the UN and its agencies, and the IMF among others. The appropriate range of its conduct is prescribed by the rules of the institution and in acting within those boundaries, even to implement change, its members' joint actions could be legitimised. At the same time, however, the BRICS conducts a parallel track of independent operations, through its own summits, technical meetings and the establishment of its own multilateral development bank, the NDB.

3.4 Economic Success as a Legitimising Factor

A major factor contributing to the perception of the legitimacy of the BRICS is the rate of economic growth of the countries and their contribution to the global economy, starting in the 1990s and peaking in the 2000s. O'Neill (2011) indicates that the aggregate GDP of the BRICS jumped from US$3 trillion in 2001 to US$11 to $12 trillion in 2011, and that over that period, a third of global economic growth emanated from BRICS countries. Highlighting the BRICS's achievements, Chinese President Xi Jinping comments, 'in the past 10 years, our combined GDP has grown by 179 per cent, trade by 94 per cent and urban population by 28 per cent. All this has contributed significantly to stabilising the global economy and returning it to growth …' (Jinping 2017). Over the period 2000 to 2008, the BRICS countries exceeded the average growth of the global economy (Nassif *et al.* 2016). The economic success of the BRICS countries means that they cannot easily be overlooked.

The ability of the BRICS countries to withstand the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 augments their ability to leverage economic strength for political gain. Over the period 2009-2015, China and India recorded remarkable growth, averaging 9.8 per cent and 8.4 per cent GDP growth respectively. Brazil averaged 3.7 per cent, while South Africa and Russia averaged 1.5 per cent and 0.1 per cent respectively (Nassif *et al.* 2016). Since the economies of Brazil, South Africa and Russia rely on commodity exports, they are more vulnerable to a downturn in the world economy. Brazil and Russia experienced the biggest slowdown in GDP growth during the global financial crisis (Banerjee & Vashisth 2010). Overall, BRICS countries demonstrated resilience, despite the global recession. According to Stuenkel (2015), this is a significant factor in the institutionalisation of the BRICS.

The current comparative rates of growth between emerging economies such as the BRICS and the developed countries of the West are particularly significant. The pace of growth in the former group is stronger than in most developed countries. While China and India's GDP per capita growth was 6.4 per cent and 6.3 per cent respectively in 2015, that of the US was 1.6 per cent, that of the EU 1.7 per cent and that of Japan 0.6 per cent in the same year (Siddiqui 2016). China and India are the fastest growing economies globally, among major economies. Furthermore, while the BRICS countries have been experiencing gains in their share of world GDP, the share of the US has been decreasing (Jeong & Kim 2010).[4]

Projections made by Goldman Sachs in its 2003 report, 'Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050,' predicts that the BRIC economies would overtake the leading Western economies within time frames ranging from 4 to 33 years,[5] based on the performance of the BRIC economies during that time period (1990s into 2000s). This means that there is a dual platform for establishing the economic credibility of the BRICs; both its past economic accomplishments, as well as its projected trajectory are considered. A long-term outlook of the ascendancy of BRICS

[4] The US share of world GDP has been falling; for example, from 21 per cent in 2007 to 19.6 per cent in 2010. In the same period the BRICs share increased from 21 per cent to 24 per cent.

[5] The Goldman Sachs report predicted that China's economy, in US dollar terms, would surpass Germany's within four years, that of Japan within 12 years and that of the US within 33 years. Similarly, in 30 years, India would be the world's third largest economy, while Russia would surpass Germany, France, Italy and the UK. Brazil, on the other hand was predicted to overtake Italy, France, the UK and Germany by 2025, 2031 and 2036 respectively (Wilson & Purushothaman 2003).

economies has been established, over a future 50-year period, negating the idea that it was a once-off occurrence due to a convergence of factors. The reputation of Goldman Sachs as a leading global investment firm is not the only basis for the initiation of a BRICS forum, but aids in bolstering the belief that the BRICs could be the dominant players in the global economy within the next 50 years.

The BRICS leverages the economic narrative concerning its ascendancy to advocate the G20 as the premier institution for addressing the global financial crisis. The group associates its role in the international system with a 'greater voice and representation in international financial institutions' for emerging and developing economies, 'a stable, predictable and more diversified international monetary system' and 'a more democratic and just multi-polar world order based on the rule of international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all states' (BRIC 2009a). The BRICS also calls for action to be taken to bolster the poorest countries most affected by the crisis.

Economic success and relative invulnerability therefore validates the individual development pathways undertaken by the respective countries, which include not only economic liberalisation but also social inclusion policies geared towards lifting vast portions of the respective societies out of poverty. This is evidenced by the Chinese president's statement at the 2017 BRICS Business Forum that, 'in close to 40 years of reform and opening up, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, we Chinese have forged ahead, fearless and determined, and we have successfully embarked on a path of socialism with distinctive Chinese features' (Jinping 2017). Indian Secretary of Foreign Affairs Shivshankar Menon also touched on the peculiarities of the BRICS identity by stating:

> Increasingly the world itself is coming to espouse views that we share among the BRIC countries. For instance, it is now widely appreciated that globalisation, development and economic processes cannot be left solely to the mercies of an unregulated free market (India 2009).

The events surrounding the global financial crisis casts doubt on the legitimacy of the US as the world hegemon, and opens a door for a narrative to emerge on the need for other legitimate actors. In holding their first leaders' summit in 2009, the BRICS countries were keen to present themselves as relevant actors, worthy of a greater voice and more prominent profile, in a changing geopolitical and economic

landscape. As Stuenkel (2014) highlighted, the success story of the BRICs as a relevant emerging power actor in 2009 is greatly influenced by the trend of decline and loss of legitimacy of the world superpower, the US. Placed against this backdrop, the distinction between rising emerging powers, formerly outside the global power structures, and faltering dominant powers, is evident (Stuenkel 2014).

The BRICS takes advantage of the role created by legitimacy deficits on the part of developed countries, and acts to secure reforms in the international financial institutions, which inevitably grants it greater influence in these institutions. The rise in the contribution of the BRICS to the growth and stability of the global economy provides a bargaining chip that it could use to advance its positions and interests. It demands a 'shift in voting power in favour of emerging market economies and developing countries to bring their participation in decision making in line with their relative weight in the world economy' (BRIC 2010).

Prior to this, in a meeting of BRIC Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on 4 September 2009 in London, the BRIC ministers recommended that emerging market and developing countries should comprise seven per cent and six per cent of quotas in the IMF and World Bank respectively (BRIC 2009b). Since the BRIC Ministers of Finance first met in November 2008 and subsequently in March 2009, their message has been consistent, a demand for reform of the structures of the IMF and the World Bank to allow for a greater voice for emerging market and developing countries. These recommendations are amplified within the G20.

In December 2010 the IMF's Board of Governors finalised the 14th General Review of Quotas, realigning quotas to reflect shifts in the economic standing of member states in the global economy, in keeping with the demands made by the BRICS.[6] In addition to a doubling of quotas, six per cent of the quota allotment was reassigned from over-represented to under-represented countries. Emerging economies' and developing countries' share of quotas also increased by six per cent, resulting in four of the five BRICS countries, China, Russia, India and Brazil, being counted among

[6] Quotas determine a country's voting power to influence IMF decisions and reflect a country's standing in the global economy. They also dictate the amount available for lending from the contingency funds.

the ten largest shareholders in the IMF[7] (IMF 2015). The reforms, however, could only be implemented following ratification by national governments. Amid concerns in the US Congress that the IMF reforms would undermine US authority in the international organisation, the US only ratified the reforms in December 2015.

Beyond the demands for increased representation, the BRICS increased its bargaining power by making significant financial contributions to boost the IMF's resources. The financial outlay was linked to conditionalities. When the BRICS leaders met informally in Los Cabos, Mexico on 18 June 2012, on the margins of the G20 Summit, they shared their joint view that it was imperative to stabilise the global economy in the midst of the potential spiralling effect of the Eurozone crisis and committed to bolstering IMF resources by increasing their contributions to this end (BRICS 2017b). They specifically stated that the making of these additional contributions was contingent on the complete implementation of the 2010 IMF voting power and quota reforms.

In 2012 the BRICS countries contributed $75 billion in additional contributions to the IMF, which formed part of the organisation's $456 billion bailout fund. China's contribution was $43 billion; India, Russia and Brazil each added $10 billion, while South Africa added $2 billion (Gray & Gills 2016). The IMF stated that the additional investment of financial resources by member states would 'strengthen the ability of the international community to provide effective crisis responses at the global level' (Rehn 2012: 3). Another aspect of the conditionality was the demand for the IMF to make use of its resources under the 'New Arrangements to Borrow,'[8] prior to incorporating the new contributions made by BRICS and other member states (South Africa 2013; Kamel 2014).

The BRICS's initial engagement with the G20 and the IMF over the period 2008 to 2012 represents a defining aspect of the group's acts of legitimation. The narrative advanced by the group centres on the loss of legitimacy of the existing international financial institutions, based on their lack of representativeness and resultant ineffectiveness. They use apparent gaps in legitimacy of existing, well-established

[7] The other six largest shareholders were the US, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and the UK.
[8] The IMF's New Arrangements to Borrow facility represents a back-up to IMF quota resources, in which some countries make themselves available to provide additional finances to the IMF.

institutions to invoke the call for new ways of managing global financial governance and for new actors to be given space to contribute to that agenda. Without reform, as proposed by the group, the institution's legitimacy would be in question. This sets the context for the establishment of the group's own relevance indivisible from the viability of the IMF.

A strategy adopted by the BRICS countries involves the use of their collective voice to press for change in the international financial architecture. The group convenes regular meetings to coordinate its members' positions, and generally once a common platform is achieved, they articulate their shared stance in various established multilateral fora. In 2009, at the height of deliberations stemming from the global financial crisis, the BRIC Ministers of Finance met on three occasions throughout the year. They emerged with a united voice and the capability to project a BRICs point of view. Given the weight of the BRICS countries in the global economy, it is becoming inconceivable to resolve global financial issues without the involvement of the BRICS.

From the onset, considering the climate of global economic stability and their own resilience in that environment, the BRICS countries cast themselves as indispensable to discussions on global economic reform. This is connected to the way in which the group endeavours to portray itself, and represents a fundamental aspect of their corporate identity. The BRICS advances a revised global political order, which brings countries on the periphery toward the centre, in rhetoric at least, a movement that coincides with decreasing capacity on the part of opposed interests at the centre to resist. The BRICS characterises its economic ascent, and shifts in the global economy, as too compelling to be ignored.

The group uses persuasion to advance their cause and started off by focusing on issues of procedural legitimacy, placing emphasis on who should be allowed to participate in discussions of global financial governance. Its attempts to change the rules pertaining to global financial governance by reforming the IMF and World Bank quota systems are correlated to its efforts to showcase its institution as legitimate.

3.5 Outreach

As the BRICS becomes more established internally, a commensurate process of extending the group's branches to draw other members of the international

community into a process of engagement has been developing. The BRICS is premised upon representing the interests of emerging powers and developing countries. Consequently, it is crucial for it to be seen as capable of providing accurate representation of the interests of the Global South, on issues ranging from inclusive development and growth to climate change, or governance of the global financial system, for example. The BRICS also requires recognition and agreement from members of this community on its relevance as an actor within the international community.

In constructing their own corporate identity as the BRICS group, the relationship between the BRICS and other groups of countries will arguably become increasingly more significant. It may opt to align itself with particular groups of countries to solidify its peculiar identity (Wendt 1999:336-343 cited in Hagstrom & Gustafsson 2015). By stressing the convergence of values, qualities or norms between itself and others, the BRICS works towards framing its own sense of self and how it wishes to be perceived.

Commencing with the initiative of the South African government in 2013 at the Fifth Annual BRICS Summit, the BRICS incorporated an 'Outreach' programme, targeting regional partners and organisations. As a component of the BRICS Summit, a BRICS-African Leaders Dialogue Forum Retreat was convened, which included participation by 12 African leaders, and reflected representation from the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities of Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. South Africa, assuming the role of representative of Africa's interests[9], envisioned this forum as facilitating dialogue and cooperation between BRICS and the African region, which would address the long-standing needs of, and challenges facing, the continent in areas such as infrastructure development. This format of outward engagement has been replicated with each subsequent summit, with the host country inviting regional partners, typically other developing countries, as well as other emerging market countries.

[9] The issue of South Africa's role as regional leader in Africa with responsibility for representing the interests of the African continent is a contentious one, given that this role has not been sanctioned by other African states. It is more so a self-assigned role based on South Africa's own perception of its identity and related responsibility to other African states.

At the Sixth BRICS Summit in Brazil, the host country invited representation from the Union of South American Nations, while at the subsequent summit, host country Russia invited and received participation from leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Eurasian Economic Union. This trend continued in 2016 and 2017 in India and China respectively, with the participation of leaders of the Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation in 2016, and the participation of a number of emerging markets and developing countries in 2017. During its chairship, China referred to the outreach as the 'BRICS Plus,' speaking of the dialogue mechanism between the BRICS and the group of countries comprising Egypt, Guinea, Tajikistan, Thailand and Mexico, designed to foster dialogue and linkages within the Global South.

In 2018, host country South Africa held both a BRICS-Africa Outreach Dialogue and a BRICS Plus Initiative, in the first instance inviting ten leaders of African regional organisations[10] and in the second instance, inviting the chairs of regional economic communities in the Global South, as well as the Secretary General of the UN. The BRICS Plus Initiative and the BRICS Outreach initiative provide coherence to the continued formation of an identity that places the group at the centre of issues relevant to countries of the Global South. In participating in outreach activities or meetings, other countries acknowledge that they recognise the BRICS and express their willingness to be associated with the BRICS partnership. Russian President Vladimir Putin, commenting on the BRICS Outreach initiative in 2014, stated,

> Tomorrow, we will hold a joint session with South American heads of state. I think such contacts with the leaders of various regions throughout the world help increase the prestige of our organisation (Putin 2014).

This statement exposes a BRICS leader's concern about the reputation of the group, and its perception and reception among other members of the community. The

[10] As part of the BRICS-Africa Outreach Dialogue 2018, South Africa invited Rwanda in its capacity as chair of the AU; Senegal in its capacity as chair of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; Gabon as chair of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Uganda as chair of the East African Community (EAC); Ethiopia as chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); Togo as chair of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS); Zambia as incoming chair of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Namibia as incoming chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC); Angola as chair of the SADC Organ; and chair of the African Union Commission.

initiatives can be viewed as legitimising activities engaged in by the BRICS, both to cement its identity and to draw out social agreement about its significance.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to unveil the deliberate activities and undertakings of the BRICS as an actor that sought to establish its legitimacy within the international community. The carefully crafted activities engaged in by the BRICS included the formation of a collective identity, its public declaration of that identity, its interests and ambitions, its use of legitimacy deficits in the global governance architecture to project its own legitimacy, secure social agreement on its participation and change the rules of the system and its outreach activities, which expanded its influence.

The journey that the BRICS engaged in was one that sought to establish its legitimacy. Amid a plethora of international institutions, groupings, blocs including regional organisations, security alliances, free trade blocs and customs markets, it was imperative for the BRICS to carve out its unique identity and to communicate that identity to members of its community. The format of institutionalisation selected by the BRICS made public its joint private discussions, through established diplomatic practices such as the hosting of summits and publishing of summit declarations and communiqués from high-level meetings. In undertaking these activities, the BRICS fulfilled various acts of legitimation that presented its coalition in a way that communicated its identity and mission. Its outreach activities met the criteria of social agreement, by incorporating other members of the international community into its mission and activities, thereby gaining tacit agreement on the willingness of other developing countries to align with the BRICS.

The upcoming chapter uses the case of the simultaneous presence of all BRICS states on the UNSC in 2011, to deliberate on the BRICS as a political actor, and its ability to frame the discourse on international security matters as well as to elicit agreement from other members of the international community on its right to participate in such activities.

CHAPTER FOUR: BRICS as a Political Actor in the UNSC

4.1 Introduction

One of the ways of assessing the legitimacy of the BRICS entails examining the role played by the group in framing ideas and norms in the international community. In a society of states, in which the making and revision of rules is a social process, states may express their intention of withdrawing support for a particular rule or norm, and use the opportunity to introduce new rules or norms. In this chapter, the ways in which the BRICS manoeuvres through the structures provided by the UNSC, specifically in the political and humanitarian crises taking place in Libya and Syria respectively in the 2011 to 2012 period, will be discussed.

In 2011, the five BRICS countries simultaneously occupied seats on the UNSC, representing a unique coincidence.[11] India, Brazil and South Africa were successful in securing three of the ten non-permanent seats on the UNSC, available on a two-year rotation. In that regard, they joined Russia and China, who are among the five permanent members of the Security Council, alongside the US, the United Kingdom (UK) and France. Two issues that mark the period include the tabling and approval of UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973 on the situation in Libya, and a number of resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, particularly Syria.

The significance of this development is that for the first time since its establishment, the BRICS took on a position of acting as a political actor. The initial association of the BRICS was an economic one, starting with the economic projections identified by the Goldman Sachs report and moving into demands for the reform of the global financial architecture. Their joint presence on the UNSC provided an opportunity for a united BRICS voice on a critical matter of international political significance and provided a launching pad for a revised and expanded conception of BRICS as a political actor within the community.

This chapter incorporates the criteria of social agreement and framing to shed light on how the BRICS negotiated greater levels of legitimacy as a relevant actor in issues of global governance. It does this by examining the BRICS contribution to the debate on humanitarian intervention in Libya and Syria, and how it sought to frame

[11] In 2012, four of the five BRICS states, Russia, India, China and South Africa, held seats on the UNSC.

the discourse on the interpretation of the R2P principle. Secondly, by focusing on BRICS participation in the UNSC, the chapter shines a spotlight on the BRICS's pursuit of legitimacy by participation and coordination in an established global governance entity (the UNSC) which, with its own rules and procedures, provides a context for agreement on who may influence the decisions on these international security matters.

4.2 Libya

By February 2011, the situation in Libya had become a major point of discussion on the agenda of the UNSC. Protests against Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi provoked a violent response on the part of the ruling regime, leading to rebel groups taking up arms against the government. Over 100 Libyans lost their lives in the flare-up. The Libyan delegation to the UN urged the Security Council to adopt a resolution that would intervene in the situation in Libya, and curb the killing of civilians. Following a briefing by the UN Secretary-General on the worsening security and humanitarian situation in Libya on 25 February 2011, the Council adopted resolution 1970 (2011) by unanimous vote. The resolution stipulated the implementation of an arms embargo, asset freezes and a travel ban against selected Libyan officials, and a referral to the International Criminal Court (UNSC 2011e).

Subsequent to an assessment that the Libyan authorities failed to implement the conditions laid out in Resolution 1970 by 12 March 2011, the League of Arab States issued a call to the UNSC to implement a no-fly zone over Libya, to prevent air attacks by the Libyan regime against the Libyan population. Based on advocacy by the regional organisations, the League of Arab States and the AU, Resolution 1973 (2011) was adopted on 17 March. Resolution 1973 (2011) calls on the Security Council to implement a no-fly zone, reinstitutes the arms embargo that was previously stipulated in Resolution 1970 (2011) and authorises member states that would be directly involved in the implementation of the resolution, either through unilateral action or joint regional action, to pursue 'all necessary measures … to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack' in Libya (UNSC 2011f:3).

Resolution 1973 garnered ten votes in favour, with no votes against, but with five abstentions. The abstentions came from Russia, China, India, Brazil and Germany.

South Africa was the only BRICS country voting in favour of the resolution, maintaining solidarity with the positive votes of the two other members of the AU that were serving on the Security Council at the time, Nigeria and Gabon. The alliance led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) that would implement the no-fly zone, arms embargo and military intervention into Libya comprised 18 states, including the US, France, UK, Qatar, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, and ran its operation from March to October 2011, a period of eight months, longer than originally anticipated.[12]

The UNSC's response to the situation in Libya in 2011 could be considered a milestone for the R2P principle, given that it was the first time that the Council was mandated to use force against a fellow member of the UN. Evans (2012) describes this period as a time of the 'coming of age of R2P'. The R2P norm, in particular the responsibility of the international community to protect civilians under threat within a nation-state, was invoked by the Security Council to inform its response to the evolving crisis in Libya.

In the months following the adoption of Resolution 1973, a backlash ensued, largely led by the BRICS countries. By August 2011, some members of the Council were uneasy over NATO's actions in Libya and its interpretation of the Security Council resolution. By September 2011, concerns mounted over the spiralling impact of the Libyan crisis on other territories in the region, particularly owing to the proliferation of arms originating from Libya. The events leading up to and resulting in the death of Muammar al-Qaddafi also became a point of contention. The BRICS countries argued that NATO, under the guise of the stipulations in Resolution 1973, changed its mandate in Libya from protecting civilians to instituting regime change. NATO, the US, France and Britain denied those claims, insisting rather that the operations were consistent with the UNSC mandate.

Russia was sceptical about Resolution 1973 from the beginning, and as the operations progressed, became more vocal regarding the implementation of the resolution. Regarding Resolution 1973, Russia's Permanent Representative to the

[12] By way of Resolution 2016 (2011), adopted in October 2011, the UNSC agreed, by unanimous vote, to bring an end to the execution of the no-fly zone and the authorisation to use all necessary measures to curb civilian casualties, which were facilitated under Resolution 1973.

UN provided the context for Russia's abstention by indicating that the country was not in a position to support the draft resolution, given what it perceived to be a violation of procedure in the way in which the resolution was addressed in the Council. The Russian permanent representative indicated that Russia posed several questions pertaining to how the military mission would be operationalised; however, those pertinent matters were not addressed. The representative further lamented the evolution of the resolution, from a limited resolution authorising a no-fly zone, as requested by the League of Arab States, to a broad-based resolution that authorised far-reaching military operations (UNSC 2011a).

Instead of armed intervention to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Libya, Russia advocated an immediate ceasefire. Russia opted not to block the passage of the resolution because of its belief in protecting the civilian lives that were being threatened and to keep up the humanitarian values at stake. According to Ziegler (2016), the tabling of the resolution on Libya coincided with a unique set of circumstances for Russia, as it attempted to reframe the Russian-US relationship, thus tempering its appetite to run into direct confrontation with the West on this issue.

A joint opinion editorial penned by US President Barack Obama, French President Nicholas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron, which was published in the New York Times and a number of international news journals, made it clear that the NATO-led coalition recognised the need for al-Qaddafi to be removed from power in order to fulfil the UNSC mandate (Obama *et al.* 2011). In response, Russia and fellow BRICS member countries, albeit for different reasons, protested against the shift in the focus of the operations. In general, Russia opposes external interference or intervention in the internal affairs of states, on humanitarian grounds, especially when it runs contrary to the desires of that state (Ziegler 2016).

Brazil's position on the situation in Libya and Resolution 1973 reflects its historical foreign policy stance, which favours diplomatic engagement and dialogue above military engagement. By way of an explanation for the decision to abstain on the vote on Resolution 1973, the Brazilian permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Maria Luisa Riberio Viotti, stated,

> We are not convinced that the use of force as provided for in paragraph 4 of the resolution will lead to the realisation of our common objective — the immediate end to violence and the protection of civilians. We are also concerned that such measures may have the unintended effect of exacerbating tensions on the ground and causing more harm than good to the very same civilians we are committed to protecting (Brazil 2011a).

In her statement, Ambassador Viotti denounced the criminal acts inflicted by the Libyan authorities against their people and also recognised the request by the League of Arab States for the implementation of a no-fly zone to curb the violence in Libya. However, Brazil did not consider this sufficient justification for pursuing military means of intervention above other non-military means. The delegation expressed concern about the possibility of exacerbating an already delicate situation, including inflicting harm on civilians during the course of military intervention and failing to achieve the desired outcome. At the same time, however, Brazil was in support of applying the R2P principle to contain the situation in Libya and furthermore, willing to concede to military intervention in Libya (Stuenkel & Tourinho 2014).

Similar to the Russian stance, however, Brazil expressed concern about the processes which led to a change in meaning of the resolution, from the initial proposal for military action limited to a no-fly zone, to the final resolution authorising wide-ranging military action. Subsequent to the start of the NATO-led military action in Libya, Brazil, like the other BRICS states, criticised what it perceived as the 'gap between what was authorised by the Security Council and the actions undertaken by NATO' (Brazil 2011b).

Traditionally, India's foreign policy advocates the pursuit of peaceful and diplomatic means of conflict resolution, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and not resorting to force to resolve conflict. As a result, India's position on Resolution 1973 on Libya was consistent with that of other BRICS states. In speaking on the passing of the resolution at the Security Council, Indian Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri claimed that the resolution was pre-emptive, given that the report from the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Libya had not yet been presented to the members of the Council, thus making it difficult to make an accurate assessment of the developments unfolding in Libya (India 2011b).

In articulating its concern over the threats to civilians and foreigners in Libya, India emphasised the importance of seeking political, rather than military solutions to the crisis. Furthermore, India remained sceptical about the lack of detail provided on how the resolution would be implemented and any possible side effects. Considering the strong trade and investment ties between India and Libya, and the large number of Indian nationals residing in Libya, Indian Ambassador Puri also commented on the possible impact of the crisis on those ties. India therefore abstained from voting on UNSC Resolution 1973. Moreover, India was mindful of the possibility of exacerbating the situation on the ground and causing greater civilian casualties as a result of military intervention. India continually emphasised the importance of respecting the principle of sovereignty (India 2011a).

China, like Russia, tends to be cynical about foreign intervention in states and generally rejects the use of force to resolve conflict. Explaining its decision to abstain on the vote on Resolution 1973, China's representative elucidated,

> China has always emphasized that, in its relevant actions, the Security Council should follow the United Nations Charter and the norms governing international law, respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Libya and resolve the current crisis in Libya through peaceful means. China is always against the use of force in international relations (UNSC 2011a:10).

In line with the position adopted by the previously mentioned BRICS states, China's representative highlighted the failure of the Council to respond to legitimate concerns and questions raised in the context of Resolution 1973. The representative, Li Baodong, stated that 'China has serious difficulty with parts of the resolution' (UNSC 2011a: 10). Despite its reservations, China's decided to abstain from the vote, based on its respect for the stance of the League of Arab States and the AU.

South Africa is a relative outlier among the BRICS countries with respect to the original position taken on the Resolution 1973 vote. It voted in favour of the resolution, in alignment with the other African states on the Council, Nigeria and Gabon. South Africa was also a member of the AU Peace and Security Council's high-level ad-hoc committee in 2011. South Africa therefore aligned with the efforts of the AU to resolve the crisis in a manner that would be sustainable and to the benefit of the Libyan population. In the context of significant backlash and criticism following South Africa's lack of agency in responding to humanitarian crises, for

example, in Burma and Zimbabwe (Rossouw 2011), the country was under pressure to respond proactively to the situation in Libya, warding off any further escalation in the killing of civilians. The statement below, delivered by South Africa's UNSC representative, Ambassador Sangqu, demonstrates the consciousness of the need to act responsibly in addressing the Libyan situation:

> We believe that the United Nations and the Security Council could not be silent, nor be seen to be doing nothing in the face of such grave acts of violence committed against innocent civilians. We believe that by adopting resolution 1973 (2011), which South Africa voted in favour of, the Security Council has responded appropriately to the call of the countries of the region to strengthen the implementation of resolution 1970 (2011), and has acted responsibly to protect and save the lives of defenceless civilians, who are faced with brutal acts of violence carried out by the Libyan authorities (UNSC 2011a:10).

South Africa did, however, underscore that its positive vote was accompanied by a caveat, that the implementation of the resolution had to be consistent with respecting Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that it should not include 'any foreign occupation or unilateral military intervention under the pretext of protecting civilians' (UNSC 2011a:10). Moreover, the resolution should 'be implemented in full respect for both its letter and spirit' (UNSC 2011a:10).

At the start of the NATO-led operation, South Africa joined its BRICS partners in criticising the implementation of Resolution 1973 and the decisions taken that were inconsistent with the mandate given by the Security Council. South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, clarified publicly that, in supporting the resolution, South Africa was not endorsing regime change. She further stated that it was evident that the NATO coalition had this motive, given their attacks on the residence of al-Qaddafi, which led to the killing of some of his relatives (Anon. 2011). A speech by an official of South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) clarified South Africa's position as supportive of R2P, on condition that it was not used as a cover for alternative motives (Ebrahim 2011). Ebrahim also pointed out South Africa's observation that NATO appeared to prioritise military intervention over attempts to find a political solution. He continued: 'as South Africa, we do not subscribe to a military solution for a political problem' (Ebrahim 2011). This became a point of

contention, namely that the AU was not given sufficient opportunity to secure a political solution through its diplomatic efforts to engage al-Qaddafi (Adams 2012).

A change in tide characterised the BRICS' initial response to Resolution 1973, and its subsequent response to the operations on the ground in Libya carried out by NATO, in execution of that resolution. As South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation highlighted during a question and answer session subsequent to a media briefing, none of the BRICS countries resorted to voting against Resolution 1973 or, in the case of Russia and China, exercising their veto power. During the course of the NATO-led operation, however, the BRICS countries vocalised their disappointment in the way in which the intervention was being conducted. A particular point of contention emerged in the expressed intention of the NATO delegation, shortly after the commencement of the implementation of Resolution 1973, to eliminate al-Qaddafi, effectively enacting regime change. BRICS criticisms of the NATO operation included the following: bias towards rebel groups accused of carrying out atrocities and crimes against humanity; attacks against residential targets that carried no military threat; and investment in a military operation that inadvertently ignored possibly genuine ceasefire offers (Evans 2012).

Odeyemi (2016a) explores the contribution of BRICS countries to the R2P principle by looking at the positions adopted by the BRICS during and in the aftermath of the tabling of and debate on UNSC Resolutions 1970 and 1973 on Libya. Odeyemi's (2016a) findings include, despite apparent differences in outlook concerning the R2P principle, that BRICS shares some common agreements on issues concerning the implementation of the R2P, and contributes to the R2P norm in three main ways. Firstly, the BRICS elevates the absolute imperative of neutrality in conception and treatment of the various parties involved in a conflict. Secondly, the group underscores the necessity of only resorting to military intervention or the use of force after all available diplomatic options have been attempted. Finally, the BRICS draws attention to the importance of assessing the likelihood of a positive outcome emerging from any intervention under the banner of R2P. This would include the obligation to gather sufficient reliable and thorough information to justify intervention, which was thought to be absent in the case of Resolution 1973 authorising the use of force and a no-fly zone in Libya.

The Libyan situation aroused lingering reservations expressed during the initial discussions on the R2P principle in 2004-2005. Primarily, these concerned the potential to invoke the principle to violate a state's sovereignty, effectively interfere in the internal affairs of states and on the extreme end, bring about regime change. Western countries generally prefer the notion of the 'right to intervene,' which is viewed with scepticism by those in the developing world, wary of the context it provides for unilateral and exploitative action by the developed world (Evans 2012).

4.3 Syria

The ongoing Syrian crisis presents a more complex scenario, provoking a mixed response from the BRICS. In March 2011, while the Security Council was considering mitigating the growing crisis in Libya, attention also turned to Syria following a violent crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. Starting on 18 August 2011, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights began indicating to the Council that over 2 000 people had been killed since the start of the protests in March 2011 (UN 2012). The UN High Commissioner attributed the violence to government security forces employing lethal force against the civilian population. Reports indicated that despite promises by Syrian President Assad to improve the situation, violence continued unabated. A worsening humanitarian crisis developed, initiating an exodus of Syrians seeking a safe haven in neighbouring countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan and further afield.

The onset of the crisis can be traced to protest demonstrations, stemming from the arrest of a group of school children who were writing anti-government graffiti in mid-March 2011 (UNSC 2011b). The ensuing resistance mushroomed, growing to include demands for political freedom and economic reforms. The response from the Assad regime came in the form of promises of reform, which would include ending the almost 50-year state of emergency, inaugurating new government ministers to oversee the reforms, and granting citizenship to stateless Kurds, among others. The overtures made by the government appeared to be insufficient to satisfy the local population, and failed to stop the convening of the largest anti-government protest to date, which was staged on 22 April 2011 (UNSC 2011b). The Syrian authorities consequently ramped up attempts to stifle dissent, and launched military advances into Syrian towns (UNSC 2011b). The civilian population's access to food,

water, and medical services became restricted, prompting the start of a widespread humanitarian crisis.

Evans (2012) examines several underlying factors that contributed to the response or lack of response by the Security Council and the international community to the situation in Syria. These include a sophisticated array of actors and groups, lack of unity among opposition forces and general unease about the capacity of opposition groups to lead a democratic reform. Unlike in the Libyan case, the response of the League of Arab States to the situation in Syria was not definitive and unanimous. One of the permanent members of the Security Council, Russia, enjoyed deep ties with the Syrian regime. With notable national interest in areas of trade and security invested in Syria, which it did not wish to jeopardise, Russia was incentivised to disrupt any attempt to overthrow Assad and destabilise the country. Russia had a naval facility at the Syrian port of Tartus and an airbase at Latakia. An additional factor concerned projections of Syria's military capability; the Syrian army was considered a force to be reckoned with, which would not be easily toppled.

Although all UNSC members generally condemned the violence taking place in Syria, from the onset the positions in the Security Council were divided. From August 2011, some members of the Council began proposing a resolution to curtail the escalating crisis in Syria, but divisions in the Council were apparent through lack of support for the attempts. On 4 October 2011 a resolution proposed by the European members of the Council [France, Germany, Portugal and the UK] was put to the vote, but failed to pass owing to lack of support from Russia and China. Among the BRICS group, Russia and China vetoed the resolution, while Brazil, India and South Africa abstained. Lebanon also abstained and nine countries assented. The resolution condemned the human rights abuses being perpetrated by the Syrian regime, including the use of lethal force on its civilian population; it indicated that the Syrian authorities failed to implement reforms and suggested that after 30 days, consideration could be given to invoking Article 41 of the UN Charter, which would allow the imposition of sanctions against Syria.

Following months of negotiation, this resolution represented a compromise proposed by the European states, after earlier draft versions were rejected on account of mention of punitive measures, such as sanctions, if the Syrian authorities did not

cease the violence. Amid growing frustration at the impasse in the Council on taking any tough measures to mitigate the crisis in Syria, the failure to pass this resolution was condemned by the US and European states, irritated by the decision of Russia and China to veto the resolution. France's representative to the Security Council, Ambassador Araud, stated that the negative vote by Russia and China was 'a rejection of this tremendous movement for freedom and democracy that is the Arab Spring', and that it ran in opposition to both the domestic and regional sentiment (UNSC 2011c: 3). Portugal and the UK's representatives expressed great disappointment at the result of the vote, particularly given that the situation on the ground continued to worsen and there was no corresponding response from the Council. The UK's representative affirmed that 'the text we voted on today contained nothing that any member of this Council should have felt the need to oppose. Yet two members chose to veto' (UNSC 2011c: 7). The US delegate similarly asserted,

> The United States is outraged that this Council has utterly failed to address an urgent moral challenge and a growing threat to regional peace and security. Several members have sought for weeks to weaken and strip bare any texts that would have defended the lives of innocent civilians from Assad's brutality. Today, two members have vetoed a vastly watered-down text that does not even mention sanctions (UNSC 2011c:8).

Similar sentiments were expressed by the German representative, who was frustrated that after numerous efforts at diluting the text, Russia and China still would not reconsider their positions (UNSC 2011c).

The BRICS countries shared a similar posture in the fact that none of them voted in support of the resolution. Common threads could be found running through the positions taken by the individual BRICS countries, although they did not speak with a unitary voice. In a statement on its abstention, the Brazilian representative suggested that it would have been beneficial for the resolution to be put to a vote after gaining the unanimous support of all Council members and considering the concerns raised by other members of the Council. Russia also made mention of the failure of the resolution's sponsors to reflect its suggestion to include a clause on the rejection of any form of military intervention.

South Africa's representative linked South Africa's abstention to disappointment about the execution of the Security Council resolution on Libya, and the

misinterpretation and mishandling of the mandate to protect civilians, to institute regime change instead. The representative stated,

> We have seen recently that Security Council resolutions have been abused, and that their implementation has gone far beyond the mandate of what was intended … We are concerned that this draft resolution not be part of a hidden agenda aimed at once again instituting regime change, which has been an objective clearly stated by some (UNSC 2011c:11).

The Russian delegate articulated a similar position, and claimed that, 'the situation in Syria cannot be considered in the Council separately from the Libyan experience' (UNSC 2011c:4). In so doing, the countries contributed to framing the lens through which intervention in the Syrian situation should be considered. In casting the Syrian crisis in the same light as the Libyan crisis, they were bringing to the fore the distortion of the Security Council mandate to suit individual interests, casting doubt on any potential success for military intervention in Syria or external intervention into the internal affairs of Syria and provoking scepticism about the intentions of the US and European countries in intervening in the Syrian situation. They were also advocating a R2P model that was demonstrably different from the Libyan model. Promoting an inclusive Syrian-led political process became the mantra of the BRICS regarding a solution in Syria. The BRICS countries expressed unwillingness to support a resolution calling for military intervention, without hope of a successful outcome (Abdenur 2016).

Another thread that runs through the BRICS response to Syria is rejection of the use of sanctions to put pressure on the government to institute reforms. The member countries were of the view that threatening punitive measures, such as sanctions, would not contribute to resolving the crisis and bringing the parties together to engage in dialogue, but only aggravate a tense situation. India, China and Russia explicitly mentioned this during their explanations of their respective votes at the Security Council meeting. Lastly, India's decision to abstain on the resolution concurred with one of the issues contributing to Russia's decision to veto it, namely the treatment of Syria's opposition groups in the resolution. The Indian representative stated, '[the resolution] does not condemn the violence perpetrated by the Syrian opposition, nor does it place any responsibility on the opposition to abjure violence and engage with the Syrian authorities for redressing of their grievances

through a peaceful political process' (UNSC 2011c:7). Russia underscored the implications of failing to demand that opposition groups heed the call for political dialogue. In a Bloomberg interview with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on 1 June 2011, Lavrov warned against sending a signal to Syrian opposition groups that if they did not cooperate in internal political dialogues, they would benefit from assistance from external military forces (Russia 2011).

The compilation of responses from the BRICS states provides a broad overview of the narrative promoted by BRICS regarding the Syrian crisis. They paint a picture of the acceptable and non-acceptable range of actions for the international community playing a role in addressing the crisis, the need to be devoid of inherent biases in selecting which parties in the conflict to support, and the need to de-escalate the situation by bringing all the relevant parties together to engage in dialogue rather than continuing to apply pressure and inciting an undesired outcome. The emphasis on political dialogue is an essential element among the positions adopted by all the BRICS countries. For example, the Brazilian representative's statement captures that sentiment: 'Brazil firmly believes that meaningful and inclusive national dialogue, leading to effective political reform, is the only way out of the current crisis in Syria' (UNSC 2011c:12).

Furthermore, as Abdenur (2016) highlights, the BRICS deems it necessary to break the automatic link between humanitarian assistance and military intervention, which reflects the tendency of Western countries seeking to justify military intervention. The execution of the NATO-led intervention in Libya provides a poignant example of the inadequacy of the existing orthodoxy on managing humanitarian crises, and strengthens the position of the BRICS in advocating an alternative approach, which would not jeopardise the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state. The BRICS engagement in the Security Council, though fleeting, was successful in underscoring the political capability of the group. The BRICS collective drew attention to the procedures in the Security Council and raised the level of scrutiny. For India, Brazil and South Africa, which are seeking reform of the Council to allow them permanent seats on the body, the scenarios in Libya and Syria respectively justify the need to ensure greater representation and equality on the Council.

The Security Council made another attempt, in February 2012, to agree on a resolution on the situation in Syria. This entailed a resolution tabled by Morocco that supported the League of Arab States' plan to engage Syria in a political process to transition the country to new political leadership in a peaceful manner and in keeping with international law. On this occasion, the BRICS member countries were split in their support of the resolution, with India and South Africa voting in favour and Russia and China voting against it.[13] The plan included enabling the establishment of a national unity government that would also comprise opposition groups and would be responsible for putting measures in place to hold free multiparty national elections (UNSC 2011d).

The plan, however, was not accepted by the Syrian authorities, which insisted that ulterior motives were at play and justified their military actions by the need to stabilise the security situation on the ground. Given that the Syrian government was unwilling to accept its proposal, the League of Arab States sought the endorsement of the plan by the UNSC. The League also desired that the international community put pressure on Syria by imposing sanctions and travel bans, in an attempt to force the regime to respond to the seemingly popular demand for political reform. In response, Russia was adamant that the attempts at regime change were still in place. In a letter dated 14 February 2012, from Russia's permanent representative to the UN to the Secretary-General, Russia's State Duma of the Federal Assembly articulated the government's position, stating the resolution 'in its current form is incapable of achieving the principal goal of ending the domestic conflict and restoring peace in Syria', and that the Security Council 'should in no way adopt the position of either party to the conflict' (UNGA Security Council 2012). The Russian perspective was that all sides needed to renounce violence in order to move forward with the process of mutual political dialogue.

Although underscoring its support for the Arab League's endeavours, China took the position that 'to put undue emphasis on pressuring the Syrian Government for a prejudged result of the dialogue or to impose any solution will not help resolve the Syrian issue. Instead, that may further complicate the situation' (UNSC 2011d:9). Chinese Ambassador Li Baodong also highlighted that China viewed the Russian

[13] Brazil no longer held a non-permanent seat on the Security Council at the time.

amendments to the resolution favourably and that those concerns should have been considered. According to the Ambassador, the unity of the Security Council was jeopardised when a resolution was tabled with members still occupying very different camps and unable to converge around a point of consensus.

Notwithstanding Russia and China's position, India and South Africa voted in favour of the resolution, given that it was driven by the regional organisation, the League of Arab States. Indian Ambassador Puri, permanent representative to the UN, asserted that,

> Our support for the Resolution is in accordance with our support for the efforts by the Arab League for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. We note that the resolution expressly rules out any measures under Article 42 of the Charter and calls for serious political dialogue between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the opposition under the auspices of the League of Arab States (India 2012a).

South Africa's Ambassador Sangqu similarly stated that,

> South Africa believes that the efforts of the League of Arab States, as the organisation with knowledge of and proximity to the situation in Syria, should be supported and given the necessary political space to find a solution to the Syrian crisis … South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution today because we believe that it has the potential to help facilitate a Syrian-led political process and dialogue between the Syrian parties, and to bring long-term peace and stability to the country … (UNSC 2011d:11).

The ambassador further indicated that South Africa did not believe that the resolution was crafted to support regime change in Syria. This position differed from the stance taken by Russia, demonstrating a divide between the IBSA group and other members of the BRICS coalition. Although they identified with the BRICS and had aligned themselves to Russia and China in the past, on this occasion, India and South Africa opted to take contrary positions in keeping with their national positions, and incidentally, aligning more closely with positions adopted by the West.

Further divisions among the BRICS could be observed in the positions taken on UNSC resolution S/2012/538 of 19 July, 2012. Russia and China both maintained negative votes, while India voted in favour and South Africa abstained. The resolution would have called for sanctions to be imposed on Syria if it did not quell the violence and was based on the six-point plan of Kofi Annan, the Joint Special

Envoy of the UN and the League of Arab States. China's contention with this resolution was multi-fold. China disagreed with the one-sided approach of the resolution, which sought to allocate the bulk of the responsibility for ending the violence to the government. It was also of the opinion that the resolution was pre-emptive to the mediation endeavours being undertaken by Special Envoy Kofi Annan. Furthermore, China emphasised the need to maintain state sovereignty as a primary principle and as a result the importance of an internally guided political process to steer the course of reform in the country. Lastly, China again took issue with the procedural dimensions of how the resolution was negotiated, noting that further collaboration and willingness could have resulted in a text that gained unanimous support (China 2012).

India justified its positive vote by stating, 'we voted in favour of the Security Council Resolution on 19 July 2012 to facilitate united action by the Security Council in support of the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy and to ensure the continued presence of the UNSMIS in Syria' (India 2012b). Further explanations of India's vote highlighted that India's vote was in keeping with its position from the beginning, in support of the Annan six-point plan and that to vote against the resolution would be to oppose its own position (Nayar 2012).

At the same time, however, it was also thought that India's vote, which ran contrary to previous positions taken with respect to the imposition of sanctions, was based on India succumbing to the pressure imposed by the US to support the resolution (Choedon 2017). Borah (2012) also outlines India's national interests that were at stake in its stance against Syria, and ascribes India's change in stance towards Syria to a number of political and economic factors, among them its desire for a permanent seat on the UNSC and enhancing its image in that regard.

South Africa's DIRCO clarified South Africa's abstention vote by alleging,

> It has been incorrectly reported that South Africa was opposed to sanctions on the Syrian government. I wish to emphasise that South Africa fully supports the request of the Joint Special Envoy for stern action. Our problem with the resolution voted on yesterday was not the issue of sanctions on the government per se, but the fact that the text did not provide for measures against the opposition for non-compliance with the Annan plan (South Africa 2012).

South Africa further expressed the view that without the opposition forces giving up their arms, the Syrian government would continue its military advances in an effort to stifle the opposition's advance. This situation would only exacerbate the tenuous security dilemma. The resolution therefore had to be explicit in its reference to the requirement for opposition groups to cooperate in the execution of the ceasefire and the political dialogue to steer the course of Syria's future. It should be noted that India held a similar view with respect to the 4 October 2011 resolution on Syria.

Moreover, South Africa criticised the workings of the Security Council, and directly linked these to the inability of the Council to achieve consensus on the matters at hand. Particularly, South Africa interpreted the challenge of the Council as the individual permanent members of the Security Council working to fulfil their individual interests and being severely hampered by ideological differences (South Africa 2012).

In the months of the initial response by the Security Council to the Syrian conflict, attempts were made by the BRICS, led by Russia, to spearhead the Council's approach to the crisis. Subsequent to the presidential statement issued by the President of the UNSC on 3 August 2011, Russia and China, supported by Brazil, India and South Africa, worked on drafting a resolution to respond to the situation in Syria, which would reinforce the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention. This draft, however, did not advance.

On 24 November 2011 a meeting of the BRICS Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held to engage with the topic of the Middle East and North Africa. The Deputy Ministers concluded that in the context of the Arab Spring, the domestic demand for reform of those societies, and the violent conflict that often ensued, the international community could only engage in resolving the crisis 'through peaceful means, without resorting to force, through establishing a broad national dialogue with due respect for independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the countries in the region' (Brazil 2011c). The BRICS Deputy Ministers affirmed the importance of not resorting to violence to attain the desired political outcome and for all sides in the conflicts, particularly the governing authorities, to avoid human rights violations. They asserted that the crisis in Syria could only be resolved through all parties in Syria coming to the table for peaceful negotiations. The Ministers also rejected

'external interference in Syria's affairs, not in accordance with the UN Charter' (Brazil 2011c). Of particular significance was the stress placed on the centrality of the UNSC as the body responsible for 'maintaining international peace and security', a position consistently held by the BRICS group (Brazil 2011c).

The BRICS Delhi declaration emanating from the Fourth BRICS Summit, held on 29 March 2012, articulated the joint BRICS position concerning the Syrian crisis and contained similar language as the above statement. In it, the five countries demanded an immediate ceasefire and cessation of human rights violations and expressed support for the attempts of the UN, the Arab League and Kofi Annan as the Joint Special Envoy, to resolve the conflict. They advocated 'dealing with the crisis through peaceful means that encourage broad national dialogues that reflect the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society, and respect Syrian independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty' (BRICS 2012).

The initiative of Brazil to contribute to the normative debate on R2P, by introducing the concept of 'responsibility while protecting' (RwP), revealed the underlying nuances in the differences in the positions of BRICS countries to R2P. It also exposed the willingness of other states to exploit those differences to weaken the cohesion of the coalition. By taking leadership on advancing the concept of RwP, Brazil would plunge itself into the centre of the debate on the principle of state sovereignty and intervention, a position which, by some assessments, it was not fully prepared to assume (Stuenkel & Tourinho 2014).[14] The RwP proposal allowed for the consideration of the use of force in intervention, but under greater restrictions and higher levels of accountability. It was meant to narrow the divide between those in full support of all three pillars of R2P and those who still had major reservations, especially concerning pillar three.[15] In essence, it was a divide between the Global North and the Global South. The other BRICS states were receptive towards Brazil's

[14] An elaboration of the three main components of Brazil's responsibility while protecting concept may be found in Stuenkel and Tourinho's (2014) work.

[15] The three pillars of R2P may be understood as follows: Pillar one concerns the responsibility of the state to protect its citizens against genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Pillar two emphasises the onus placed on the international community to support states to uphold those responsibilities. Pillar three, which is the most controversial of the pillars, hinges on the burden placed on the international community to intervene in the event that a state neglects to fulfil its responsibility.

proposal, but Russia and China were guarded in their acceptance of the proposal, given that it allowed for intervention under particular circumstances (Prawde 2014).

The response to Brazil's RwP proposal was mixed, ranging from hesitation to scepticism to cautious consideration. Coming on the heels of the Libyan intervention and the backlash that ensued, the ongoing crisis in Syria, and Brazil's alignment with the other BRICS countries in abstaining from voting on Resolution 1973 on Libya and the October 2011 resolution on Syria, Western countries were not inclined to support this Brazilian initiative (Benner 2013). Tides changed, however, when Brazil's stance on Syria evolved, supporting a resolution condemning the violence in Syria, after previously aligning with the BRICS, particularly Russia and China, to abstain on such resolutions. On 19 December 2011, at the 66th session of the UN General Assembly, Brazil voted in favour of Resolution 176, which called for an immediate ceasefire, cessation of human rights violations, and implementation of the plan of action of the League of Arab States (United Nations 2011b). Brazil was the only member of the BRICS coalition that voted in favour of the resolution; the other four BRICS states abstained. This change, in addition to revisions made by Brazil to the RwP principle, de-emphasising the requirement for chronological sequencing of the three R2P pillars, was seen favourably by the West and subsequently, Western countries viewed RwP more favourably (Benner 2013). The differences in the positions of BRICS states were clearly evident and by endorsing Brazil's proposal, Western states sought to drive the wedge in further.

4.4 Analysis of the BRICS Tenure on the UNSC

The presence of all five BRICS countries on the UNSC in 2011 was a momentous development, as it provided an institutionalised context within which the BRICS could persuade global powers and international audiences of its stance concerning a major international security and governance issue: R2P. The significance of the UNSC is elucidated in Hurrell's statement on the procedural dimension of legitimacy. Hurrell (2005) affirms the need to appreciate the Security Council for the procedural legitimacy that it represents, rather than its substantive essence, such as its ability to determine whether the use of force is lawful in a given instance. The Security Council provides a platform for debate and discussion, and allows member states to air and justify their positions. Elaborating on the value of the Security Council in promoting legitimacy, Hurrell (2005: 24) argues, '[the Security Council] should rather

be viewed as a deeply flawed and heavily politicised body in which arguments can be presented and policies defended because other, better, forums simply do not exist'.

This is echoed by Ralph and Gallagher (2015:558), who underscore that from a 'proceduralist perspective of international legitimacy', the Security Council is able to give credence to particular views or courses of action through the passing of resolutions. The authority of the decisions taken emanates not from the moral substance of the resolution, but from the procedural processes, which allow specific actors within a specified period to engage in processes of discussion, negotiation and compromise with a view to influencing the actions and agreements of the Council. The pivotal issue then becomes the composition of the Council and who the actors in a position to decide are. The simultaneous presence of all BRICS states on the Council in 2011 therefore represented an opportunity to frame a BRICS perspective in the international security domain.

Over the course of 2011 when all the BRICS states were simultaneously members of the UN Security Council, and in a position to influence the peace and security global agenda jointly, the BRICS demonstrated a degree of unity that allowed a distinct contribution to norm evolution in the international community. In a statement by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, it was declared that the BRICS states coordinated their positions during their time on the Security Council (Russia 2011). This was also expressed in the Fourth BRICS Summit Delhi Declaration, in which the BRICS states recalled '[their] close coordination in the Security Council during the year 2011' (BRICS 2012).

The unity displayed was not seamlessly carried over to the subsequent year, however. The IBSA states (India, Brazil and South Africa) sought to contribute to the mediation of the Syrian conflict by taking a leading role in engaging with the Syrian authorities. India, Brazil and South Africa, coordinating their positions through the IBSA forum, attempted to spearhead a mediation effort with the Syrian authorities, aiming to convince the Syrian regime to desist from using force against the civilian population and promote a ceasefire. IBSA dispatched a delegation of its Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs to Syria in August 2011, which met with President Assad and the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs during the visit.

The IBSA countries also advocated the issuance of an UNSC presidential statement on Syria, which was issued on 3 August 2011, and represented the first declaration coming out of the Council. The presidential statement called for a ceasefire and access for humanitarian aid to the country. The IBSA group was influential in bringing together Russia and China and the Western states, to reach consensus on the statement. As members of the BRICS, they provided a bridge between the two sides, which held opposing views on addressing the Syrian crisis. IBSA's efforts in mediating the Syrian crisis, were, however, not enduring and by 2012 the efforts had already fizzled away. Simultaneously, Russia and China maintained closely allied positions. Of the five BRICS countries, Russia was the closest ally to Syria and had most invested in an outcome to the conflict that would see Syrian President Assad remaining in power.

The post-Cold War international security environment, in which the increasing incidence of humanitarian crises and violence by states against their populations are being recorded, creates a sensitive normative context for BRICS member states. The shift in focus presents a challenge to existing normative values, particularly those applicable to sovereignty and non-intervention (Job 2016). As staunch supporters of the role of international law and multilateralism, the authority for legitimising the use of force in attempting to resolve such conflicts became a pivotal issue. Job (2016; 896) labels the approach of India, China and Brazil to intervention as 'pragmatic flexibility.' As evidenced by Brazil's RwP initiative, Brazil expresses willingness to concede to foreign intervention under certain circumstances. China's position, while generally opposed to external intervention, revolves around the necessity of upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter, maintaining the integrity of the UNSC mandate, and respecting the sovereignty of the state, in the event that humanitarian intervention or peacekeeping operations become necessary to prevent genocide, war crimes and atrocities against civilians (Zhaoxu 2018, Zhenmin 2009). On the substantive challenge of responding to the political and humanitarian crisis in Syria, the BRICS countries were sharply criticised for opposing the efforts of the Council to bring meaningful resolution to the crisis. The IBSA countries were also singled out for failing to take a normative stand and to be responsible powers to mitigate the worsening crisis (Human Rights Watch 2011). Although the BRICS countries' stance was widely disparaged, given that they were

acting within the precinct of the Security Council, their positions had to be respected. This does not mean, however, that other countries did not find other ways to apply pressure on the Syrian regime unilaterally, for example through sanctions or to topple the administration through supplying arms to opposition groups.

Garwood-Gowers (2013) posits that the difference in membership status at the UNSC contributes to the divergence in positions between the IBSA group and Russia and China. Given that India, Brazil and South Africa are non-permanent members of the Council seeking permanent membership, they face pressure to justify themselves as worthy of attaining such status and therefore, by necessity, pressure to be viewed favourably by Western states. On the other hand, Russia and China are secure in their positions and do not require the support of Western states.

Ziegler (2016:351) highlights an important consideration in the political nature of the R2P principle, which is well understood by Russia. The inherent issue is as much procedural as it is substantive. A critical factor or question to be answered lies in 'who is authorised to invoke the principle', causing embedded disparities in global power relations to surface. Bearing in mind that the UNSC is the body authorised to implement the R2P principle, the political processes at play within the Council are relevant. The Indian permanent representative to the United Nations, Syed Akbaruddin (2018), illustrates the political dimension of R2P by stating, 'while Responsibility to Protect, at its core, has an appeal as a "noble cause", its usage has only been selective in the context of a wider geo-strategic balance of power among competing players or groups.' He further notes that the application of the R2P is susceptible to 'double standards, selectivity, arbitrariness and misuse for political gains' (Akbaruddin 2018). In this context, concerns may be articulated about how the proposal for invocation of R2P was introduced and negotiated, whether participants in the discussion are allowed to voice their reservations and the level of attention given to these reservations, whether there is equality in how various members are treated and the motivations and interests of those states calling for invoking the R2P principle. The BRICS countries sought to highlight the discrepancies in the Council that privileged some members and some proposals over others. Furthermore, there is a requirement for interpretation and assigning meaning to events taking place on the ground that would justify the need for the international community to react. The way in which such information is presented

may also reveal political motives that favour particular actors and therefore particular courses of action over others. All of these factors contribute to the political aspect of R2P.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter revealed the increased legitimacy attained by the BRICS by acting as a political actor within the sphere of the UNSC. It cannot be denied that the BRICS played an important role in contributing to the debate on the R2P principle, as a result of its members' joint activity on the Security Council (Odeyemi 2016b; Adams 2012; Abdenur 2016). They were able to use their positions as permanent and non-permanent members to direct the dialogue on R2P, to focus and bring attention to the implementation aspect of R2P. The concerns raised by the BRICS could not be overlooked easily, if the Security Council was to support implementation of Pillar three of the R2P norm. A rift remains between the West and the emerging and developing countries over the interpretation and understanding of the use of force and humanitarian intervention in international security crises (Lee & Chan 2016; Ziegler 2016).

Not only was the BRICS able to frame the debate, but through participation in an established international institution, it was able to secure social agreement on its right to participate and to have a voice in matters of international security significance. This moved the BRICS from being predominantly concerned with international financial governance matters to a broader range of critical international issues. It allowed the group to work towards redefining and fine-tuning its identity as an international actor. By operating within the confines of the UNSC, and coordinating their positions, the BRICS elicited tacit agreement from other members of the community that the five countries were allowed a seat at the table and could speak with a united voice on issues under consideration by the Council.

The next chapter focuses on the BRICS's engagement with the climate change regime, paying particular attention to the ways in which the BRICS contributed to shaping the agenda and inserting their voice in climate change governance. In so doing, the chapter reveals the legitimacy attained by the BRICS by casting itself as relevant to this significant international issue.

CHAPTER FIVE: Setting the Agenda Through Climate Change Engagements

5.1 Introduction

In assessing the legitimacy of the BRICS, the issue of climate change provides a useful focal point. Climate change has been deemed one of the many critical issues on which the positions among the BRICS states differ substantially, representing a potential fracture line between the four newly emerging economies in the BRICS, Brazil, South Africa, India and China, and Russia. The subject has the potential to enhance perceptions of Russia as an outlier in the group, not quite an emerging power, but rather a former power that is trying to reinsert itself as a significant actor in global power relations. The issue of climate change could possibly lend credence to those who question Russia's membership in the group, highlighting the vast and fundamental differences between Russia and the rest. Furthermore, even among Brazil, South Africa, India and China, differences exist in their positions and inclinations in the climate change debate (Hurrell & Sengupta 2012). As a result, the inability of the BRICS to share a common platform on matters of climate change, which is a central issue in terms of global governance, adds fuel to the voices that seek to delegitimise the BRICS on the basis of the apparent fracture lines within the group.

Given the above, this chapter addresses the approach taken by the BRICS in immersing itself in the climate change agenda and framework as a means to gain legitimacy as an actor in the global governance framework. It delves into the ways in which the BRICS seeks to establish its legitimacy on this critical global governance matter through efforts to shape the agenda and contribute to the range of actions and activities designed to combat climate change. The criteria that are used in this chapter to assess the BRICS's pursuit of legitimacy in the climate change domain are firstly its attempts to frame the discourse on attributing responsibility for climate change and the actions to be taken by developed and developing countries to mitigate climate change. Secondly, the chapter deals with the acts of legitimation engaged in by the BRICS, such as its joint summit declarations and communiqués that declare their position on climate change, their establishment of funding for climate change related projects through the BRICS NDB, as well as the establishment of environmentally friendly joint initiatives. Lastly, mention is made of

the BRICS's attempts to secure social agreement on its participation as a legitimate actor in the global climate change framework by engaging with other established actors and institutions, such as other multilateral banks, that comprise that framework. These three illustrations highlight the BRICS's efforts to gain legitimacy through its climate change engagement.

5.2 Emergence and Manifestation of BRICS's Agency on Climate Change

Reflecting on the earlier definition of 'power' by Barnett and Duval as 'the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate' (2005:8), climate change should be considered a pivotal issue for BRICS countries. The BRICS has placed a premium on the need to counteract the asymmetric relationship between the Global North and the Global South, underscoring that countries of the Global South have a right to identify and pursue their own development paths. They have prided themselves on their achievement in climbing the global economic ladder through adhering to their unique development paths based on their own unique circumstances. The BRICS countries have articulated the view that developing states have been victims of an international order designed to privilege developed nations and designed to dictate to developing countries the acceptable range of behaviour. The global climate change regime has echoed this dynamic. In that context, it was important for the BRICS to have a voice, influencing the future climate regime that would be adopted.

Climate change is part of what Hurrell and Sengupta (2012: 464) refer to as the 'development-power-autonomy nexus'. There are several aspects of this nexus. Firstly, as the BRICS countries are significant contributors to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, their development trajectory and decisions have an impact upon the global environment and the climate change regime complex. Secondly, in order to reduce poverty and inequality and meet domestic development targets, the BRICS insists on having the freedom to plot development pathways that fulfil these objectives, without external pressure to conform to environmental prescriptions that were not similarly imposed on developed countries during their industrialisation eras. Thirdly, climate change, and environmental issues more broadly, can exacerbate distributional conflicts, by unfairly ascribing the burden of mitigation to some states or with some states suffering disproportionately from the effects of climate change. All

these factors point to the connection between development, power and autonomy, which makes climate change a critical issue for states such as those comprising the BRICS.

Furthermore, the BRICS group has adopted a position of being a voice for the developing world, which has been articulated in its summit statements. Considering that the global climate change negotiations have been reflective of a tussle between developed and developing countries, it represents an opportunity for leadership from the BRICS. In order to do this, however, the BRICS would have to overcome the internal discrepancies which have introduced scepticism about its ability to be relevant to this debate. The issue of climate change negotiations and the position of BRICS in that process reveal dissimilarities among the five countries, but also illustrate the influence of the five countries in shaping the agenda of the global climate change regime.

All BRICS countries are major emitters, with China being the largest GHG emitter in the world, India in fourth place, Russia in sixth and Brazil in eighth place (Hovi *et al*. 2017). While Russia, as a developed country and part of the Annex I group of developed countries, had to undertake legally binding obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, the other four BRICS countries, as part of the non-Annex group of developing countries, were not subject to the same obligations. The starting point for Russia and the other four BRICS countries is therefore starkly distinct and has resulted in different approaches to climate change negotiations, with Russia loosely negotiating as part of the Umbrella Group, which includes the US, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Norway and Ukraine, and on the other side, Brazil, South Africa, India and China as part of the G77+China, which largely represents the bulk of developing countries. Historically, Brazil, India and China were central to the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, setting the stage for developed countries to be held liable for carbon emissions and their historical responsibility in that process (Destradi & Jakobeit 2015).

Because of the rapid economic growth and industrialisation that took place after the 1990s in Brazil, India, China and to a lesser extent South Africa, carbon emissions skyrocketed, causing emissions in these countries to be comparable to those in developed countries. This development put the four countries on the radar in terms

of the need to change the climate regime to make it more reflective of changing geopolitical dynamics. The Umbrella Group's position, for example, has called for major developing country emitters to be subject to obligations similar to those of Annex I countries, in keeping with the shifts in the global economic landscape. Developed countries considered it necessary that these countries also be held responsible for contributing to global carbon emissions and therefore argued that they should be made to take on legally binding targets for emissions cuts. The four countries, Brazil, India, China and South Africa, were invited to participate in the Major Emitters Forum on Climate Change, which was convened by former US President, Barack Obama, as a platform for bringing all major players to the table to be able to secure agreement ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen (COP21).

At the 2009 COP21, four of the five BRICS countries were crucial to the negotiation of the final text of the conference, the 'Copenhagen Accord'. For the first time, Brazil, South Africa, India and China (later referring to themselves as BASIC) met frequently during the conference to coordinate their positions (Ramesh 2009 cited in Hallding *et al*. 2013). As major emitters, but still considering themselves developing countries facing significant social challenges, including issues of widespread poverty and inequality, these countries found themselves being targets of developed countries that were pressing to have these emerging economies bound by a legally binding treaty. Fundamentally, the development aspirations and growth potential of these countries were being challenged and capped by the discourse that the planet was already burdened and could not accommodate the full development needs of these emerging powers (Hallding *et al.* 2013). It was reported that during COP21, the Danish Prime Minister was collaborating with about 24 countries, including Germany, France and the US, to table a resolution that would demand that the voluntary national commitments of emerging economies be replaced with legally binding obligations (Dasgupta 2011). At the same time, seeking to overcome the stalemate in Copenhagen, then US President Obama met with the leaders of Brazil, South Africa, India and China to attempt to come to a common agreement. As a result of that engagement, the US and those four countries drafted the Copenhagen Accord. Although there was dissatisfaction among many parties, including the G77, that the

official negotiating tracks of the Conference were side-lined in favour of an exclusive small group negotiation and therefore criticism of the way that the Copenhagen Accord emerged, 141 member states eventually signed the Copenhagen Accord, including the other BRICS member, Russia.

While the Copenhagen Accord was not a legally binding treaty, its significance was that for the first time developing countries, including emerging powers, opted to undertake voluntary emission targets. This represented a significant shift, narrowing the distinction between those responsible for mitigation and those that were not (Hurrell & Sengupta 2012). China has highlighted that its voluntary reduction of GHG emissions is in keeping with its national circumstances and is unconditional, that is, not dependent on the commitments made by other countries (China 2009). Brazilian President Michel Temer has underscored the significant efforts undertaken by Brazil to incorporate clean energy in its energy profile, representing over 40 per cent of its energy mix (Temer 2017).

In adopting this approach, the BASIC countries were able to acknowledge the geopolitical shifts taking place in the international system, with emerging powers rising to the forefront of global governance and in that context, assuming some degree of leadership and responsibility to address the climate change challenge. At the same time, their approach distinguishes them from developed countries, by stipulating different terms and conditions for action. The leadership of the BASIC in submitting voluntary commitments also influenced other developing countries to do the same (Hochstetler & Milkoreit 2014).

In the climate negotiation regime, the BRICS states are challenged to carve out a space in which they secure commitments from other states, avert attempts to limit their own growth and avoid being saddled with costly climate change actions (Keohane & Oppenheimer 2016). The BASIC countries have been consistent in calling for a clear distinction between developed and developing countries as two clearly distinct categories, requiring very distinct actions. They have not allowed the discourse to be overtaken by arguments that emphasise the rise of emerging economies and the fact that this development creates an unusual scenario not envisioned in the Kyoto Protocol, with some emerging economies now exceeding developed countries in the quantity of GHG emissions. In aligning themselves with

the G77+China group, they have been adamant in calling for developed countries to honour their commitments to legally binding targets, as well as climate finance and technology transfer. On the last-mentioned point, Hurrell and Sengupta (2012) highlight the dissatisfaction of emerging powers with the unfulfilled commitments of developed countries to climate financing and technology transfer.

Russia's position has been that developing countries also ought to be held to legally binding targets, and they have traditionally been opposed to the common but differentiated responsibilities principle. Concurrently, a key contribution of the BASIC group to climate negotiations has been a refusal to be coerced into accepting similar terms and conditions as developed countries and rejecting any indication of the need for its members to be subjected to mandatory emission reductions targets. It has maintained that the problem of climate change was created by the developed world and that faced with the imperative of reducing poverty in its respective countries and addressing other socio-economic challenges, its development efforts should not be hampered. The countries have consistently emphasised the need to adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and particular capabilities and equity, which has also been uncompromisingly underscored by the G77+China group as fundamental. Although the 2015 Paris Agreement was hailed as a bigger success than the Copenhagen Conference owing to its accomplishment in attaining a legally binding agreement, the commitments of developing countries remained voluntary. This was due to the positions adopted by the BASIC countries, as some of the more advanced economies in the developing country classification, as well as the wider G77+China.

The fundamental differences in positions between the BASIC group and Russia created a divergence in the BRICS. The joint statement of the first meeting of the BRIC leaders held in Ekaterinburg, Russia in 2009, included comments from the BRIC countries on their willingness to engage in discussion on combatting climate change on the premise of common but differentiated responsibility. The countries also committed to pursuing cooperation in the area of energy. In the same year, however, the BASIC countries coordinated their position at the Copenhagen climate change conference, which was in contradiction to the position adopted by Russia. In 2011, Russia proposed the initiation of meetings of senior officials in science and technology of BRICS countries, to discuss collaboration in the area of science and

technology, which included collaboration on research in climate change and energy efficiency (China 2015; Gatilov 2012). It is reported that in 2011, Russia's lead negotiator, Oleg Shamanov, shared with Ria Novosti, Russia's then state-owned news agency, that when Russia introduced climate change and energy efficiency as issues for collaboration among the BRICS states, it was with the awareness that the other BRICS countries were on the opposite side of the pole to Russia pertaining to climate change (Dobrovidova 2015). In 2015, under Russia's chairmanship of the group, Russia convened the first meeting of Ministers of the Environment of the BRICS, which discussed issues of sustainable development, the inclusive green economy and climate change. The Ministers committed to setting up a working group on the environment, in addition to probing the possibility of financing climate-related projects by the BRICS' NDB.

The official position of the BRICS on climate change, as expressed in the 2018 Johannesburg Summit declaration, supports the implementation of the Paris Agreement, recognition of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and climate financing and technological transfers by developed countries to developing countries (BRICS 2018a). Adopting this position would have required negotiation within the group to sidestep the apparent differences in views on the above aspects of climate change. In adopting this baseline position, they sought to overcome their differences to adopt a BRICS position. This position was by no means ambitious, but allowed them to add a joint perspective to the global debate.

The establishment by the BRICS of the NDB has proven to be one of the ways in which the BRICS contributes to the global climate regime. The NDB, as part of its environmental and social framework, has established climate change as one of its core pillars, aiming to support climate change mitigation and adaption efforts. The bank has set its focus on funding for sustainable development and sustainable infrastructure and has given an indication that it plans to dedicate 60 per cent of its funding to renewable energy projects (NDB 2016). Since the commencement of its operations in Shanghai in 2016, the NDB has approved 13 sustainable development projects in BRICS member states, at least half of which were projects in renewable energy. The NDB has also cited the amount of carbon emissions that would be avoided by implementation of each project. The bank has joined with other multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development

Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, among others, in committing to climate mitigation and adaptation through 'aligning financial flows to the Paris agreement' (NDB 2017). A secretariat mission of the Green Climate Fund, which is the fund established by the 194 countries party to the UNFCCC to support climate change mitigation and adaptation among developing countries, also held discussions with the NDB in China in 2017 to discuss areas for mutual cooperation. BRICS's ability to secure cooperative arrangements with established multilateral development banks in the area of climate change confirms the agreement by members of the international community that BRICS is an appropriate participant in the climate change framework.

In addition to the work being undertaken by the NDB, the Third Meeting of BRICS Ministers of the Environment, which was convened in June 2017, agreed to implement the BRICS Partnership for Urban Environmental Sustainability Initiative. This initiative would focus on cooperation among the BRICS countries in the areas of air and water pollution, waste management and spatial planning (eThekwini Municipality 2017), with a view to addressing issues of urban sustainability that plague BRICS countries. In addition, they have pursued a range of climate-related and environmental sustainability initiatives, such as the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, BRICS Agricultural Research Platform, Clean Rivers Umbrella Programme, and the BRICS Environmentally Sound Technology Cooperation Platform (BRICS 2018a). The BRICS has therefore been pursuing practical areas of cooperation, which puts it on track with global climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Bearing in mind the history of divergence among the BRICS countries on the issue of climate change, the significance of the BRICS exploring avenues to collaborate and assume a leadership role in climate change mitigation and adaptation actions is particularly noteworthy. While this potential fracture line threatened to undermine its claims to legitimacy as a political body, it has instituted innovative ways to be relevant to the global climate change movement. By taking on collaborative action to address climate change, it is able to make its voice heard, but importantly, to do so on its own terms.

The BRICS contribution to the climate change debate is linked to its self-stated posture as a voice for the developing world. While the comments on climate change in BRICS Summit statements have been limited to one or two paragraphs, the broader narrative concerning climate change has been emphasised through a range of different media. The crux of the BRICS position has been an endorsement of the Paris climate accord, which in itself is indicative of a set of positions and principles, which the BRICS wants to ensure, are being upheld.

Keohane and Oppenheimer (2016:146) describe two characteristics of the Paris Agreement as its 'discretion' and 'vagueness.' Under the Paris Agreement Pledge and Review system, states are able to communicate intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) which represent the actions they plan to undertake to reduce GHG emissions. These INDCs can take a variety of shapes and can be conveyed in whatever units the state decides. Furthermore, the Paris Agreement does not stipulate how ambitious a state needs to be in its mitigation efforts. For example, Keohane and Oppenheimer (2016:146) refer to Russia's INDCs as 'neither ambitious nor specific'. Beyond the communication of INDCs, states are not legally bound to fulfil the commitments specified in their INDCs. The voluntary and imprecise nature of the pledge and review system under the Paris Agreement finds acceptance among the BRICS states, as it resonates with principles endorsed by the BRICS.

The Paris Agreement fits within the BRICS's view of the need to support a plurality of approaches to development. It has favoured an approach to sustainable development that encapsulates the national circumstances of different countries. The development approach then is not imposed externally, but cultivated internally. It has also endorsed the principle of peaceful coexistence or 'respectful coexistence' (Temer 2017), which allows a state to pursue its own specifically calibrated development pathway, while being mindful of the imperative of other states to do the same. Chinese President Xi Jinping captures this in his statement, 'The law of the jungle where the strong prey on the weak and the zero-sum game are rejected, and peace, development and win-win cooperation have become the shared aspiration of all peoples' (Jinping 2017). This subscribes to a notion of development for all, which is opposed to an idea of development as a zero-sum game. Chinese President Xi Jinping, in speaking at the BRICS Business Forum in Xiamen in 2017, referred to the BRICS as 'a champion of development', noting the commitment of the BRICS to

sustainable development (Jinping 2017). By advocating issues of development premised on sustainability and the peculiarity of national circumstances, this narrative fits in with the BRICS identity as a voice for the developing world.

In articulating its position on climate change, the BRICS maintains the same language and rhetoric across a range of platforms. Each summit statement and ministerial meeting reflects similar language, voicing support for the Paris Agreement and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Different multilateral configurations of BRICS countries, such as IBSA and BASIC, also echoed similar sentiments as expressed in BRICS statements.[16] The BRICS has also placed a premium on ensuring economic growth while pursuing sustainable development. What has emerged in its engagement with climate change therefore, is an attempt to reinforce its principles of building a fair and equitable international political and economic order, while at the same time pursuing initiatives that are commensurate with an increasing role for the BRICS in the management of global affairs.

Keohane and Oppenheimer (2016:146) express the hope that coming out of the Paris Agreement, countries will take advantage of the opportunities to facilitate 'technologies, practices and international relationships' that will anchor their climate change responses as they seek to slow down the global temperature rise. The BRICS contribution to the global climate change agenda can therefore be considered in this context. The BRICS has taken advantage of their relationship and interaction to contribute to the climate change agenda. It has also employed a number of initiatives involving new technologies, research and collaborative ventures as part of its climate change mitigation efforts. Beyond climate change, Harmer and Buse (2014:142) highlight a similar 'progressive' approach of the BRICS towards global health, with the emphasis on innovation in medicines and medical technologies and in treating non-communicable diseases.

5.6 Conclusion

The BRICS response to the climate change agenda was indicative of its attempts to increase its legitimacy as an actor within the global governance architecture. The

[16] Refer for example to the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum - 8th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting held on 17 October 2017 and the joint statement issued at the conclusion of the 24th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change held in Beijing, China on 11 April 2017.

three criteria used to assess its legitimacy in this arena, namely its acts of legitimation, social agreement and framing, demonstrated a process towards developing the internal competence and momentum to contribute to the agenda and gain recognition and agreement by other actors within the international community, including states and international organisations, on its ability to play a role in the climate change regime.

In contributing to framing the climate change agenda, the BRICS incorporates acts of persuasion to anchor the agenda in favour of its national circumstances and the particular realities that affect developing countries. One aspect of this is rejecting the pressure to take on greater levels of responsibility in terms of climate change mitigation efforts. Another is maintaining the focus of the agenda on common but differentiated responsibilities, which maintains the separation between developed and developing countries with regard to climate change mitigation efforts, as well as on the Paris Agreement framework, which facilitates voluntary targets. Across various platforms, including summit meetings, technical meetings and official high-level meetings, the discourse is repeated on the imperative of adhering to implementation of the Paris agreement. Although the elaboration of a BRICS position on climate change has not been exhaustive, the use of the same language in communicating a basic stance on climate change management helps to seal the BRICS position and maintains consistency in the message to be communicated to other members of the international community on their interpretation of the locus of the climate change regime. Given their self-assigned position as representatives of the interests of developing states, the BRICS states' interpretation of climate change mitigation responsibilities coincides with the interests of developing states, which include the need for developed states to adhere to climate financing and technology transfer to assist developing states with adaptation and mitigation.

In addition, through the NDB projects and their own sustainable development initiatives, such as the BRICS Energy Research Platform, the BRICS countries dictate how to interpret climate change mitigation efforts for emerging economies like themselves. This ties in to the acts of legitimation engaged in by the BRICS to position itself as relevant to the climate change regime. The fact that climate change was established as one of the pillars of the NDB illustrates the conscious attempts to be perceived as legitimate actors in the climate change framework. When one

considers the procedural notion of legitimacy, including considerations of who should decide how rules are interpreted, the BRICS has inserted its voice as an actor within the climate change regime that makes a valid contribution in indicating the activities that should be undertaken based on its interpretation of the rules. Equally important has been its interaction with other members of the international community, such as Asian and European multilateral development banks, on issues of climate change mitigation, which enhances its legitimacy in that particular global governance framework.

The next chapter seeks to gain perspective on the perception of the BRICS by other members of the international community. In that regard, the chapter focuses on the views of the EU, given that it maintains a precisely articulated position towards the BRICS.

CHAPTER SIX: Legitimacy of the BRICS in the eyes of the European Union

6.1 Introduction

In a society of states, other members of the community have to recognise the existence and relevance of an entity in order for that entity to be deemed legitimate. In the case of the BRICS, various actors in the international community have either tacitly or overtly expressed their recognition of the BRICS and support for the mission, goal and activities of the BRICS as an entity. Other actors, on the other hand, have chosen to ignore the emergence of the BRICS as a non-issue, or at least an issue not deserving attention. One of the actors that has explicitly vocalised its position towards the BRICS is the EU. The significance of the EU's perspective is rooted in its centrality to global trade, security, geopolitical and normative matters. It occupies a global position as a 'formidable power in trade' (Meunier & Nicolaïdis 2006:907), as a 'shaper of global rules and standards' (Heisbourg 2010: 18), in addition to being home to major powers such as Germany, the UK and France.

Importantly also, historically, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Western European countries have occupied positions as imperialist powers and subsequent to World War II, as key constituents in the making of the rules to govern the international order, including shaping for example the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the multilateral trading system under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Whilst European powers are not synonymous with the European Union, the views of the European Union, which encompasses all of the great powers, are incorporated as representative of the Global North and to reflect the core-periphery dynamic. As European economies falter and European integration is shaken, the rise of the BRICS countries poses a direct challenge to the European Union, both in political and economic terms. On this basis, it is useful to consider whether and how the European Union has sought to legitimize or delegitimize the BRICS as members of the international community which could destabilize Europe's own position.

Whereas previous chapters focused on actions by the BRICS to legitimise its existence, this chapter examines the external views in order to comprehend the establishment of legitimacy in a society of states. This chapter therefore discusses

how the EU has sought to rationalise the BRICS's existence and activities. In doing this, the EU also defines how it should interact with the BRICS coalition, based on its perception of the BRICS and the perception of itself. The chapter also covers attempts to delegitimise the BRICS through a discourse focusing on difference and incoherence in the group.

This chapter engages the social agreement criteria to assess the legitimacy of BRICS. It evaluates the agreement by members of the international community on the acceptable range of BRICS conduct. It responds to the sub-question referred to earlier regarding who the other actors in the international community are that have bestowed legitimacy upon the BRICS.

6.2 The EU's View of the BRICS

In 2011, the European Parliament considered a report, submitted by Saryuss-Wolski, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to consider an EU policy towards the BRICS. Previously, the EU did not recognise the BRICS as a group and claimed that it interacted with the BRICS on the basis of bilateral relationships with each of the five individual countries. The tabling of the report and the subsequent resolution that was agreed on by the European Parliament set the context for the EU's perception of the BRICS and the changing multilateral order, the EU's engagement with the BRICS, including practical recommendations moving forward and the EU's revised role in an evolving global order. Part of the EU's consideration, emanating from the resolution, was how to reposition itself, its values and pursuits in the context of a global order in which emerging powers, such as the BRICS, occupy a much stronger and more ingrained position than ten years previously.

In providing justification to the European Parliament for the tabling of a resolution on the matter, the Committee of Foreign Affairs acknowledged that firstly 'the BRICS … and other emerging economies could gather strong relevance in foreign policy terms on the global scene, provided their economic growth further consolidates' (European Parliament 2012a: 8). The Committee also acknowledged that,

> The EU will have to duly take into account the new weight, in political and economic terms, of the BRICS and other emerging powers and use its political leverage to continue to promote universal values in the looming new multi-polar system of global governance and be at the forefront of the process of reform of the international governance system (European Parliament 2012a: 8).

The European Parliament was made aware of the need for the EU to depart from the underlying belief that the BRICS, given its differences and ad hoc coalition, was a temporary, unsustainable and unlikely actor on the international stage, that if ignored, would not gather the momentum to effect any meaningful change. Saryuss-Wolski, in introducing the resolution during the European Parliament's debate on 1 February 2012, stated, 'the BRICS as a cross-continental foreign policy actor does exist and the ostrich policy of hiding one's head in the sand, believing that the BRICS will stop existing, will not serve the EU well' (European Parliament 2012c). As such, the EU resolution provides official recognition to the BRICS as an international actor. Furthermore, the resolution makes it clear that taking a position to recognise the BRICS was important in order to manage the process of global governance reform and mitigate against the BRICS undermining the global governance system. The resolution specifically states, '[the European Parliament] … believes that the EU should duly take into account the new weight, in political and economic terms, of the BRICS and other emerging powers, as this may contribute to an orderly reform of global governance, based on a convergent platform without any destabilising effects' (European Parliament 2012b: p6). The EU not only recognises the multipolarity of the global political and economic order, but also recognises that global leadership may shift in favour of emerging countries. The transitions taking place therefore require careful management, to avoid the EU being locked out of the process.

The resolution highlights shifting demographics, that is, growing populations, among BRICS and other emerging powers, which would result in them having a larger share of the global population, which would thus inform the requirement to make global governance structures more representative of these changing dynamics.

6.3 EU-BRICS Relations

The debate among the members of the Parliament revealed core differences in ideas on how the EU should approach the BRICS. The main distinction was whether the EU should recognise BRICS as a bloc or grouping and in so doing devise a strategic policy for EU-BRICS engagement or whether the EU should only seek to engage with individual BRICS countries, given the inherent internal incoherence in the BRICS grouping. The EU's High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Catherine Ashton, during her debate contribution, stated,

> So my proposal, Mr President, is that we need to invest in these countries as strategic partners in a very strong and dynamic bilateral relationship; finding the themes and issues where we can work closely, economically and politically, bilaterally and internationally. We need to do that because is in our interest to do it. But I also believe that is in our interest to avoid a mindset that says it is the West versus the rest … Which brings me to my last remarks: Individual countries, yes; individual relationships, absolutely critical; but as they start to come together, it is really important that we think about what it is that brings them together to form a common position. We need to find ways in which we can create a different dynamic and create common calls with some or all of them when that works… (Ashton 2012).

Other members expressed similar views. For example, Sala, representing the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D group), the second-largest political grouping in the European Parliament, stated,

> I personally believe that the BRICS is not an integrated grouping and that we should not approach it as a single political unit – even though it is true that the BRICS can produce an *ad hoc* unified viewpoint, for example in the United Nations. However, we should not overestimate this aspect. We must put far greater emphasis on the creation of bilateral partnerships (European Parliament 2012c).

In other European circles, views expressed on the EU-BRICS interaction were comparable to those conveyed in the resolution. Cameron (2011), Director of the EU-Russia Centre based in Brussels, said the following: 'The EU has strategic partnerships with all BRIC countries and is currently negotiating new, comprehensive agreements with Russia, India and China. It has not so far recognised the BRICs as a group and there is no pressure to do. Brussels does not consider the BRICs capable of acting together on any major global issue'. Eurostat, the EU's Statistical Office, in its 2012 Eurostat pocketbooks edition on the EU and the BRICS, also documented that the EU did not acknowledge the BRICS as a group, preferring rather to interact with the countries on a bilateral basis (Eurostat 2012).

The final resolution represented a compromise, and stated that,

> The BRICS and current emerging economies do not constitute or comprise a formal grouping of countries designed to play a specific role in international affairs and whereas the EU should therefore develop a relationship with each one of those countries, taking note of their singularity and specific foreign policy objectives and aims … (European Parliament 2012b)

However, the EU also recognised that the BRICS was a significant foreign policy actor, given its history of coordination of foreign policy decisions within international institutions. Consequently, it would be imprudent of the EU to disregard the BRICS entity. The EU therefore agreed to adopt a multi-pronged approach, focusing on the bilateral relationships with individual BRICS countries but also looking for joint engagement with the BRICS group on issues of global governance.

In considering the way forward for EU-BRICS engagement, the European Parliament resolution stated that the EU might seek 'further political dialogue and understanding with the BRICS and other emerging countries, including on an individual basis' and it proposed that the EU should pursue high-level meetings between each distinct BRICS member and the EU (European Parliament 2012b). The aim of these meetings would be to find common ground with individual BRICS countries, establish a platform of trust and convince them to accept higher levels of responsibility concerning global governance. Part of the EU's challenge in dealing with the BRICS is the dissonance between BRICS positions and those of the EU. A common thread in the European Parliament's debate on the BRICS is the sense of tension between European values and BRICS values, and a feeling that the BRICS undermines the position of the EU in the global system by taking positions that are opposed to those of the EU, as in the case of the approach within the UNSC to resolving the situation in Syria.

In proposing to focus on the bilateral relationships between the EU and the individual BRICS countries, the EU is mindful of the need to achieve policy convergence and establish commonalities and willingness to cooperate if there is to be successful joint management of the international system. The EU acknowledges that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to consider global governance without the active involvement of the BRICS countries, given their centrality to the global economic system and the conversion of this economic advancement into political clout. As such, noting that the EU-BRICS engagement is primarily political in nature, the European Parliament highlighted the importance of collaborating with the BRICS to attain 'an inclusive system of global governance' (European Parliament 2012b:5). It is not useful to the EU to regard the BRICS as enemies. There is no going forward in global governance, with opposing streams that cannot identify with the other's position or see no need to coordinate positions. Both the BRICS and the EU would

be interested in maintaining stability in the international system. Constructive engagement is therefore deemed necessary for the EU.

6.4 BRICS as a Threat

The language of the EU concerning the BRICS circulates around the issue of the BRICS as a threat and a competitor to the EU. The resolution mentions the remarkable economic potential and predictions for BRICS countries, with the possibility of China and India comprising half of the total world economic activity by 2050, and underscores that Europe's ability to be recognised as a key player in the international system is tied to European countries being able to achieve similar levels of economic success. The EU is thus faced with the need to manage both the rise of emerging powers and its own place in the international system. In recommending the need for deepening and enhancement of bilateral relations with individual BRICS countries, the EU recognises the need to neutralise the BRICS as a coordinated actor. The Parliament agrees on the importance of developing 'a nuanced EU policy towards these countries aimed at creating synergies with individual BRICS countries and other emerging countries and at discouraging the creation or consolidation of potentially cohesive alternative groups of States in foreign policy terms' (European Parliament 2012b: 6). The EU is of the view that by engaging with individual BRICS countries, the EU would be able to take advantage of the synergies, maximise its economies of scale and bolster its standing in the regions occupied by BRICS countries. In so doing, the EU anticipates that it would be able to consolidate its position and create greater equilibrium in the balance of power, as it concerns the emergence of BRICS countries and other emerging powers.

It is evident therefore, that though the resolution stipulates the requirement to consider the emergence of the BRICS as an opportunity, not an obstacle, the EU perceives the BRICS as a threat that has to be managed. It represents a threat, both in terms of economic competition and in terms of the emergence of the BRICS as a political actor that can challenge the EU's position. Emphasis on the lack of coherence among BRICS countries and the differences among them fits within the EU's thinking of the need to scramble any further imbedding of the BRICS as a harmonised actor. The discourse emanating from the EU, highlighting the dissonance of the BRICS, undergirds the strategy employed by the EU, to avoid the consolidation of any group of countries that may pose a challenge to the EU's role in

the international system. This sentiment is reflected in the statements of several members of the European Parliament, spanning a range of different ideological platforms. Vigenin, representing the second largest party (S&D), stated,

> However, I would like to warn against attempts to simplify the picture and to regard the BRICS countries as a kind of unified political bloc. Indeed, we have no interest in seeing them move closer to one another to create a counterweight to the EU that will not necessarily be based on the principles and values we find important. That is why I would recommend an intensification of bilateral relations without artificially pushing these countries towards greater cohesion (European Parliament 2012c: 8).

In a similar tone, Ojuland of the Alliance for Liberals and Democrats of Europe claimed, 'if we cannot engage them positively, they might become extremely difficult competitors for the EU in economic terms while disregarding human values' (European Parliament 2012c: 8). In the submission of written comments on the resolution, Kohlicek, of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left party, noted,

> It is clear from certain passages that, on the one hand, there will be an attempt at various EU levels to unify viewpoints as much as possible, not just in foreign policy but also in other areas, so that the EU can act as a unified and sufficiently large partner. On the other hand, negotiations will be conducted individually with individual BRICS countries in order to eliminate the danger of them taking a unified approach (European Parliament 2012c: 13).

O'Neill (2011:162), who first established the BRIC acronym, captures the sense of apprehension of Europe towards the BRICS by stating, 'it is a popular perception among Europeans that Europe can only lose from the BRIC's success … In many ways, it reflects a more common European concern that somehow Europe can no longer influence the rest of the world, and can only be influenced by it'. On the economic front, the BRICS presents a challenge to European economies. The volume of exports emanating from the BRICS challenges the place of industrialised countries in the global market economy, with the BRICS assuming an increasing share of global trade (Havlik *et al*. 2009).

On the other hand, some members warn against adopting an approach to the BRICS based on assessing the group as a threat. Of note, Tomasevski, of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, comments, 'a coherent and efficient EU policy has to be developed towards BRICS, not determined by fears or apprehensions

about the emergence of new powers, but based on building mutual trust' (European Parliament 2012b: 5).

The resolution pays particular attention to Asian emerging powers. It even proposes that the EU, in addition to the US, may pivot more towards Asia Pacific than the North Atlantic as a key strategic partner and as a central focal point of its energies. At the same time, however, highlighting the relationship between the EU and Russia, the resolution states, 'in the long-term, the rise of Asian powers is likely to facilitate further alignment of interests and closer strategic cooperation between the EU and Russia' (European Parliament 2012b: 7). In order to engage effectively with the BRICS, it is evident that the EU favours a divide-and-conquer approach. It wishes to utilise individual BRICS countries to pursue the EU's strategic interests, while attempting to incite greater competition among them. The EU also expresses the need to deepen relations with BRICS countries that maintain democratic principles and those that are pursuing a 'social market economy' (European Parliament 2012b: 4). For example, South Africa is identified as a strategic partner in advancing democratic principles on the African continent, while Brazil is recognised for its role in promoting democratic governance.

In an evolving multipolar world, the EU deems it essential to identify key strategic partners. In that regard, in discussing the EU's foreign policy towards the BRICS, the EU-US relationship is seen as critical. The EU emphasises the importance of harnessing its relations with its transatlantic partners, in particular the US, to engage jointly with the BRICS on matters of global governance reform. By combining efforts and harmonising their policies towards the BRICS, the EU-US could pursue beneficial interactions with the BRICS with the goal of enhancing global governance. This collaboration would allow the EU to approach the BRICS from a stronger position.

6.5 Negotiating a New Place for the EU in a Changing International System

In assessing how the EU should engage with the BRICS, the underlying platform is the need to discern the revised but significant role of the EU in an evolving global order, in which new powers have emerged to challenge the EU's position as a dominant power. Going forward on issues of global governance, the EU recognises

that any progress on this front requires the EU to engage with the BRICS. The place of the BRICS in the global economy is too central and its subsequent increasing political leverage is too significant to be ignored. The resolution underscores,

> That the EU should act more strategically so as to bring Europe's true weight to bear internationally, in particular by managing the implications of interdependence, instigating reforms of global governance, and mobilising collective action in areas such as the rule of law, sustainable environment and regional security, through constructive interaction with the BRICS and other emerging powers (European Parliament 2012b: 5).

To some extent, therefore, it is inconsequential whether the BRICS is considered a 'bloc' because it wields influence in the international system and compromises the EU's position.

Given an evolving global landscape, the EU seeks to position itself at the forefront of developments to reform global governance and as a central force in bringing together the relevant parties to discuss issues of global significance. It is wary of being side-lined and being positioned on the outskirts of movements by dominant powers, such as the US, and emerging powers such as the BRICS, to negotiate the new rules of the game. One of the approaches recommended to be adopted by the EU was the pursuit of 'issue-based coalitions' (European Parliament 2012b: par. 9) that would incorporate a plurality of actors, including state and non-state actors, in both industrialised and emerging countries. This would overcome the propensity of the West against the Rest.

Some European Parliament members call on the EU to re-evaluate its Eurocentric stance, which casts the EU as superior in values and responsible for spreading those values internationally. In coming into confrontation with BRICS emerging powers, which espouse values that differ from those of the EU, the EU's position has often been weakened in international negotiations. Some insist on the need for the EU to uphold its values, such as the promotion of human rights and democracy and defending the rule of law, and to promote them while working with the BRICS on a bilateral basis, while others advocate strengthening relations specifically with the BRICS countries that share European values.

Furthermore, the EU articulates the importance of ensuring internal unity among EU countries, which would strengthen the EU's position in contributing to global

governance and addressing global challenges. The EU perceives its role as pioneering action towards addressing global issues, including restructuring of global institutions and mechanisms, in addition to bringing the relevant actors together to contribute to this cause.

The EU considers a number of scenarios that might result if there are no avenues for dialogue and coordination between developed and emerging powers, in particular the BRICS. If one understands the liberal international order as a rules-based system, in which there are open markets, international cooperation, and international institutions and law managing the relations between states, the combination of which results in stability and some level of progress, the EU wishes to guard against a whittling away of this system. In the absence of such an order, states can descend into locking themselves into regional organisation or bloc dynamics, pulling away from the wider system of international cooperation and engagement. According to the scenarios presented in the European Parliament's resolution, one possible outcome could be 'competing world agendas' (European Parliament 2012b: para. F) and disintegration of the architecture that upholds the global economy. Furthermore, if states organise themselves into regional blocs, there is little opportunity for jointly addressing global challenges. For the EU, the possibility of such scenarios warrants a concerted effort or strategy to engage the BRICS, with a view to pursuing what it refers to as 'inclusive' global governance (European Parliament 2012b: para. I). The extent of economic interdependence between Europe and the BRICS countries makes it imperative that channels remain open for dialogue.

The establishment of the BRICS NDB created avenues for dialogue and cooperation between the BRICS and European banking institutions. The NDB signed memoranda of understanding with the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development respectively on 1 April 2018 on the margins of the second annual meeting of the NDB. It was agreed that the BRICS would collaborate with both institutions to pursue sustainable development and infrastructure projects and to exchange ideas and expertise.

It bears noting that in contrast to the EU, the US has largely opted to disregard the BRICS entity, giving preference instead to its bilateral relations with the individual countries (Schaefer & Poffenbarger 2014; Papa 2014). After reviewing the

responses of US foreign policy-making entities and US think tanks towards the BRICS, Papa (2014) reveals that the US government has sought to discount the relevance of the BRICS grouping, relegating its existence to a development that requires little or no attention. Schaefer and Poffenbarger explain the rationale for this approach by expounding that any attempt by the US to relate to the BRICS bloc would 'create more traction' (Schaefer & Poffenbarger 2014:117) for the BRICS, as well as 'increase the influence and prestige of the body among developing states' (Schaefer & Poffenbarger 2014: 117). The authors accept this approach, as it does not weaken the US's position, but simultaneously warn against ignoring the implications of the BRICS presence. Papa (2014) also cautions against the US's ostrich policy, highlighting the increasing difficulty that would be faced in attempting to evade discussions on the topic.

In referring to comments made by US Under-Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs, Robert Hormats, at the French Institute for International Relations in Paris on 4 October 2010, Papa (2014:371) depicts a similar fear the US shares with the EU. Hormats encourages coordinated action between the US and the EU in working with emerging powers, like the BRICS, to prevent them from establishing or changing rules that would benefit themselves but disadvantage the US. Similar to the EU therefore, a perception of the BRICS as a threat is evident in US government circles, despite attempts to downplay the significance of the entity.

Other nation-states such as Japan, Fiji, Turkey, Venezuela, Syria, and Argentina, among others, also recognised the presence of the BRICS as a new actor, the goal that the BRICS set about to achieve and the positive or negative implications for their own circumstances. Fiji, for example, considers bolstering relations with the BRICS as a viable option to expand its international alliances (Fry & Tarte 2015). During the visit of Venezuela's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Arreza, to South Africa in July 2018, the Minister expressed his backing of the BRICS and desire to build stronger ties with the group (Ebrahim 2018). The AU also acknowledged the arrival of the BRICS as a positive development that would benefit African nations (AU 2016). It was also reported that Turkey, in its pursuit of alternative alliances, desired to form part of the BRICS coalition (Issaev 2018). Lastly, in 2013, the Syrian regime of Bashar Al-Assad dispatched a letter to BRICS leaders to request their assistance in resolving the Syrian crisis (Gladstone & Droubi 2013). Apart from the views

expressed by developed states such as the EU and the US, among some developing states, harnessing relations with the BRICS is positively perceived as a beneficial alternative to its relationships with its traditional partners. They also recognise the shift in the balance of power in global power relations with the emergence of new actors such as the BRICS.

6.6 Conclusion

The position taken by the EU towards the BRICS reveals aspects of the process of legitimacy for actors in the international arena. Firstly, it is important to highlight the debate within the European Parliament on whether the BRICS should be recognised as a corporate entity. This refers to an understanding that offering official recognition to another actor in the international community confers a degree of legitimacy on that actor to conduct affairs within that setting. In opting to recognise the BRICS entity, as outlined in the European Parliament's resolution, the EU extends its agreement that the BRICS has a particular place to occupy in the international community and that the EU would be willing to cooperate with the BRICS on issues of mutual interest. This represents a source of legitimacy for the BRICS.

The EU also acknowledges the need to engage the BRICS in order to manage the global governance reform process, given the increasing role of the BRICS in contributing to that process. By taking this position, the EU links the BRICS as an actor to an understanding of the BRICS identity, which rests on ambitions of playing an active part in the reform of global governance systems. It reinforces the BRICS identity as being relevant to global governance matters.

The depiction by the EU of the BRICS as a threat that requires active management also maintains a notion of the BRICS's legitimacy, ascribing a measure of social power and influence to the group. Understood within a constructivist framework of the ability of social actors to give meaning to developments in their community and respond based on the meaning assigned, its perspective of the BRICS continues to underpin and sustain the BRICS's identity as a relevant force in areas such as trade, international politics and environmental governance.

The significance of an EU position towards the BRICS stands in opposition to the lack of an articulated position by other major powers, in particular the US. A cross-section of developing countries has also expressed support for the BRICS initiative

and their willingness to work with the BRICS to achievement development outcomes. One notes therefore that different members of the international community may adopt different approaches to recognising new actors, accepting the role and mission of the new actors and describing the conduct permissible for such new actors. One of the sources of BRICS legitimacy has been social agreement on its rightful participation by a variety of members of the international community, including both developed and developing countries.

Based on the findings presented in the previous four chapters, the subsequent chapter delves into a discussion to link the findings to the research question in order to present the reader with an assessment of the factors that led to the BRICS gaining legitimacy as an actor in the international system.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this research, I set out to resolve the question: How has the BRICS tried to gain legitimacy in the international system and what factors have contributed to this legitimisation process? I aimed to do this by examining the attempts of the BRICS to establish its own legitimacy, the actors that bestowed legitimacy upon the grouping and the attempts by other powers to delegitimise the group.

I argue that the establishment of the legitimacy of the BRICS has been a negotiated process. In the political game of international relations, the BRICS engaged in a number of strategic moves to validate its existence and secure the approval of the international community. Hopf (1998:178-179) notes that 'an actor is not even able to act as its identity until the relevant community of meaning … acknowledges the legitimacy of that action, by that actor, in that social context.' The findings reveal four aspects of this negotiated process. First, the BRICS has engaged in a continuous process of portraying its identity and activities as legitimate. Secondly, the process has entailed securing social agreement on the right of participation of the BRICS in the new bargain that will define the international order. Thirdly, it has included contestation by the BRICS of the existing order through a number of strategies. Fourthly, the BRICS has engaged in a process of changing the rules in that order and in so doing procuring acceptance of what constitutes 'rightful conduct' for that group of states.

7.2 Acts of Legitimation

It is useful to revert to Clark's (2005:3) argument, that 'At the point where legitimacy and legitimation overlap is a political terrain – the meeting ground of norms, distribution of power, and the search for consensus'. The acts of legitimation engaged in by the BRICS take place in this framework and cannot be separated from the other forces at play, including the social agreement of members of the international community, attempts at framing the agenda and efforts to change the rules governing the system. The processes are in fact mutually reinforcing, acting off both dominant norms and power hierarchies.

On one level, the assessment of an actor or institution as legitimate takes places in the intersection between the web of international norms and the understanding of the

actor's interests, identity and behaviour (Reus-Smit 2007:165). Analysing the BRICS's legitimacy is therefore blanketed in understandings of the norms governing the global political and economic order. At the same time, the power dynamics at play provide the platform for actors to engage in acts of legitimation. A question was posed whether the sustainability of the BRICS is directly dependent on the continued state of decline and crisis in the US, given that its ascent occurred in the context of crisis in the world superpower (Stuenkel 2014). It is useful to recall Wendt's (1994) view that the way in which an international system is constructed influences the way in which collective identities are formed. Some structures may encourage collective identities through shared norms and expectations, while others are prohibitive to collective identities because of feelings of fear or antagonism. The emergence of the BRICS has to be evaluated in consideration of the structure within which it operated, that is, an international structure that lacked legitimacy, resulting in an opportunity for the development of the collective identity of the BRICS group.

It can be said that the BRICs interpreted the structure of the global governance system as vulnerable. The structure was not oppositional to new actors, nor was it openly welcoming. The international system, as evidenced by the global financial crisis and its contagion effect across Europe, was so broken that it gave sufficient 'slack' (Wendt 1994:386) for the BRICs states to formulate a collective identity that would challenge the existing system. The decline of the US and other global powers played an important role in how the BRICS states interpreted the international structure.

The context of declining legitimacy of the world hegemon and existing global financial governance system also provided an entryway for the BRICS to create a narrative that justified its existence. The narrative pivoted on the BRICS's contribution to the global economy, its share of global trade and global population statistics, as well as its contribution to stabilising the global economy during the 2008 to 2009 global financial crisis. This narrative was a facet of the persuasive tools employed by BRICS to put forward a logical and rational argument regarding its relevance and its right to be respected and obeyed.

Throughout the journey of the BRICS, the group took deliberate action to present itself as legitimate. The BRICS incorporated customary diplomatic tools in its

engagement with other members of the international community, including the hosting of summits, technical and official high-level meetings. It also held fast to practices and ideals of multilateralism, which have been a pillar of the 21st century global order.

One of the primary ways in which the BRICS seeks to legitimise itself is through the formation and rehearsing of its identity. The group has steadily worked to undertake activities and adopt positions that are consistent with how it perceives itself and how it desires to be perceived. The group has also opted to utilise existing institutions in that process. When one considers the political agency of the BRICS in 2011 as members of the UNSC, its relevance was grounded in its capacity to participate in the deliberations and decisions as members of the Security Council, and furthermore, its right to coordinate its members' positions and present a united front. Regardless of fundamental disagreements, the other members of the Council had to adhere to the positions adopted by the BRICS. In blocking Western-led initiatives and resolutions, they demonstrate the potential of alternate power centres, capable of dictating the terms of their participation. Through joint, coordinated action, the BRICS put the spotlight on how we conceive of and process information and developments in the international community, and respond accordingly. In the midst of their own differences, they drew attention to their roles as emerging powers and delegitimised the common knowledge arising from established powers regarding the bases and conditions for foreign intervention.[17]

The differences in the positions of the BRICS countries on critical political matters and their varying allegiances raise the question of how far the individual BRICS states are willing to go in an attempt to maintain a unified position. Where their national interests do not converge and where there are competing pulls from various actors in the international community, in particular the US, as well as their own domestic constituencies, the wedge between them is apparent. With respect to the Syrian crisis and UNSC response, it was clear that Russia actively appealed to the other BRICS states to occupy its positional location. As a re-emerging power that

[17] The situation of Crimea and the contentious BRICS response to the Russian intervention in Crimea in 2012 will not be addressed in this paper. However, in The BRICS and the Future of the Global Order (Stuenkel 2015) provides a comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the BRICS's response to the Crimea situation.

pits itself against US hegemony, one may probe the rationale for alignment with Russia, a state that ideologically exists on a more extreme end of the spectrum concerning its geostrategic ambitions. Schaefer and Poffenbarger (2014:116) make a distinction between Russia, a 'revisionist actor', and the other four BRICS countries, which they regard as 'status quo actors'. In spite of these differences, they continue to press ahead, in fact, deepening cooperation across an increasingly greater number of sectoral areas. This illustrates that their alignment is not bound by commonality in material interests, but rather a unity in identity defined by the desire for a multipolar world order free of domination, hegemony or unilateralism of any one power.

The acts of legitimation engaged in by the BRICS were both internally focused and externally oriented. These reflected mindfulness of being a member of an international community and the need to establish its own core. The externally focused activities had several features. One pertained to the issue of alignment, that is, decisions on the partners or other actors to which the BRICS should align. Through its outreach and BRICS Plus engagement, the BRICS opted to align itself to other emerging market and developing countries. Rather than a practical cooperation mechanism, this is firstly an identity issue, shoring up its own identity as an emerging market and developing country coalition.

Another feature involves decisions on how to participate in existing global governance frameworks, which involve a range of other actors, which have pre-existing structures and agendas. With respect to climate change, the challenge for BRICS has involved overcoming differences in the positions of the members on climate change mitigation efforts and responsibilities, while at the same time implanting itself into an existing framework. The BRICS did not attempt to change the framework, but through its rhetoric and language reinforced its position in support of the Paris Agreement, in other words, its support to voluntary commitments. In configuring an agenda that runs in tandem with this position, the BRICS took on a voluntary and self-created programme of activities, including the funding of renewable energy projects through the NDB and the conception and implementation of environmentally sustainable cooperation projects among themselves. These programmes were not externally imposed, but born out of the initiative of the BRICS countries themselves. They were therefore consistent with the basic tenets of the

Paris Agreement and allowed the group to integrate with the existing climate change framework.

7.3 Securing Social Agreement

The very existence of the BRICS in 2018, nine years after the first BRICs summit in Russia, is testament to the agreement by members of the international community of its willingness to accept the BRICS as an actor able to interact within the systems of the inter-state architecture. In some cases, that agreement has been subtle and understated, while in others it has been overt.

The social agreement on BRICS' membership of the international community rests upon the shared beliefs of members of that community and the norms that come to define that community. Acceptability therefore runs in tandem with compliance with generally accepted norms. The degree of compliance with the normative framework governing the international states system provides a point of reference to evaluate the BRICS as an actor. Bernstein (2012) underscores the symbiotic relationship between the effectiveness or authority of a given institutional arrangement, such as the BRICS, and the undergirding norms that it embraces.

The BRICS group has tended to fit in with and reinforce internationally acceptable norms or principles, which no doubt are not beyond contestation. Some criticisms of the BRICS have targeted its perceived willingness to accept the international order, while making only superficial changes that would advance the positions of the BRICS countries within the system. For some, the lack of revolutionary ambition has meant a dismissal of the merits and purpose of the coalition. The BRICS has been accused of upholding the neoliberal economic order that has come to define the global economic landscape, in addition to upholding the global governance institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF and the UNSC, which maintain systems of inequality among states and reinforce the divide between the Global North and Global South. A scan of the positions adopted by the BRICS reveals a general sense of compliance with key norms that define or continue to define the 21st century global order, including neoliberalism, sovereignty, multilateralism and liberal environmentalism.

Bernstein's (2012) writings on grand compromises are a useful point of departure to interpret the interface between BRICS and the international community and the

underlying basis of the BRICS legitimacy. A grand compromise, in essence, arises from a historical negotiation process in which particular norms emerge as dominant and accepted, which govern the relations among states, the behaviour of states and the management of the international order (Bernstein 2012). The grand compromise becomes embedded in institutions and practices of states, and continues to be reinforced through those systems and practices and also reinforces or alters norms during that process. Universal global norms resulting from full agreement by all members of the international community are illusory. The reality of the production of norms manifests through power hierarchies, existing norms, state interests and external environmental factors, such as economic or security crises, all intermingling to produce a grand compromise. The compromise that emerges conceals the disagreements, differences in interpretations, discontent, power tussles and sense of disenfranchisement that underlie the process and that continue to exist under the surface, despite the pervasive embedding of the norm. Furthermore, the grand compromise can tend to lack well-articulated boundaries, exhibiting vagueness on what is included or excluded, what the specific rules of engagement and precise definitions or interpretations of key concepts are. New actors can challenge the grand compromise and inject new understanding or interpretations. The multiplication of institutions that enforce the compromise can reorder, reprioritise or reinterpret the central tenets of the compromise.

In this framework, it may be agreed that the BRICS has subscribed to the two main grand compromises below that define the post-Cold War period. In so doing, its member countries have aligned their national policies and foreign policy behaviour to the accepted norms of the international community.

International Liberal Order

The BRICS has demonstrated its willingness to accept key, though not all, tenets of the international liberal order, which have become accepted norms for the international community in the post-Cold War era, chief among them multilateralism and economic liberalisation, defined by an open global economy. These norms have evidenced great staying power and they have penetrated to become central characteristics of relations between states and determinants of the pathway to development or continued development for both developing and developed countries.

The BRICS countries in particular have been beneficiaries of the economic liberalisation that spread across the regions of the world in the post-Cold War period. Their economic growth in the 1990s and 2000s can be attributed to the opening of their markets, increases in the inflow of foreign direct investment and significant growth in exports. The benefits derived from the spread of liberal economic principles were in accordance with their own national interests and goals, providing economic growth and relieving domestic social pressures. Foot and Walter (2011: 343) refer to this as the 'fit between the global norm and domestic values and priorities'. As beneficiaries of the liberal economic order, they voice their support for an open world economy, free from protectionism. The structure of the BRICS countries' export-oriented economies requires a favourable external environment, facilitating beneficial terms of trade for their exports. For example, after a process of liberalisation of its economy, India has enjoyed unprecedented growth rates since 1992, which are unmatched in its history (Ollapally 2018).

One component of the BRICS's legitimacy therefore emanates from its participation as members of the international liberal order, which in effect forms part of the community of states that uphold the order. The EU has expressed its willingness to engage the BRICS on the basis of being jointly able to safeguard the liberal order. The adoption by the BRICS of the norms associated with multilateralism and economic liberalisation allows the five countries to be incorporated, even if grudgingly, in negotiating a new compromise in the wake of the waning post-World War II American-led liberal hegemonic order. This has also been expressed as a criticism of the anti-revisionist nature of the BRICS group (Bond 2015).

The BRICS's engagement with the liberal order has been selective and partial. On the economic front, its members have embraced a sort of hybridisation between neoliberalism and state-centric capitalism (Stephen 2014). While generally accepting of aspects of the liberal order, elements of discontent persist, which have prompted the BRICS to lobby for reform of the governance systems. In instances of positive correlation between the benefits of the liberal order and favourable domestic outcomes, there is willingness to accept the rules (Foot & Walter 2011). Concurrently though, they would also have experienced the negative effects of the globalisation of economic liberalisation, for example during the Asian debt crisis (1997-1999). The acknowledgement of the BRICS by emerging market and

developing countries, which participate in the BRICS Outreach initiatives, may be indicative of their association with this aspect of the BRICS identity, which expresses dissatisfaction with the status quo in so far as it disadvantages that cross-section of countries.

With the addition of new actors to the international liberal order after the end of the Cold War, the post-World War II compromise became more diffuse, with differing ideologies from a range of new states, purporting a variety of agendas (Ikenberry 2018). The BRICS countries generally abided by the existing rules but also harboured displeasure with the power hierarchies and the systems designed to maintain those hierarchies. The issue then was who was authorised to formulate the rules of the evolving order. A new compromise was essential, which would delineate a new architecture based on the agency of an expanded range of actors (Ikenberry 2018). Without the requisite power, states may opt to follow the rules, while seeking to augment their power, secure a more advantageous position and from that place, begin to contest the imbalanced power hierarchies (Schweller & Pu 2011). The above findings reveal that the EU, for example, has recognised the right of the BRICS countries to demand or expect reform of the global governance architecture and the liberal international order, advocating orderly reform that avoids destabilising the entire system.

Liberal environmentalism

The BRICS' contribution to the international climate change agenda resonates with the grand compromise of 'liberal environmentalism' (Bernstein 2012: 26) that came to define the 20th and 21st centuries. Bernstein's (2012) explanation of liberal environmentalism encompasses the notion of sustainable development that arose in the midst of the advance of globalisation and neoliberalism, which sought to locate environmentalism parallel to economic growth and poverty alleviation. In other words, economic growth, environmental protection and management and addressing social challenges were identified as simultaneous goals and environmental policies and prescriptions had to be consistent with neoliberal norms.[18] The definition of sustainable development, as well as agreement on its implementation, however,

[18] The components of the environmental regimes included not only climate change, but also issues such as biodiversity, forest degradation and protection of endangered species. Climate change, however, became one of the most dominant political battle grounds.

remained elusive. The liberal environmentalism compromise was crippled from the onset,[19] having glossed over key points of divergence in ideologies, interests, and identities (Bernstein 2012).

With the view that climate change governance has always been hampered by fundamental divergences, the differences in the positions of the BASIC countries and Russia was not a point of disequilibrium in the group. The global environmental governance architecture has always been diffuse, with no single coherent core, comprising a variety of state and non-state actors and international organisations with varying ideologies (Andonova *et al.* 2009; Bernstein 2012; Bulkeley & Betsill 2013; Keohane & Victor 2011). In such an environment, the BRICS's limited efforts to coordinate joint positions on climate change and sustainable development were not an anomaly, but compatible with the existing governance framework. It did not attempt to revise the liberal environmentalism compromise, but restricted its actions to seeking ways to be relevant to the climate change governance architecture.

Various actors, both new and existing, may exercise power through the climate change governance framework. They do so in the ways they shape the agenda and discussion and also in the ways they choose to implement the climate change agreements (Bulkeley *et al*. 2014). The BRICS countries opted to exercise their power by maintaining the focal point of the climate change governance agreement on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, despite their historical differences, at least between the BASIC group and Russia, on this subject. They also reinforced the obligation of developed countries to support the efforts of developing countries in climate change mitigation and adaptation, through financial and technological means. Hurrell and Sengupta's (2012: 469) analysis of the North-South dynamics in climate change highlights that emerging powers view themselves as 'defenders of the status quo' and upholding the norms that were laid out at the Rio Earth Summit, while developed countries have sought to revise the compromise that was attained. Their agency in the climate

[19] A defining moment for liberal environmentalism was the 1992 UN Convention on Environment and Development, commonly referred to as the 'Rio Earth Summit', which adopted the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and which shaped the environmental compromise in place today.

change agenda focuses on blocking any attempt to reopen the terms of the agreement, particularly to negotiate less favourable terms for emerging economies.

Beyond the rhetorical positions adopted, the BRICS, through the NDB, channelled resources towards funding renewable energy, which contributes to global efforts to reduce carbon emissions and pursue sustainable development through innovative energy initiatives. The BRICS displayed adherence to norms dictating the appropriate response to environmental protection, thus confirming its status as one, among a plurality of actors, comprising the climate change governance regime. As would have been observed from the US President Donald Trump's stated intention to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement (White House 2017), violation of socially accepted norms opens a state up to severe censure, ridicule and disapprobation.

Questions about the genuine commitment of countries such as Russia and China to climate change mitigation efforts, however, remain unanswered. Their dependence on carbon-intensive industries as structural characteristics of their economies casts doubt on their ability to take the lead in the climate change issue and on whether the rhetoric is sincere (Bond 2013). It has also been argued that the very structure of emerging powers' economies and their development structures are predicated on 'ecologically unsustainable patterns of resource use' (Hurrell & Sengupta 2012: 466).

7.4 Framing of an Agenda - Pursuing Legitimacy through Contestation

The negotiation of legitimacy by the BRICS has entailed contestation as a primary strategy. The group has employed a number of strategies to contest the existing governance and power structures and enhance its own sense of relevance and power. The strategies used by the BRICS are identical to those identified by Schweller and Pu (2011:53) as tactics used by the Chinese state, both to bolster its influence and delegitimise the hegemony of the US, without engaging in direct conflict. These include advocating the enforcement of multilateralism as a guiding principle of relations between states and as such condemning unilateral behaviour by the US, discrediting the US as the sole hegemon by opposing positions taken by the US within international organisations and establishing its own institutions while also shaping the agenda in existing institutions. While the BRICS has used a range of strategies to contest US hegemony, no BRICS country is interested in direct war or confrontation with the US.

The voting patterns of the BRICS in the UNSC ran counter to the positions taken by the US and EU, particularly in the case of the Libyan crisis. The BRICS response to the Syrian crisis was more varied but still represented oppositional positions to the Western powers. This behaviour has been categorised as 'soft balancing', defined by the tendency to use non-military strategies to counter US hegemony (Pape 2005). This would include, for example, efforts to block US attempts at unilateral military intervention. Paul (2005) describes a post-Cold War environment in which 'second-tier great power states', such as China and Russia, may form informal coalitions to balance US unilateralism. He adds that by holding veto power in the UNSC, these states are able to restrict the advances by the US in the international security domain. The inclusion in the BRICS of two veto-wielding members reinforces the group's ability to act as a restraint against US or European dominance.

Far from welcoming the participation of the BRICS countries simultaneously on the UNSC, their participation, in particular opposition to US and European resolutions and positions, was a point of frustration and irritation. The BRICS was engaged in a political game, attempting to dictate interpretation of and gain traction for what they considered to be appropriate action for the BRICS in that setting, namely the international peace and security domain. The BRICS had to demarcate the conceivable range of behaviour that applied to the group. It was involved in a deliberate process of acting out its identity and defining which joint or coordinated actions were possible.[20]

Through discourse, and what Barnett and Duvall (2005) refer to as 'productive power',[21] they sought to reinforce their identity by assigning specific meaning to the events in Libya and Syria, which revolved around criticism of the NATO-led operation in Libya and disagreement with proposals by the US and European states to impose measures, such as sanctions, against the Syrian regime, thereby exacerbating the crisis.

[20] See Hagstrom & Gustafsson (2015).
[21] According to Barnett and Duvall (2005: 55), 'productive power concerns discourse, the social processes and the systems of knowledge through which meaning is produced, fixed, lived, experienced, and transformed'.

The BRICS has generally opposed US exemptionalism,[22] that is, US exemption from the rules of the liberal international order, which are applicable to all other states. This is depicted in the excerpt below:

> The willingness of the other BRICS members to loosely join with Russia speaks to the uneasy view that many states have had of the United States in the post-Cold War World. The unilateral nature of the US power since the conclusion of the Cold War and particularly following the attacks of September 11, 2001, as well as its willingness to skirt the various restraints that were created in the post-World War II order have peaked the interest of great powers and middle powers alike (Schaefer & Poffenbarger 2014:117).

Hagstrom and Gustafsson (2015) argue in favour of a 'relational concept of identity' in which a group or country's identity is formulated based on its concept of an 'other'. They further express the inextricable link between identity and agency, with the former serving as a basis for the latter. Inherent in the BRICS's identity is a notion of contestation against US hegemony and against an international order that prescribes different, either preferential or detrimental, rules for different members of society. This contestation is against intrinsic inequalities in power hierarchies in global governance structures, which disadvantage emerging and developing countries.

The BRICS contribution to the climate change agenda is also testament to the inclination to contestation. Brazil, South Africa, India and China, as the BASIC coalition, sought to block attempts by developed countries to impose mandatory emission cut targets despite the fact that they are among the top carbon emitters. Their insistence on voluntary targets revealed their unwillingness to accept that their terms of engagement should be dictated by the US or European powers. They were also challenged by their domestic constituencies, particularly in the case of China and India, to respond in a substantive way to the environmental problems facing the respective countries, including pollution (Ollapally 2018). It was pivotal therefore for them to identify and pursue ways to deal with the global climate change framework on their own terms. The inclusion of renewable energy initiatives as a major component of funding from the NDB was one way in which they prescribed an appropriate response to the climate change agenda. Their commitment to

[22] See Vezirgiannidou (2013) and Foot and Walter (2011).

cooperation on various sustainable development initiatives, focusing on cities, pollution, water management, biodiversity, clean rivers, disaster management, agricultural research and the environment more generally, should also be noted as part of their collective response to the climate change agenda.

In the context of the slow pace of progress on climate change negotiations, Keohane and Victor (2011:7) propose that 'decentralized activities may have greater impact'. The efforts of the BRICS states, although open to criticism over the lack of leadership displayed in attempting to increase substantive commitments by states for emissions reductions, and promote compliance, are in keeping with this school of thought. The notice of the US's intention to withdraw from the Paris climate change agreement, as announced by US President Donald Trump on 1 June 2017, signals the willingness of the US to respond to the climate change framework by invalidating the compromise that was attained (Foot & Walter 2011). It signals that, as it has been from the beginning at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the global climate change complex remains severely challenged.

The US deliberately neglected to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on the basis of the absence of emission reduction obligations for countries such as China and India. This train of thought is reinforced in the US's withdrawal from the Paris climate accord, with President Trump justifying part of the reason for withdrawal as the lack of parity between demands on the US versus demands on emerging powers such as China and India to cut emissions (White House 2017). The BRICS's efforts to contribute to climate change mitigation, which have been limited to intra-BRICS cooperation and funding, represent a point of contestation to the insistence by developed countries[23] for greater responsibility by emerging powers to respond to the climate change dilemma.

Hurrell and Sengupta (2012: 481) apply Tsebelis's (1995: 289) notion of veto-player to emerging powers in the global climate change framework. Tsebelis (1995: 289) describes a veto-player as 'an individual or collective actor whose agreement (by majority rule for collective actors) is required for a change in policy'. Hurrell and

[23] Developing states, including for example, small island developing states, have also pressed for emerging powers to have binding targets, given their impact on the environment in terms of emissions.

Sengupta (2012) use this definer to describe the shift in power relations taking place with the rise of emerging powers, which have been successful in positioning themselves as central players in matters of global governance. As veto-players, emerging powers, such as the BRICS, can stymie progress or disrupt the advance of issues under their purview. Securing their agreement is therefore important in the management of global issues, such as climate change, security crises and global financial governance. In this context, the tendency of the BRICS to contestation is consistent with its position as veto-player.

The BRICS' contestation behaviour is also evident in its decision to establish the NDB, at a time when the US Congress delayed ratifying the IMF reforms to increase representation of emerging market economies and developing countries. Beyond the significance of the NDB as an indication of the increasing institutionalisation of the BRICS, the establishment of its own development bank was significant in reinforcing its collective identity as being in pursuit of a more democratic international order. It elevates the BRICS as an alternative actor in the global financial governance architecture, offering funding opportunities for emerging and developing countries, to address gaps in funding from existing institutions.

7.5 Changing the rules

By seeking to change the rules of international institutions, which form part of the global governance architecture, the BRICS has sought to negotiate, press the boundaries of and garner acceptance for its range of rightful conduct within the international community. The collective BRICS identity began to form around notions of imbalance in representation in global financial institutions and advocacy for greater participation. The strength of its identity lay in the ability of each member to associate with a common mission and common feeling of marginalisation despite its contribution to the global economy. The 'emotional allegiance' among them contributes to the formation of a collective identity (Hagstrom & Gustafsson 2015:10), which has been an instrumental starting point for their collective agency.

In pressing for reforms in the IMF to increase representation of emerging market economies in the institution, the BRICS established the willingness of the IMF to comply with its request. It should be noted though, that the BRICS advocacy of greater representation in international financial institutions coincided with a severe

crisis faced by such institutions, in particular the IMF, relating to its survivability. The compromise that emerged was a merging between the desires of the BRICS and the needs of the institution. What was gained through both the IMF reforms and the establishment of the G20 as the premier forum for the management of the global financial architecture, was acceptance of the contribution of non-traditional powers to the financial governance framework.

Kahler's (2013) observation regarding the actions and approach of China, India and Brazil to international negotiations is noteworthy. He postulates that these emerging powers were more concerned with being allowed into the relevant institutions to have a voice in the rule-making, than in the substance of the rules. The primary issue then has been one of procedural legitimacy: pursuing the right of participation. This is reminiscent of the call for a NIEO, a component of that was a cry from developing countries to be included in the decision-making processes and to be co-authors in re-writing the rules that affected their development. The IMF, for example, was seen as unfavourable to developing countries, offering conditional terms of financial assistance, which compromised development efforts and gains.

The BRICS supports a rules-based international order, undergirded by multilateralism. This equates to belief in and commitment to a system in which the rules have been mutually agreed and in which changing the rules requires a process of negotiation through multilateral channels. The BRICS support for the World Trade Organisation as a rules-based system that upholds the global trading regime reflects this position. The position of the BRICS towards the multilateral trading regime is evident in the pressure by the bloc to maintain the rules that were negotiated and agreed on a multilateral level. In multiple fora, the BRICS coalition has reiterated its support for and adherence to an 'open,' 'rules-based,' 'non-discriminatory,' 'transparent' multilateral trading system (BRICS 2016; BRICS 2017b**;** BRICS 2017c; BRICS 2018a). A rules-based order lends itself to predictability, but also to the opportunity for a collaborative process of rule formation. The emphasis here is on procedure.[24]

[24] Note that there would be no shortage of arguments that question the commitment of some BRICS states, such as Russia and China, to a rules-based order, given their own propensity to subvert the rules, as in the case of China's operations in the South China Sea and Russia's annexation of Crimea.

However, preliminary focus on procedural legitimacy does not erase the significance of the substance of the rules to be changed. The rules of the international order are not static. They are open to reform and could be altered to become more favourable to one's circumstances. Patrick (2016:24) summarises the negotiation that defines this process by indicating that the new global order will be 'the product of ongoing negotiations and compromise among established Western and rising non-Western powers on how best to reform old and create new institutions – and how to allocate burdens and privileges within them'.

Just as the BRICS is enhancing its position as a voice for issues concerning emerging powers and the developing world, new challenges for emerging economies are arising, which threaten the very principles for which the BRICS fights. These challenges include, for example, global trade wars between the US and other countries, and the US's decision to renege on multilateral agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change. South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation even describes a current context of 'multilateralism at siege' (Sisulu 2018). As Hurrell and Sengupta (2012) would have articulated, it is therefore important not to overstate the capacity of the BRICS to change the rules governing various international norms and agreements and the increase in or stability of its negotiating positions.

7.5 Divide and Conquer - BRICS as a Threat

Given that legitimacy is linked to power, the journey of the BRICS has been confronted by repeated acts of delegitimation. The acts of delegitimation have been intended to exploit the lack of cohesion and substantial differences in the group, to dismantle any possible strength in the alignment. The differences between the democratic and non-democratic BRICS states, IBSA versus Russia and China, BASIC versus Russia, the energy producers versus energy consumers among the group and China and India, as economic powerhouses, versus the rest, are highlighted as points to weaken the coalition further, undermine their joint identity and interrupt any potential strength of their coordinated action. The delegitimation strategy also involves playing off the divergences in geopolitical positions and ambitions of the five countries.

As the EU's position reveals, there is also an incentive to dismantle the potential for greater cohesion among the countries. The justification for engaging with the BRICS strictly on bilateral terms fulfils this objective, but also denies the group the recognition of its collective identity. Schaefer and Poffenbarger (2014) support a US response to the BRICS that prevents consolidation of ties between Russia and China, who together could oppose and stymie US initiatives and also form a Eurasian bloc, limiting US influence. The perception of BRICS as a threat attests to the perceived strength of the unit when acting in unison.

The writings of Crawford (2011) on wedge strategies in international power politics provides further understanding of the ways in which other international actors seek to balance the BRICS's rise. Crawford (2011: 158) highlights that a state employs 'defensive "divide-and-balance" wedge strategies' in reaction to threats posed by a group of opponents that have aligned themselves and that seek to weaken the position of that state. The threatened state may use 'selective accommodation' to place 'divergent pressures' on the group members, thus attempting to undermine the alliance or strength of the coalition (Crawford (2011: 160). For example, a state may seek to co-opt a member of an aligned coalition to adopt a neutral position, in contradiction to the position adopted by the group and may offer that member some form of reward or inducement. A state may also seek to strain the cooperation and unity in an aligned coalition by coaxing one or several members to engage in negotiations apart from the whole.

The findings reveal that several of these strategies were used as balancing efforts against the BRICS. A specific strategy mentioned by Crawford (2011: 167) as a feature of selective accommodation, is the use of 'endorsement' in which a state seeking to divide a coalition backs the stance or proposal of a member of the coalition in order to exacerbate divergent views within the coalition. This was evidenced in the developments related to Brazil's introduction and spearheading of the notion of RwP, which tolerated the use of force in humanitarian interventions under restricted and accountable conditions. This proposal was not enthusiastically endorsed by other members of the BRICS. In eventually supporting Brazil's RwP proposal, Western states sought to aggravate the tensions within the group on this issue. In a similar vein, this wedging strategy was evident in India's positive vote on the UNSC resolution of 19 July 2012 on Syria, which differed from the vote of other

BRICS states on the Council and also diverged from India's earlier voting positions. India's vote was in part attributed to coaxing by the US to support the resolution. In so doing, the divergences in the positions and therefore in the unity of the BRICS were showcased and exploited.

The response of the EU to the BRICS also exposes the wedging strategy approach to compromising the BRICS coalition. The EU's position focuses on enhancing the bilateral relationships with individual BRICS countries, which would include, for example, identifying and pursuing common interests with those countries. Given the differences in economic strengths and weakness of individual BRICS countries, differences in their political values and systems and geopolitical tensions among them, by engaging with them individually, the EU could exploit those differences by convincing individual BRICS states to adopt neutral positions, by pursuing cooperation with one state in an area that runs counter to the interests of another BRICS state, and by negotiating along parallel tracks with individual BRICS members.

7.6 Conclusion

In the context of a multipolar world with a range of new actors, the BRICS exists in a space of contested legitimacy. As Kagan (2004) states, 'The struggle to define and obtain international legitimacy in this new era may prove to be among the critical contests of our time, in some ways as significant in determining the future of the international system and America's place in it as any purely material measure of power and influence'. The contestation of legitimacy can be seen as a defining feature of the new global order and as such, the legitimacy of the BRICS and its implications for reform of the global order were the focus of this paper.

Much of the literature focuses on the ability of the BRICS to be a powerful bloc, rivalling dominant powers, such as the US. Considering substantive structural imbalances in the economies of the BRICS states and fundamental differences in their economic and geopolitical conditions, I would argue that the BRICS is not necessarily poised, or required, to overtake the US as a dominant power. Despite forging a common identity, competition among the BRICS states remains unresolved, and they continue to be guided by different motivations and goals in terms of power ambitions.

I would agree with Ikenberry (2018) that the decline of the American-led liberal hegemonic order does not necessarily equate to the rise of emerging powers or other non-traditional powers or the rise of other great poles of power. The increased legitimacy of the BRICS is instead indicative of a shift in global power relations in which new actors may be perceived as legitimate and capable of contributing to global governance, in an environment previously hostile to such states. The 'after hegemony' (Papa 2014:377) debate in academic circles points to the shift between focusing the discussion on which states are rising rather than on an understanding that the ebbs and flows of global power dynamics allow different contributions to emerge from different actors.

The sustainability of the BRICS is far from guaranteed, but it cannot be denied that the emergence and increased institutionalisation of the coalition paints a picture of the global economic and political landscape at a particular period in time. The BRICS is engaged in a process of negotiating its legitimacy within the international community of states and associated governance systems. The nature of this negotiation has not been defined by neat boundaries, as in a straightforward process. The activity of the BRICS rather resembles a hodgepodge of activity across a wide variety of areas, seeking to find points of convergence and opportunities for activation and manifestation of their collective identity. In negotiating its legitimacy as an actor within the international system, the BRICS strives to attain social agreement by members of the international community regarding its participation, frame the agenda and dictate the interpretation of issues in a way that privileges its position and to change the governance rules to secure a more advantageous position. In order to achieve this objective, the group engages in infinite acts of legitimation to portray itself as legitimate and to secure the agreement of its community.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this paper focuses on two aspects of legitimacy, namely procedural legitimacy and persuasion, there would be value in future research examining the other three aspects of legitimacy as defined by Hurrell (2005) to assess the contribution of the BRICS to the global order. Useful research questions would include: Has the BRICS been able to establish substantive legitimacy, that is, legitimacy on the basis of a notion of what is just and right? What has been the role of the BRICS's specialised

and specialist knowledge in legitimising its existence? Has the BRICS group been effective as an institution?

REFERENCES

Abdenur, A. 2014. China and the BRICS Development Bank: Legitimacy and Multilateralism in South-South Cooperation. IDS Bulletin, 45(4): 85-101.

Abdenur, A. 2016. Rising Powers and International Security: The BRICS and the Syrian Conflict. Rising Powers Quarterly, 1(1): 109-133.

Adams, S. 2012. Libya and the Responsibility to Protect. Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect. Occasional Paper Series. No. 3. October 2012. Internet: http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/libyaandr2poccasionalpaper-1.pdf Access: 4 April, 2018.

African Union. 2016. Agenda 2063 and Its Concept: The African Union has Embarked on Implementing this Development Agenda. Press Release. May 10, 2016. Internet: https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20160510. Access: October 10, 2018.

Akbaruddin, S. 2018. Statement by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, Permanent Representative, General Debate on the Responsibility to Protect and the Prevention of Genocide, War Crimes, Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes against Humanity. United Nations General Assembly. 25 June 2018. Internet: https://pminewyork.org/statementgeneral?id=eyJpdiI6IkQ4akpsS3BFS0dsQTlNWGVEN3lFeWc9PSIsInShbHVlIjoiVDVva01CYUSqcStyNUE0Q3V4eSt5QT09IiwibWFjIjoiMmJlNsNjMjkwMWRkNTcsM2RjMmExNmFlYjg2MTJkMDM0ODcxNThmNsExOGNkNGSlMjNjOTRmMThlYWEySjUyMCJ9 Access: 8 August, 2018.

Amisi, B., Bond, P., Kamidza, R., Maguwu, F and Peek, B. 2015. BRICS Corporate Snapshots during African Extractivism. In BRICS – An Anti-Capitalist Critique, edited by P. Bond and A. Garcia. London: Pluto Press.

Andonova, L.B., Betsill M., Bulkeley H. 2009. Transnational Climate Governance. Global Environmental Politics, 9(2): 52-73.

Anon. 2009. BRICs, Emerging Markets and the World Economy: Not Just Straw Men, The Economist, 18 June.

Anon. 2010. The Trillion-Dollar Club, The Economist, 15 April. Internet: http://www.economist.com/node/15912964 Access:12 September, 2017.

Anon. 2011. SA slams NATO's 'Regime Change' in Libya in UN Speech, 15 June, Mail and Guardian. Internet: https://mg.co.sa/article/2011-06-15-sa-slams-natos-regime-change-in-libya-un-speech Access: 1 May, 2018.

Anon. 2012. Text of Chinese President's Interview with BRICS Media. BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, BBC Worldwide Limited. March 28, 2012.

Armijo, L.E. and Roberts, C. 2014. The Emerging Powers and Global Governance: Why the BRICS Matter. In Handbook of Emerging Economies, edited by R. Looney. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Ashton, C. 2012. Speech on EU foreign policy towards the BRICS and other emerging powers, by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, 1 February 2012. European Commission. Internet: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-12-56_en.htm Access: 14 February, 2018.

Atkinson, P., and Coffey, A. 2011. Analysing Documentary Realities. In Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method and Practice, 3rd edition, edited by D. Silverman. London: Sage.

Bacik, G. 2013. Turkey and the BRICS: Can Turkey Join the BRICS? Turkish Studies, 14(4): 758-773.

Banerjee, R. and Vashisth, P. 2010. The Financial Crisis: Impact on BRIC and Policy Response. The Perspective of the World Review, 2(2): 55-77.

Barnett, M. and Duvall, R. 2005. Power in Global Governance. In Power in Global Governance, edited by M. Barnett and R. Duvall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Benner, T. 2013. Brazil as a Norm Entrepreneur: The "Responsibility while Protecting" Initiative. Global Public Policy Institute Working Paper.

Bernstein, S. 2012. Grand Compromises in Global Governance. Government and Opposition, 47(3): 368-394.

Bijarnia, B.S. 2013. Whither Global Economic Governance? The Emerging Role of BRICS: An Alternative. Indian Journal of Asian Affairs, 26(1/2): 75-92.

Bond, P. 2015. BRICS and the sub-imperial location. In BRICS – An Anti-Capitalist Critique, edited by P. Bond and A. Garcia. London: Pluto Press.

Borah, R. 2012. India's 'Catch-22' Situation in Syria. Internet: https://www.files.eths.ch/isn/188664/ISN_151242_en.pdf. Access 6 July, 2018.

Brazil. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2011a. Adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya. 17 March, 2011. Internet: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/press-releases/9877-adoption-of-united-nations-security-council-resolution-1973-on-libya. Access: 17 May, 2018.

Brazil. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2011b. Human Rights and Diplomatic Action (Folha de S. Paulo, September 9th, 2011). Internet: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/speeches-articles-and-interviews/minister-of-foreign-affairs-articles/5876-human-rights-and-diplomatic-action-folha-de-s-paulo-01-09-2011. Access: 10 May, 2018.

Brazil. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2011c. Joint Statement on the Occasion of the Meeting of the BRICS Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the Situation in the Middle East and North Africa – Moscow, November 24, 2011. Internet: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/press-releases/9976-joint-statement-on-the-occasion-of-the-meeting-of-the-brics-deputy-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-moscow-november-24-2011 . Access: 10 May, 2018.

BRICs. 2008a. Joint Communiqué, BRICs Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting. Internet: http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/press-releases/21-documents/173-brics-foreign-ministers-meeting-yecaterinburg-may-16-2008-joint-communique Access: 15 February, 2018.

BRICs. 2008b. Press Release: Meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers, New York, September 26, 2008. Internet: http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/080925-foreign.html Access: 18 June, 2018.

BRIC. 2009a. Joint Statement of the First BRIC Summit. Internet: http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/209 Access: 25 August, 2018.

BRIC. 2009b. Meeting of BRIC Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Communiqué, London, September 4, 2009. Internet: http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/090904-finance.html Access: 24 June, 2018.

BRIC. 2010. Second BRIC Summit – Joint Statement. Internet: http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/press-releases/21-documents/66-second-summit Access: 13 October, 2018.

BRICS. 2012. BRICS Delhi Declaration (Fourth BRICS Summit). Internet: http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/19158/Fourth+BRICS+Summit++Delhi+Declaration Access: 3 June, 2018.

BRICS. 2015. The Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership. Internet: https://russianembassyza.mid.ru/documents/21973412/23283854/partnershipstrategy_eng.pdf/944395dd-a8cc-4709-b08d-ab41e6eec87c Access: 21 September, 2018.

BRICS. 2016. Leaders' Informal Meeting on the Margins of the G20 Summit Hangzhou, China, 4 September. Internet: http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2016/brics0905.htm Access: 13 October, 2018.

BRICS. 2017a. BRICS Leaders Xiamen Declaration, Xiamen, China, 4 September 2017. Internet: https://www.brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201709/t20170908_2021.html Access: 2 February, 2018.

BRICS. 2017b. Media Note on the Informal Meeting of BRICS Leaders ahead of G20 Summit in Los Cabos, June 18, 2012. Internet: https://www.brics2017.org/English/AboutBRICS/DOPS/201701/t20170114_1119.html Access: 6 June 2018.

BRICS. 2017c. Press Communique of the BRICS Leaders' Informal Meeting on the Margins of the G20 Hamburg Summit, 7 July. Internet: http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5221. Access: 13 October, 2018.

BRICS. 2018a. Johannesburg Declaration. Internet: http://www.brics2018.org.za/documents-0. Access: 15 September, 2018.

BRICS. 2018b. What is BRICS? Internet: http://www.brics2018.org.sa/what-brics Access: 5 July, 2018.

BRICS Parliamentary Forum. 2015. Statement of the BRICS First Parliamentary Forum, Moscow, June 8. Internet: http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/150608-parliament.pdf Access: 14 February, 2018.

Brutch, C. and Papa, M. 2012. Deconstructing the BRICS: Bargaining Coalition, Imagined Community or Geopolitical Fad? The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 6: 299 – 327.

Bryman, A. 2012. Social Research Methods, 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bulkeley H. and Betsill M. 2013. Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change. Environmental Politics, 22(1): 136-154.

Bulkeley, H., Andonova, M., Betsill, M., Compagnon, D., Hale, T., Hoffmann, M., Peter Newell, P. and Matthew Paterson, M., Roger, C. and VanDeveer, S. 2014. Transnational Climate Change Governance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bull, H. 1977. The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics. London: Macmillan.

Calderon-Saks, M. 2014. Are the BRICS a Viable Alternative to the West: A Succinct Analysis. Perspectives on Global Development and Technology, 13: 61-69.

Cameron, F. 2011. The EU and the BRICs. Policy Paper 3: February 2011. Lifelong Learning Programme, Loughborough University. Internet: http://dseu.lboro.ac.uk/Documents/Policy_Papers/DSEU_Policy_Paper03.pdf Access: 13 January, 2018.

Chidley, C. 2014. Towards a framework of alignment in international relations. Politikon, 41(1): 141-157.

China. Embassy of China in Denmark. 2009. China's role in Copenhagen Talks "Important and Constructive." Internet: http://dk.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/climate/t647125.htm Access: 10 October, 2018.

China. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations. 2012. Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria Tabled by the United Kingdom. July 19, 2012. Internet: http://www.china-un.org/eng/gdxw/t953482.htm Access: 7 July, 2018.

China. Consulate General, New York. 2015. China Science and Technology Newsletter. No. 6. Internet: http://newyork.china-consulate.org/eng/kjsw/csat/t1345401.htm Access: 5 May, 2018.

Choedon, Y. 2017. India on Humanitarian Intervention and Responsibility to Protect: Shifting Nuances. India Quarterly, 73(4): 430-453.

Ciorciari, J.D. 2010. The Limits of Alignment: Southeast Asia and the Great Powers since 1975. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Clark, I. 2003. Legitimacy in a Global Order. Review of International Studies. 29: 75-95.

Clark, I. 2005. Legitimacy in International Society. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, A. and Farooq, A. 2013. BRICS and the Privileging of Informality in Global Governance. Global Policy, 4(4): 428-433.

Cooper, J. 2006. 2006. Of BRICs and Brains: Comparing Russia with China, India, and Other Populous Emerging Economies. Eurasian Geography and Economics, 47(3): 255-284.

Crawford, T. 2011. Preventing Enemy Coalitions: How Wedge Strategies Shape Power Politics. International Security, 35(4): 155-189.

Dasgupta, C. 2011. Climate Change Negotiations: Guarding the "Overriding Priorities." Indian Foreign Affairs Journal, 6(2): 217-229.

De Coning, C., Mandrup, T. and Odgaard, L. 2015. Introduction. In The BRICS and Coexistence: An Alternative Vision of World Order, edited by C. de Coning, T. Mandrup and L. Odgaard. Oxon: Routledge.

Desai, R. 2013. The Brics are building a challenge to western economic supremacy. The Guardian, April 2. Internet:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/02/brics-challenge-western-supremacy Access: 16 November, 2017.

Destradi, S. and Jakobeit, C. 2015. Global Governance Debates and Dilemmas: Emerging Powers' Perspectives and Roles in Global Trade and Climate Governance. Strategic Analysis, 39(1): 60-72.

Dobrovidova, O. 2015. Ahead of Paris, Russia becomes a Climate Policy Wallflower. Internet: http://www.climatechangenews.com/2015/07/29/ahead-of-paris-russia-becomes-a-climate-policy-wallflower/ Access: 18 April, 2018.

Ebrahim, E. 2011. Speech by Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim on 'South Africa's position vis-à-vis recent UNSC resolutions on Libya and the Libyan crisis as a test of South Africa's leadership role on "African solutions to African problems"' – presented at the University of Venda, August 2. Internet: http://www.dirco.gov.sa/docs/speeches/2011/ebra0805.html Access: 2 May, 2018.

Ebrahim, S. 2018. Venezuela Seeks Strategic Alliance with SA. July 6. Internet: https://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/venezuela-seeks-strategic-alliance-with-sa-15862792. Access: October 10, 2018.

eThekwini Municipality. 2017. SA Committed to Sustainable Development. Internet: http://www.durban.gov.sa/Resource_Centre/new2/Pages/SA-committed-to-sustainable-development.aspx. Access 30 April 2018.

European Parliament. 2012a. Draft Report on the EU Foreign Policy towards the BRICS and other Emerging Powers: Objectives and Strategies (2011/2111 (INI)). Committee on Foreign Affairs. Rapporteur: Jacek Saryuss-Wolski. Internet: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-472.116+02+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN Access: 13 January, 2018.

European Parliament. 2012b. European Parliament resolution of 2 February 2012 on the EU foreign policy towards the BRICS and other emerging powers: Objectives and strategies (2011/2111(INI)). Internet: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P7-TA-2012-0017+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN Access: 13 January, 2018.

European Parliament. 2012c. Debates on the EU foreign policy towards the BRICS and other emerging powers, 1 February, 2012, Brussels. Internet: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=20120201&secondRef=ITEM-016&language=EN&ring=A7-2012-0010 Access: 13 January, 2018.

Eurostat. 2012. The European Union and the BRIC Countries. European Commission. Internet: https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/1_avrupa_birligi/1_6_raporlar/1_5_eurostat/The_European_Union_andthe_BRIC_Countries.pdf Access: 13 January, 2018.

Evans, G. 2012. The Responsibility to Protect after Libya and Syria. Address by Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC QC, Co-Chair, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, to Annual Castan Centre for Human Rights Law Conference, Melbourne, 20 July 2012. Internet: http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech476.html Access: 17 July, 2018.

Falk, S. 2009. "Shift of Power" or Multipolarity? Reflections on the Role of Emerging Markets in International Politics. Zeitschrift für Politikberatung (ZPB)/Policy Advice and Political Consulting, 2(4): 577-589.

Flemes, D. 2013. Network Powers: Strategies of Change in a Multipolar System. Third World Quarterly, 34(6): 1016-1036.

Foot, R. and Walter, A. 2011. Global norms and major state behaviour: The cases of China and the United States. European Journal of International Relations, 19(2): 329–352.

Fry, G. and Tarte, S. 2015. The New Pacific Diplomacy. Acton: Australian National University Press.

Garwood-Gowers, A. 2013. The Responsibility to Protect and the Arab Spring: Libya as the Exception, Syria as the Norm? Internet: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/UNSWLJ/2013/24.html Access 3 July, 2018.

Gatilov, G.M. 2012. Speech of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia G. M. Gatilov at the roundtable ‘Sustainable industrial development: the experience of BRICS in achieving of competitiveness and work place creation’, Vienna, November

20. Internet: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/133642. Access: 5 May, 2018.

Geertz, C. 1973. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In The Interpretation of Cultures, edited by C. Geertz. New York: Basic Books.

Ghori, U. 2014. The BRICS+: Fault Lines and Opportunities. In The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms, edited by V.I. Lo and M. Hiscock. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing

Gladstone, R. and Droubi, H. 2013. Assad Sends Letter to Emerging Powers Seeking Help to End Syrian War. New York Times, March 27. Internet: https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/28/world/middleeast/syrias-developments.html. Access: October 10, 2018.

Gray, K. and Gills, B. 2016. South–South cooperation and the rise of the Global South. Third World Quarterly, 37(4): 557-574.

Hagstrom, L & Gustafsson, K. 2015. Japan and Identity Change: Why it Matters in International Relations. The Pacific Review, 28(1): 1-22.

Hallding, K., JuRisoo, M., Carson, M. and Atteridge, A. 2013. Rising Powers: The Evolving Role of BASIC Countries. Climate Policy, 13(5): 608–631.

Hammersley, M. 1992. By what Criteria should Ethnographic Research be Judged? In What's Wrong with Ethnography, edited by M. Hammersley. London: Routledge.

Havlik, P., Stöllinger, R., Pindyuk, O., Hunya, G., Dachs, B., Lennon, C., Ribeiro, M., Ghosh, J., Urban, W., Astrov, V. and Christie, E. 2009. EU and BRICs: Challenges and opportunities for European competitiveness and cooperation. Industrial Policy and Economic Reform Papers No. 13. Internet: https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/1934/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/pdf Access: 18 July, 2018.

Heisbourg, F. 2010. Chapter One: The European Union and the Major Powers, Adelphi Series, 50(414-415): 17-40.

Hochstetler, K. and Milkoreit, M. 2014. Emerging Powers in the Climate Negotiations: Shifting Identity Conceptions. Political Research Quarterly, 67(1): 224–235.

Hopf, T. 1998. The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory. International Security, 23(1): 171-200.

Hovi, J., Sprinz, D., Sælen, H., & Underdal, A. 2017. The Club Approach: A Gateway to Effective Climate Co-operation? British Journal of Political Science, 1-26.

Human Rights Watch. 2011. IBSA: Push Syria to End Bloodshed. October 16, 2011. Internet: https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/16/ibsa-push-syria-end-bloodshed Access: 2 July, 2018.

Hurd, I. 2000. Legitimacy, Authority, and Power at the UN Security Council. Ph.D. Yale University, Connecticut.

Hurrell, A. 2005. Legitimacy and the Use of Force: Can the Circle be Squared? Review of International Studies, 31: 15-32.

Hurrell, A. and Sengupta, S. 2012. Emerging Powers, North-South Relations and Global Climate Politics. International Affairs, 88(3): 463-484.

Ikenberry, J. 2018. The End of Liberal International Order? International Affairs, 94(1): 7–23.

India. Ministry of External Affairs. 2009. Address by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on BRICs in the New World Order, May 13, 2009. Internet: http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/1041/Address+by+Foreign+Secretary+Shivshankar+Menon+on+BRICs+in+the+New+World+Order . Access: 23 June, 2018.

India. Ministry of External Affairs. 2011a. Situation in Libya should be Normalised Peacefully by its People, 23 August, 2011. Internet: http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/477/situation+in+libya+should+be+normalised+peacefully+by+its+people . Access: 15 May, 2018.

Indian Ministry of External Affairs. 2011b. UNSC Resolution on Libya – India's Explanation of Vote, March 18, 2011. Internet: https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/639/UNSC+resolution+on+Libya++Indias+Explanation+of+Vote . Access: 31 May, 2018.

India. Ministry of External Affairs. 2012a. Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India to UN on UNSC Resolution

on Syria. 4 February, 2012. Internet: http://www.mea.gov.in/india-in-unsc.htm?dtl/19058/Explanation+of+Vote+by+Ambassador+Hardeep+Singh+Puri+Permanent+Representative+of+India+to+UN+on+UNSC+Resolution+on+Syria. Access: 1 June, 2018.

India. Ministry of External Affairs. 2012b. Q. 1280 Vote against Syria in UNSC. Internet: http://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/20482/q+1280+vote+against+syria+in+unsc . Access: 1 June, 2018.

International Monetary Fund. 2015. Press Release: IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde Welcomes U.S. Congressional Approval of the 2010 Quota and Governance Reforms, December 18. Internet: http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/14/01/49/pr15573 Access: 4 July, 2018.

Issaev, L. 2018. Is Turkey really Looking for Alternatives to the West? Al Jazeera, August 17. Internet: https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/turkey-alternatives-west-180817121235970.html. Access: October 10, 2018.

Jeong, K. and Kim, E. 2010. The Global Financial Crisis: New Implications and Perspectives for Emerging Economies. Global Economic Review, 39(1): 1-13.

Jinping, X. 2017. Working together to Usher in the Second "Golden Decade" of BRICS Cooperation. Address at opening of BRICS Business Forum, Xiamen, September 3. Internet: https://www.brics2017.org/English/Headlines/201709/t20170904_1887.html Access: 6 August, 2018.

Jinping, X. 2018. Speech by Xi Jingping at BRICS Business Forum 2018, Johannesburg. Internet: http://www.brics2018.org.sa/speech-11 Access: 14 July, 2018.

Job, B. 2016. Evolution, Retreat or Rejection: Brazil's, India's and China's normative Stances on R2P. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 29(3): 891-910.

Kagan, R. 2004. A Tougher War for the U.S. Is One of Legitimacy. New York Times, January 24. Internet: https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/24/books/a-tougher-war-for-the-us-is-one-of-legitimacy.html. Access: 13 November, 2017.

Kahler, M. 2013. Rising Powers and Global Governance: Negotiating Change in a Resilient Status Quo. International Affairs, 89(3): 711-729.

Kamel, M. 2014. International Monetary and Financial Negotiations in Times of Crises: The G20 Pittsburgh Summit 2009. International Negotiation, 19(1): 154-188.

Katz, C. 2015. Capitalist Mutations in Emerging, Intermediate and Peripheral Neoliberalism. In BRICS: An anti-capitalist critique, edited by P. Bond and A. Garcia. London: Pluto Press.

Keohane, R. and Oppenheimer, M. 2016. Paris: Beyond the Climate Dead End through Pledge and Review? Politics and Governance, 4(3): 142-151.

Keohane, R. and Victor D. 2011. The Regime Complex for Climate Change. Perspectives on Politics, 9(1): 7-23.

Keukeleire, S. and Hooijmaaijers, B. 2013. The BRICS and Other Emerging Power Alliances and Multilateral Organizations in the Asia-Pacific and the Global South: Challenges for the European Union and Its View on Multilateralism. Journal of Common Market Studies, 52(3): 582–599.

Khalid, A. 2014. The Power of the BRICS in World Trade and Growth, Analysing the Macroeconomic Impacts within and across the Bloc. In The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms? edited by V.I. Lo and M. Hiscock. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kramer, A. 2009. Emerging Economies Meet in Russia. New York Times, June 16. Internet: ttps://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/world/europe/17bric.html 17 August, 2018.

Lavrov, S. 2018. Article by Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov, published by the South African magazine Ubuntu on July 25. *Internet*: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/maps/sa/-/asset_publisher/mNKyBR4ugevQ/content/id/3303398, Access: 15 July, 2018

Lee, P. and Chan. L. 2016. China's and India's Perspectives on Military Intervention: Why Africa but not Syria? Australian Journal of International Affairs, 70 (2): 179-214.

Lincoln, Y. S., and Guba, E. 1985. Naturalistic Inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Linklater, A. 2009. The English School. In Theories of International Relations, Fourth Edition, edited by S. Burchill, A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, T. Nardin, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lumumba-Kasongo, T. 2015. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and Africa: New Projected Developmental Paradigms. Africa Development, 40(3): 77-95.

Macfarlane, N. 2006. The "R" in the BRICs: Is Russia an emerging power? International Affairs, 82(1): 41-57.

Makin, A. and Arora, R. 2014. How Solid are the BRICS? An Economic Overview. In The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms, edited by V.I. Lo and M. Hiscock. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Melissen, J. 2003. Summit Diplomacy Coming of Age. Discussion Papers in Diplomacy. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations. Internet: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20030500_cli_paper_dip_issue86.pdf Access: 13 July, 2018.

Meunier, S. and Nicolaïdis, K. 2006. The European Union as a Conflicted Trade Power, Journal of European Public Policy, 13(6): 906-925.

Müller, M. 2011. New kids on the block: the rise of the BRIC and the reconfiguration of global economic ties. European Researcher, 12(15):1615-1625.

Nassif, A., Feijo, C. and Araújo, E. 2016. The BRICS's Economic Growth Performance before and after the International Financial Crisis, International Journal of Political Economy, 45(4): 294-314.

Nayar, K.P. 2012. Creativity at the Table: India's vote on Syria at the UN Security Council, 9 August, 2012. Internet: http://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/20286/creativity+at+the+table+indias+vote+on+syria+at+the+un+security+council. Access: 6 June, 2018.

Nayyar, D. 2016. BRICS, Developing Countries and Global Governance. Third World Quarterly, 37(4): 575-591.

New Development Bank (NDB). 2016. NDB President: 60% of Funding Will Be for Renewables. Internet: https://www.ndb.int/president_desk/ndb-president-60-funding-will-renewables/ Access: 5 May, 2018.

New Development Bank (NDB) 2017. A Truly Global Response to Climate Change. Internet: https://www.ndb.int/president_desk/truly-global-response-climate-change/ Access: 5 May 2018.

Nogueira, J. 2012. The Global Influence of BRICS: A Brazilian Perspective. Internet: http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/newsdesk/BRICS-2012.pdf, Access: 20 September, 2017.

Nossel, S. 2016. The World's Rising Powers Have Fallen. Foreign Policy, July 6. Internet: http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/06/brics-Brazil-india-russia-china-south-africa-economics-recession/ Access: 5 September, 2016.

Obama, B., Cameron, D. and Sarkozy, N. 2011. Joint Op-ed by President Obama, Prime Minister Cameron and President Sarkozy: 'Libya's Pathway to Peace. 14 April. Internet: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/14/joint-op-ed-president-obama-prime-minister-cameron-and-president-sarkozy Access: 13 October 2018.

Odeyemi, C. 2016a. R2P Intervention, BRICS Countries, and the No-fly Zone Measure in Libya. Cogent Social Sciences 2: 1-16.

Odeyemi, C. 2016b. Re-emerging Powers and the Impasse in the UNSC over R2P Intervention in Syria. Strategic Analysis, 40(2): 122-149.

Ollapally, D. 2018. India and the International Order: Accommodation and Adjustment. Ethics & International Affairs, 32(1): 61-74.

O'Neill, J., 2001. The World Needs Better Economic BRICs. Global Economics Paper No: 66. Internet: https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/archive/archive-pdfs/build-better-brics.pdf Access: 12 December, 2017.

Pant, H. 2013. The BRICS Fallacy. The Washington Quarterly, 36(3): 91-105.

Papa, M. 2014. BRICS' Pursuit of Multipolarity: Response in the United States. Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences, 7(3): 363-380.

Pape, R. 2005. Soft Balancing against the United States. International Security, 31(1): 7-45.

Patrick, S. 2016. World Order: What, Exactly, are the Rules? Washington Quarterly, 39(1): 7-27.

Paul, T. 2005. Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy. International Security, 30(1): 46-71.

Prawde, A. 2014. The Contribution of Brazil's 'Responsibility while Protecting' Proposal to the 'Responsibility to Protect' Doctrine. Maryland Journal of International Law, 29(1): 184-1209.

Putin, V. 2014. Putin speech at BRICS Summit Plenary Session 2014. Internet: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46229 . Access: 3 September, 2018.

Qobo, M. and Soko, M. 2015. The rise of emerging powers in the global development finance architecture: The case of the BRICS and the New Development Bank. South African Journal of International Affairs, 22(3): 277-288.

Ralph, J. and Gallagher, A. 2015. Legitimacy faultlines in international society: The Responsibility to protect and prosecute after Libya. Review of International Studies, 41:553-573.

Ramesh, J. 2009. Suo Moto Statement of Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Environment and Forests in Rajya Sabha on 22nd December, 2009. New Delhi: Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. Internet: http://envfor.nic.in/downloads/public-information/COP%2015_meet.pdf

Rehn, O. 2012. Statement of Vice-President Olli Rehn to the International Monetary and Financial Committee on behalf of the European Commission. International Monetary and Financial Committee Twenty-Sixth Meeting October 13, 2012. Internet: http://www.imf.org/external/am/2012/imfc/statement/eng/ec.pdf Access: 3 June, 2018.

Reus-Smit, C. 2007. International Crises of Legitimacy. International Politics, 44: 157-174.

Reus-Smit, C. 2009. Constructivism. In Theories of International Relations, edited by S. Burchill, A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, T. Nardin, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit, and J. True. London: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers Limited.

Roberts, C. 2010. Polity Forum: Challengers or Stakeholders? BRICs and the Liberal World Order, Introduction. Polity, 42 (1):1-13.

Robinson, W. 2015. The transnational state and the BRICS: a global capitalism perspective. Third World Quarterly, 36(1): 1-21.

Rolland, S. 2013. The BRICS' Contributions to the Architecture and Norms of International Economic Law. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law), 107: 164-170.

Roubini, N. 2009. The BRICs: An Analysis. Forbes, June 18. Internet: https://www.forbes.com/2009/06/17/bric-Brazil-russia-india-china-renminbi-yekaterinberg-opinions-columnists-roubini.html#722742d851eb Access: 28 July, 2018.

Roussouw, M. 2011. SA's 'no-fly' vote hits turbulence. Mail and Guardian. 25 March. Internet: https://mg.co.za/article/2011-03-25-sas-nofly-vote-hits-turbulence Access 22 March, 2018.

Russia. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2011. Bloomberg Full Transcript of Sergey Lavrov Interview, June 1, 2011. Internet: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/vistupleniya_ministra/-/asset_publisher/MCS7HQuMdqBY/content/id/204754 Access: 14 June, 2018.

Saran, S. 2017. The next ten years of BRICS - will the relationship last? Internet: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/brics-first-next-ten-years/ Access: 22 November, 2017.

Schaefer, M. and Poffenbarger, J. 2014. The Formation of the BRICS and Its Implication for the United States: Emerging Together. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schweller, R. and Pu, X. 2011. After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline. International Security, 36(1): 41-72.

Sharma, R. 2012. Broken BRICs: Why the Rest Stopped Rising. Foreign Affairs, 91(6): 2-7.

Siddiqui, K. 2016. Will the Growth of the BRICs Cause a Shift in the Global Balance of Economic Power in the 21st Century? International Journal of Political Economy, 45: 315–338.

Singh, S. 2013. Future of Golden BRICS. Strategic Analysis, 37(4): 393-397.

Sisulu, L. 2018. Opening Remarks by Minister Lindiwe Sisulu at the Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations, DIRCO, Pretoria, June 4. Internet: http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2018/sisu0604.htm, Access: 10 October, 2018.

Sornarajah, M. 2014. The Role of the BRICS in International Law in a Multipolar World. In The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms? edited by V.I. Lo and M. Hiscock. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing

South Africa. Department of International Relations and Cooperation. 2012. Statement by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ebrahim Ebrahim, on the UN Security Council Vote on the extension of the mandate of the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), Pretoria, 20 July 2012. Internet: http://www.dirco.gov.sa/docs/speeches/2012/ebra0720.html Access: 1 July, 2018.

South Africa. Department of International Relations and Cooperation. 2013. National Assembly for Oral Reply, Question No: 231 (NO2320E), Published in Question Paper No: 7-2013 of 21 August 2013. Internet: www.dirco.gov.sa/docs/2013pq/pq231.html . Access: 7 June, 2018.

Stephen, M. 2014. Rising Powers, Global Capitalism and Liberal Global Governance: A Historical Materialist Account of the BRICs Challenge. European Journal of International Relations. 20(4): 912-938.

Strüver, G. 2016. International Alignment between Interests and Ideology: The Case of China's Partnership Diplomacy. GIGA Working Papers, No. 283. German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg.

Stuenkel, O. 2013. The Financial Crisis, Contested Legitimacy, and the Genesis of Intra-BRICS Cooperation. Global Governance, 19 (4): 611-630.

Stuenkel, O. 2014. Emerging Powers and Status: The Case of the First Brics Summit Asian Perspective, 38(1): 1-13.

Stuenkel, O. 2015. The BRICS and the Future of the Global Order. London: Lexington Books.

Stuenkel, O. 2016. Do the BRICS Possess Soft Power? Journal of Political Power, 9(3): 353-367.

Stuenkel, O. 2017. China-India Border Dispute Shows why the BRICS Grouping Matters more than Ever. Internet: http://www.postwesternworld.com/2017/07/31/border-dispute-grouping-matters/ Access: 10 August, 2017.

Stuenkel, O. & Tourinho, M. 2014. Regulating Intervention: Brazil and the Responsibility to Protect. Conflict, Security & Development, 14(4): 379-402.

Temer, M. 2017. Statement by H. E. Mr Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil – Opening of the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly – New York, 19 September 2017. Internet: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/speeches-articles-and-interviews/president-of-the-federative-republic-of-brazil-speeches/17461-statement-by-h-e-mr-michel-temer-president-of-the-federative-republic-of-brazil-opening-of-the-general-debate-of-the-72nd-session-of-the-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-19-september-2017, Access: 1 September, 2018.

Tsebelis, G. 1995. Decision Making in Political Systems. British Journal of Political Science, 25(3): 289-325.

Tyler, M. and Thomas, M. 2014. BRICS and Mortar(s): Breaking or Building the Global System? In The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms, edited by V.I. Lo and M. Hiscock. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

United Nations. 2011. Security Council Approves 'No-Fly Sone' over Libya, Authorising 'All Necessary Measures' to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions. Press Release, 17 March. Internet: https://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm Access: 5 May, 2018.

United Nations. 2011. General Assembly Adopts more than 60 Resolutions Recommended by Third Committee, including Text Condemning Grave, Systematic Human Rights Violations in Syria. Internet: https://www.un.org/press/en/2011/ga11198.doc.htm Access: 5 May, 2018.

United Nations. 2012. Report of the Security Council, 1 August 2011-31 July 2012. General Assembly, Official Records, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 2. New York. Internet: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/2 Access: 1 May, 2018.

United Nations General Assembly Security Council. 2012. Letter dated 14 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. A/66/697–S/2012/91. Internet: http://undocs.org/S/2012/91 Access: 15 June, 2018.

United Nations Security Council. 2011a. Minutes of 6498th meeting on Thursday, 17 March 2011, 6 p.m. New York. S/PV.6498. Internet: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6498 Access: 1 April, 2018.

United Nations Security Council. 2011b. Minutes of 6524th meeting on Wednesday 27 April, 2011, 4 p.m. New York. S/PV.6524. Internet: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6524. Access: 1 April, 2018.

United Nations Security Council. 2011c. Record of 6627th meeting on Tuesday 4 October 2011, 6 p.m. New York. S/PV.6627. Internet: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6627. Access: 1 March, 2018.

United Nations Security Council. 2011d. Record of 6710th meeting Tuesday, 31 January 2012, 3 p.m. New York. S/PV.6710. Internet: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6710 Access: 1 March, 2018.

United Nations Security Council. 2011e. Resolution 1970 (2011). Internet: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1970%20%282011%29 Access: 20 November, 2017.

United Nations Security Council. 2011f. Resolution 1973 (2011). Internet: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1973%20%282011%29 Access: 20 November, 2017.

Van Ham, P. 2010. Social Power in International Politics. Oxon: Routledge.

Van Ham, P. 2015. The BRICS as an EU Security Challenge: The Case for Conservatism. Clingendael Report, Netherlands Institute of International Relations. Access: 1 December 2017. Internet: https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2015/the_brics_as_an_eu_security_challenge/ Access: 10 August, 2018.

Vezirgiannidou, S. 2013. The United States and Rising Powers in a Post-hegemonic Global Order. International Affairs, 89(3): 635–651.

Wallerstein, I. 2013. "Whose Interests are Served by the BRICS?" Internet: http://iwallerstein.com/interests-served-brics/ Access: 14 May, 2017.

Wallerstein, I. 2015. Whose Interests are Served by the BRICS? In BRICS – An Anti-Capitalist Critique, edited by P. Bond and A. Garcia. London: Pluto Press.

Wendt, A. 1992. Anarchy is what States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics. International Organisation, 46(2): 391-425.

Wendt, A. 1994. Collective Identity Formation and the International State. The American Political Science Review, 88(2): 384-396.

Wendt, A. 1999. Social Theory of International Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

White House. 2017. Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord. Internet: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/ Access: 18 July, 2018.

Wilson, D. and Purushothaman, R. 2003. Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050. Goldman Sachs, Global Economics Paper No: 99. Internet: http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/archive/archive-pdfs/brics-dream.pdf Access: 16 August, 2017.

Yi, W. 2017. BRICS Mechanism will Shine more Brightly: Chinese FM. Internet: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/08/c_136112470.htm. Access: 2 November 2017.

Zhaoxu, M. 2018. Statement by Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu at Security Council Meeting on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. May 22, 2018. Internet: http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians_ac/t1566547.htm Access: 3 August, 2018.

Zhenmin, L. 2009. Statement by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin at the Plenary Session of the General Assembly on the Question of "Responsibility to Protect." July 24, 2009. Internet: http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/other_thematicissues/t575682.htm Access: 3 August, 2018.

Zhu, J. 2015. New South–South Co-Operation and the BRICS New Development Bank. BRICS Insights Paper 2.

Ziegler, C. 2016. Russia on the Rebound: Using and Misusing the Responsibility to Protect. International Relations, 30(3): 346–361.

Zondi, S. 2015. The G77@50 and the Struggle for a Decolonial Future. UNISA Latin American Report, 31(1): 1-6.