

## **The Role of BRICS in Reshaping the Global Order: Confronting Western Hegemony in a Multipolar World**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the role of the BRICS group in reshaping the structure of the global order. The scientific significance of the research lies in its contribution to understanding the mechanisms of global systemic transformation and its historical trajectory. Practically, the study aims to explain the factors behind the redistribution of power within the international system and the implications of this shift. The central research problem is framed by the following question: What is the role of the BRICS group in transforming the structure of the global order? From this, several sub-questions emerge concerning the current state of the global system, the nature and institutional structure of BRICS, the group's vision of the international order, and its influence on global power dynamics. The study is based on the central hypothesis that the increasing global influence of BRICS signals a redistribution of power within the international system, potentially leading to a decline in the hegemonic role of the United States of America (U.S.A.). The research employs a historical approach to trace the evolution of international relations and power structures, as well as a descriptive approach to examine the characteristics, goals, and strategic behaviour of the BRICS countries.

The study tracks the development of BRICS from its emergence as an economic concept in 2001 to its evolution into a politically and economically significant bloc. It analyses the group's stance on Western hegemony and its initiatives aimed at restructuring global financial and governance systems. The findings indicate that BRICS plays an increasingly influential role in challenging the United States (U.S.)-led unipolar system. The group has made notable progress in building institutional alternatives to traditional Western-dominated financial bodies, supporting efforts to curtail American financial dominance. Despite internal divisions and geopolitical disparities, BRICS is emerging as a significant force promoting a transition toward a multipolar world order, though its role remains complex and not without contradictions.

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**Keywords:** BRICS, global order, western hegemony, multipolarity, geopolitical shift, rising powers

## Introduction

The establishment of a new world order following the Cold War and the end of bipolarity gave rise to a unipolar system dominated by the United States, positioning it as the preeminent global power. This unipolarity enabled the United States to assert its dominance over international affairs and make strategic decisions independently, often with limited regard for international institutions such as the United Nations (UN). For decades, the U.S. has actively shaped global structures in alignment with its strategic interests, reinforcing its hegemonic position.

While the United States remains the central power in the current global order, the rise of alternative global actors seeking a more active and influential role in world affairs is undeniable. Russia has reasserted itself militarily and politically, and China has rapidly expanded its global economic and geopolitical influence. Other emerging powers, including India, Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey, and even the European Union (EU), have begun to challenge the unipolar structure and advocate for a more balanced international system. Recognizing these shifts, the United States has acknowledged the growing threat to its hegemonic status, especially as these powers form new alliances with developing and regional states.

Within this evolving landscape, the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) has emerged as a central player. With increasing economic and political clout, BRICS has begun to pose a tangible challenge to Western-dominated institutions, particularly those led by the United States. The bloc's collective initiatives have contributed to the formation of alternative international frameworks in economic governance, security, and diplomacy. While united in seeking a more balanced world order, BRICS members differ significantly in their political systems, ranging from

India's liberal democracy to China's one-party rule and Russia's centralized governance. This diversity raises questions about the group's internal coherence and long-term strategic alignment. Moreover, the motivations driving each country's participation in BRICS are not solely ideological; they also include pragmatic goals such as access to alternative financing, expanded trade opportunities, and enhanced regional influence. The strengthening of Sino-Russian relations and the rising autonomy of South American states further reflect this global redistribution of power. Together, these developments raise the possibility of a transition from a unipolar world to a multipolar order where power is more evenly distributed among multiple influential states.

### ***Significance of the Study***

- Academic Significance: This study contributes to academic discourse by analyzing the evolving mechanisms of global power redistribution. It offers a comprehensive framework that incorporates theoretical, historical, and practical dimensions of international system transformation.
- Practical Significance: By exploring the dynamics behind BRICS growing role in global governance, this study provides critical insights into how emerging powers may influence the trajectory of the international order and challenge the existing hegemony.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

This study aims to:

- Analyse the rise of the BRICS nations, identifying their core components and assessing their role in global affairs.
- Evaluate the potential of BRICS as a unified international force capable of shaping a multipolar global order and reducing Western hegemony.

### ***Research Problem and Questions***

The global system is currently witnessing a surge in the formation of new economic and political alliances. Among them, the BRICS group stands out as a key challenger to Western dominance and a proponent of multipolarity. Although BRICS has made considerable strides, it continues to struggle in matching its economic potential with corresponding political influence. Given this context, the study seeks to address the central research question: What is the role of the BRICS group in transforming the structure of the global order?

To answer this, the study will examine the following sub-questions:

- What is the current structure of the global order amid ongoing geopolitical shifts?
- What defines the BRICS group and its institutional framework?
- How does BRICS perceive and interact with the global order?
- What impact has BRICS had on restructuring the international system?

### ***Hypotheses of the Study***

This study is built on the following central hypothesis: "The increasing role of BRICS in global affairs signifies a redistribution of power within the international system and may contribute to the decline of U.S. hegemony."

Supporting hypotheses include:

- BRICS plays a constructive role in promoting global stability and balance.
- The economic growth of BRICS countries presents a credible challenge to U.S. economic dominance.
- The collective influence of BRICS signals an ongoing shift from unipolarity to multipolarity.

### ***Scope of the Study***

- Spatial Scope: The study focuses on the five BRICS nations Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa and their roles in global governance and international relations.
- Temporal Scope: The research covers developments from the beginning of the 21st century, with emphasis on events and transformations through 2024.
- Thematic Scope: The focus is on the influence of BRICS in reshaping the global order, particularly in challenging Western-led institutions and promoting a multipolar framework.

### ***Methodology***

This study utilizes a combination of historical and descriptive methods:

- Historical Method: This method traces the development of the global order from the balance of power era to the Cold War's bipolar system, followed by the unipolar dominance of the U.S., and the more recent transition toward multipolarity. Special attention is given to the post-2008 financial crisis, when BRICS began to pursue a more assertive role.
- Descriptive Method: This method helps analyse the strategic goals, institutional structures, and international behaviour of BRICS. It also informs the interpretation of data to assess BRICS long-term viability as a transformative global force.

## **The Nature of the Global Order in the Context of Contemporary Political Transformations**

This section begins by exploring the concept of the international system, outlining its theoretical roots and historical development. It then analyzes the structure and key features of the current global system, arguing that a systemic perspective is essential to understand international transformations. The focus then shifts to BRICS, starting with its conceptual definition and examining its evolution through summit meetings from inception to 2024. The study contends that BRICS represents not just a reaction to global power shifts, but the expression of a shared identity and preexisting cooperation, as first noted by economist Jim O'Neill. The section concludes by assessing BRICS's institutional structure and its growing role in global governance.

### ***The Concept of the International System and Its Stages of Development***

The modern international system took clearer form after World War II, though its foundations trace back earlier. Pre-World War I conflicts, while global, were limited in intent and scope. Prior to that, imperial rivalries and the pursuit of colonies defined great power competition, affirming the need for a systemic view of international relations rooted in the Westphalian model (Al-Dhahir, 2007, p. 133). Despite its significance, the term "international system" lacks a universally accepted definition. Some view it as a neutral framework, while others argue it is biased or governed by double standards. The system is central to international relations theory, studied across realism, liberalism, and constructivism (Mingst, 2003, pp. 83-100). Generally, it is seen as a network of sovereign states whose interactions form observable patterns, shaped by the distribution of resources and power configurations unipolar, bipolar or multipolar (Huesken, 2012, pp. 41-43).

Maurice A. East and colleagues describe the system as patterns of interaction between states with shared goals. Hedley Bull defines it as a network of interdependent states promoting the preservation of sovereignty and peace (Hettne & Oden, 2002, p. 9), while David Singer highlights the balance between uniformity and diversity in state behavior. Structural realist John Mearsheimer emphasizes regional dynamics and geography over global polarity, arguing that all great powers pursue hegemony to ensure security, thereby undermining systemic stability (Little, 2009, p. 300).

Below is a brief overview of the stages in the development of the international system, divided into distinct historical phases.

1. **Balance of Power System:** This stage emerged with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, institutionalizing sovereignty, non-interference, and balance of power principles. It evolved through:

- The post-1815 Vienna system, with Britain maintaining equilibrium in Europe.
- Post-World War I shifts after 1919, leading to the collapse of major empires and the rise of nationalist movements and new powers (Fahmy, 1995, pp. 18-22).
- 2. Bipolar System: Post-World War II, the world split into capitalist (U.S.) and communist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) blocs. Key factors shaping this era included ideological confrontation, expanded strategic zones, nuclear parity, and decolonization (Sobh, 1998, p. 200). States were no longer the sole power centers; regional and international organizations gained influence.
- 3. New World Order (Unipolarity): With the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the U.S. emerged as the sole superpower. It used intergovernmental organizations like the UN, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to justify interventions and assert economic and military dominance (Al-Alyawi, 2020, p. 221).
  - Bush's and Clinton's strategies emphasized global leadership and preemptive action.
  - After 9/11, George W. Bush's doctrine focused on unilateralism, preemptive war, and spreading democracy (Guyatt, 2003, p. 233).
- 4. Multipolar Era: Obama's policy emphasized diplomacy, regional responsibility, and domestic revival, paving the way for a less U.S.-centric world. Trump's "America First" strategy combined nationalism with military strength, challenging multilateralism and prompting rising powers like China and Russia to forge regional alliances (Kleib, 2017, pp. 230-242). Biden's administration returned to multilateral engagement, reinforcing alliances and promoting democracy amid strategic competition with China and Russia (Wso, 2024, p. 191).

### ***The Concept of the BRICS Group and Its Stages of Development***

The growing complexity of global political, economic, and social dynamics has weakened the traditional dominance of the nation-state, making way for new transnational actors such as multinational corporations, financial institutions, and regional economic blocs that transcend national borders. This trend became particularly prominent in the 21st century, as emerging markets gained influence in shaping a multipolar economic order, resulting in a decentralized global economy (Dailami & Masson, 2011, p. 7).

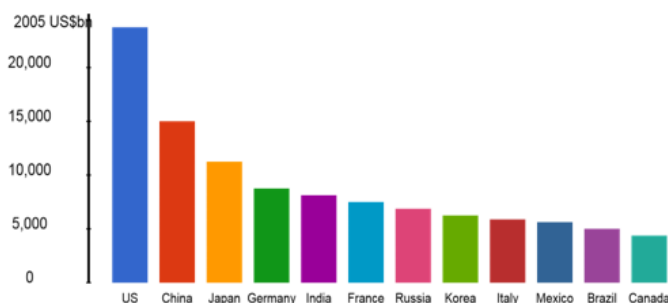
Russia's shift toward the BRIC grouping first coined by Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs was a response to its limited integration into the G8 (Åslund, 2012). Introduced in 2001, BRIC referred to Brazil, Russia, India,

and China, all of which demonstrated rapid economic growth and rising global relevance (John, 2012, p. 2). O'Neill's report *Building a Better BRIC World Economy* emphasized their growing importance in global finance (Xiaoyun & Carey, 2014, p. 3), while *Dreaming with BRICs: The Road to 2050* projected that the group would surpass the GDP of the G6 by 2040 (South Africa's Position in BRICS, 2013, p. 6).

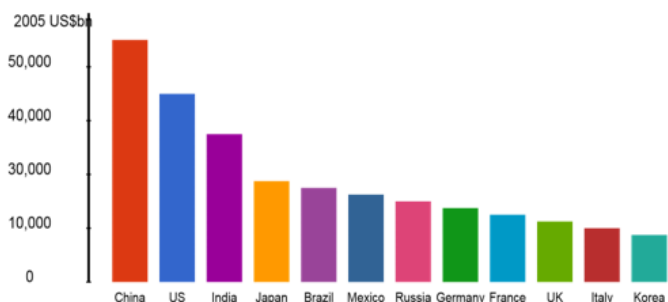
Initially met with skepticism due to internal diversity, the BRIC nations differed in political systems and development models, limiting prospects for deep integration (Scaffardi, 2014, p. 141). Analysts continue to debate whether BRICS will evolve into a political bloc or remain primarily an economic alliance. Some argue that O'Neill's concept was both a recognition of emerging powers and a tool that constructed their geopolitical identity (Bond, 2013, p. 59).

Goldman Sachs reaffirmed the BRIC concept in its 2005 report *How Solid Are the BRICs?* (O'Neill, 2005), justifying the group's composition while excluding other emerging economies due to weaker structural fundamentals (Sandrey & Others, 2013). The report predicted China would overtake the U.S. by 2040 and India would surpass Japan by 2033, projecting BRIC countries as future economic giants.

**The Largest Economies in 2025**



**The Largest Economies in 2050**



Source: O'Neill & Others, 2005, p. 8

Following the table, we discuss the major stages in the development of the BRICS group, highlighting its transition from informal dialogue to a structured platform with tangible global impact.

Schedule of BRICS Summits from its Inception to 2024:

S. No	Year	Host City	Host Country	Member Countries	Main Topics & Decisions
1	2009	Yekaterinburg	Russia	Brazil, Russia, India, China	First official summit, discussing the global financial crisis, calling for reforms in international financial institutions
2	2010	Brasília	Brazil	Brazil, Russia, India, China	Enhancing economic cooperation, developing dialogue mechanisms among member countries
3	2011	Sanya	China	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	South Africa officially joins the group, enhancing cooperation in energy and climate sectors
4	2012	New Delhi	India	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Discussing the establishment of the New Development Bank, enhancing trade among member countries
5	2013	Durban	South Africa	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Preliminary approval for establishing the New Development Bank, enhancing intra-BRICS investments
6	2014	Fortaleza	Brazil	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Official signing of the agreement to establish the New Development Bank and currency reserve arrangements
7	2015	Ufa	Russia	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Launching economic cooperation strategy, discussing global security challenges
8	2016	Goa	India	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Combating terrorism, enhancing cybersecurity and technology cooperation
9	2017	Xiamen	China	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	"BRICS Stronger: A Partnership for a Brighter Future", enhancing innovation and industrial cooperation
10	2018	Johannesburg	South Africa	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Fourth Industrial Revolution and its impact on development, enhancing cooperation in the digital economy
11	2019	Brasília	Brazil	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Combating financial crimes, enhancing cooperation in energy, science, and technology
12	2020	Moscow (Virtually)	Russia	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing health and economic cooperation during the pandemic
13	2021	New Delhi (Virtually)	India	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	"Cooperation for Continuity, Consensus, and Change", recovering from the pandemic
14	2022	Beijing (Virtually)	China	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	"Strengthening the BRICS Partnership for High Quality Development and Starting a New Era of Global Development", focusing on sustainability
15	2023	Johannesburg	South Africa	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	"BRICS and Africa: A Partnership for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development", discussing the expansion of the group
16	2024	Kazan	Russia	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia	"Strengthening Multilateralism for Global Development", discussing expansion and potential unified currency

Source: Prepared by researchers

The formal BRIC grouping emerged in 2009 amid the global financial crisis. South Africa joined in 2011, forming BRICS. Since its inception, BRICS has undergone six key stages of development:

- Formation Phase (2009-2011): Initial summits prioritized financial reform and economic cooperation (John, 2012).
- Institutionalization (2012-2015): Launch of the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) in 2014 marked key structural advances (Stuenkel, 2015).
- Strategic Expansion (2016-2019): The agenda broadened to include political coordination, digital innovation, and cybersecurity (Pant & Saha, 2020).
- Crisis Resilience (2020-2022): The group coordinated pandemic responses and held virtual summits focused on public health (BRICS 2021 Declaration).
- Global Expansion (2023-2024): The admission of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, and Saudi Arabia marked a shift toward greater geopolitical outreach (BRICS 2024 Summit).
- Future Outlook: The agenda now includes sustainable development, digital transformation, and proposals for a BRICS currency (Aparajita, 2023). BRICS now acts as a voice for the Global South, challenging Western-dominated institutions and promoting multipolarity.

### ***Factors Behind the Emergence of the BRICS Group as an Influential Force in the International System***

The emergence of BRICS as a major actor in global affairs can be attributed to three main factors:

- The 2008 Global Financial Crisis: The 2008 crisis exposed serious flaws in the Western-led financial order, undermining the credibility of key institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and the United States. These institutions failed to anticipate or effectively manage the crisis, fueling global dissatisfaction and calls for reform. BRICS countries capitalized on this disillusionment by advancing a collective vision that challenged Western dominance and promoted a multipolar system. Despite internal differences, the group gained legitimacy by advocating for more inclusive global governance (Xiaoyun & Carey, 2016, p. 7).
- The Relative Decline of U.S. Global Power: Although the U.S. remains the world's preeminent military and economic power, its relative global dominance has weakened. Joseph Nye (2010) notes that this decline is relative rather than absolute, citing internal issues such as sluggish economic growth, reduced investment, and deteriorating

educational performance. Slowing technological and industrial productivity has constrained the U.S.'s global leadership capacity. These shifts have created space for emerging coalitions like BRICS to assert themselves on the world stage (Maihold, 2023).

- The European Union's Lack of Dynamism: The EU's limited economic growth and internal fragmentation have weakened its global influence, especially compared to rising powers. The failure of the Lisbon Strategy, aimed at making Europe the world's most competitive economy by 2010, highlighted the EU's policy incoherence and lack of coordination (Kappel, 2015, pp. 4-5). Furthermore, deficiencies in both hard and soft power, combined with its inward focus on regional disparities and political divisions, have restricted the EU's global engagement. This has led many of its traditional partners to seek alternative alliances, notably with the BRICS countries.

### **The Impact of BRICS Countries on the Global Order**

BRICS represents a multipolar vision of international relations, grounded in four core principles: the promotion of legal equality and mutual benefit among states; support for diverse national development models; respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; and non-interference in the internal affairs of states, except within the framework of mutually accepted international norms and standards. The bloc seeks to coordinate its positions on global security issues through institutions such as the United Nations and consistently advocates for the right of all nations to access and benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Furthermore, BRICS aims to support development across the Global South by strengthening the economic and financial capabilities of its member states and partners.

At its core, BRICS constitutes a coalition opposed to the unipolar structure that has long characterized global governance. The group aspires to reshape the global order by promoting a more balanced and inclusive political and economic system one that challenges the hegemony of the United States and counters the concentration of monetary and financial power in Western-dominated institutions. In pursuit of this goal, BRICS has engaged in a range of coordinated efforts across multiple domains. This section begins by examining the political actions undertaken by BRICS countries in opposition to unipolar dominance, highlighting their unified positions on key global issues and resistance to Western-led interventions. It then turns to an analysis of the group's economic initiatives and financial strategies, particularly those aimed at reducing dependency on Western financial institutions and building alternative mechanisms for development and cooperation. Finally, the section assesses the broader impact of BRICS' collective actions on the evolving

structure and dynamics of the global order, evaluating the extent to which the group has influenced the shift toward a more multipolar international system.

### ***BRICS Political Actions Against Polar Hegemony***

The first BRIC summit in 2009 marked a strategic effort by emerging powers to advocate for a multipolar world order and demand greater influence in global institutions such as the IMF and World Bank. The group emphasized the need for global governance reforms that would better reflect the interests of developing nations. In response to Western interventionism during the Arab Spring, BRICS states promoted the principle of non-interference, warning against regime change efforts that lacked viable governance alternatives and posed risks to regional stability. The 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, initially justified on humanitarian grounds, became a turning point, as BRICS countries, particularly Russia and China, criticized the mission for exceeding its mandate and facilitating regime change. This experience reinforced their skepticism toward Western-led interventions and shaped a coordinated stance on Syria, where Russia and China have consistently opposed military action and promoted diplomatic solutions (Morris, 2013, pp. 1265-1267).

BRICS members have also taken a unified stance against Western-imposed sanctions on Russia, arguing that such measures contravene international law and undermine the United Nations Charter. The group maintains that these unilateral sanctions, particularly those lacking Security Council authorization hinder global economic recovery and promote protectionist agendas. From the BRICS perspective, politically motivated economic restrictions exacerbate unfair competition and deepen structural inequalities in the global economic system. The alliance between Russia and China has grown significantly in this regard, characterized by expanding bilateral trade agreements and strategic cooperation designed to reduce dependency on Western-dominated financial networks (Chellaney, 2012, p. 4).

On the Iranian nuclear issue, BRICS has consistently opposed any unilateral military intervention and expressed strong support for Iran's right to pursue peaceful nuclear energy in compliance with international obligations. The bloc underscored the necessity of resolving the dispute through diplomacy and dialogue, particularly within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and relevant UN Security Council resolutions (Mohammed, 2015, p. 54). Mikhail Kalugin, head of the BRICS Affairs Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry, reiterated the group's rejection of U.S. extraterritorial sanctions following its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), noting that such measures contravene multilateral norms. BRICS members' engagement with Iran reflects their broader opposition to unilateralism and reinforces their

commitment to a pluralistic global governance structure (Al-Alyawi, 2020, p. 251).

Cybersecurity has emerged as another key domain in which BRICS collectively resists U.S. hegemony. Many BRICS nations have experienced cyber breaches believed to be linked to foreign surveillance activities. In response, the bloc has taken coordinated steps to reduce reliance on U.S.-controlled digital infrastructure. Notably, Russia initiated a strategic fibre-optic network project connecting major BRICS hubs Vladivostok, Shantou (China), Chennai (India), Cape Town (South Africa), and Brazil, thereby bypassing U.S. networks. President Vladimir Putin has championed this initiative, calling for enhanced digital sovereignty and promoting Russian-developed technologies as secure alternatives to Western platforms (Zidane, 2013, pp. 151-153).

On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, BRICS has consistently condemned the construction of Israeli settlements, viewing them as violations of international law. The bloc reaffirms its support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and encourages direct negotiations between the parties. However, BRICS has expressed reservations about Western mediation, which it perceives as biased in favour of Israel. The group continues to emphasize the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and adherence to international law as foundational tenets of global order (Al-Alyawi, 2020, p. 251).

Overall, BRICS political actions reflect a cohesive strategy aimed at counterbalancing Western dominance and promoting a multipolar international system. Through diplomatic coordination, opposition to unilateral sanctions, support for sovereignty, and investment in digital independence, the BRICS nations articulate a collective vision rooted in pluralism, legalism, and global inclusivity.

The expansion of BRICS is not merely an administrative or procedural development but a deliberate political strategy aimed at reshaping global governance and reducing the dominance of traditional Western powers. Kipgen and Chakrabarti (2022) argue that the inclusion of new members reflects an intentional move by BRICS to strengthen its geopolitical influence and present a more representative multipolar alternative to the existing international order. The expansion strategy underscores the bloc's broader political vision of challenging the polar hegemonic structure, particularly by incorporating countries that share a normative commitment to sovereignty, non-intervention, and global equity. By diversifying its membership base, BRICS amplifies its legitimacy and bargaining power within international institutions, thereby enhancing its capacity to contest Western-centric frameworks of power and decision-making (Kipgen & Chakrabarti, 2022).

### ***BRICS Economic Measures Against Polar Hegemony***

The global economic system comprises three interdependent pillars: the international financial system, the international monetary system, and the international trading system. These are primarily governed by three major institutions: the IMF, the IBRD, and the World Trade Organization (WTO,) which collectively reinforce the processes of economic globalization. The growing internationalization of production, financial integration, and investment flows has significantly reduced national economic autonomy. One of the first casualties of this trend has been the erosion of state sovereignty over key factors of production (Wolff, 2016, p. 20).

The origins and structures of the IMF and World Bank reflect the strategic priorities of Western powers, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. With the U.S. contributing around 20% of the institution's capital, it maintains dominant voting power and effective veto rights. These institutions are modeled on Western legal and economic frameworks, and leadership remains skewed as an American typically heads the World Bank, while a European leads the IMF. Voting rights are based on financial contributions rather than population, entrenching disproportionate influence for wealthier states. Moreover, loan allocation often aligns with the geopolitical interests of major donors, lacking transparency and public accountability. The IMF's dependence on repayments from developing countries further burdens fragile economies, reinforcing systemic inequities in global economic governance (Al-Alyawi, 2020, p. 252).

Unlike other major economic alliances, the BRICS countries, despite the diversity of their economic relationships, share common positions on numerous global economic issues. They advocate for a reformed and more equitable international economic order and collectively reject U.S. unilateralism. A central objective is to reduce dependency on the U.S. dollar, which dominates the global monetary system and exposes economies to risks stemming from dollar volatility. BRICS also pushes for a redistribution of voting power within the IMF and World Bank to give emerging economies greater representation, and they call for the elimination of veto privileges held by Western states. Furthermore, they support a transition toward a multicurrency-based financial system and endorse the rotation of leadership in global financial institutions, with candidates from developing nations (Issa, 2015, p. 114).

In recent years, BRICS has made significant efforts to demonstrate its potential to drive global economic reform not only for the benefit of its own members but also for the broader Global South (Hashim, 2020, p. 129). As major contributors to global economic growth, BRICS countries have increasingly been viewed as a counterweight to Western-led financial governance. Some analysts predict that these emerging economies may

eventually surpass their developed counterparts in overall economic strength, contributing to a more balanced and inclusive global financial architecture. BRICS economic strategies can be observed in three primary domains of trade. First, the bloc plays an influential role in the World Trade Organization, shaping negotiations and advocating for developing country interests. Second, it actively engages in regional and bilateral trade and investment frameworks to enhance its strategic influence. Third, BRICS summits and related economic forums have evolved into formal platforms for strengthening trade cooperation and policy alignment among member states (Purugganan et al., 2013, p. 5).

Given these dynamics, BRICS is poised to expand its trade and investment presence across multiple regions and increase its institutional influence in the IMF, World Bank, and similar bodies. The bloc has worked to harmonize its economic policies, particularly through coordination within the G20. Regionally, Russia and China are using platforms like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to enhance their strategic reach and curtail U.S. involvement, while Brazil and South Africa lead efforts to expand political and trade partnerships across Latin America and Africa. Meanwhile, the U.S., Europe, and China still largely depend on pre-existing bilateral trade agreements (Bremmer, 2013, p. 284).

Given their economic weight and potential, the BRICS countries are increasingly viewed as potential challengers to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). China dominates in manufacturing, India in services, while Russia and Brazil are major suppliers of raw materials. South Africa, for its part, holds significant mineral reserves both domestically and regionally within Africa (BRICS and The World Order, 2013, p. 19).

### ***The Impact of BRICS Movements on the Global Order***

#### ***The Shift of the International System Towards Multipolarity***

BRICS represents an integrated geopolitical project aimed at reshaping the international system and transforming it from a unipolar structure dominated by the United States to a multipolar one in which emerging powers play an increasingly influential role. The group's coordinated actions contribute to accelerating this transformation in several ways:

1. Reducing Relative U.S. Power: Over the past two decades, there has been a noticeable decline in the relative power of the United States, particularly when compared to emerging powers such as China. This shift is especially evident in economic indicators. According to data from the International Monetary Fund, the United States' share of global gross domestic product, measured at purchasing power parity (PPP), declined from 20.2% in 2000 to 15.7% in 2023. In contrast, the share of the BRICS countries (prior to the group's expansion) rose

significantly during the same period from 19.4% to 31.5% (IMF, 2023, pp. 47-52). While the relative decline of U.S. economic dominance reflects broader structural shifts, BRICS countries have strategically positioned themselves to benefit from and reinforce this trend. This economic rebalancing signals a broader redistribution of power within the international system, with BRICS nations increasingly asserting their influence on global economic governance and contributing to the shift toward multipolarity.

As Acharya (1961– ) contends, “the end of the American world order is not the result of a sudden collapse of American power, but rather a gradual shift toward a multipolar world in which BRICS plays a pivotal role in the redistribution of global power” (Acharya, 2023, p. 87).

2. **Formation of a Parallel Geopolitical Bloc:** This economic transformation is complemented by the group’s consolidation as a geopolitical counterweight to the West. The BRICS group, especially following its expansion in 2023, has emerged as a geopolitical bloc that stands parallel to the traditional Western powers. The expanded group now includes: two nuclear powers (Russia and China); two of the world’s top ten economies (China and India); three of the largest global oil producers (Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates); and four of the five countries in the E7 group of emerging economies (a grouping that includes China, India, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Indonesia, and Turkey) (Horber et al., 2024, pp. 112-115). According to Stuenkel, “the new BRICS expansion represents a strategic shift in the global power structure, bringing together pivotal states in diverse geopolitical regions, expanding the geographical base of a project aimed at challenging Western-centric global governance” (Stuenkel, 2020, pp. 203-205).
3. **Promoting an Alternative Model of Global Governance:** Beyond economics and geopolitics, BRICS promotes an alternative model of global governance rooted in principles that diverge from those associated with the Western-dominated international system. Central to this model are respect for national sovereignty, the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and a commitment to inclusive multilateralism contrasted with what BRICS characterizes as “selective multilateralism” practiced by Western powers. For example, BRICS members often criticize Western-led interventions that bypass international consensus or United Nations frameworks. Furthermore, the BRICS framework emphasizes sustainable development, solidarity among countries of the Global South, and the promotion of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue as foundational elements

for a more inclusive and equitable global order (Horn & Watson, 2022, pp. 78-85).

The 2023 BRICS Summit culminated in the adoption of the “Johannesburg Declaration,” which underscored the group’s collective demand for “a more representative, democratic, and equitable global order,” while explicitly criticizing “policies of hegemony and double standards” that characterize the current international system. Through these economic, geopolitical, and normative strategies, BRICS actively contributes to the dismantling of unipolarity and the construction of a more diversified global power architecture.

### ***Restructuring the Global Financial and Economic System***

The BRICS group seeks to initiate profound structural reforms in the global economic and financial system, which has been historically shaped by post-World War II institutions and reinforced by American hegemony. These efforts target three interrelated areas: reducing U.S. dollar dominance, building alternative institutions, and reforming global economic governance.

- Challenge to U.S. Dollar Dominance: One of the central objectives of BRICS has been to reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar, a move that directly challenges what Erickson describes as the United States "excessive privilege" in the global financial system (Eichengreen, 2021, pp. 167-172). The bloc has taken several concrete steps in this direction:
- The proportion of intra-BRICS trade settled in local currencies increased from 7% in 2011 to 30% in 2023 (New Development Bank, 2023, p. 45).
- The dollar’s share of BRICS foreign exchange reserves declined from 85% to below 70% over the past decade. (The World Financial Review, 2023).
- The launch of the “BRICS Pay” platform has enabled member states to conduct trade transactions outside the U.S.-influenced SWIFT network (Singh & Sharma, 2023, pp. 76-80).

As Standage (2023) notes, “BRICS’ success in undermining the dollar’s dominance would constitute a historic shift in the global financial system, similar to the world’s transition from the gold standard to the Bretton Woods system” (pp. 213-217).

- Building a Parallel Institutional Structure: In parallel, BRICS has sought to develop an institutional infrastructure that complements the existing global financial system while reducing its members’ dependence on U.S.-led structures. This effort includes the creation and operationalization of key financial entities:

- The New Development Bank, positioned as an alternative to the World Bank, had financed 96 projects totaling \$32 billion by 2023 and achieved an AA credit rating (Griffith-Jones, 2023, pp. 46-52).
- The Contingent Reserve Arrangement functions as a liquidity safety net akin to the International Monetary Fund, with a committed capital base of \$100 billion (Wang, 2022, pp. 174-180).
- The BRICS Exchange Alliance connects the national stock exchanges of member states to improve financial integration and market access (Dogan et al., 2021, pp. 215-220).

Liu and Wu (2022) emphasize that BRICS financial institutions are not designed to dismantle the current international financial architecture but rather to construct a complementary system that addresses geopolitical vulnerabilities resulting from overdependence on U.S.-centric institutions (pp. 90-95).

- Reforming Global Economic Governance: BRICS has emerged as a key advocate for reforming global economic governance, focusing on increasing the representation and voice of developing countries within existing multilateral institutions. Tangible outcomes of these efforts include:
- The 2010 IMF quota reform, implemented in 2016, increased the voting power of emerging economies. Notably, China's voting share rose to 6.09%, making it the third-largest voting member, surpassing Japan (Woods, 2021, pp. 782-785).
- The World Bank has come under growing pressure to revise its lending frameworks by adopting more development-friendly and flexible conditionalities (Subrahmanyam, 2023, pp. 64-70).
- BRICS countries have persistently called for reforming the World Trade Organization, advocating for a trade regime that prioritizes developmental concerns and offers fairer treatment for developing economies (Narlikar, 2022, pp. 43-50).

According to the Independent Expert Group (2023), "BRICS pressures were a crucial factor in pushing multilateral institutions toward reforms that give greater weight to developing and emerging countries" (pp. 23-28). Through these initiatives, BRICS not only challenges the dominance of the existing global financial system but also promotes the emergence of a more pluralistic and equitable economic order aligned with the interests of the Global South.

### ***Challenge to U.S. Geostrategic Hegemony***

In addition to economic and financial restructuring, the BRICS group has pursued a multidimensional strategy aimed at challenging the long-standing geostrategic dominance of the United States. This strategy involves

the promotion of an alternative security architecture, the contestation of Western ideological narratives, and coordinated efforts to counter U.S.-led sanctions regimes.

- Promoting an Alternative Security Architecture: BRICS countries, particularly China and Russia have sought to construct a security framework that offers a counterbalance to the U.S.-led Atlantic alliances. This alternative architecture is grounded in principles of multipolarity, regional cooperation, and non-intervention. Notable components of this evolving security framework include:
- Consolidation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): With members such as China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, and several Central Asian states, the SCO has emerged as a prominent regional platform for security cooperation and strategic dialogue (Karaganov, 2023, pp. 52-58).
- Expansion of intra-BRICS military cooperation: Joint military exercises, exemplified by the “BRICS Maritime” drills off the coast of South Africa in February 2023, illustrate the increasing defense coordination among member states (Mashigo, 2023, pp. 294-301).
- Collaboration on non-traditional security threats: BRICS countries have enhanced cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism, cyber defense, and transnational organized crime, thereby broadening the scope of their security agenda beyond conventional military threats.

As Katzouev (2022) observes, “the joint military exercises conducted by BRICS countries transcend conventional training purposes; they serve as a potent symbolic gesture underscoring their collective resolve to cooperate in resisting U.S. geopolitical pressure” (pp. 318-324).

In examining the dynamics of great power competition and cooperation within a shifting global landscape, Sharma (2021) provides a nuanced analysis of the China-India relationship, highlighting how strategic rivalry coexists with selective cooperation. This duality reflects broader trends in the international system, where emerging powers navigate both confrontation and collaboration to advance their interests. Sharma’s insights are particularly relevant in understanding how regional powers like China and India adapt to global systemic changes, balancing geopolitical tensions with economic pragmatism. Incorporating this perspective enriches the analysis of multipolarity and the complexities of interstate relations in an evolving order (Sharma, 2021).

- Challenging the Hegemonic Western Narrative: BRICS actively contests the global ideological dominance of Western powers by fostering alternative platforms for discourse and knowledge production. These initiatives seek to reshape the intellectual foundations of global governance:

- Establishment of independent media outlets: Channels such as Russia Today (RT), China Global Television Network (CGTN), and new initiatives like BRICS Voice offer alternative narratives on global affairs, countering what BRICS perceives as Western media bias (Thakur, 2022, pp. 277-284).
- Creation of academic and research platforms: Institutions such as the BRICS Academic Forum and the BRICS University Network aim to develop independent epistemological frameworks rooted in non-Western perspectives.
- Soft power and public diplomacy: BRICS countries have promoted a governance model emphasizing national sovereignty and non-alignment, positioning it as a legitimate alternative to Western liberalism (Liu & Wu, 2022, pp. 111-117).

According to the Lauterbach Institute (2023), “BRICS efforts to challenge Western cultural and epistemological hegemony have begun to yield tangible results, particularly in the formation of alternative discourses on development, governance, and the global order” (pp. 56-62).

- Confronting U.S. Sanctions Policy: The BRICS bloc has taken deliberate steps to weaken the effectiveness of U.S. and Western sanctions, both by developing institutional alternatives and by reinforcing mutual economic support mechanisms:
- Development of independent payment systems: Systems such as Russia’s System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS) and China’s Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) provide alternatives to SWIFT and reduce vulnerability to sanctions (Wilson, 2024, pp. 73-80).
- Expanded trade with sanctioned states: BRICS countries have increased economic cooperation with states under U.S. sanctions including Russia, Iran, and Venezuela thus providing alternative economic lifelines (Patel, 2023, pp. 187-193).
- Strategic adaptation to sanctions: Member states have collectively sought to transform sanctions into opportunities for greater economic self-sufficiency and innovation (Roberts et al., 2023, pp. 254-260).

As Gabuev and Stuenkel (2024) argues, “BRICS' growing capacity to devise and implement anti-sanctions strategies significantly erodes the effectiveness of sanctions as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy, thereby weakening Washington’s ability to leverage financial tools for geopolitical influence.”

### ***Reshaping Global Governance Participation***

The BRICS group aims to reshape global governance by advocating for a more inclusive, multipolar international order that reflects the interests

of emerging economies and developing countries. This effort includes enhancing the voice of the Global South, promoting genuine multilateralism, and challenging the traditional Western-dominated architecture of international institutions.

- Strengthening the Voice of the Global South: BRICS has prioritized amplifying the role of developing countries in global decision-making, seeking to represent the diverse perspectives of the Global South. Key initiatives include:
- The "BRICS+" Initiative: This mechanism expands engagement beyond core BRICS members by fostering partnerships with other emerging economies such as Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand (Anthony & Kriekp, 2023, pp. 110-117).
- Dialogue with Regional Organizations: BRICS regularly engages with regional and intergovernmental entities including the G77, the African Union, the G15, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to strengthen South-South cooperation (Patel, 2022, pp. 201-208).
- Promotion of a Global South-Oriented Agenda: Issues such as food security, energy sustainability, and financial inclusion are central to BRICS's development agenda, positioning the bloc as an advocate for pressing Global South concerns (Samar, 2023, pp. 65-72).

As Sinath and Castillo (2023) affirm, "BRICS's ability to attract countries from the Global South bolsters its legitimacy as an alternative to Western-dominated institutions and broadens the geopolitical base supporting the restructuring of the international system" (pp. 110-117).

- Promoting True Multilateralism: BRICS challenges the concept of "selective multilateralism" a system in which Western powers dominate international institutions by advancing a model of genuine, inclusive global cooperation. The group's approach includes:
- Support for the United Nations: BRICS endorses the UN as a central forum for global governance but calls for reform of the Security Council to increase representation of developing nations (Nayar, 2022, pp. 132-138).
- Empowering Regional Actors: Recognizing the role of regional organizations, BRICS emphasizes the need to strengthen bodies such as the AU and ASEAN as essential components of a balanced multilateral system (Sharma & Mishra, 2023, pp. 201-208).
- Reforming the Multilateral System: BRICS advocates for comprehensive reforms to global institutions to ensure more equitable participation and legitimacy, especially for countries historically excluded from power centers (Bhandari, 2023, pp. 175-182).

According to the High-level Panel on Global Governance (2023), “BRICS initiatives represent a serious attempt to transform global governance from a Western-based, hierarchical model to a more networked and participatory one” (pp. 47-53).

In this context, the notion of compensatory power becomes crucial to understanding how non-Western actors maneuver within and reshape the global order. Ilik and Adamczyk (2025) highlight the EU’s use of institutional and normative tools to maintain influence amid shifting global power dynamics, illustrating a broader pattern where both Western and emerging actors like BRICS seek to recalibrate governance systems through diplomacy, regulatory mechanisms, and strategic partnerships. This shift away from traditional hegemonic dominance toward more decentralized and pluralistic models of governance reflects a systemic evolution in international affairs (Ilik & Adamczyk, 2025, pp. 155-171).

In summary, the emergence of BRICS reflects a structural challenge to U.S. dominance, though this challenge is nuanced and does not necessarily entail direct confrontation. While the United States has actively sought to curb the rise of these powers particularly during the Obama administration, which focused on managing the Eurozone crisis and domestic economic concerns this has provided BRICS countries with an opening to assert themselves as global actors (Pant, 2013, p. 94). Although BRICS leaders often deny intentions of directly opposing the U.S., their coordinated actions increasingly serve as a counterbalance to American influence.

One area of friction is the differing perspectives on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). While the U.S. maintains its traditional position, BRICS countries have advocated for a review and possible revision of the treaty's provisions, a stance likely to generate further disagreement. Scholars are divided on the extent of BRICS's role in shaping the future global order. Brzezinski (2012) argues that rising powers now play a crucial role in reforming and protecting global commons, requiring consensus-based cooperation (p. 129). Others, however, contend that BRICS has yet to offer a coherent model for reform and that the U.S. continues to set the agenda for institutional change (Hashim, 2020, p. 148).

The question then arises: How can the influence of the BRICS countries be connected to the challenges faced by the global order? Three potential scenes can be considered:

- Scene One: Superpower Conflict: This scene is characterized by a confrontation between major powers and is rooted in the principles of classical realism. In this framework, the BRICS countries are seen as aiming to reshape the global order, influence the behaviour of other states, and restructure the global economy to their benefit (Ding, 2006, p. 6). The power transition in this context is viewed as inherently

conflictual. Rising dissatisfaction with the legitimacy of the current system may lead to hegemonic challenges, potentially resulting in military confrontations.

- Scene Two: Harmony Among Major Powers: Rooted in liberal institutionalism, this scene envisions a peaceful transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world order. It is guided by a shared interest in global stability and cooperation. Here, the BRICS countries act as stabilizing agents, contributing to the peaceful redistribution of power and playing a constructive role in maintaining international order.
- Scene Three: BRICS and Systemic Realignment: Some scholars argue that BRICS plays a minimal role in shaping the global order (Hashim, 2020, p. 150). Traditionally, emerging powers have faced two stark choices: integrate into the Western-dominated system or reject it entirely, risking marginalization. However, BRICS countries seem to be carving out a third path. Rather than simply accepting or confronting the existing order, they are engaging with it on their own terms, thereby gradually reshaping its foundations. In today's more interconnected and assertive international environment, many countries including those in BRICS are forming alternative partnerships that bypass traditional Western-centered structures, thereby redefining the global system (Zakaria, 2009, p. 55).

To conclude, although the BRICS countries do not share a unified ideology, identity, or historical experience, they are bound by a shared desire to secure a rightful place within the international order. They recognize that the dominant powers are unlikely to relinquish their advantages voluntarily. As a result, BRICS members have concluded that working together offers the best chance to safeguard their interests. Isolated, each would struggle to gain influence but united, they can amplify their collective voice. This has led to increasing coordination among BRICS members, particularly in matters of conflict, influence, and representation in international forums, where they now often speak with a unified voice (Hashim, 2020, p. 151).

## Conclusion

1. The BRICS group has evolved from a conceptual investment term in 2001 into a powerful political and economic bloc, reflecting a significant transformation in the global order. Originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, and China, with South Africa joining in 2010 BRICS institutionalized through annual summits and landmark developments like the 2014 creation of the New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve Arrangement. The bloc's expansion at the 2024 Kazan Summit, with the admission of five new members, further

underscores its growing influence and commitment to reshaping the multipolar world order.

2. Collectively, BRICS wields substantial geopolitical and economic weight: it includes two nuclear powers (Russia, China), two of the top ten global economies (China, India), and key oil exporters (Russia, Saudi Arabia, UAE). The group represents over 40% of the world's population and generates around 31.5% of global GDP, giving it significant leverage in global decision-making.
3. Institutionally, BRICS has built a parallel structure to Western-led financial systems. Key milestones include the NDB's \$32 billion in project funding by 2023, the \$100 billion CRA, the BRICS Exchange Alliance, and BRICS Pay, which enhances financial sovereignty by enabling local-currency transactions and reducing reliance on the U.S. dollar.
4. Strategically, BRICS is working to dilute U.S. financial dominance. Intra-BRICS trade in local currencies rose from 7% in 2011 to about 30% by 2023, while the share of dollar-denominated foreign exchange reserves dropped from 85% to under 70%. Efforts to develop alternatives to the SWIFT system and reform the governance of global financial institutions reflect its commitment to a fairer, multipolar order.
5. Politically, the bloc has coordinated stances on major global issues: rejecting Western military interventions (e.g., Libya, Syria), opposing sanctions on Russia and Iran, defending Iran's nuclear rights, condemning Israeli settlements, and promoting cybersecurity sovereignty.
6. Through expanded membership and partnerships under the "BRICS+" framework, the group is constructing a parallel global architecture rooted in state sovereignty, non-interference, and the reform of multilateral institutions to reflect Global South priorities.
7. Nonetheless, BRICS faces serious challenges: internal divergences, competing geopolitical alignments, and continued economic dependence on Western markets hinder its cohesion. Moreover, Western efforts to undermine the bloc complicate its ability to act as a unified global actor.
8. Moreover, the diverse political systems among BRICS members, from democratic India to more centralized governance structures in China and Russia raise important questions regarding the bloc's normative coherence. While BRICS emphasizes principles such as sovereignty and non-interference, this stance can at times limit the group's engagement on sensitive issues, including human rights and democratic governance. These differences have led to international

scrutiny and have prompted debates about whether BRICS envisions a genuinely equitable global order or primarily acts as a geopolitical counterbalance to Western influence, regardless of internal political models.

9. Looking ahead, three possible scenarios define the group's trajectory:
  - Superpower Confrontation, where BRICS seeks to overhaul the U.S.-led order through direct rivalry.
  - Superpower Harmony, where BRICS supports a gradual, cooperative shift to multipolarity within existing institutions.
  - Transformational Integration, a hybrid path where BRICS engages global structures on its own terms to incrementally reshape global norms and power relations.
10. Despite internal differences, BRICS members are united by a common ambition to secure their place in global governance and to challenge a system that resists accommodating their rise. Their collaboration reflects a shared resolve to establish a multilateral framework that mirrors the evolving realities of the 21st-century world.

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