



BRICS and the Politics of Multi-Polarity: Rethinking Global Governance

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Abstract

The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and its recent expansion, has evolved beyond its economic foundations to emerge as a formidable actor influencing global governance. This article critiqued portrayals of BRICS as a merely symbolic or disjointed alliance, arguing that it offers a viable alternative to the Western-dominated global order. It challenges the representativeness of traditional institutions like the UN, IMF, and World Bank, while examining BRICS' initiatives such as the New Development Bank and de-dollarisation efforts. Being a qualitative research, secondary data was utilized to analyze BRICS' institutional strategies, ideological narratives, and policy tools that seek to reshape global power configurations. The study is anchored on two theories, the Neo-Gramscian and Structural Realism. The study argued that BRICS functions both as a symbol and agent of multi-polarity and examines whether the coalition can consolidate a coherent global vision beyond being a protest bloc. The study established in its findings that, BRICS is the alternative to Western dominated global institutions, thus, providing a change in the unipolar grips on global politics. One of the recommendations given is that as an alternative to unipolarity, BRICS should promote South-South alliances so as to strengthen its New Development Bank that will measure up with the global institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. Its evolving role may be pivotal to the future of global governance.

Keywords: Global governance, BRICS, multi-polarity, economic order, emerging powers.

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Introduction

The formation of the BRICS Countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa has spurred much debate in global geopolitics, disrupting old power structures and altering the character of international relations (Bond, 2018). Jim O'Neil in a 2001 research paper, argued for the growth of what was then the "BRIC" countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). The group expanded to include South Africa in 2011, further reinforcing its political and geographical diversity. With the inclusion of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates in 2024, BRICS continues to broaden its geopolitical and economic footprint. In its 2025 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the following countries were invited as partner countries they include: Belarus, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Nigeria.

Since its inception, BRICS has been interpreted through the competing lenses of Realism and Liberalism. Realist interpretations emphasize their growing strategic influence, suggesting a challenge to Western hegemony. Conversely, liberal commentators often dismiss the bloc's effectiveness, citing limited institutional coherence and historical absence from global leadership roles. Pant (2013), for instance, described BRICS as "an artificial construct" unlikely to emerge as a true strategic rival to the West. Such critiques often reflect a Western exceptionalism lens that underestimates BRICS' political motivations and normative ambitions. Yet BRICS represents more than a symbolic alliance. It reflects a desire to challenge the dominance of the Global North and foster South-South cooperation across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. By offering alternatives to Bretton Woods institutions, BRICS embodies a post-liberal approach to development and governance. The creation of the New Development Bank and advocacy for de-dollarisation illustrate the bloc's effort to exercise soft power and institutional influence in shaping a multipolar world order.

Recent data reflect BRICS' growing global significance: together, the bloc accounts for around 40% of the global population, contributes 25% of global GDP, engages in 15% of global trade, and holds 40% of international foreign currency reserves (Duggan, Azalia, Rewizorski, 2022; Viswanathan, Mathur, 2021). While these figures underscore its potential, the realisation of systemic transformation remains uncertain.

This paper explores BRICS not merely as an economic coalition but as a political project intended on reshaping the architecture of global governance. Its success or failure will shape the contours of the international order and stability in the coming decades. Therefore, this study

departs from previous research by situating BRICS within the broader context of global multipolar restructuring, emphasizing how the bloc's evolving agenda especially post-2023 reflects a deliberate effort to reshape international governance norms and reclaim agency for the Global South. It adopts a neo-Gramscian perspective to examine how BRICS leverages soft power, institutional experimentation, and counter-hegemonic discourse to construct a more inclusive, plural, and equitable global order.

Conceptual Review

The concept of *global governance* gained traction following the 1995 report by the United Nations Commission on Global Governance, titled *Our Global Neighborhood*. The report underscored the growing roles of both state and non-state actors, including individuals and multilateral institutions, in managing global affairs. This represented a departure from the Cold War-era focus on state-centric governance (Qoraboyev, 2021). Broadly speaking, global governance is defined as the collective process through which international actors address shared problems, mediate competing interests, and shape global norms and policies. It takes cognizance of activities undertaken by non-state actors to establish frameworks for cooperation and decision-making.

Post-Cold War governance structures have leaned heavily toward neoliberalism, characterized by the dominance of market principles, privatization, and reduced state intervention. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank promoted structural adjustment programmes across the Global South, promising economic growth and poverty reduction (Brands, 2016). However, these programmes often failed to account for local realities, resulting in increased unemployment, erosion of social services, and growing public disillusionment in countries like Zimbabwe, India, and Mexico. For a long time, the unipolar system of governance was essentially dominated by America's economic and military influence, intervening in several countries for instance in Afghanistan (2002), Iraq (2003), and Libya (2011). These actions reinforced perceptions of a Western-centric, exclusionary, and coercive global order which were considered biases of this governance model. The immediate response was the emergence of counter-hegemonic coalition. These included radical actors such as jihadist movements, but also more institutional alternatives like BRICS, which advocates for multi-polarity, sovereignty, and equitable global development.

Similarly, the concept of *Multi-polarity* refers to an international system characterized by the presence of multiple influential powers, as opposed to a single hegemon (unipolarity) or two dominant powers (bipolarity). In a multipolar world, states or blocs hold significant and often comparable levels of political, military, or economic influence, resulting in a more complex and dynamic geopolitical environment (International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Science, 2015). The rise of BRICS exemplifies this transition. As emerging powers from diverse regions, BRICS members challenge the concentration of global authority in Western institutions. They advocate for a more inclusive and balanced global governance structure that accommodates multiple perspectives and development pathways.

This conceptual shift is central to understanding the BRICS project: it is not merely a reaction to Western dominance but an attempt to institutionalise a new vision of international relations based on shared power, mutual respect, and development cooperation across the Global South. The cooperation is an initiative aimed at balancing global governance and equal prosperity amongst developed and developing countries.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach rooted in secondary data analysis. It draws upon scholarly articles, institutional reports, government documents, and policy briefs to examine the evolving role of BRICS in global governance. The qualitative method enables an in-depth understanding of BRICS as both a political project and a counter-hegemonic force within the international system. By analyzing speeches, declarations, and communiqués from BRICS summits alongside academic and policy literature, the study seeks to uncover how the bloc articulates and enacts its vision of multipolarity. The methodological orientation is interpretive and analytical, with emphasis on the discursive and institutional strategies employed by BRICS to reshape global governance structures.

Finally, using diverse categories of secondary data such as academic journals, summit reports, government communiqués, and think-tank publications ensures data triangulation and enhances the credibility of findings. This methodological combination mitigates interpretive bias while enabling a comprehensive understanding of how BRICS articulates its vision for a fairer, multipolar world order. In summary, the qualitative secondary data approach strengthens this study's analytical depth, theoretical coherence, and empirical validity. It provides a robust framework for examining BRICS as an evolving political project seeking to reshape global

governance norms through institutional innovation, discursive influence, and South–South cooperation.

Theoretical Framework

This study leverages two grounded key international relations theories: Neo-Gramscian and Structural Realism. These theories provide complementary insights into the motivations, strategies, and limitations of the BRICS bloc.

Neo-Gramscian Theory

The Neo-Gramscian perspective of hegemony, developed from Antonio Gramsci's theory (1947, 1970s) by Robert Cox (1981), and later expanded in scope by Robert Cox and Stephen Gill (1993). The theory posits that global order is shaped not merely by material capabilities, but also by ideational power and institutional structures. From this viewpoint, the prevailing global governance system reflects the dominance of neoliberal capitalist interests, primarily championed by Western states and multinational corporations.

BRICS is interpreted within this framework as a counter-hegemonic coalition seeking to challenge the notional and institutional dominance of the Global North. It advocates alternative norms around sovereignty, development, and multilateralism, promoting a pluralistic international order. The Neo-Gramscian lens is particularly useful for analysing BRICS' soft power tools, such as the New Development Bank and its push for financial autonomy through de-dollarisation. While critics argue that the theory underplays military and strategic factors, it remains a powerful tool for understanding how emerging powers contest dominant ideologies in global governance. Structural Realism, primarily associated with Kenneth Waltz, offers a more systemic view of international politics. It asserts that the international system is anarchic and that state behaviour is primarily shaped by the distribution of power, or polarity. In this view, BRICS can be seen as a strategic response to the enduring unipolarity of the post-Cold War era dominated by the United States.

From a structural realist perspective, the formation and consolidation of BRICS reflect the logic of balancing. Its members seek to counterbalance the hegemonic influence of the U.S. by asserting greater agency in global economic and political affairs. The theory underscores the bloc's emphasis on sovereignty, security, and the recalibration of power dynamics through

mechanisms such as the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement and expanded summit diplomacy. Although Structural Realism has been critiqued for downplaying the roles of domestic politics and ideational factors, its focus on systemic constraints and power balancing provides critical insights into BRICS' geopolitical strategies.

In this study, the Neo-Gramscian and Structural Realist theories are employed in a complementary fashion. Both theories explain BRICS as both a normative and strategic actor in the international system, one that seeks to reshape global governance by challenging Western dominance while advancing a multipolar, inclusive world order.

The Nexus

The triangulated application of Neo-Gramscian and Structural Realist theories therefore combines structural materialism with critical ideational analysis. While Structural Realism explains the external, systemic logic behind BRICS' strategic behaviour its collective efforts to counter-balance Western influence and enhance security autonomy, the Neo-Gramscian approach explains the internal, ideational logic its attempt to redefine global governance norms and challenge the ideological foundations of liberal hegemony. Together, they provide a fuller picture of BRICS as both a power-balancing mechanism and a normative reform project.

In terms of explanatory value, this triangulated framework captures the dual character of BRICS: it is at once a geopolitical response to power asymmetry (as Structural Realism posits) and a political-economic movement challenging hegemonic narratives (as Neo-Gramscian theory contends). The synergy of these theories enables a more robust understanding of how BRICS combines *hard power pragmatism* with *soft power institutionalism* to pursue an alternative world order.

Analytically, the triangulation enhances utility by bridging the gap between material and ideational explanations. It avoids the reductionism of realism, which tends to ignore the role of ideology, and the over-normativity of critical theory, which sometimes overlooks state power and strategic interest. Through this dual lens, the study interprets BRICS as both a structural actor operating within the logic of anarchy and a transformative agent attempting to reshape the global order from within. This analytical synthesis provides a multi-dimensional understanding of BRICS' global behaviour revealing that the bloc's contestation of Western dominance is not purely oppositional but dialectical, combining realist self-help with critical reformist ambitions.

Ultimately, the triangulated theoretical framework enhances the study's analytical coherence and explanatory depth by demonstrating that BRICS is not only reacting to systemic constraints but also actively constructing new ideational and institutional alternatives. It is through this intersection of power and purpose, structure and agency, that the evolving role of BRICS in re-imagining global governance can be most effectively understood.

BRICS in Global Financial and Security Governance

Through the New Development Bank (NDB), the BRICS bloc has demonstrated its capacity to provide global public goods, particularly in development and finance. The NDB represents a strategic effort to establish alternative conditions for collective action within the broader architecture of global economic governance (Stoker, 1997 cited in Rewizorski, 2018: 281). Its creation reflects the third wave of multilateral development banking, driven by dissatisfaction with the representational imbalances in traditional financial institutions.

The first wave of such institutions, like the Asian and African Development Banks emerged in the 1960s to serve regional interests during the post-colonial era. The second wave, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), was established after the Cold War to support the transition of Eastern European economies (Sato, Aboneaaj, & Morris, 2021). The third and current wave, exemplified by the NDB, represents a revisionist move toward more equitable global finance. Despite collectively contributing over 30% of global GDP, BRICS countries command less than 15 % of voting power in the IMF. By contrast, the EU, which contributes 18% of global output, holds over 30 % of voting rights, an imbalance the NDB seeks to address.

With a starting capital of US\$ 50 billion, the NDB focuses on infrastructure and sustainable development projects in the Global South. It has funded diverse initiatives such as the Bank of Huzhou Sustainable Infrastructure Project in China, the BDMG Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Project in Brazil, and affordable housing and transport infrastructure projects in Russia, India, and South Africa. These investments reflect the bank's alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to infrastructure, urban development, and environmental sustainability. In addition to the NDB, BRICS launched the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) in 2014 to mitigate short-term balance-of-payment crises and reduce dependence on Western-led financial safety nets. With a total pool of US\$ 100 billion of which China contributes US\$ 41 billion, and Russia, India, and Brazil each contribute

US\$ 18 billion and South Africa contributing US\$ 5 billion, the CRA enhances financial resilience among BRICS countries (Duggan et al., 2022).

In the realm of international security, BRICS members have adopted regionally grounded foreign policies that align with their broader strategic goals. Russia's Eurasian focus is evident in its security posture in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and its promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) reflect its aim to expand influence across Asia. India's "Look East" policy and strategic recalibration with Pakistan demonstrate a regional security approach, while Brazil emphasises South American integration and South Africa advocates for African unity and homegrown conflict resolution.

Despite common interests, significant geopolitical divergences exist within the bloc. Tensions between India and China, for example, hinder the development of a unified BRICS security strategy. Similarly, Brazil, India, and South Africa advocate for United Nations Security Council reform, whereas Russia and China, as permanent members, have little incentive to support such efforts. These divergences reflect the complexity of achieving consensus within a group of diverse regional powers (Petrone, 2021). Nevertheless, BRICS' initiatives in security and finance collectively reflect an ambition to challenge existing hierarchies and to promote an alternative, multipolar vision of global governance. Indeed, their efforts represent the bloc's dual strategy: asserting influence within existing systems while gradually building parallel structures that reflect their interests and values.

BRICS and the Current Global Order

The recent expansion of BRICS to include Belarus, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Nigeria marks a significant evolution in its global role. This enlargement not only enhances BRICS' demographic and geographic diversity but also reinforces its positioning as a coalition seeking a more equitable and multipolar world order. As Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva noted in 2023, BRICS has become a "source of creative solutions to the challenges we face," and the growing interest from other states in joining the bloc attests to its rising global relevance.

Measured by purchasing power parity (PPP), BRICS now represents 36% of global GDP and encompasses 46% of the world's population. These figures signify not just economic weight but also the potential for normative influence on global governance frameworks. The group's

stated commitment to multilateralism, sovereign equality, and international law positions it as a counterbalance to Western-led institutions perceived as exclusionary or unrepresentative.

The shifting balance of global power from post-Cold War unipolarity to emerging multipolarity has created space for alternative voices in shaping international norms. BRICS members share varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the existing global order, particularly in the areas of economic and security governance. Their joint initiatives, such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), are not aimed at replacing existing institutions but rather at complementing and reforming them to allow for greater inclusivity and fairness (Patrick & Hogan, 2025). BRICS expansion and the future of world order: Perspectives from member states, partners, and aspirants, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. China's ascent as the world's second-largest economy and India's rapid growth highlight the bloc's increasing economic clout. These dynamics, coupled with South-South cooperation initiatives and the expansion of BRICS membership, challenge the dominance of Western economies in global decision-making forums like the IMF, World Bank, and G20. Acharya's (2015) concept of a "multiplex world order" provides a useful framework for understanding BRICS' emerging role. In a multiplex world, international relations are no longer defined by binary oppositions but by overlapping, multi-layered networks of cooperation and competition. BRICS exemplifies this complexity: it is not a monolithic bloc but a diverse coalition of countries with divergent political systems, foreign policy priorities, and regional interests.

This internal diversity complicates consensus-building but also allows for flexible engagement across different issues. For example, while Russia and China often present a united front in countering Western dominance, India maintains strong ties with the West, particularly through strategic partnerships with the United States. Brazil and South Africa, meanwhile, emphasize non-alignment and pragmatic multilateralism, using their BRICS membership to advocate for regional and continental interests. BRICS operates as a platform for balancing global power without forming rigid alliances. Its members navigate complex geopolitical terrains by prioritizing national interests while seeking cooperative gains. This pragmatic and non-confrontational approach is evident in their strategies on trade, infrastructure, climate negotiations, and digital governance.

Despite internal differences, BRICS members collectively pursue an agenda of reforming global governance structures to better reflect contemporary realities. Their expansion strategy and inclusive mechanisms, such as the proposed "partner countries" tier, suggest a long-term vision for growing influence while preserving internal cohesion.

BRICS and the West

The alternative global governance model advocated by BRICS particularly by Russia and China reflects a deliberate effort to counter the dominance of Western powers, specifically the United States, the European Union, and NATO. This model emphasises principles such as non-interference, respect for sovereignty, and multilateralism, contrasting sharply with the interventionist tendencies often associated with Western foreign policy (Beeson & Zeng, 2018).

Russia's activities in Africa, including in Mali, Burkina-Faso, Niger, Sudan, Libya, and the Central African Republic, illustrate this strategic shift. By offering security partnerships grounded in sovereignty and mutual respect, Russia has gained influence in regions where traditional Western powers especially France are facing backlash (Hauer, 2019). The vacuum created by waning Western engagement has enabled Moscow to project itself as a credible alternative, especially through the deployment of private military companies like the Wagner Group, now African Corps. While controversial in Western discourse, these deployments are perceived in parts of Africa as cost-effective, risk-averse means of supporting incumbent regimes and preserving order.

China and Russia both advance a "revisionist" approach to global governance, preferring a post-liberal model that rejects Western interventionism and ideological conformity. This orientation shapes their positions on multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, where they often resist sanctions and interventions against regimes like those of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Omar al-Bashir in Sudan. These stances align with a broader BRICS vision that prioritises national sovereignty and regional solutions over external imposition.

South Africa, for its part, has articulated an "African Renaissance" foreign policy, grounded in the notion of African-led development and security. It champions a pragmatic approach to diplomacy, illustrated by its quiet engagement in the Zimbabwe crisis and its endorsement of the Democratic Republic of Congo's 2019 elections, despite Western criticisms.

South Africa's support of incumbent African governments and preference for dialogue over confrontation further reflects the broader BRICS ethos (Hamill, 2019).

This BRICS approach to global engagement departs significantly from the Western liberal international order. Instead of pursuing liberal democratic conditionality or regime change, BRICS states promote pluralism in governance and development models. While this strategy resonates with many countries in the Global South, it also raises concerns among Western policymakers about the erosion of liberal norms in international affairs. Overall, the BRICS-West divide is not purely ideological but strategic. BRICS countries seek a re-calibrated international order that better reflects their growing economic and political weight. They challenge the West not through open confrontation but by building parallel institutions that will promote South-South cooperation, and advance alternative visions of development and security.

Implications of BRICS Structural Power Shift

The rising influence of BRICS across key dimensions of structural power, finance, governance, security, and development signals a shift away from the unipolar dominance of the post-Cold War era. BRICS' strategic initiatives and growing institutional presence offer alternatives to Western-dominated frameworks and introduce greater diversity into global governance mechanisms (Papa & Chaturvedi, 2024; Walter, 2024).

By leveraging collective economic power, BRICS is actively rebalancing global decision-making, especially within platforms like the G20. Initiatives such as the use of local currencies in trade, cross-border payment systems, and the establishment of the Contingent Reserve Arrangement reflect a pragmatic approach to financial sovereignty. Rather than advocating radical or abrupt de-dollarisation, BRICS has pursued a cautious yet deliberate diversification of financial systems that enhances autonomy while maintaining economic stability.

BRICS' consensus-driven model of cooperation promotes moderation and pragmatism. This is evident in the bloc's tendency to prioritise achievable initiatives such as trade in local currencies and educational exchanges while avoiding divisive issues like a common BRICS currency (Norton, 2024). South African President Cyril Ramaphosa aptly described the bloc as an equal partnership of countries with differing views but a shared vision for a better world. Beyond economics, BRICS is increasingly shaping global discourse on digital governance, climate action, and human rights. However, the diversity of political systems and ideologies

within the group raises the possibility of competing normative frameworks. The internal variation in perspectives on democracy, civil liberties, and governance may limit the group's appeal and coherence as a normative power (Onis & Gencer, 2018).

Nevertheless, BRICS plays a critical role in advancing South–South cooperation. The BRICS+ outreach initiative, increased intra-BRICS trade and investment, and collaborative development in sectors like agriculture, public health, and renewable energy, all foster alternative models of international partnership (Fontaine & Murphy, 2025). These efforts reduce dependency on traditional North–South dynamics and empower emerging economies to define development on their terms.

Challenges and Opportunities

The structural power shift led by BRICS holds both opportunities and risks. While the group contributes to the diversification and democratisation of global governance, sustaining its collective influence will depend on how effectively it manages internal contradictions and navigates external pressures in a complex multipolar world. The bloc encompasses a wide range of political systems, economic capacities, and foreign policy orientations, which complicates efforts to build a cohesive strategic agenda. This diversity offers the strength of broader representation, it also increases the potential for internal tensions and fragmented decision-making, for instance, geopolitical rivalries between India and China will pose persistent hurdles. These tensions can undermine the bloc's unity and constrain its ability to take strong collective positions on critical global issues. The 2024 expansion added new layers of complexity, with historical and regional rivalries among members like Iran and the UAE or Egypt and Ethiopia requiring careful diplomatic navigation (Asia Pacific Task Force, 2024; Patrick & Hogan, 2025). Similarly, the exclusion of contentious actors like Venezuela and Pakistan underscores the group's careful balancing between ambition and internal cohesion.

Unlike the more ideologically aligned G7, BRICS functions on a principle of agreeing to disagree. This model, though flexible, can dilute collective action and limit the bloc's ability to respond decisively to crises. Nonetheless, this pragmatic framework allows members to focus on areas of consensus such as local currency trade and infrastructure development while shelving more divisive topics like United Nations Security Council reform or a common currency (Beeson & Zeng, 2018). In addition, BRICS has prioritised non-contentious issues, such as academic

cooperation, cultural exchanges, and digital infrastructure. It is deepening collaboration and building credibility gradually, thus, avoid alienating any member state.

Opportunities for BRICS lie in expanding its role as a platform for South-South cooperation. With the inclusion of new members and the development of the "partner countries" mechanism, BRICS can scale its outreach and foster more inclusive multilateralism. It is particularly well-positioned to promote alternative development models that prioritise sustainability, local ownership, and regional diversity. The use of national currencies in trade and the development of alternative payment systems could significantly reduce members' reliance on Western financial systems like SWIFT. The 2024 Kazan Summit Declaration signals the bloc's growing ambition to shape the global financial architecture (Asia Pacific Task Force, 2024). The quest to compete favourably with Western institutions, BRIC has focused on infrastructure investment, spearheaded by initiatives such as China's Belt and Road Initiative and the New Development Bank's project portfolio, positions it as a key factor in reshaping global development finance. As member countries increasingly serve as both recipients and sources of foreign direct investment, their collective influence over the global economy is likely to expand.

Conclusion and Recommendations

BRICS has moved beyond its original function as an economic acronym to become a geopolitical force advocating for a more inclusive and multipolar international system. The group's expansion in 2024, its phased approach to partnership, and its emphasis on practical cooperation underscores its growing institutional maturity.

BRICS has adopted a strategy of gradual transformation to enhance local currency trade, develop cross-border payment systems, and promote sustainable infrastructures. It seeks to create parallel frameworks that can evolve alongside traditional institutions. This pragmatic orientation exemplified at the 2024 Kazan Summit, which emphasized functionality, incremental reform, and flexible partnerships. It can expand its influence without over-extending its internal cohesion, since global leadership requires network-building, not bloc rigidities. BRICS represents one of the few initiatives capable of fostering cross-regional and ideologically diverse collaborations.

In rethinking global governance, it is incumbent on BRICS to ensure inclusive multilateralism so as to challenge the hegemonic global dominance of the West by institutionalising a coherent agenda. As an alternative to unipolarity, BRICS should promote

South-South alliances so as to strengthen its New Development Bank that will measure up with the global institutions (e.g. UN, World Bank and IMF). This cooperation can reduce dependency on Western powers. It should leverage global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and geopolitical instability to increase its governance coalitions as a strong alternative.

On a whole, this study set out to examine the evolution of BRICS as a transformative actor in global governance, assess its contribution to the emergence of a multipolar international system, and evaluate its institutional innovations through the dual theoretical lenses of Neo-Gramscian and Structural Realism. The findings reveal that BRICS has transcended its economic origins to become a strategic coalition advocating for inclusivity, equity, and sovereignty in global decision-making. The bloc's expansion, institutional diversification, and advocacy for de-dollarisation reflect both its structural pragmatism as explained by Structural Realism and its ideational resistance to Western hegemony as interpreted through Neo-Gramscian theory.

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