BRICS at the United Nations: An Analytical Model

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, many scholars have been studying the new power stratification in the international system. In the multipolar order that arose, concepts as emerging and middle powers have been used to analyze the States that are not great powers but still hold a relative influence on global issues. This paper adds to this debate and aims to deepen the classification applied to the United Nations member States. We reinforce the need to update the traditional approach concerning the intermediate countries since it does not suit the specific case of the BRICS. Accordingly, we will propose an analytical model to comprehend the opportunities available to each group of States. The focus will be on peace and security issues, relying on the effects that these asymmetries can cause on the decision-making process. Thus, we will analyze the BRICS countries using the model to indicate the heterogeneity among them and understand why they do not act as a group in peace and security affairs at the UN.

Keywords: United Nations. Emerging Powers. Peace and Security. BRICS

Introduction

Since the foundation of the International Relations´ theoretical field, States have been compared based on their relative power. Although classical theories describe the international system as anarchic, the lack of formal hierarchy does not imply the absence of material and subjective inequalities between countries. With the development of academic studies, the asymmetry between States is no longer a hypothesis and has become a premise, generating concepts such as great power, developing countries, and emerging countries.

This paper departs from the literature of international stratification, understanding this concept instead as hierarchies and differences between States, measured in terms of varied powers. Among the several possibilities of levels and classifications, including the great powers and the small countries, some States are described as middle powers, emerging powers, intermediate countries, and developing countries, among other terms.

In analyzing the impact of this group of intermediate countries, Goldman Sachs´ researcher Jim O'Neill aggregated Brazil, Russia, India, and China as States that would have both economic and political potential to influence international relations, creating the acronym BRIC. Subsequently, the adhesion of South Africa in 2011 and the transformation of BRIC into BRICS made the group more representative. Although there is no consensus in the

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literature on the actual status of the BRICS—some call it an alliance, group, forum, or actor, among others—its member States have been commonly categorized as emerging powers, including through the joint declarations (Stuenkel, 2015).

These countries, therefore, would have common demands and challenges and could gather to share transactional costs and seek multilateral solutions to their demands (Visentini, 2013). However, despite being a group that conducts joint negotiations in other instances, the BRICS countries do not act as a coalition within the United Nations, the main multilateral organization. Hence, the research question that this article seeks to answer is: why do the BRICS not act as a negotiating coalition in the UN? Due to the opportunities for dialogue opened by the UN, it draws attention to the fact that the BRICS do not use it as a forum for convergence.

Our main argument is that there are particular asymmetries that hamper the BRICS´ joint action at the UN. In this logic, the objective of this paper is to propose an analytical model aimed at understanding the opportunities available to the different strata of countries in the organization, which gives them unequal capacities to influence the decision-making process. The model is grounded on indicators that analyze the State´s performance in the UN, based on elements of the organization itself, built on two levels: the asymmetry institutionalized in the UN Charter and the control of organizational resources. We consider that the BRICS countries are a fruitful case study to apply the stratification framework since there is no consensus about their status and—as we will argue—no common ground to group them into the same strata at the UN.

We also believed that, among the different UN thematic agendas, the field of international peace and security is a productive topic of analysis, as this is where asymmetries tend to manifest tangibly. Great powers usually have a strong case to take part in negotiations, and States with less relative power are found to have more difficulty advancing their agendas. The latter often need to appeal to alliances as a strategy for sharing transactional costs, but the BRICS have not been following this pattern.

The UN structure itself formalizes this differentiation by establishing permanent members for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and giving them a central role in decision-making. The BRICS countries are divided into permanent (Russia and China) and non-permanent (Brazil, India and South Africa) members, which thus opens different possibilities for international action and hinders joint action. In the meantime, we propose that, at the UN, the BRICS countries have also asymmetrical organizational resources that requalify their ability to influence the decision-making process of international peace and security. This

condition makes it even more difficult for them to act as a coalition within the organization.

This work was also motivated by concerns and theoretical limitations faced during the writing process of the Ph.D. thesis of both authors, who have the United Nations (UN) as a general object of study. We both participated in the Academic Capacitation Program at the Permanent Mission of Brazil at the United Nations and could experience how the asymmetries between countries manifest openly and vividly. The fieldwork was fundamental to conclude that theory does not capture the practical imbalances of UN power politics.

Thus, this paper is divided into three sections: in the first section, we present the genesis and evolution of the concept of middle power, as well as how it has been applied to study the relational power at the UN. In the following two sections, the structure of the UN stratification model is presented to classify the BRICS countries, based on their capacities to influence the negotiations on peace and security. We hope, therefore, to point out elements to understand why they do not use the UN as a forum for joint engagement. Therefore, this article will start with a literature review section on the theoretical evolution of the debates on the stratification of States in the international system and the UN.

International Politics and State´s Stratification
Since the consolidation of the International Relations academic field in the post- World War years, asymmetries between States have been related to the ability of a political unit to lead other political units to do something that they would not otherwise do (Lake, 2010; Mattern, 2010). The first attempts to classify and rank the States in the international system highlighted the prevalence of an orthodox view of power measurement. According to the traditional concept, power was based on material and tangible criteria: population, geographical area, and economic and military data. The control of these elements would embed the great power status**.**

With the enlargement of the concept, material power has been losing its role as an exclusive indicator of power. Complementarily, the literature has come to value the possession of immaterial resources as a means of ensuring that a State can make another political unit follow its preferred course of action. This alternative form is known as soft power (Nye, 2014). Indeed, the concept consists of demonstrating the symbolic resources in ways that do not involve the use of force, such as a country's international leadership, the relative influence in the management of an international regime, and the ability to be an interlocutor of States with different profiles.

The international system, nonetheless, was still an asymmetric environment, but

opportunities were opened for greater participation by other States that did not fit into the group of great powers. A variety of terms were used to analyze the heterogeneous group of intermediate countries, of which Brazil, Russia, China, South Africa, and India would be part of (Lima, 2005). Among them, it came forth in the literature the classification of emerging powers as a valid concept to interpret this rise of States that, despite domestic and regional differences, share aspects of their international strategies.

Intermediate Strata at the International System

According to Lima (2005), although there is no consensus for a precise definition of the term, emerging powers were initially related to the economic categories of large markets. In this context, their ability to affect international issues would be linked to the projection of their economy and growth. Therefore, Fonseca, Paes & Cunha (2016) argue that the "emerging" predicate derives from the economic jargon of the financial market and has been applied as a classification in multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Thus, the term emerged related to the emerging market scope and was used interchangeably with the term "developing country" to describe States that were rising in the world's political and economic hierarchy.

However, analyzing the state only by the economic lenses suggests limitations and raises questions. There are rich countries that are not considered powerful, and influential countries that are not economic powers. In this sense, when studying the study of intermediate States, Milani, Pinheiro & Lima (2017) criticize that the debate on the classification of States is generally summarized in the concept of graduation. The graduation of a State consists of an exogenous classification of financial agencies, which verifies the highest economic reliability and the least subject to crises. It is on this horizon that the Goldman Sachs´ report that coined the term BRIC belongs. According to the authors, this view is only partial, since it conceals processes of social, political and normative developments of States. Hence,

> In all these domains, the implication seems to be that the very concepts of North/core and South/periphery can be dismissed—that it is possible through statistical permutations to dispel the world's disparities, asymmetries, and hierarchies. A concept like 'graduation' has been used to blur not only the fundamental divide between wealth and poverty but also the cleavage between rule-makers and rule-takers. (Milani, Pinheiro & Lima, 2017: 6)

As the literature on the subject has been developing in recent times, but without a delimited semantic definition of the concept, several terms have been used to express related ideas. As with the concept of developing countries, as mentioned above, the idea of emerging

power also appeared linked to concepts such as medium, intermediate and regional power. In such cases, dimensions such as peer recognition, alliance building, and projection among neighbors were added to the concept, which was no longer based on market size alone. Therefore, Fonseca, Paes, and Cunha (2017) argue that the concept of emergent power absorbed the need to expand its content to escape the limitations imposed by the circumscription to the economic aspect. In both the literature and the financial market, the idea of emerging power also must come with a political aspect:

> The investigation of the semantic patterns of academic usage of the predicate emerging to qualify international agents provided a conceptual prototype of this class of phenomena. Emerging is usually placed as an attribute of power as a reference to an increasing degree of might of a country in politics and international economy. (...) an emerging power would be the one whose diplomatic behavior aims to reform or to review the international order, having material support to its claims. This pattern of behavior is prototypically associated with a non-identity belonging to the status quo of the international order. (Fonseca, Paes & Cunha, 2017: 51-52)

The concept, therefore, has undergone a qualitative reinterpretation and has incorporated a revisionist element: these States seek to reform the international order to broaden their diplomatic possibilities and expectations. As they need to have a material basis for their demands, the reform also focuses on—but is not limited to—financial institutions and the economic environment. Therefore, although the material capability is considered fundamental to enable the reform, there is an element of legitimacy and recognition that is also a necessary condition for systemic projection to be effective.

These subjective characteristics are also seized and expressed by the intermediate States in different ways because, as with economic and military elements, they do not use their immaterial resources of power in the same manner. Therefore, even within this middle power stratum, some authors identify this heterogeneity and suggest subclassifications. Jordaan (2003), for example, argues that the concept should be subdivided into emerging middle powers and traditional middle powers. These categories would be distinct in terms of mutually affecting constitutive and behavioral characteristics.

The traditional middle powers would be developed, stable, democratic and uninfluential in their region, while the emerging middle powers would be semi- peripheral, materially unequal, recent democracies and regionally meaningful. Besides, the traditional ones would have a low impetus for regional action and would be conceding to pressures for order reform; the emerging ones would be reformists and, although inclined towards the integration of their region, would seek to build an identity that distinguishes them from the less developed neighboring countries. Examples of traditional middle powers would be

countries such as Australia, Canada, and Sweden, while emerging medium powers can be illustrated by Brazil, India, and South Africa.

However, some countries raise questions about which category they belong to. A striking example is the situation of Russia and China, which are still classified by financial and trade regimes (such as the World Trade Organization) as developing countries and therefore considered emerging powers. However, in the UN, they both act as major powers since they serve as permanent members of the Security Council (MacFarlane, 2009). As we will argue below, this institutional asymmetry is a central factor that weakens the BRICS´ articulation as a negotiating coalition in the organization.

Intermediate Strata at the United Nations

With the redefinitions of the global order derived from the consolidation of multilateral forums, especially after World War II, new international organizations were created by the great powers of the period, and the UN was the most successful example. Consequently, several authors of International Relations have studied the relative positioning of States at the United Nations. The starting point is that, within the UN, the relative status of States is not identical to the system´s configuration.

As a result, Albaret (2013) argues that the strategy of the middle powers in the United Nations has reshaped the debate on the central role of the great powers in multilateral institutions. According to the author, if we adopt the classification derived from realism and consider that the attribute of power is the ability to impose its will, there would be an incompatibility of power and multilateral forums, which carry the principles of inclusion and reciprocity. Drawing from this conclusion materializes the liberal perspective that multilateralism changes the power game between States and does not generate a simple reproduction of great powers´ politics.

> The theoretical debate initially outlined here opens up many clues about the relationship between multilateralism and great powers. However, the contribution finds its limits in the fact that each theory offers a partial view since none proposes to think of them simultaneously. Then, the example of the UN invites us to identify, on the one hand, the practice of the powers (understood here as actors) within and related to the UN game, and, on the other hand, the effects of multilateralism on the great power´s game. This double questioning thus allows us to understand how the UN, which emanates from the great powers, renewed the game and became a privileged space for the multilateral strategies of the middle powers. (Albaret, 2013: 2 – author´s translation)

According to the author, as the UN has been designed as an institution in which persuasion and argumentation are employed more commonly than the use of force, opportunities of autonomy are opened for emerging powers. These States would be located in

an ambivalent position between seeking a seat in the great powers´ table and maintaining, at least in the narrative, the defense of the principles of inclusion and equality. Thus, as the middle powers consider themselves qualified to participate in the international game but not to act on their own, the possible strategies would be coalition building, emphasis on niche diplomacy, and consolidating the image of a trusted member of the international community (Albaret, 2013).

Thus, if the strata in a multilateral organization do not automatically reproduce the asymmetries of the system, it is worth pursuing classifications that consider the impact of the UN structure on the relative position of States. Eduardo Uziel (2015), for example, seeks to outline the following typification of United Nations Member States in the field of international peace and security:

> In order to update this classification and make it simpler and more adapted to the reality of the United Nations and the Security Council, this paper considers the following categories: 1) major powers, which occupy the permanent seats in the UNSC (US, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France, known as the P-5) and enjoy special powers in the Organization; 2) middle powers, which through their political and economic weight or contributions to peacekeeping missions can influence decisions or coordinate groups that influence them (this would include Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Spain, among others); 3) small powers, which have little chance of making a difference in the decision-making process which even when they are members of the Council. (Uziel, 2015: 38; author´s translation)

By Uziel´s definition, therefore, Russia and China are not part of the same group as Brazil, India and South Africa, because the permanent seat in the UNSC rescales the international role of these States. The author, therefore, recognizes that the sovereign equality established in the UN Charter does not translate into effective horizontality, a situation that restricts those who can influence international decisions. Therefore, for the author, the UN acts on the principle of nuanced sovereign equality.

If in the international system the BRICS gathering was motivated by the mutuality of emerging power characteristics, the same cannot be said about them in the UN. At the organization, they have divergent agendas and strategies. Albaret and Devin (2016) broaden the debate by considering that the proliferation of expressions to analyze these countries demonstrates the numerous uncertainties caused by the increase in their international projection. However, the authors point out that, in practice, the diversity of strategies in these countries makes cohesion difficult. We consider that the asymmetries between the BRICS countries are an obstacle to the group's consolidation as a negotiating coalition and lead them to choose other forms of interaction.

In light of this debate, the first section aimed to introduce the evolution of the concept of emerging power. As presented, the genesis of the term was related to the idea of emerging markets and developing countries. The evolution of the international system caused an expansion of the concept and added subjective elements, such as recognition and revisionism. Later the concept was applied to the intermediate countries at the United Nations. It was possible to verify that, while the classification of Brazil, India, and South Africa as emerging powers is frequent, there are disagreements about the stratum to which Russia and China belong as they are great powers in the UN, but not formally in economic and financial regimes. Thus, the next section will introduce the proposal of an analytical model, which can be applied to further study the strategies of the BRICS at the UN and to understand their obstacles to conduct joint negotiations in peace and security issues.

UN´s First Stratification Level: Nuanced Sovereign Equality as the Institutionalization of Asymmetry Between the Member States

The proposal of a framework to analyze the BRICS in the UN necessarily involves understanding the asymmetries between them. These gaps generate different opportunities and interests and make it difficult to align strategies on peace and security issues. Thus, we propose a two-level model to analyze the heterogeneity of the BRICS in the UN. In this section, we will present the first level of the model, referring to the institutionalized difference between permanent and non-permanent members of the UNSC.

To proceed with the design of the analytical model, we emphasize that asymmetries in member States' capacities to influence the outcome of the organization's decision-making processes in the areas of peace and security are initially based on the legal-institutional framework created by the UN Charter[3] itself: the founding document of the organization. By institutionalizing both formal equality and formal hierarchy between its member States, the document enshrines the principle of nuanced sovereign equality.

While the institutionalization of formal equality occurs through the principle of sovereign equality among the member States (Article 2.1), the rationalization of formal hierarchy occurs because the UN Charter: i) endows the Security Council with a restricted composition to 15 members (11 members before the 1963 amendment) and guarantees the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France a differentiated prerogative from the rest by virtue of their permanent membership (article 23.1); ii) requires concurrent vote of the permanent members of the Security Council for the adoption of a qualified majority

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[3] Available at: https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/ (accessed on 25th November 2019)

resolution of the body—that is to say, it guarantees the veto power (article 27.3); (iii) give the Security Council primary responsibility and special duties for the maintenance of international peace and security (Articles 24.1 and 24.2); iv) confers binding legal value on Security Council resolutions (article 25); v) the General Assembly has a subsidiary role in maintaining international peace and security (Articles 11 and 12); vi) does not confer binding legal value on the resolutions of the General Assembly (article 10).

As a result, the peace and security mechanisms created by the UN Charter formally crystallize asymmetries in effective participation. Indeed, we conclude that the US, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France (P5) should be treated as a particular stratum concerning the other member States of the organization due to their ability to influence the UN peace and security decision-making processes. Thus, within the UN, the BRICS do not present themselves as a consistent block beforehand.

However, in the literature reviewed in the first section, we have seen that other member States also have disparities in their ability to influence decision-making. Middle powers, for example, either by their regional projection or by niche diplomacy, have greater possibilities for articulation than small countries. Thus, the second section of the model seeks to advance this issue by introducing other indicators that help in understanding these differences.

UN´s Second Stratification Level: Control of organizational resources as elements of asymmetry between Member States

To move forward on the analytical model, we emphasize that, in addition to the UN structure, the asymmetries in member States' capacities to influence peace and security decision-making are also based on disparities in the control of organizational power resources. The definition of organizational power employed here is proposed by Hardy and Clegg (1996), who analyzed the control of informal resources as an institutional asset. According to the authors, this power is composed of technical knowledge of the organization´s culture and sociability rites. Thus, actors who know the normative details and master the rules of procedures have a greater ability to maximize their earnings. In this regard, we consider that in the UN peace and security agenda, these resources are composed of the following elements.

Historical Commitment to the United Nations on International Peace and Security Issues

In this first element, we consider that the history of the State's participation in the peace and security organs endows it with practical knowledge, informational control, and agency capacity to present solutions and be recognized by others as a credible interlocutor (Baccarini, 2017). Therefore, the date of entry into the UN should be taken into account as it indicates the

time by which the State could start to learn and introduce practices into the organization. The image below compares the date of entry of member States, from the original members to the most recent entry (South Sudan, in 2012)

Image 1: Admissions to the UN (1945-2012)[4]
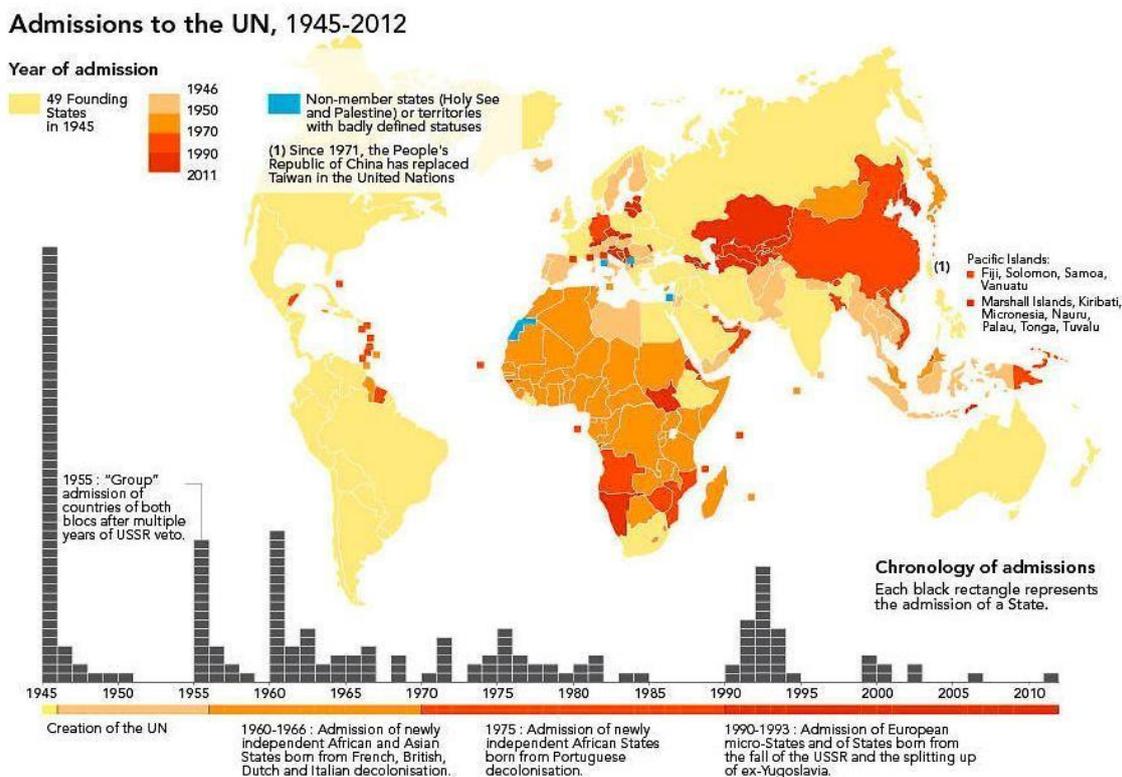
Along these lines, as the body that has the central prerogative to deal with the issue, one should also consider the background of participation in the Security Council. For non-permanent members, the quantity of mandates is an important indicator since, as it as an elective seat, it shows not only the recognition of other States in the voting process but also the greater possibilities of influencing decision-making. The image below illustrates the representation at the UNSC and highlights the countries with the most mandates.

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[4] Available at:
http://cartotheque.sciences-po.fr/media/Admissions_to_the_UN_1945-2012/1257/ (accessed on 29th November 2019)

Image 2: Mandates of Non-Permanent Members (1945-2016[5])

REPRESENTATION ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
Quantity of mandates of non-permanent members, between 1945 and 2016

Countries with
more terms:
Japan - 11
Brazil - 10
Argentina - 9
Colombia - 7
India - 7
Pakistan - 7

1000 km

11
6
1

* Saudia Arabia refused
the seat in 2013.

** Before its dissolution,
Yugoslavia carried out 3 terms.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: UNSC website, 2016.
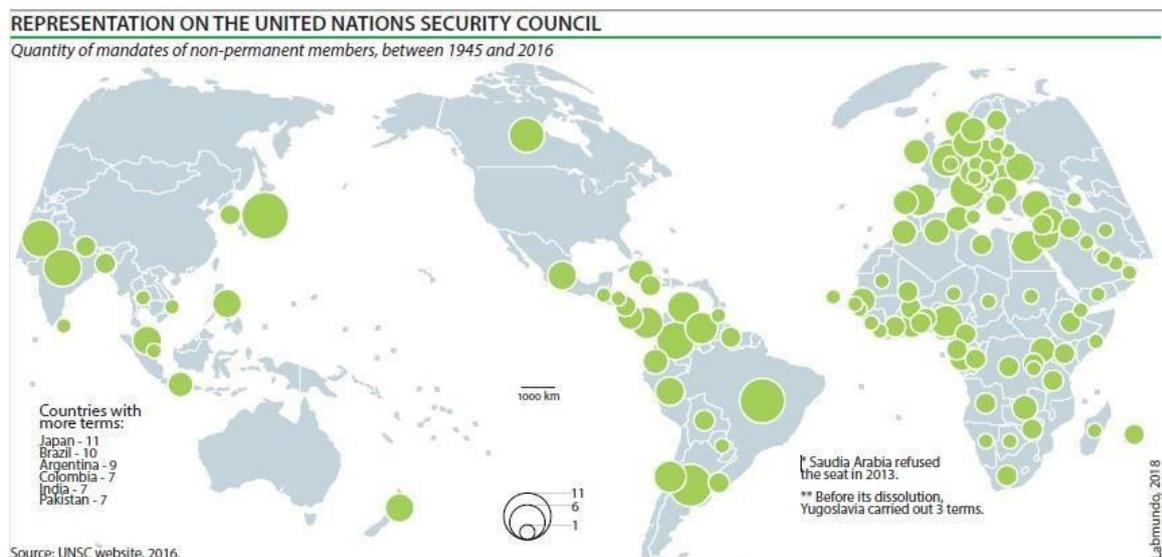
Source: LIMA et al, 2017: 34[6].

From this data, it is already possible to introduce preliminary considerations about the BRICS. All five are UN members, but UNSC membership differs: Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) and China (represented by Taiwan until 1971) have been permanent members since the organization's creation, and Brazil and India are among the countries with more rotating terms: 10 and 7 respectively. South Africa was represented at the UNSC only on three occasions—less than half that of India. The African country was also suspended from the organization and was the subject of several condemning resolutions during the apartheid regime. Thus, not only are Russia and China prominent in this criterion but there are gaps between Brazil, India and, above all, South Africa.

Besides, under Article 30 of the Charter, the UNSC has the prerogative to establish its own rules of procedure, which are governed by the Provisional Rules of Procedure (S/96)[7], revised and amended on several occasions since its establishment in 1946. Because they are considered provisional, several changes in the working methods were conducted through informal mechanisms. Thus, the permanent members have the institutional memory and mastery of the working methods of the body, which gives them the technical knowledge to operationalize the rules in their favor.

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[5] None of the non-permanent members with the most mandates were in the UNSC between 2016 and 2019, the year of this paper´s publication, which, therefore, does not alter the argument presented here.
[6] The reference and the page of this source are part of the Portuguese version of the book mentioned. The English version is yet to be published. We thank the authors for kindly letting us use the images firsthand
[7] The original document and the revisions can be found at http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/rules/ (accessed 19 Nov 2019)

Non-permanent members have a short term of only two years, which makes the number of mandates a relevant piece of information to verify the country's knowledge of the procedures. Once within the UNSC, the country also broadens the possibilities of being elected to lead UN subcommittees or to engage more directly in peacekeeping operations, as we will further develop below.

Ability to Act Continually at the United Nations
We also consider that in conjunction with the country's history of participation, it is necessary to observe qualitative criteria for such engagement, such as the size of the country's permanent delegation to the UN. A consistent number of diplomats are important both for attending meetings and leading working groups and for their ability to monitor and gather information. In this sense, according to Albaret (2013),

> It has become a commonplace to stress that States do not have the same resources: the disparity in size of permanent missions at the United Nations (varying from 2 to 148 people), underlines the differences between States in relation to access to information and agenda items, the matrix of discussions, the ability to position themselves in negotiations, etc. These human and organizational resources contribute in some way to the reproduction of the international hierarchy within the UN game. (Albaret, 2013: 1, author´s translation)

In addition to the number of members, it is also necessary to analyze the composition of the delegation by the career level of the diplomats working in the mission. A significant number of high-level employees indicate that the country attaches importance to the organization and is willing to direct qualified personnel to work.

In this realm, there are significant differences to be mentioned between the BRICS. Because they are permanent members, Russia and China need to have a greater number of representatives to attend simultaneous meetings and gather information on all the agenda items. According to data from 2018, Russia has a delegation of 81 employees on its permanent mission; of these, 22 hold the titles of Ambassador, Minister or Counselor (the highest positions available). Meanwhile, he Chinese delegation is composed of 89 employees, of which 27 occupy the three highest positions.

In turn, the Brazilian delegation has 40 staff members, and 10 are Ambassadors, Ministers or Counselors. Out of the 40, 4 are military personnel, who attend peacekeeping operations meetings. Even though it is half of the staff of Russia and China, the Brazilian delegation is larger than the other two BRICS members. India has 27 employees and only 6 are in the highest hierarchy. South Africa, despite having the smallest delegation among the BRICS with 24 employees, has more high-ranking representatives than Brazil and India;

among the 24, 11 are either Ambassadors, Ministers or Counselors.

Material Contribution to the United Nations in the Field of International Peace and Security

In addition to the human resources at the Permanent Mission, we should consider the contribution effectively made to international peace and security. To begin with, it could be analyzed through budget indicators, such as the share that the country represents in the general budget of the organization. Also, the contribution to the peacekeeping operations budget should be added to the analysis.

The table below shows the top ten contributors to the UN´s regular budget and the percentage of their contribution. All member States need to pay a share, in percentages ranging from 22% to 0.001%. It is possible to see the great concentration of power in the hands of the P5, besides the expressive participation of Germany and Japan (countries that claim a permanent seat in the UNSC). Of the three BRICS countries that are not permanent members of the UNSC, only Brazil is among the top ten contributors. India contributes with 0.737% and South Africa with 0.364%, according to 2018 data.

Table 1: Top Ten Contributors to the UN´s Regular Budget (2018[8])

Member State	Share (%)	Gross (US$)
1) United States	22,00%	591 388 114
2) Japan	9,680%	260 210 770
3) China	7,921%	212 926 602
4) Germany	6,389%	171 744 484
5) France	4,859%	130 616 129
6) United Kingdom	4,463%	119 971 143
7) Brazil	3,863%	102 767 125
8) Italy	3,748%	100 751 030
9) Russia	3,088%	83 009 386
10) Canada	2,921%	78 520 213

Source: author´s elaboration based on data from the United Nations Contributions Committee (2018)[9]

In addition to contributing to the regular budget, financial contributions to

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[8] We could not find data for the same years for this section. Thus, some sources presented data from different years. However, there was no significant change in the UN in this period that could cause significant variations in the trends presented.

[9] Annual data available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/budget.shtml> (accessed 7th May 2019)

peacekeeping operations may also add to the analysis. As peacekeeping mandates are approved by the UNSC, permanent members, besides being able to interfere directly with the content of the resolutions, can also influence its implementation through its relevance to financial and personnel contributions. The chart below illustrates the distribution of payments and compares major powers (P5), middle powers and countries with lower projection.

Image 5: Contributions to Peacekeeping Budget (2014)

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS FUNDING
Main funding, by country, in billion dollars, in 2014
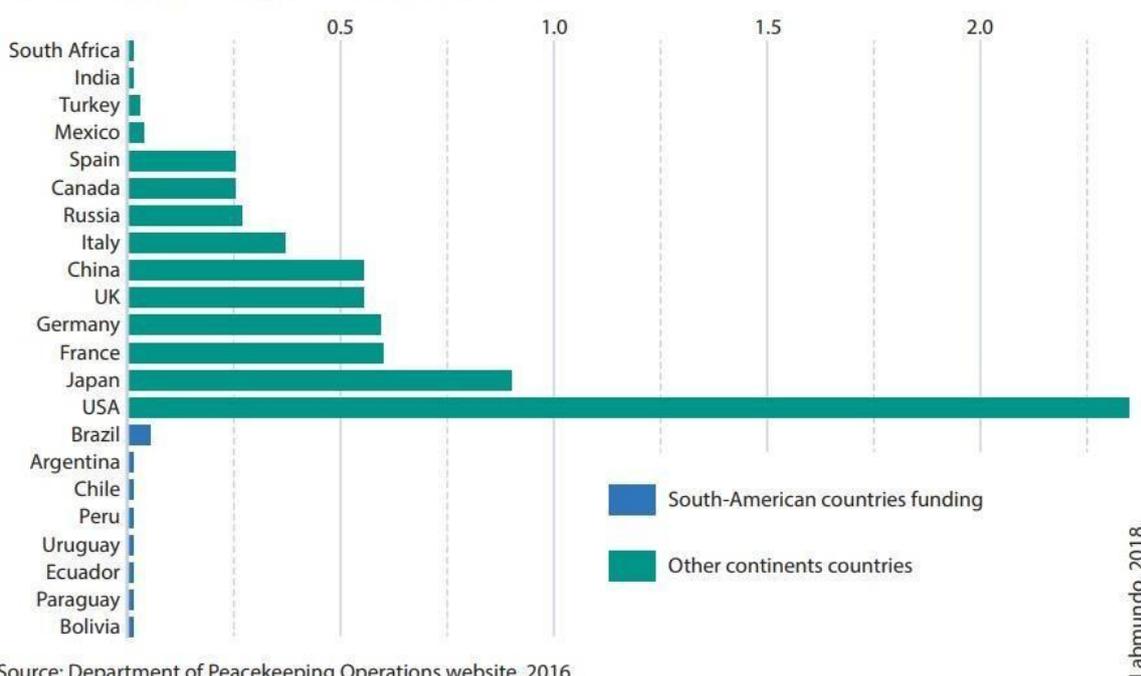
Source: Department of Peacekeeping Operations website, 2016.

Source: LIMA *et al*, 2017: 34[10].

From the data, we can see that Russia and China contribute significantly more than the other members of the BRICS. Brazil is the major contributor among the countries of South America and the other emerging powers. South Africa and India contribute less than other emerging countries such as Turkey and Mexico.

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[10] The reference and the page of this source are part of the Portuguese version of the book mentioned. The English version is yet to be published. We thank the authors for kindly letting us use the images firsthand.

Image 6: Personnel to Peacekeeping Operations (2015)

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS MILITARY PERSONNEL

Main contributions by country, in million people, on 2015 December

Source: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2016.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: LIMA *et al*, 2017: 34.

In the troop contribution, there is a reverse trend compared to the largest financiers. There is a tangible division of labor between those who pay and those who go to the field. India emerges as the largest personnel contributor, followed by China, both of whom are two emerging powers with more than 1 billion inhabitants. South Africa contributes more than Russia and Brazil.

Motivations for emerging countries to supply peacekeeping operations include training opportunities in real-world crisis and conflict scenarios, sharing of military doctrine with other States, and reimbursement of amounts spent on deployed troops. Contributions to peacekeeping operations are also one of the criteria used to compose the Peacebuilding Commission, established in 2006. The five largest financial contributors and the five largest troop contributors guarantee representation.

The Capacity of Coordinating International Negotiations

Besides the historic presence at the UN and its financial and human resources contribution to peace and security, we propose that the country's negotiating capacity also interferes with its ability to exercise real power and influence. To tackle this point, we should add an institutional policy-building capacity element to check if the country participates in the UN´s negotiating groups.

We argue that membership in the United Nations´ peace and security concertation groups alters the State's ability to influence the decision-making processes. This is because

these conditions modify the negotiating capacity of a state to the extent that: (i) by reconciling its position within the group, it has a greater capacity to consolidate a majority in voting processes; ii) by concerting its position within the group, the state can endow its position with greater representativeness (quantitative and qualitative).

As shown, the BRICS countries are not a negotiating coalition in the UN and have different interests to settle peace and security issues. For this reason, the UN is not the BRICS's main arena. As a result, they are not one of the negotiating groups recognized by the organization[11]. An accurate example of the divergence of strategies among the five was the paradigmatic case of Resolution 1973 in 2011 concerning the establishment of an air ban zone in Libya. At the time, the five BRICS were simultaneously at the UNSC, but despite previously coordinating positions to abstain and thus question the legitimacy of the resolution, South Africa changed the vote and was in favor of the US proposal (Oliveira *et al*, 2015). This indicates that a particular interest prevailed over the group´s concertation. Also, Onuki and Oliveira (2013) point out that there is no data to suggest that the BRICS adopted a convergent posture not even in the General Assembly.

Among the negotiating coalitions that these countries participate in are the G77 (from the BRICS, only Russia is not a member), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM, in which South Africa and India are full members, and Brazil and China are observers), and the Joint Coordinating Committee (which unites the G77 and the NAM). Furthermore, the UN divides States for electoral purposes into regional geopolitical groups. Brazil is part of the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC); Russia is part of the Eastern Europe Group; India and China are part of the Group of Asian States; and South Africa is part of the Group of African States. Therefore, there is a difference in agenda and identity that makes the BRICS countries seek other coalitions as priority discussion forums at the UN.

Capacity to Occupy Central Positions in Resolutions´ Negotiations

Over time, mechanisms have been created to make the structural and institutional boundaries of the UNSC more flexible for decision-making and debate among States. Such a concession allows, for example, that States and negotiating groups not represented in the UNSC could attend meetings and voice their views in open debates. However, Baccarini (2017) presents some reflections that conclude that the proliferation of informal groups and negotiations has led to the emergence of a consensual decision-making pattern, where the ability to influence

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[11]   The list of negotiating groups recognized by the organization can be consulted here: https://outreach.un.org/mun/content/groups-member-states (access on 26th Nov 2019).

the outcome remains concentrated in P5. For the author, the permanent members decide in advance the terms that they are willing to agree and concede, and the documents that go to other States are previously negotiated and written.

Thus, such apparent openness to other States´ engagement is counterbalanced by the practice of the penholder, a method instituted in 2010. The topics on the UNSC agenda are divided among its members, who are responsible for drafting the first resolution sketch. Data from the Security Council Report[12] confirms Baccarini's (2017) position that such a system has deepened the negotiating gap between P5 and non-permanent members, who rarely act as the penholder and are therefore relegated to the role of proposing minor amendments. When the document is already written, there is a substantial increase in the political cost of opposition.

In 2017, out of 39 themes in the Security Council agenda, permanent members are penholder in 25 themes. The convergence is even clearer by focusing on the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, which participate in 24 themes. It is noted here that, even among the permanent members, there are differences as to the centrality of the normative production process, with the Western powers controlling the initial versions of the documents. Even when the non-permanent members are the penholders, it is never a fulfilled work: they often inherit the drafts written by the previous penholder or leave them to the following one after they leave the UNSC.

In the second level of the analytical framework, regarding the control of organizational resources, we confirm once again the BRICS are subdivided into two strata, which is an obstacle to the joint formulation of strategies at the UN. Moreover, the control of organizational resources further separates the ability of these States to act jointly and differentiates States within the same stratum. We argue that, while differences do not impede concerted negotiation, the aspects that the BRICS have in common in the international system are not reflected in peace and security issues within the UN. The five have different agendas, interests, and strategies, and they have asymmetrical capacities to influence decision-making. Thus, the table below summarizes the two levels of the model and summarizes the criteria and classification levels of the UN member States.

Table 2: United Nations Member States Stratification Model in the Field of International Peace and Security

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[12] Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/images/briefs/February%202017%20Insert.pdf (access on 26th Nov 2019)

• *Great Powers:* Compared to the other member States, they form a particular category of countries that, because of their relative position in the asymmetry formalized by institutional design and the imbalance in the control of organizational power resources, have a greater capacity to influence the results of United Nations decision-making processes concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. This is because this category of member States has: (i) greater ability to influence the outcome of Security Council decision-making, ie the ability to directly influence all outcomes; ii) greater control of organizational resources. This stratum includes the five permanent members of the UNSC: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China.

• *Middle Powers:* Compared to the great powers, they form a particular category of Member States which, because of their relative position in the asymmetry formalized by institutional design and the imbalance in the control of organizational power resources, have less ability to influence the international peace and security negotiating process. Compared to the other member States, they are a stratum that has a greater capacity to influence the outcome of United Nations decision-making processes.
Emerging powers such as Brazil, India and South Africa are part of this stratum, and there are differences in resource control between them.

• *Other Member States:* Compared to the great and middle powers, they form a category of member States which, due to their relative position in the asymmetry formalized by the institutional design and the imbalance in the control of organizational power resources, have less capacity to influence the outcome of United Nations decision-making processes regarding the maintenance of international peace and security

Source: author´s own work.

Therefore, we argue that the two levels must be taken into consideration to build a model that allows us to understand why the BRICS do not use the UN peace and security scope as a forum for interaction. We emphasize that this is due to the mismatches regarding the institutionalization of asymmetry in the UN Charter and the possession of organizational resources. The combination of the two levels highlights that the BRICS have different strategies, agendas, and possibilities in this area, which makes it difficult for the coalition to be effective. The five countries are divided into two strata and are not homogeneous with the

other countries in the category they are part of.

However, we would like to point out that the placement of a State in each of the strata presented by the model needs to be constantly reviewed, as there may be upward or downward mobility from one category to another. This alteration may occur due to a change in the organization's legal and institutional framework (though unlikely, it cannot be considered impossible). Also, this mobility may occur due to variations in the control of organizational power resources by member States over time. We, therefore, reaffirm that, in the conditions under which the UN operates today, there are several barriers to thinking about the BRICS as a group, especially in the agenda of international peace and security.

Final Remarks

Reading about the UN and experiencing the daily life of the organization are two distinct and often distant tasks. By entering the headquarters and observing the negotiating dynamics, the bargaining for votes, and the veiled threats, the literature seems to be an abstract production, detached from reality. International Relations courses and classical texts teach that States have different powers in the system but knowing this data and living this asymmetry are separate processes. Therefore, the main motivation of this work was the search for an analytical model that approaches the nuances within the largest multilateral organization in the world.

Thus, the main goal of this paper was to introduce an analytical model comprising the asymmetries of the different strata of countries in the United Nations, which gives them unequal capacities to influence the decision-making process. Although in other forums the BRICS countries are considered emerging powers, we indicate that in the case of UN peace and security scope the group is subdivided: as permanent members of the UNSC, Russia and China are great powers. Therefore, the first section sought to conceptualize the term "emergent power" and stressed that it is not possible to homogenize this intermediate stratum.

In the following section, the paper presented elements and indicators that were relevant to analyze the negotiating capacity of the BRICS in peace and security issues. These include the size and composition of the permanent mission to the UN, the material contribution to the UN (especially the peace and security sectors), and the capacity for international concertation.

Since the paper seeks to fill a gap in the literature, in which theory appears detached from practice, the model is open to future applications in case studies. New research agendas involve exploring the similarities and disparities between Russia and China, on one hand, and between Brazil, India and South Africa, on the other hand. It is also appropriate to adapt the model to fit countries that are not permanent members of the UNSC but also do not fit into the

emerging power category, like Germany and Japan. With this initial effort, we expect to contribute to the academic field with a model that can be adapted, applied and tested in future studies.

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