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THE RUSSIAN DILEMMA: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION TOWARD THE BRICS

MA Thesis

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Tartu, 2021

ABSTRACT

Russia faces an internal dilemma while projecting its identity toward the BRICS. The literature on the country identity suggests that it manifests both an imperial and great power self-perception, but in this case, Russia is dealing with a group with a solid postcolonial set of values. The poststructuralist discourse analysis was the primary method for analyzing the country's instrumentalization of that dichotomy and the outcomes for Russian identity construction. The gathered data consists of the public and official discourses of both Russia and the BRICS during its regular and extraordinary meetings. It was possible to indicate that the country shows evidence of an attempt to engage its objectives in the group's agenda by the projection of its identity toward the group. The study also shows that Russia is under the effects of Othering with the BRICS. In which the contact with the group identity is also shaping the country's identity. The conclusion is that Russia is developing a pragmatic approach to postcolonial narratives to advance its agenda, but the country was not able to construct a solid leadership in the BRICS.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIC - BRICS Information Center

BRIC - Brazil, Russia, India and China

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

CSTO - Collective Security Treaty Organization

EAEU - Eurasian Economic Union

EU - European Union

G20 - Group of Twenty

G8 - Group of Eight

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

IMF - International Monetary Fund

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDB - New Development Bank

PPP - Public-Private Partnerships

R2P - Responsibility to Protect

SCO - Shanghai Cooperation Organization

UN - United Nations

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

WB - World Bank

WHO - World Health Organization

WTO - World Trade Organization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not be possible without the support of many people and institutions. Firstly, the University of Tartu and the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Science for providing the necessary tools to elaborate this research. I would like to also show my gratitude to all the University and the Institute personnel, such as professors, staff, and directors, during these two years of study. This thesis was written during one of the biggest crises that our world has seen in years; those persons were always present to answer my questions and to keep our educational process going in the best possible way. All the professors with whom we shared the classroom, remotely or presential, have awakened my interest in this topic. I want to give a special mention to my advisor Radityo Dharmaputra. To whom I am thankful for the support, for the revisions, comments, and especially for believing in this project since the first day we made contact. To him, I wish the best of luck in his bright academic career ahead. The writing process of this research was only bearable by direct and indirect support of my family, my friends, and especially of my companion back home, who shared with me the bitterness of the distance and the longing for our reunion. Without all those persons and institutions, it would not be possible to reach the present result. Last but not least, it is crucial to also manifest gratitude to the Republic of Estonia and its mighty people, a magnificent nation that received me with open arms during my whole period in Tartu.

1. INTRODUCTION

The studies of identity in international relations are a significant part of the scholarship, promoting new interpretations to understand the states' behavior and motivations. One of the key players in today's world politics is the Russian Federation, whose historical and actual actions are directly entangled with the most relevant dynamics of power in our present time. This study will address the Russian identity formation in the context of the BRICS, a semi-institutionalized international organization made by the cooperation of five members with substantial differences. The reader can raise a question on why it is important to research the Russian dynamics toward the BRICS. It is a valid question and opens the space for the introduction of the topic. To have such research is significantly important because the BRICS represent a large share of the world territory, population, and economy. However, this study also addresses the Russian identity studies to introduce the country's projection toward the BRICS as another element in the debate about identity.

The analysis of this Relational process adds to the academic debate a new perspective of the country acting among nations that it does not consider hostile or aligned toward itself. The Russian behavior in the BRICS is relevant for emergent and developing countries' policymakers who desire to better understand the country's actions. It can provide a clear interpretation of the Russian positions to the peripheral countries. This debate differs from the previous studies because most Russian identity studies toward international organizations are related to Western ones or how the country has a prominent role, such as NATO, the EU, and the EAEU. The BRICS is not a formal international organization, and neither is a place in one of those two sides. Due to its internal dynamics and background, the Russian actions toward them are a topic with a vast possibility for new findings and contributions to the academic debate.

This research aims to address the Russian projection of identity toward the BRICS, especially the outcome of this relation to the country's identity. Russia has its identity, and it is directly related to the country's foreign policy; it is possible to affirm that Russia projects its identity via its foreign policy. This study addresses how that process occurs and the outcomes to the country identity and foreign policy, since one hypothesis that this study uses is that the foreign policy also constructs identity. The

research will address how Russia manages to project itself toward the BRICS, not only the way the country does it but also the outcome of the process. It is not relevant for the scope of the research to enter into the debate about Russia's relations toward each BRICS member separately. This study is about Russia's identity; the country's projection toward the BRICS is one dimension to engage in this matter. In order to fulfill this objective, it was necessary to narrow the scope of the discourse analysis to only official and BRICS-related discourses by using Hansen's (2006) methods and the author's subjectivity tools when proceeding with the discourse analysis. The poststructuralist approach in the discourse analysis and theoretical construction is directly connected to the author. This specific approach was a fundamental tool to engage with the Russian toward the BRICS case since it assumes the discourse capacity to produce reality.

Regarding the thesis structure, the idea was to divide it into three main chapters: the first is about the methodology, the second regarding the theoretical design, and the last one with the discourse analysis and the empirical analysis. The idea is to initially bring the theory behind the study and introduce the reader to the research concept of identity. That specific design allows the reader to have the tools with which the discourse analysis was made. There is a parallel between both parts. The main aspects of identity covered in the theoretical part have their empirical counterpart in the next section. The introduction on the Relational aspect of identity, the non-hostility of the Russian construction of the BRICS archetype, the Linking process between the country and the group identities, and the identity dimensions are addressed in the same progression in the empirical section. That structure will guide the reader to follow the argument to construct the theory and the analysis in a subsequential order.

The Relational part will address the identity debate itself and how the international relations literature works with the concept. The dichotomy between a hostile and a non-hostile Other will be constructed and later utilized in the Russian case. After developing these two concepts, the Linking process will use them to engage with the relation between Russia and the BRICS, first introduced in the theoretical section and later instrumentalized in the methodological part. The final part is regarding the identity dimensions following Hansen's (2006) steps for methodological analysis. The Spatial, Temporal, and Ethical dimensions will be presented in the same previously mentioned structure. Firstly, their theoretical conceptualization and later with their

instrumentalization in the study's selected case. All those parts are linked to further the debate, from an initial identity conceptualization to a deeper discussion on the external forces that constrict identity construction. This structure aims to inform the reader that all those concepts are connected to the identity construction itself.

The methods used are a poststructuralist discourse analysis based on Hansen (2006) and the author's methods to text selection. The data of this research is made entirely of official and public discourses of both the Russian head of state addressing the BRICS and the group declarations. Also, peripheral data such as the group's documentation, memorandums, action plans, and treaties were used to contribute to the central data. Regarding the reliability and validity of the data, this matter was always addressed during the construction of the thesis. For this reason, only official digital databases, such as governmental and BRICS official websites, were used to have the official translation of each document and discourse. It is possible to raise a question about the validity of the speeches not having their original version used and why the researchers used the official translations. Since this research deals with the Russian position toward the BRICS, and the country also addresses its external matters, the English version is valid because it was not addressing its domestic environment.

2. METHODOLOGY ON DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This research can be understood as both explanatory and exploratory regarding the international relations scholarship. The explanatory nature of the present study is directly related to an area of knowledge in which the literature is extensive and has substantive findings, the Russian identity, and foreign policy studies. That area of the Russian studies in the social sciences and international relations is mainly dedicated to studying the country's position regarding hostile and competitive relations, mainly with the United States, the EU, and the other states in its surrounding neighborhood. This research aimed to analyze the Russian identity construction toward the BRICS, a group that can be understood as not-Western and neither a formal international organization, such as NATO or the UN. In this sense, the exploratory nature of the research appears since the literature of the Russian identity and foreign policy construction lacks productions focusing on the country's exclusive relation toward the group. Some researches focus on the BRICS and Russia simultaneously, but mainly focusing on the group's particularities instead of putting the country in the center of the analysis, leading to conclusions of the Russian behavior in BRICS, in a passive relation, rather than the Russian actions towards the group, based on the active role of the country in that mutual relation. The present study was conceptualized to work with both the explanatory nature, working with a vast and already consolidated field of research, and the exploratory one since it proposes to enlarge the study about Russian identity to new frontiers.

Before moving into how the discourse analysis was made, it is important to refer to the primary source of both theory and methodology of this research: "*Security as Practice Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*" of 2006 by Lene Hansen. Regarding the theoretical aspect, the book was essential to introduce the author's interpretation of poststructuralism and also the philosophical base behind the theory. It worked as a central piece in constructing the theoretical approach of the research; from the book's references, there was the possibility to expand the argumentation toward new perspectives in poststructuralist thought, for example, this research utilized classic constructivist approaches, such as Campbell (1990 and 1992), and other approaches of the poststructuralism, such as Weaver (1995 and 2002). More actual perspectives influenced this research and classical visions regarding constructivism, structuralism, and

poststructuralism such as Foucault, Derrida, and Burke. In this research, Hansen's role was in her text selection methods and the use of the subjectivity used in analyzing the texts, which the analysis borrowed from the author during the research. The concept of language as ontological and supported by a collective nature can construct reality (Hansen,2006). This study's crucial interpretation relied on the analysis of the discourses since it is based on the poststructuralist discourse analysis.

The methodology and model of discourse analysis were also based on Hansen's (2006) methods and criteria for selecting and analyzing the text. It is mentioned in the book that "*there will always be a process of selecting agents of discourse as well as the material to be drawn upon*" (Hansen, 2006). An agent's selection is important because, during the elaboration of this research, there was a vast possibility for different sources and discourses to be analyzed. The preference for the use of only the Russian head of the official state speeches alongside the BRICS official documentation was made to identify the consolidation and the later adaptation of the official discourse to other discourses. Narrowing the discourse analysis to only the official level makes it possible to highlight the governmental actions towards an external critical position in a broader perspective (Hansen, 2006), which fits the research scope. Analyzing both the Russian discourse and its position toward the BRICS is supported by this method because it works with an external counterpart and position development. Russian relation toward the BRICS is constantly changing and evolving based on the instrumentalization of a harmful external environment. By adopting this methodological approach, it is possible to focus exclusively on the scope of the research, which is the Russian identity construction toward the BRICS.

This study is both explanatory and exploratory. It can be understood as explanatory because it deals with a consolidated field of research and with trustworthy sources, such as official discourse. The explanatory side is related to the consequences of identity construction, which is already a discussed and consolidated topic, especially on the chosen theoretical approach. The utilization of Russia as the present case is not what brings the exploratory side to the research. It is the detachment of the country from the BRICS. By changing the Russian perspective as a group member and an agent external to the group, it is possible to enter the study's exploratory side with its self-identification. The literature on Russia in the BRICS is usually on the country's membership or in group

action, moving the country to a secondary role. Taking the explanatory side of identity studies and combining the exploratory side of Russia as interacting with, and not only being part of the BRICS is an exercise that relied on the now presented methodology. Poststructuralist discourse analysis and its limitation to official speeches were the tools that guided the process respecting the case's particularities.

This research relied on a methodology consisting of discourse analysis of both the Russian leadership's speeches at the BRICS Summits, Joint Declarations, and other official documentation, such as action plans, memorandums, and press releases. The chosen texts were fundamentally only the public and official ones, targeting international society, such as other states, civil societies, and international organizations. The texts were selected after gathering all Russian discourses in BRICS meetings and the group joint declarations from its first meeting in 2009 to the last one in 2020. Another source was to focus also on extraordinary BRICS meetings - such as the pre-G20 Summit ones, which were still public and official - and the action plans of the group. The decision focused on gathering the documentation only from official sources and working with the discourses in their raw format instead of using pre-conceived analysis.

For this task, it was necessary to utilize the Kremlin official website alongside the Russian and other BRICS member's Ministry of Foreign Affairs digital archives. The BRICS as a group has few digital sources such as official websites or digital databases. For example, there is no online central address from the BRICS, the group instead creates specific ones for specific meetings, and after the summit, the website is no longer updated. For example, the first digital address created for the group, with documentation and media material regarding the meeting and the BRICS members, was created only in 2015. This dynamic of an "*ad-hoc* digital presence" made the utilization of governmental sources necessary since the documentation was available in the domestic digital archives of the members.

Another reliable source, which made the process of unification of both speeches and the documentations in only one website, was made by the University of Toronto through the BRICS Information Center. The BIC has many of the leaders' speeches and official documentation from 2009 to 2020, alongside the temporary website links. Even with the substantial participation of the BIC of the University of Toronto as a source's provider, this research intended to work with the data directly from the official

government sources and because most of the Russian speeches were only available in their digital archive. The utilization of the official speeches and documentation from governmental institutions archives and English represent the core of the text that was chosen for the analysis. Using that kind of documentation was made because it represented the sources with the most reliability and validity for the research. The sources of this research were not abundant, especially regarding the BRICS documentation, primarily because of the lack of group primacy for the construction of an unified and operational information center. The possibility of relying on the BIC was positive, but the most secure source for data was the governmental digital database of Russia and the other BRICS countries. Since the data was only official and public documentation, there was no privacy barrier or the instrumentalization of classified information. The utilization of official sources for data storage made the process dynamic and fruitful.

After selecting the text, based on the previously introduced criteria, it was necessary to first divide the sources into two groups: essential sources and auxiliary sources. The first group consisted of the Russian leadership speeches during the regular summits and in the BRICS joint declarations from 2009 to 2020. The second in the extra-official BRICS summits Russian speeches, the group positions in other official documentation, such as action plans, memorandums, agreements, and treaties. The second group acted as a supportive force in the construction of the empirical analysis. In elaborating the theoretical argumentation, any previous mention to those found in the revised literature or the first group documentation was checked to have the raw text. For example, the NDB treaty is frequently mentioned in the Fortaleza Declaration (2014) and the literature. The action plans and non-regular meetings also were mentioned in the primary group and later revised.

Regarding the BRICS documentation in the first group, after the analysis, there is the possibility to apply a temporal division based on three distinct periods. The first, 2009 to 2011, which is the initial BRIC formation, its enlargement to become the BRICS, and its consolidation as a semi-institutionalized organization, this period is also marked by a solid ideological construction of the group principles. The second one, 2012 to 2016, which represents the most critical period of the BRICS regarding its revisionist position and also the most active one, with the introduction of coordinated action in international organizations, the enlargement of the group scope to areas such as regional security and

the creation of mechanisms to face the global financial governance, such as the NDB foundation. The last period, from 2016 to 2020, is the time when it was able to highlight the loss of momentum of the group and a possible tendency toward its stagnation regarding outside BRICS coordinated action, the primacy of an inter-BRICS tone in the Summits, and the interruption in the development of new initiatives.

The first group was also composed of the Russian official speeches, but instead of promoting a new temporal division, it was decided to keep the previous organization, the three periods, and place them alongside their counterparts. This exercise was important because it opened the possibility to track the Russian position regarding the group to highlight the country's influence in the group. For example, the promotion of a regional security agenda in the second moment, 2012 to 2016, was already present in the country's manifestations before that same period. In this sense, it was possible to utilize the Russian official position regarding the BRICS by analyzing its previous manifestation and its effects on the group's declarations and actions that succeeded. One substantial difference was also to perceive the Russian position before and after the summit, as in an open and ending speech, the attempt to influence the group and later on the celebration for the group's new position adoption was present smaller on a scale. In all of the three periods, Russia had a joint position with the BRICS. The intention behind keeping the temporal division based on the group instead of Russia is to see the country's influence by comparing the country's previous positions and the BRICS changes.

The analysis of the Russian discourses and the BRICS documentation, mainly regarding the first group and applied to the second group, was made by highlighting essential aspects of the speeches, then divided into five categories related to the theoretical framework used in the research: the non-Hostile Other creation, exclusively present in the Russian data only, the three dimensions of identity and the Linking process which are present in both sets of data. That division was planned to have the Russian perspective of the BRICS and its actions toward the group, how the country constructs its Otherness relations and, in this case, specifically the BRICS, and then to perceive their shared elements which firstly enables the Linking process to exist and later the elements of a possible shared identity between Russia and the BRICS.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 IDENTITY CONCEPTUALIZATION

For this study about BRICS, it is necessary to conceptualize the elements applied afterward, starting with identity in International Relations. The goal of this section is to provide a fundamental way to understand the concept. This exercise will give both the essential tools to work with the present theoretical framework and, later on, create a more profound discussion when dealing with the Relational/Otherness characteristics of identity. The concept will also be enlarged and consider the processes of Linking and Differentiation to a final discussion on the possible dimensions inside of identity construction.

Firstly, it is essential to discuss what identity is in general and even more specifically to what it is inside the International Relations. More important than to explain "why the International Relations field of study adopted identity as one of its key concepts," it is the objective of this section to present its basic concepts and the vision on why a poststructuralist approach to identity fits in the study objectives. The importance of identity in International Relations was better described by what Berenskoetter (2010) claimed about the study of the topic. For the author, there are two possibilities on how to approach the theme: the first is to produce a general or "neutral" approach to it, which is not the way this study will approach identity, and the second one is by accepting that there are different ways to the topic's instrumentalization, such as, for example, the traditional realist one, with the primacy for the power balance and the influence of an anarchical international system, and their initial critics by the first constructivist understandings of identity.

Before moving into the poststructuralism defense, some visions of identity inside the International Relations scholarship will appear in this research. Starting in the 1990s with an attempt of International Relations scholars that desired to change the realist-rationalist debate hegemony, "Identity" became a central part of studies of International Politics (Berenskoetter, 2010). The concept started to appear in the productions of many relevant authors to the area, those trying to define and unravel it. Campbell (1992:9) defines identity as "*an inescapable dimension of being. Nobody could be without it*". A

critical observation from Campbell about the indivisible nature of both "existence and Identity." Connolly (1991:64) suggests that *"My identity is what I am and how I am recognized rather than what I choose, want, or consent to. (...) Our identity, in a similar way, is what we are and the basis from which we proceed"*. In the previous quoted sentence, Connolly highlights that identity does not belong only to the self but has an external layer of interaction with others. Narrowing down to the central topic of Foreign Policy, Hansen (2006:20) claims that identity is a *"precondition for and as constituted through foreign policy."* Those three declarations above bring us three points to start the conceptualization of identity. It is impossible to exist without identity; it is directly related to both our self and others' perceptions and is also constructed by how the states interact among them.

Hansen's (2006) poststructuralist vision was chosen because the core idea of her identity theory is both a *"precondition"* for and also *"constituted through"* the exercise of foreign policy. Hansen (2006) also claims that a foreign policy needs a place, a narrative, or a defined ground for it to address, and what legitimizes it to act in a defined environment is the manifestation of the national interest and the identity. That foreign policy is based on an identity, but identity here is not a static concept or the actual image. It is shaped and changes per its interactions with external counterparts. Hansen (2006) affirms the "constitutive" rather than "causative" nature of identity and foreign policy, that vision on both the concepts will help to understand the Russian identity toward BRICS better. Russia already has its own identity, and it is manifested by the country's policies regarding external Others, in this case, the BRICS. However, Russia's relation to the rest of the group also shapes its identity, creating a new outcome from the interaction between Russia and its four counterparts.

As mentioned before, this study will work with a poststructuralist understanding of identity and Foreign Policy, and therefore, it is necessary to highlight some problems with other approaches to identity. The traditional constructivist approach was responsible for separating the State actions from the causality of the anarchical international system. Since the system is a dangerous place with the constant necessity for self-help, all states act according to their interests creating the bases for the selfish behavior of nations in the international. The early constructivists discredited that vision because they believed that each state's identity would lead to a positive or a negative interaction among them, despite

their external systematic influence (Mielniczuk, 2013). This vision is possibly closer to our theoretical approach here, but the static assumption of identity compromises the possibility of a deeper understanding of Russian relations in BRICS. Moving forward on the 90's constructivism, Wendt affirms that identity is born by the process of interaction, the states "*social identities*," those are initially from their "*corporate identity*," which is directly related to domestic and internal aspects of a national and the assumption of the pre-existing link between one people and one territory (Wendt, 1992 and 1999, Mielniczuk, 2013). That narrative excludes the possibility of identity change and adaptation by external actors and thus implying a causality relation between national interest, domestic narrative, and identity.

The Wendt (1992 and 1999) interpretation on identity does not match with Russia's observed facts and behavior when promoting its foreign policy and identity toward the BRICS, since there is a mutual construction of both identity and foreign policy in the case. It is correct to assume that identity directly relates to the domestic environment, but the possibility of change by the execution of the foreign policy is a crucial aspect that needs to be addressed, especially in the present case. The Wendt theory does not address how states understand the structure of international politics and the impact of that movement in their self-identity construction (Ringmar, 1997, Waever, 2002). The exclusion of the policymaker protagonism - using the "*death of the author*" principle, an essential contribution of the poststructuralism literary school (Burke, 1998) - is necessary to let the signs present in the foreign policy discourse flow to the audience. That exercise can be understood as the exercise of noticing the impact of foreign policy in the self-identity construction of one nation, the possible materialization - in the shape of (foreign) policy - of the impact of the state's interpretation of the international political structure.

The poststructuralism in IR mostly dialogues with identity studies, in Waever's (2002) approach to the core concepts of the same philosophic school is present the idea that "*pure dichotomies are not very information rich in contrast to differentiated systems of difference*" (Waever, 2002, p. 24). The Russian identity manifestation toward BRICS is closest to a "differentiated system of difference" than to a "pure dichotomy" since the extensive and diverse dimensions it takes are based on non-hostile Otherness relations and the apparent presence of more than two parts involved. Poststructuralism assumes

that identity "*needs a complex, multimension system to make sense*" (Waeber, 2002, p. 24), the identity manifestation of Russia and its implication to a relatively new international organization that differs from most of the other counterparts is the possibility to elaborate a multidimensional system within the identity understanding.

3.2 IDENTITY RELATIONAL ASPECT AND OTHERNESS CONSTRUCTION

In order to deepen the discussion on Russian identity projection toward BRICS and assuming its Relational aspect after the introduction of the identity concept above, this research will use the four analytical steps¹ that Hansen (2006) uses to develop a theoretical framework. The author used it "*for understanding the political construction of identity*" (Hansen, 2006), and this presented structure can help develop and illustrate the concept of identity constructed by a non-hostile Other and the Relational nature of it. After this process, it will be possible to add a new layer to the present concept of identity to deal with the Russian and BRICS peculiarities: Identity generated by a non-hostile Othering process and its Relational nature. The intention in using Hansen's (2006) four steps is to first attest to the relational nature of identity, with the possibility for both a hostile and a non-hostile Other construction. However, the author's theoretical framework will also be used in the following sections to help guide a deeper discussion on identity.

Moving forward with the conceptualization of identity, it is the moment to introduce the following characteristic of the theme: identity is a relational aspect, and it

¹ The author in her 2006 book, "*Security as Practice Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*" describes four steps in order to construct a practical tool for Identity construction studies. The first of them is to return to Campbell in his "*conception of the state identity as a Radical Other*" and revising it in order to promote the creation of degrees of Otherness. On those degrees the Radical Other will be placed, but it will open the space for new Others to assume the function of Identification and Differentiation in the Identity construction process. The next step is to understand that Identity construction is based on a series of comparisons between one and the Other - by the process of "Linking and Differentiation" and by assuming a Relational aspect inside the topic. The third step described by the author is the assumption that Identity has a place to fit in - it can be a space, a temporal or an ethical one. The place exerts direct influence over the individual placed in them and is a core disposition in Foreign Policy studies. The fourth and last step is to gather the three previous ones and then see the discursive and narrative influence that organize those previously noted characteristics in order to produce Identity and Foreign Policy.

is dependent on the existence of the Other, as part of the Hansen first step. The identity studies in International Relations are attached to the central core of the scholarship discussions and fundamental pillars themselves. Furthermore, it is a debate that brings together a wide variety of arguments, theories and helps to produce different perspectives to understand the phenomenon (Waever, 2002). Since the literary production in the present area deals with the mutual relation of the Self and the Other, Identification, Differentiation, and the construction of Otherness (Resende, 2020:236), all those concepts are also present in the identity debate and will be better explained in the following pages. It is not easy to separate all those aspects since they all work together to construct identity, but the Relational aspect of identity construction is an essential part and the fundamental ground for identity to exist. It establishes identity, the possibility of Identification, Differentiation, and the Otherness's outcome in the Self and Other mutual recognizing and interactions (Connolly, 2002).

The Other is a counterpart in which the self-identity will be projected towards positively or negatively, leading to the processes of Identification or Differentiation. For Campbell (1990: 270), "*foreign policy can be understood as referring to all relationships of otherness, practices of differentiation, or modes of exclusion that constitute their objects as foreign in the process of dealing with them.*" This concept is vital to illustrate the decisive characteristic of Otherness in Foreign Policy studies and highlights the manifestation of the Differentiation phenomenon to create foreign and domestic borders. Following the theoretical background of this study, one brief hypothesis regarding Russia's Foreign Policy and identity toward BRICS illustrates the role of Otherness in foreign policy: In the present situation, Russia is projecting its identity toward the group, based on its perceptions of them and on itself. Nevertheless, at the same time, the actions and the different identities of the BRICS countries and the country's foreign policy are also shaping Russia's identity. The Otherness relations presented here by the BRICS (Other) and Russia (Self) are acting as the engine for Russia's foreign policy promotion and identity formation in a circular construction.

The Other can be a hostile or a non-hostile one. Whether positive or negative, all identity is created by the relationship between the Self and the Other, with the subsequent interpretations imposed by parts involved - Campbell (1990) also supports the idea that the existence of the domestic and foreign environments as also the international systems

and the state itself begins to exist only after the start of interactions between identities (Campbell, 1990). This theory justifies both the importance of Othering relations and the existence of the Radical Other as the main engine for both identity constructions. This section will discuss the possibility of a non-hostile Othering relation to promote the debate about Russia's identity building in relation with the BRICS. For poststructuralism, the Self/Other relation is also the basic premise of identity studies, but the antagonistic relation should not be the primary source (Waever 2002). It is inevitable to assume that the hostile Other is present in today's international politics, but it is also inevitable to assume that this role is not a constant in the relation among identities. This section suggests that we follow the line that a non-hostile Other also has the same impacts as the hostile Other, but in different ways, discussed in the next section regarding Linking and Differentiation.

Following the first step, instrumentalization, the relational aspect of identity, it is possible to introduce two possible perspectives of the Others mentioned above and then move to a brief parallel of Othering construction in Russian identity studies. Campbell used the Radical Other as a form to illustrate the state's necessity to create a counter-image in order to legitimize its policies and identity, and this led to the enlargement in the National Security and Military Capacities politics of one State (Hansen, 2006: 34; Campbell, 1992). The Radical Other is only one possible dimension of the Other existence. That dimension is usually portrayed as a set of negative external differences such as "*evil, irrational, abnormal, mad, sick, primitive, monstrous, dangerous or anarchical,*" and it is concentrated in the Other by the political discourse or rhetoric of the policymaker (Hansen, 2006; 34, Connolly, 2002; 66). Thus, the differences are usually related to adverse conditions in the Self's eyes. According to Connolly (2002), those same conditions that will harm one Self Identity are externalized in the figure of the Other.

This specific Other produces Otherness by the congregation of negative attributions and the Self's exercise. The Self, in an antagonistic position, projects its identity to it in the form of foreign policy, which will also influence the identity of the Self. A foreign policy constructed by capitalizing the Other's negative interpretation is also constructing the Self as one which embraces its place as the counterpart of the Other. The assumption and the necessity to restrain the actions of a hostile Other is a power-

driven decision, as the definition of Other as unfavorable, its categorization in the place of hostility is possible by the exercise of the Self's power (Connolly, 2002), which lead to the construction of the Self's identity during the Differentiation process.

By the assumption that the state has the goals to continue existing, defending its citizens, its borders, and its independence, the construction of identity - and subsequently Foreign Policy - based on its State preservation is a reasonable line of thought. It is self-explanatory that having a Radical Other beyond its borders and threatening its self-security is a factor that is relevant for the construction of a Foreign Policy. However, this degree of Otherness is only one fraction of the production of identity and the production of Foreign Policy (Hansen, 2006: 33). The other degree that Hansen (2006) addresses is the non-hostile Other, which can produce Otherness and subsequently identity. The Othering relation is not based only on "*potential threatening enemies, there are, for instance, friends and relatives* (Waever, 2002; 24). With this conclusion from Weaver (2002) and Hansen (2006), I would like to address the other side of the Othering relation in identity: the non-hostile Other construction.

Othering in a non-antagonistic direction was perceived by Hansen (2006) in the Self's acceptance of the superiority of the Other, leading to the Self's adaptation to the external norms and identity. There is in this movement a positive perception of the Other identity and the possibility of self-improvement by adopting the Other elements. Since in the hostile Other scenarios - the antagonistic placement of identity led to a foreign policy, which also helped to solidify the Self-identity by the construction of a harmful Othering exercise, in positive or non-hostile Other scenarios, this process of mutual construction, in a circular way of identity and foreign policy, is also valid. One identity-based in reaching a positive external characteristic will produce a foreign policy that seeks its goal, and its foreign policy will also construct the Self-identity as one which seeks to engage in a specific arrangement perceived as positive. This perception of superiority of the external is present in the Russian identity literature by different scholars, for example, the Westernizing movement of Russia in seeking to reach European standards of development (Neumann, 1996, Hansen, 2006). The postcolonial vision on the Russian "self-colonization," with the adoption of Western European norms and values in its imperial ages (Morozov, 2015), and also after the dissolution of the Soviet Union with

the Russian adoption of Western economic doctrines in order to reach modernity and self-consolidate as part of the global capitalist system (Christensen, 2013).

Other ways of positive and non-hostile Othering are possible; such as Othering with a past Self in a different epoch or by the break of the Other/Self dichotomy in order to promote different elements inside one complex, and not nuclear, Other (Waever, 1996, Hansen, 2006). The concept of a non-hostile Othering in poststructuralist research brings to the discussion different problematics such as "*delimiting a core constellation*" and "*avoiding having to represent the whole network in its total complex of meaning*" (Waever, 2002; 24). One possible solution for this problem in reaching the core of the non-hostile Othering relation is by the research of the elements that constitute the Self (Waever, 2002), in order to avoid generalizations of the systemic factors present in one non-hostile Othering relation - the further discussions in this section will introduce the dimensional tool as a possible framework for this task. In this case, those elements are related to the Russian self-identity construction and the subsequential foreign policy that rises from this identity. The Russian identity literature also works with the foreign policy of Russia to different international organizations with a more antagonistic relation, such as NATO and the EU, and others without this element.

This study is based on the Russian identity and its foreign policy toward BRICS, in this case, the Russian Federation is the Self and BRICS the Other, but usually, in the International Relations literature, it is common to see Russia in an Othering position with other international organizations. After discussing the elements that construct the Othering in two poles, hostile and non-hostile Other, it is essential that two possible examples of different Othering relations can be presented. That brief introduction of the traditional Others in Russian identity literature is necessary for moving to a deeper discussion on the outcomes of those two possible ways of manifestation of the Relational nature of identity: by the linking and differentiation processes.

Regarding a possible hostile Othering regarding Western-oriented international organizations, mostly NATO and the EU, the current literature on the topic indicates an important temporal factor in transforming the Russian Othering relation. In the context of the end of the Soviet Union, the recent independent Russian Federation had a moment of adaptation towards a Western normative construction (Mielniczuk, 2013) and tried to adopt both a regime of domestic and international economic practices to adjust its

economy to a free-market orientation (Barsukova, 2019). It is possible to see that Russia is not Othering in a negative way with the Western institutions, but instead is developing a foreign policy based on its new identity, which actions led Russia to join the Council of Europe in 1996, the G8 in 1997 and the signature of cooperation treaties with the EU and NATO in 1994 and 1997 (Makarychev and Morozov, 2011). The '90s were a period of intense Russian cooperation with the "*Western-dominated multilateral institutions*," even though with a demonstration of weakness - not willing cooperation - but instead defeated cooperation from the Russian side, as suggested by Makarychev and Morozov (2011). Here it is possible to see the mutual construction of Russia's identity/foreign policy nexus; the identity construction demanded a suitable position towards Western institutions. That behavior led to construct Russia's identity as a nation willing to take part in those same multilateral institutions and share the western norms.

That brief moment of Russia's adoption of the Western-oriented multipolarity was interrupted with the change in Russian perception toward those same institutions - one pivotal moment in this turning point is possibly the NATO intervention during the Kosovo War in 1999, leading the country to question the international organization intentions and the security of Russia (Makarychev and Morozov, 2011). Another action that frustrated the Russian plans on the regional sphere, and was perceived as a contention measure against possible Russian military actions, was the admission to Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic in 1997 to the military alliance (Gorenburg, 2019). Still working with the current Russian position towards NATO in the ongoing literature, it is mentioned that it changed from an early possible cooperative relation to a position in which the country considers itself as being threatened by the organization's "enlargement towards" and support for "color revolutions" in its borders (Pynnöniemi, 2018, Horvath, 2011, Gorenburg 2019). Russia's new position toward the Western institutions seeks to promote the image of a "besieged fortress" (Pynnöniemi, 2018) in which not only antagonist states but also international organizations, such as the EU, are responsible for promoting an anti-Russian feeling in its neighboring nations - for example, Ukraine in 2014. Those positions regarding NATO and the EU, present in the State National Security Strategy, marks the confirmation of the exercise of a hostile Othering in the construction of identity and foreign policy. Russian change of perception regarding those institutions took part in the country's identity change, then it consolidated a new foreign policy, and it is now

constructing its identity towards the West. Russian perception of its own "great powerness" (Neumann, 2008) is a part of its identity reinforced by its Othering with the Western nations and institutions. It promotes a substantial change in its foreign policy and identity by promoting itself as a counterpart of the Western/European process of normative diffusion (Reshetnikov, 2018).

The previous paragraphs mentioned two possibilities of Othering, a non-hostile and a hostile, with the same group of institutions and different periods, specific conditions, and identity constructions. It is clear that Russia's position toward Western institutions is perceived in the literature as majorly antagonistic and hostile, but this study is intended to work with an organization that does not belong to the same Western sphere, such as NATO or the EU. The literature regarding Russia and the BRICS work with different perspectives about that relation. Let us change the Other in the question and assume the BRICS in this place. Russian official rhetoric is not officially "anti-Western," it is true that it has a defense for non-Western forums such as the BRICS itself (Makarychev and Morozov, 2011). However, it combines both the defense to continue norms, such as the International Law supremacy, with a crisis in how Western countries exercise and operationalize those norms (Reshetnikov, 2018). The BRICS are a revisionist group to promote a broader and more inclusive international governance, without thoroughly questioning the rules and norms of it but instead by promoting a critical interpretation of them as exclusionary of the non-Western powers (Duggan, 2013, Thies and Nieman, 2017). That vision fits Russia's agenda as a possible way of promoting its values.

The combination of Russia's and the other BRICS member's limited criticism made it possible to identify them as "neo-revisionist"²(Allison, 2020:4) since Russia's objectives are congruent with the BRICS general aspirations. The group has a

² The term "new-revisionist" is present in Roy Allison's 2020 article "*Russian Revisionism, Legal Discourse and the 'Rules-Based' International Order.*" The author uses a constructivist approach by Richard Sakwa (2017) of the concept "new-revisionist" as an actor with ambitions not to change rules but how those rules are applied. In Sakwa's (2017) argumentation, Russia engaged in a revisionist way with only some of the norms that interested it in promoting its objectives - as in Ukraine, Syria, and Georgia (Allison, 2020). By those means, the country has not engaged in a holistic proposal of international law and norms revision, but how those norms are articulated and implemented by the Western powers.

heterogeneous collection of foreign policies. However, their agendas can work together. This cooperative behavior is perceived in their domestic differences preservation to promote their shared objectives; topics such as Human Rights and Democracy in each member's internal context are not considered fundamental for the group to carry on with its collective activities (Mielniczuk, 2013). Russia perceives in BRICS the possibility to ally with other peripheral actors that gather possible conditions for achieving a substantial change in the actual world order, that feeling is different from the EAEU which dialogues with a nostalgic construction of an imperial legacy from Moscow (Morozov, 2013). The difference in the BRICS is that the group is perceived as a tool for Russia to legitimize itself and promote potential pieces of confrontation to the international world order, such as creating the BRICS's NDB in 2014 (Morozov, 2015). Some visions also are restricting Russia as not able to follow the developing pace of its colleagues, leading to the failure of the block, and others support the idea that Russia has the plan to enlarge the cooperation to the point that the BRICS will "evolve" into a political coordination tool (Toloraya, 2015). For the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister, Sergey Lavrov, Russia is constructing a pole based on international organizations and strategic partnerships, and the BRICS is portrayed as being one of them together with the EAEU, the CSTO, and the SCO (Allison, 2020).

We can conclude that the BRICS are perceived as different from Western organizations in the present literature. It is possible to notice a positive construction by the Othering exercise of the Russian identity. BRICS is not perceived as a hostile Other, as NATO and the EU were by Russian Federation in the '90s. However, there is a substantial difference regarding the identity carried at the time and the one present in Russian rhetoric. That discussion will be better developed in the next section, under the debate about the Linking process of Russia's identity towards the BRICS and the outcome of this relation. It is also possible to conclude that there is a constant process of Identification of Russia's identity and the BRICS and a differentiation process regarding Russia and Western institutions. For now, both the BRICS and the Western institutions can be the Other in our Relational aspect construction of identity, but those are different. The BRICS is not a formal international organization. The group does not have an independent body, a headquarters, and a foundation charter. It is closer to a forum than to an institution such as the EU or NATO. Also, the group is assuming its global subalternity

to exogenous norms. While the EU, NATO, or even the IMF are perpetrators of the current set of rules in global governance, the BRICS is promoting them. Substantially, those are the significant differences between those two possible ornaments.

3.3 LINKING AND DIFFERENTIATION

In this section, this research will discuss the two processes presented in the outcome of the Othering exercise: Linking and Differentiation. Those two phenomena are different because they carry the positive or negative Othering result in producing identity. In the case of Differentiation, it will happen in a negative juxtaposition towards another identity, as in a hostile Other. The case of Linking is the opposite. It is the result of the positive Othering by the identities. As mentioned before and supported by the bibliography on the Russian identity Othering to international organizations, the BRICS' is a positive Othering, unlike the negative Othering with NATO or the EU. The Russian identity toward the BRICS produces the effect of Linking in order to promote a positive relation. That outcome is based on interpreting the signs, actions, and background elements in the Other's identity and their comparison to the Self's identity. They lead to positive and cooperative foreign policy and construct the Self's identity by a positive interaction.

By the assumption that identity is a relational concept, created and responsible for creating the comparisons between the Self and the Other, Waever (2002) argues that it is "*necessary to identify specific concepts which historically have come to take on particular importance as 'vehicles' of identity production*" (Waever, 2002; 24). The particularities of Russia and the BRICS are considered when dealing with identity construction and understanding the outcome of the Othering relation. This study is dealing with the Russian projection toward the group. Thus, it is essential to highlight that the Russian Self-perception of the BRICS characteristics is the factor that will construct the country's positive identity toward the present Other. For example, Russia has its interpretations regarding multipolarity and multilateralism - based more on the construction of a possible way to counter the Western rule over international institutions rather than a promotion of a system based on regional self-determination and equality among the participants - and does use it to construct its perceptions of the BRICS (Makarychev and Morozov, 2011).

The "non-Western" and critical approach are also possible positive characteristics inside the Russian archetype of the BRICS identity.

Othering constructs the Russian perception towards the BRICS identity with the archetype made by the internal linking of the positive - in the Self's awareness - characteristics of the group. The Other is composed of different characteristics, and those are linked among them by the Self's interpretation positively or negatively; the poststructuralist approach explains that meaning is not inherent to the discourse but instead created after the valuation of the one who receives it (Foucault, 1974, Derrida, 1976, Hansen, 2006). In other words, the Self is creating the Other archetype by its own set of values and identity; the later juxtaposition exercise of the Self's identity with the Other archetype is already decided - if it will lead to a positive or negative outcome. This "decision" or valuation of the Other archetype is preconceived in the process in which their characteristics are linked positively or negatively. The Self's only and exclusive perception of the Other archetype is not what creates identity since it will consist of a nonrelational exercise. Even with the predefined positivity or negativity of the Other archetype, both the Self and Other archetypes must be juxtaposed. When having a relational process, it is mandatory to have one part and the other in an Othering exercise to achieve identity construction (Hansen, 2006). That process is responsible for constructing the country's foreign policy, which will later influence the Self's identity.

3.4 SPATIAL, TEMPORAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF IDENTITY

After the conclusion of Hansen's (2006) second step, I would like to move forward the discussion to introduce the debate about the dimensions of identity. Those three possible dimensions are related to the limits of the discourse itself, because any discourse is present in between the limits of existence such as time, space, and ethnic identities. Those forces both constrain the identity and the foreign policy and also serve as the solid pillars for those concepts to build up. Those three concepts are analytical tools created by the Othering processes mentioned in the previous sections and not a sign which can be present in the foreign policy discourse (Hansen, 2006). All three dimensions are in natural equilibrium, and there is not one that is more important than the other, that perception will help to understand their role as a theoretical framework because it will deal with the

external factors and the cases' particularities, factors, and variables that were present in the previous argumentation as the "*vehicles of identity production*" (Weaver, 2002). The discussion on how they behave separately in the Russian towards BRICS case will be developed in the empirical section; the outcomes of that analysis will help the research better engage in perceiving how the country is engaging in the nation's cluster based on its identity projection and adaptation.

Still working with the dimensional aspect, space is directly usually related to both the geographic and territorial concept of it, and it is relevant to consider it while working with Foreign Policy since it is the domestic actions towards something from outside of the boundaries of a State (Neumann, 1996). What is outside the territorial or legal, as in Neumann (1996), spheres are subject to being affected by the foreign policy. The traditional focus of the foreign policy studies is on Nation-State mutual interactions, as the primary holder of international agency. However, in this case, one of the objects is a traditional state, and the second one is a collective of countries which, on the one hand, are shown to not have a solid and institutionalized center but on the other, the capacity to engage different Identities in order to a semi revisionist coordinated foreign policy. For this reason, it is essential to enlarge the concept of spatiality and have a non-fully territorial notion of space in order to provide the theoretical tools that the present case demands appropriately. Russia has its geographical spatiality based on the Eurasian subcontinent; the BRICS share the same situation³. Because of this reason, we can inevitably discard the geographical aspect.

Even if we cannot find a geographical one, Identity studies can also provide for abstract constructions such as "the West," "the Third World," and even "barbarian and terrorist" constructions of place in which an Identity can fit (Hansen, 2006). If we keep with the suggested spatial notions by Hansen (2006), we will enter a field of a standard

³ China is the only country which shares a border with Russia, but both countries have historical processes and backgrounds that create an inevitable cleavage between them if the exercise was to create a possible common spatiality background based on geographic bases and without ignoring the non-geographic side of the spatiality dimension. The rest of the BRICS countries don't share a border and two of them not even the same continent in which one part of Russia is present, so we can conclude that the geographic aspect here is not the one in which we will place Russian and BRICS identity as a common group to move on with the theory.

peripheral spatiality for Russia and the BRICS by the notion of exclusion from the core as the five nations not being part in the international governance decisions (Duggan, 2013). Russia also projects itself as being external from the Western decision-making processes and negating its agency over the perpetuation of the international norms, but still adapting its norms even in their institutional projects, such as the EAEU not developing its instruments and relying upon the Western ones such as the EU model of institutionalization (Oskanian, 2018, Morozov, 2015). The peripheral spatiality of Russia can be better instrumentalized by the introduction of a postcolonial lens present in what Morozov (2015) called a "*Subaltern-Empire*"⁴ condition of the country regarding its actual position in the international dynamics, in which Russia holds its limited imperial identity combined with the self-introduction of Western norms in its own set of normative practices. Spatiality is not a concept based exclusively on geographical territory. In this case, it is only possible to understand the spatiality of the Russian identity Othering with the BRICS by introducing a Spatial dimension based on the positions of observed objects in the international system.

After introducing the spatial dimension and moving to the second one, the Temporal. This identity dimension has a relational nature, and just like the other two dimensions, this one is relational to a series of factors that are highlighted in the subsequential fragment of Hansen (2006):

"Temporal themes such as development, transformation, continuity, change, repetition, or stasis are crucial for understanding and analyzing the

⁴ The argument provided by Morozov (2015) in his book, *Russia's postcolonial identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*, is that Russia has a historical formation based on the European civilization, sharing its norms and with the continuous attempt to "catch" its European counterparts. For the author, the focus on the subalternity of Russia is more relevant than on the colonial past of the country, which has a subaltern relation to the West regarding its economic relations and the adoptions of the normative imperatives of the other side, leading to a Foreign Policy based on confrontation of "neocolonialism" of the Western norms diffusion. The portion of the argument related to the imperial of its identity is the expansive policy to its "near abroad". The maintenance of spheres of influence, the intervention in domestic affairs of the post-Soviet space countries and the defense of a soviet legacy in order to promote not only its own but the "regional" security. The combination of both a subaltern position, regarding the global regime of trade and norms assimilation, and the imperial policy to its surrounding neighbors leads to a brief justification on the use of Subaltern Empire terminology to understand Russia's Identity.

construction of identity within foreign policy discourse, and one might distinguish between discourses of religious, civilizational, political, and other forms of progress on the one hand and discourses of intransigence on the other."
(Hansen, 2006: 43)

Those themes mentioned above are relevant to the temporality side because identity is not a static concept; it changes, and the temporality aspect dialogues directly with the mutational characteristic of identity. Even though it has a stable core, which both preserves and gradually changes following the new outcomes and fluctuations it is exposed to (Resende, 2020), the temporal dimension of identity is important because it brings to the discussion another layer of possibility for debating the Othering.

The "stable core" which Resende (2020) suggested is under the effect of the relational aspect of identity formation and subsequently to foreign policy outcomes. For that reason, it fits as a tool for analyzing the study's objective. The new layer introduced here is the possible adaptation of the Self to the different external temporalities, even though with significant differences. Inside the identity, the temporal dimension will help to illustrate why a contrasting temporal place can shape the identity without constructing a specific historical shared identity. The temporal dimension is not based exclusively on a limited period, such as the Enlightenment or the Middle Age, but it is also the representative of a past vision of the Self that belongs to a hostile place to the actual self's eyes (Hansen, 2006).

In the case of the Russian identity toward the BRICS, the main discussion regarding temporality could be both the nexus "development versus underdevelopment," in a tautological vision of economic capacities development as a measure, and the "Colony versus Metropolis," this one is where resides a Russian possible dilemma regarding its BRICS' counterparts. That dilemma relates to how Russia projects its identity towards a group that rejects the notions of an imperial and metropolitan identity for them. In analyzing the empirical data, the dilemma will be addressed to understand the Russian position regarding the colonial background rhetoric present in its rhetoric and the perpetration of its imperial self-conception. That colonial past can be translated into contemporary subalternity by using the poststructuralist theoretical conception; because the Other's speech carries the signs which only create meaning after the Self's

interpretation and not by the narrative transmitter characteristics. The Temporal dimension allows us to enlarge the concept of colonization and engage with the Russian dilemma in a way that it is possible to understand the creation of a shared identity also in this nexus, not based on the exact historical place but placed on the outcomes of the colonization to the present days which are present in nowadays Russian reality, especially if the comparison is between the BRICS members, including Russia.

To conclude the third step and finish with our discussion on the theoretical part of the study, and moving to the third step of Hansen's (2006) theoretical framework construction: The Ethical dimension. This dimension is perceived as one state's manifestations of its policy towards its responsibilities and ethics regarding, for example, its populations. However, this responsibility may also extrapolate from the domestic environment in the form of foreign policy, in an exercise of promotion of core values that represent the identity construction of one and with the production of responsibility on other groups, external or internal to the country boundaries (Hansen, 2006). For example, the Human Rights politics of one country might be only internal affairs. However, massive violations of the same Human Rights abroad can lead to an intervention or the mobilization of the country's capacities to perpetuate its morality abroad.

The Ethical dimension is essential because it dialogues with the Russian aspiration to construct a multipolar order on its terms. The previously discussed arguments about the Russian interpretations of multipolarity and multilateralism help this hypothesis formulation and affirm that the country has a robust Ethical dimension present while Othering with the BRICS. The comparison of the BRICS with the EAEU, the SCO, and other "allies of Russia" by Lavrov (Alisson, 2020) illustrates the promotion of expectations and transforming the group into a tool for promoting its new world order. The Self in question has its ethic regarding a wide variety of topics. The exercise of detachment that sets values is important because it helps to understand the Russian objectives while interacting with the BRICS. If we bring back the former discussions about the positive Linking process that Russia made by a preconception of the group values, it is possible to understand and track its objectives while promoting its foreign policy.

With the utilization of the Ethical dimension tool, it is possible to have a different and congregational justification of the non-hostile Other status of the BRICS by analyzing

Russia's identity Othering with the group. The isolated analysis of this specific dimension, which is also true for the two previous ones, helps us clarify this specific engine present in the Linking exercise, the Othering, and identity formation. All three dimensions of identity help us be limited and deal with the exogenous elements that influence identity formation. In a possible inside-out systematization, the dimensions are the nuclear part of the identity construction, forming the preconditions for the Self to engage positively or negatively when constructing the Other archetype. Later on, this will lead to the juxtaposition of the Self and Other's identities by an Othering exercise, creating an identity as its final, however, not a static product. The foreign policy originally from this identity also influences shaping it.

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 NON-HOSTILE OTHERING RELATION

In this section, this study would like to address two significant aspects of the Russian relation toward the BRICS: Its non-hostile Othering relation and the Linking process between Russia and the BRICS identities. Firstly, it will start with the non-hostile construction mentioned in subsection 3.2 of the theoretical chapter and support this theory utilizing the Russian and BRICS actions in the international sphere, their behavior, and especially the discourses made by the Russian leadership in the group summits. The idea of a non-hostile Other is only possible because of the relational aspect of identity, it is a fundamental engine for this process to happen, and for this reason, it is vital for the analysis concerning the characteristics of how Russia perceives the BRICS to be addressed and instrumentalized in the following empirical part of the study. This section supports the idea of a new layer of the Relational aspect of identity, necessary to analyze the Russian case, the non-hostile Othering relation. The non-hostile Other will be the tone on how Russia is Othering with the BRICS. The main arguments that support the non-hostility of Russia toward BRICS are three; the scarcity of new security policies from Russia targeting the group after Othering with it, the Self's perception of security improvement by interacting with the Other, and finally, the enlargement of the cooperation to diverse areas, including security as well.

Firstly, and engaging with the first argument, it is crucial to bring back Campbell (1992) in order to portray the non-hostile Otherness, for example, when the author supported the idea that security policies would rise from a radical Othering construction, that this specific foreign and domestic policy would be the expected outcome of an identity construction based on the hostility of the involved parties. The lack of security policies based on the threat perception among the BRICS members, and from inside the group to the external Others, represents no hostile Othering process in their identity construction of the group members. This absence of military capacity increase and the formulation of a security agenda of Russia toward the BRICS is the fact that both illustrate the existence of an Other not constructed in a negative way and the capacity of identity construction by the act of a positive Othering. The argument above might sound simple -

the lack of security measures toward another is the result of a non-hostile Othering - but it is an essential first step to construct the argument that Russia is facing a non-hostile Other in the figure of the BRICS. The development of the argument will be presented in the following paragraphs. However, it is fundamental to start with this perception because, according to Campbell (1990 and 1992), hostility while Othering is the main engine for national security and military capacities increase.

Following the second argument, which consists of the security as constructed by the Othering process, this point works with the assumption that Othering with a hostile Other will increase threat perception of the Self. On the other hand, the same exercise facing a non-hostile Other might lead to a safety perception that the Self's security might be improved by cooperating with the Other. We already discussed that the absence of security policy formulation from Russia toward the BRICS leads to the constitution of a non-hostile relation. However, it is not correct to assume that the country does not have a security agenda regarding the group since it does not promote its domestic military capacities. The presence of security debate in BRICS was constant since the first meeting in Yekaterinburg in 2009. With the evolution of the group, this debate also enlarged. Even though it never really assumes any concrete action in the field of security. Alongside the expressed will from the Russian leadership, there is also the explicit notion that the BRICS have an essential role in contributing to international security in Russian terms.

Despite the initial character of the Yekaterinburg (2009) summit, the former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev demonstrated the will of Russia to strengthen their relationship and defended the thesis that: "*the increase of the cooperation in BRIC would bring a positive aspect to the international and self-security, to keep the rule of law as the fairness of the decision making*" (Medvedev, 2009). As mentioned before, the Russian first contact with the BRICS was based on perceiving the group as a possibility for international security policy construction. This contribution would be possible by "*strengthening the economic foundations of the multipolar world*" (Medvedev, 2010) and by "*the coordination of practical efforts in the field of international security*" with "*regular meetings of senior representatives in charge of national security issues*" (Medvedev, 2012). It was already discussed in the theoretical part the Russian feeling towards the West of being a "besieged fortress" (Pynnöniemi, 2018) and its will to promote Multilateralism challenging the "Western collective unipolarity" (Makarychev

and Morozov, 2011), returning to this discussion. If we take the country's official position regarding the early BRICS' years, it is possible to portray a Russia willing to promote a counterpole to the West to promote its safety. With the hypothesis that Russia has a strong threat perception from Western institutions and countries and supports the strategy of countering it via the promotion of the non-Western ones, one of those possible tools is the BRICS in the country's vision.

The Russian perception of the group leads our argument to a new possible layer of interpretation that the non-hostile Other is not only the one with the absence of a threatening perception but the one which might fit in the Self policies to face the hostile Other. In this case, Russia is Othering with the BRICS to shape the group as a mechanism for its safety promotion. The Russian identity, also constructed by the negative Othering with Western institutions, produces a foreign policy based on pursuing ways to protect itself from external threats. In a non-hostile Othering, BRICS as the Other, the outcome of this foreign policy is trying to shape the group to fit in its security objectives. This foreign policy to the BRICS is the result of the Russian identity construction, but also the Othering exercise is influencing this same identity via foreign policy. In the subsequent argument about non-hostile Otherness, it can be argued of the possible final stage of the Russian identity being shaped by its foreign policy to BRICS, and conclude the existence of a non-hostile relation in the present case. The background of this collective identity construction is the Russian negative Othering with the West, the outcome of this is the production of a foreign policy to undermine its vulnerability by trying to bring the BRICS to its framework, and the final result is Russia becoming more collaborative and seeking to increase the cooperation with the group.

The final part of the argumentation consists of the enlargement of the cooperation due to a non-Hostile Othering. Russia does have security intentions regarding BRICS. A hostile or not Other presence is not measured by the complete absence of this debate but by directing those actions toward a specific Other. In the case of Russia, the BRICS is not the reason for military spending increasing but instead a possibility for self-defense and collective security in the eyes of the Russian elites. The Russian non-hostile Othering relation is also perceived in the spillover effect present in increasing the group's topics. The original scope of the group was setting a collective economic and financial agenda for cooperation in 2009 (Duggan and Azalia, 2020) in the face of the impact of the 2008

financial crisis, and the Russian leadership at the time was already promoting the enlargement of the agenda, highlighting that the group was becoming a place for discussing not only economic and financial cooperation but also other matters in world politics:

"We discussed ways in which we can respond to **other global challenges** facing humanity today, including **international terrorism, fighting organized crime and preventing drugs trafficking**. I think the issues we discussed here reflect in full measure the range of problems facing our countries today. **The BRIC format is indeed becoming a full-fledged platform** giving us the opportunity to coordinate our efforts and make concrete decisions, including the decisions that were just approved here with the conclusion of the agreement that the heads of our development banks just signed." (Medvedev, 2010)

The above fragment of the President's speech is important to show the evolution of the Russian scope regarding the BRICS, with the potential increase in the group's capacities to promote the country's interests. Russia is placing international terrorism, fighting organized crime, and preventing drug trafficking in the same degree as the current financial crisis at the time⁵, an attempt to give the BRICS more agency than the group demanded at the first moment.

The BRICS were initially conceptualized not by their members but by the financial institutions' perception of a substantive turn in the world economic dynamics. The initial scope of the group was to address these specific agendas of economic and development order (Brazil, Russia, India, China, 2009). The official Russian position has the explicit intention to promote the enlargement of the group to other areas, placing security-related issues in diverse areas as one of the group's most prominent goals, together with economic development and the revision of global financial institutions. In the 2013 Summit at Durban, South Africa, President Vladimir Putin declared that "*the ambitious BRICS*

⁵ I believe it is important to highlight that this study doesn't have the pretension to judge what international problem is more important or relevant, the analysis is based exclusively on the Russian representative position.

Action Plan for the coming year that we adopted today includes new areas of cooperation such as information security, joint efforts to combat drugs trafficking and terrorism, and promotion of youth and educational exchanges" and that "another avenue for work is to expand the circle of BRICS dialogue partners in all different areas. We are taking our first step in this direction at this summit by holding a meeting between the BRICS group and African leaders." (Putin, 2013). Russia is in those declarations promoting the group as a tool for achieving its security-related objectives, as initially intended to, and as a way for creating peripheral cooperation.

The Russia projection of identity toward the BRICS has constructed a base for security issues to be discussed in their summits, but it also made it possible for the country to support international cooperation oriented toward the BRICS goals. This movement can be read as a variation and, in some sense an evolution, of the previous security coordination intentions, in which the BRICS could take a positive part in Russian security objectives in the vision of the country's national security doctrine. The group here is also perceived as a possible tool for promoting other non-hostile relations outside their five nations range. The non-hostile Other construction of the BRICS by Russia opens the space for the country to target the group as a tool for facing its hostile and non-hostile Others outside the BRICS sphere. Russia is by this action promoting its foreign policy toward the BRICS, but at the same time, as discussed before, it is also being influenced and shaped by these same actions' outcomes. The Russian construction of the BRICS as a tool for both security and cooperation promotion to an environment external to Russia-BRICS nexus results from country identity being shaped in this non-hostile Othering relation. The adoption of BRICS as a bridge toward its objectives introduces an intermediate element in its foreign policy. Instead of a direct Russia-West security policy or a Russia-Africa cooperation policy, the country is reconstructing its identity by adopting the group as necessary for its goals; it explicates its intentions to shape the course of the BRICS.

This section discussed the elements, based on the Russian leadership in the BRICS Summits, that help justify the argument that Russia is facing a non-hostile Othering relation with the group. The being BRICS as non-hostile Other is supported by three aspects, all based on the theoretical conceptualization of the Relational aspect of identity discussed in the previous section. The first aspect is the absence of the formulation of security doctrines from Russia toward the BRICS. Such evidence is supported by

Campbell's (1990 and 1992) theory about the effects of a hostile Other in one country's foreign policy and identity construction. The second aspect was the Russian manifestation of the possibility of the BRICS producing favorable policies regarding the country's security. If the hostile Other promotes the development of insecurity and the subsequent increase in the country's military capacities, it was augmented that a non-hostile Other can have complimentary participation in developing the security-related policy of the Self. That argument led us to the third and last aspect, which was the possibility for this aspiration to cooperate to grow into other forms of cooperating. This hypothesis was based on the explicit Russian stance for the group to widen its scope and to include security, social and non-BRICS cooperation. All of those aspects can be understood in a sequential way in which they are evolving from a simple constatation of a non-hostility relation to a potential alliance that can address non-security themes.

The lenses of poststructuralism were necessary to assume that while Russia was promoting its foreign policy toward BRICS, it was also subject to have its identity shaped by the interaction. This created perception is fundamental to understand the evolutionary behavior of the non-hostile relation with the group. The possibility for Russian and BRICS identity to change is necessary to perceive the evolution from one initial identity, with delimited foreign policy objectives, to a different one, with new objectives closer to the group identity. The following section will discuss the Linking process, which can only exist by presenting a non-hostile relation between the Self and the Other.

4.2 LINKING PROCESS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE BRICS

During this research, the basic perception of Russia and the BRICS relations is that the country perceives the group as a non-hostile Other. Based on this hypothesis and combined with the Relational aspect of identity, this study has previously discussed how this process of a Relational interaction with a non-hostile Other happens and its subsequent effects on Russian identity. In the theoretical discussion, it is presumed that this previously mentioned Othering relation will lead to a Linking process, in which the positive characteristics of the BRICS - that are perceived under the Russian interpretation of the group - will lead to the construction of an archetype for them, this will, later on, be under an Othering relation with Russia. The outcome of this is identity construction. This

section will discuss how Russia targets the points of the BRICS identity that the country considers positive and interacts with its position to construct a common ground.

Unlike the previous empirical subsection, in which the focus was majorly on the Russian leadership speeches, it will be necessary to bring the BRICS Joint Declarations to evidence and engage them with the Russian rhetoric towards the group. The analysis of the BRICS joint declarations from 2009 to 2020 lead to a general idea of the group, which consists of two elements: the defense for the rule of international law, based on the multilateral diplomacy under the edge of the UN, and the introduction of emerging countries in the global governance, the latter with a focus on the international financial institutions (Duggan and Azalia, 2020). These two elements were present as the foundation for the group in 2009, and it is possible to perceive their influence in the group's objectives until its last summit in 2020. Even though the core of those ideas was preserved, they changed and expanded to include different objectives, such as the inclusion of the G20 for a considerable period as one of the elements for international governance improvement and other areas of cooperation beyond the original focus of the group in financial and economic topics.

This subsection will be divided into an analysis of the Russian and BRICS documentations, based on the two principles that drive the BRICS and find the evidence to support the theory of a Linking process in the present case. During the theoretical explanation, it was introduced Waever's concept of the "*vehicles of identity production*" (Waever, 2002), which are the particularities of Russia and BRICS that are present when constructing identity. The two elements mentioned above work as a "vehicle of identity production" in this analysis, mainly because they serve an empirical base in which Russia manifests its positive vision over the BRICS in multiple aspects of the group. The initial part of the analysis will target the early BRICS starting in 2009, documentation and then constructing the parallel with a more enlarged relation of Russia and the BRICS. The Yekaterinburg Declaration (2009) is not a formal foundation document since the BRICS do not have one. However, it helped highlight and fine-tune some of those principles that worked as vehicles of identity production in a Linking process before moving to the background elements under the dimensional identity construction. The declaration resulted from an international summit between countries willing to cooperate and send their message globally by presenting their proposals for the economy, governance, and

diplomatic practices to the international community (Duggan and Azalia, 2020). Both previously mentioned elements are present in the declaration, and they represent the members' will and intentions to the international normative institutions.

The first element is the support of the rule of law, Multilateralism, and the support for the UN as the main forum for political and diplomatic coordination. This manifestation is introduced in the Yekaterinburg Declaration in this form:

*"We express our strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy with the United Nations playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats. In this respect, we reaffirm the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN with a view to making it more efficient so that it can deal with today's global challenges more effectively. We reiterate the importance we attach to the status of India and Brazil in international affairs, and understand and support their aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations. We have agreed upon steps to promote dialogue and cooperation among our countries in an incremental, proactive, pragmatic, open and transparent way. **The dialogue and cooperation of the BRIC countries is conducive not only to serving common interests of emerging market economies and developing countries, but also to building a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.**" (Brazil, Russia, India, China, 2009)*

This declaration is necessary because of two aspects; firstly, because it is introducing the support for the UN primacy, "*central role in dealing with global challenges and threats,*" the acknowledgment of the UN is combined with a proposal for the reform of the institutions, and the second one is the manifestation that the BRICS cooperation would help to create a more peaceful and prosperous world order. Those two points serve to introduce the group's early intentions to address locally to its members and address global discussions.

In which way can we relate the above fragment to the Russian position toward the group? In 2009, the Russian position was restrained mainly to construct a solid proposal for a new financial design; the country also explicitly gathers future meetings involving

the presidents and ministerial reunions (Medvedev, 2009). In the 2010 Summit, Brasilia, Medvedev gave a speech in which it is possible to check that Russia is still observing the group and pushing its agenda. There is no manifestation of open support for Brazil and India UNSC permanent membership aspirations until 2012, and the discourse is based more on general statements criticizing the lack of emergent nations agency in the financial governance and the support of the enlargement of the group areas of cooperation:

*"We share an imperative that the international community should resolve conflicts through political, diplomatic and legal means, rather than the use of force. In our view, it is necessary to strengthen collectivist principles in international relations and to establish a just and democratic world order. **Russia, China, India and Brazil actively cooperate within the United Nations.** The most notable example is the collaboration of these states with the UN General Assembly in drafting resolutions on the prevention of the deployment of any weapons in outer space and of the use of force or threats to use force against space facilities."* (Medvedev, 2010)

However, the question made at the start of the last paragraph still needs to be answered. The Russian leadership did not share the BRICS goals in its totality, but something kept Russia willing to cooperate and manifest its will for the enlargement of the group. Those elements are present in the country of the BRICS shared values regarding international conflicts and the use of force; this is the Russian perception of the BRICS, which is the outcome of the archetype construction of the group, positively engaging both Russia and the BRICS in a Linking process. Answering the question above, the BRICS's position is related to the Russian one towards the group because it is constructed by combining positive traits from the Russian perspective. The archetype here is the outcome of the internal linking process of the Other characteristics, the Russian position was not cooperative with the BRICS in the first moment, and still, there are substantial differences in the speeches tone. However, it was possible for this mutual relation to evolve due to a positive construction of the BRICS according to the Russian values. The Linking process deals with values and also signs that are attributed and interpreted by the Self.

Another possible example of Linking as the outcome of a positive construction of the Other archetype is if we return to the dichotomy between a positive and negative construction and combine it with the hostile and non-hostile Other. Both the BRICS and NATO are perceived by Russia as multilateral institutions, one in a positive way and the other negatively, according to the Russian categorization of Multilateralism and supported by the literature investigating these thematic. While the BRICS, for Russia, represents a non-Western and critical political body, which fits in the country's idea of multipolarity, NATO - and here we can quote almost any major international organization with a strong US and European lead, such as the EU, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO for example - represents the "*collective unilateralism*" as Makarychev and Morozov (2011) described.

This idea is how Russia seems to portray Western Multilateralism, a systematic organization that preserves the differences of the parts in the arrangement but has a unilateral position that is a reliable reproduction of Western values. Suppose we return to the argument that signs need designation towards the Other and be placed in a broader set of values to produce identity. In that case, Russia places the BRICS as belonging to its values of multipolarity and Multilateralism, creating a positive identity and promoting a cooperative foreign policy to the five nations' political group, a Linking process. In the counterpart, Russia also recognizes the multipolarity of Western institutions. However, in contrast to the BRICS case, multipolarity is not aligned to the country's values and understanding. Hence, the identity formation produces an antagonistic view of the Other, and the subsequential foreign policy is almost exclusively based on countering the West's actions and expansion. This positive construction of the BRICS "allows" Russia to construct a cooperative relation even with differences between the country and the group agenda.

It is possible to affirm that Russia had a positive construction of the BRICS. In the theoretical background, it was argued that only a positive construction is not enough to construct identity; it is necessary a relational exercise, but the first step to understanding this relational exercise's outcomes is to dig into the Self's conception of the Other. We already concluded that Russia has a positive one, which can keep with a cooperative tone even with pragmatic differences. The following discourses will bring back the debate on constructing a positive archetype of the BRICS by Russia and how this was necessary for

the identity construction process. The following speeches and declarations to be analyzed were present in the Syrian crisis in 2014. Firstly, the BRICS Joint Declaration stated that:

"Our shared views and commitment to international law and to Multilateralism, with the United Nations at its center and foundation, are widely recognized and constitute a major contribution to global peace, economic stability, social inclusion, equality, sustainable development and mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries. We renew our openness to increasing engagement with other countries, particularly developing countries and emerging market economies, as well as with international and regional organizations, with a view to fostering cooperation and solidarity in our relations with all nations and peoples. Since its inception the BRICS have been guided by the overarching objectives of peace, security, development and cooperation. In this new cycle, while remaining committed to those objectives, we pledge to deepen our partnership with a renewed vision, based on openness, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation. (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2014)

The above part of the Fortaleza Declaration has introduced a critical turning point in the BRICS identity: the group being guided by objectives regarding security. It is also possible to see that the BRICS are assuming to be under the construction of a "new cycle," which manifests the group change regarding its past Self. The group has indeed engaged with security-related topics since its early years, but it was the first time in the BRICS official documentation that the concerns about global peace were present as a basilar characteristic of the group. The group also introduced the concept of a "shared view" of its members, which earlier was understood more as a set of congruent ideas than shared ones, giving a new degree in constructing a collective position over sensitive topics. In the Fortaleza Declaration, it is possible to conclude that the BRICS are starting a movement to open the group for new possibilities⁶.

⁶ Besides a possible articulation of the group by Russia in the case of the Syrian crisis, it is also possible to relate this expansion to two distinct moments in the BRICS path: the perception of the G20 as no longer the major international institution capable of promoting a new regime for financial and economic norms

Now moving to the Russian position in 2014 at the BRICS summit, the country also celebrated the BRICS capacity to promote alternative solutions, but with the Russian perspective over the facts. In this case, the Russian leadership attested that:

"Our nations play an increasingly significant role in the global political arena as well. It is thanks to Russia and China's firm stance in the UN Security Council, with support from other BRICS participants, that we were able to rally most international dialogue participants – including the European Union and the United States – and prevent a foreign invasion in Syria, achieving the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons." (Putin, 2014)

The previous claim about the Russian perspective is justified because the Fortaleza Declaration does not mention the EU or the United States in its whole text. It mentions other multilateral systems and intra-institutional relations in a general perspective, when dealing with security-related issues, but not in a confrontational tone or attributing "the prevention of a foreign invasion in Syria" by the action toward a specific other (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2014). The Russian speech in this aspect is instrumentalizing its hostile Other relations, the West, while celebrating the BRICS's efforts in constructing an alternative for the Syrian crisis that fits in the country's foreign policy. In this scenario, the Linking process is represented by the shared values mentioned in the declaration and the Russian position, but acting differently.

The positive outcome of the Othering process between Russia and BRICS, only possible because of the country's pre-awareness of the group during its archetype construction, led to the identity construction and the formulation of a foreign policy that pursues to place the group as a supportive of the country agenda. In this sense, Russia is instrumentalizing the BRICS based on its self-identity perceptions; by assuming the

since 2012, in the context of the Durban Declaration (2013) and the G20 Summit of Los Cabos (2012), and the introduction of South Africa as a member in 2010. The African country's entrance can be understood as an attempt to increase the group's presence together with other African nations, since the economic and political position of the country was not fully aligned with the ones of the BRICS and the country had at the moment a strong position towards the Western institutions and nations (Duggan, 2015). Those two episodes represent an earlier stage of the BRICS changes in order to renew its position.

positive character of the group archetype, the country can project its objectives toward the BRICS and shape the group. This thesis supports the hypothesis that Russia's identity projection toward the BRICS to achieve its objectives and that the country has its identity shaped by the interaction with the group. It was already mentioned in the previous subsection that the BRICS are represented as a possibility for Russia to increase its security objectives, as creating a new pole in its multipolarity aspirations. In the present case, the BRICS voting together with Russia and China against intervention in Syria is possibly the materialization of the previous hypothesis regarding the non-hostile Other cooperation. The group is shaped to support Russia's objectives, based on both the non-hostility and the Linking between archetypes and Russian Self, and the country has its identity shaped when assuming the BRICS as necessary.

This paragraph will discuss the UNSC actions during 2011 and 2012 when all the five BRICS members were represented with permanent or temporary membership. Since the group was formed in 2009, there was only one significant security-related issue requiring⁷ the group to have a substantial position in the context of the Arab Spring; it was when the UNSC discussed the topic about authorizing or not the use of force in both Libya and Syria. It was the first and only time all members of the BRICS were present as UNSC members⁸. The group presented coordinated positions regarding both topics. For example, the group justified its position at the time as protecting the "*independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of each nation*" (Duggan, 2015). That rhetoric goes against the traditional vision defended by Western policies regarding, for example, the R2P, Necessary and Distress, in which the sovereignty of a State is possible of violation under Human Rights violations or other major catastrophes, the UNSC was not debating only a

⁷ The affirmation that the group has the demand for a position is only justifiable because of the UNSC members' disposition at the time, as explained later. The BRICS only had the opportunity to act in a political bloc mostly because of their current place in international organizations at the time.

⁸ Brazil was elected as a non-permanent member for the 2010-2011 membership, South Africa and India both for the 2011-2012. China and Russia both hold a permanent seat under Article 23 of the UN Charter (1945). Even though Brazil was at the end of the mandate, the conduction of the Libyan and Syrian crisis was made with the five BRICS countries as effective members and with a right to vote. Countries elected members available at: <<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/countries-elected-members> >

humanitarian crisis it was the clash between two projects regarding the R2P and International Humanitarian Law itself (Odeyemi, 2016).

According to Odeyemi (2016), the UNSC was divided by two possible interpretations of the R2P, one supporting its use to give the UN authorization over the use of force in the region led by the "P3" - United States, United Kingdom, and France - and a second position, with a critical view about using it by the alliance of the "P2" - China and Russia - and the rest of the BRICS. At the time, the group developed itself to enlarge its participation in the international sphere, changing from an economic group to a semi-institutionalized organization (Stuekel, 2015). That substantial change in the group's intentions is directly linked to why the group manifested its position regarding the R2P and the Syrian crisis. If the group is manifesting its intention to revise the Western leadership of norms diffusion, it is also necessary for them to have a common position in areas beyond their original scope. This research suggests two possible ways to understand this movement; one is it was directly under the influence of Russia and China, countries with more resources in the institutional body of the UN - the permanent membership in the UNSC, for example -, and that the group has found their consensus over international themes (Odeyemi, 2016, Pant, 2013).

Those two explanations reveal that the group was changing and being shaped by their members' agendas, mainly by Russia as the most active part (Allison, 2013) and by contacting the group's foreign policy with the external BRICS environment. The Russian position in the BRICS celebrates the group's efforts in preventing the intervention in the country. However, mainly it also supports the idea that the BRICS were responsible for the outcome of the Moscow-Washington alliance over the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, which was more the efforts of bilateral coordination by the Russian and the United States government than the BRICS engaging in the question (Odeyemi, 2016). Even though the group did not impact the outcome of the situation regarding the Syrian chemical weapons, they supported the idea of the destruction of those (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, 2014). The Russian leadership did recognize it as being the outcome of the BRICS political coordination (Putin, 2014), and this can be understood as an example of the Linking between Russia and the BRICS archetype, in which the positive perception of the Other constructs the conditions to the later on Othering exercise.

Those discussions above are essential to understand the Russian position regarding the BRICS's first core element and how this directly engages with the Russian projection toward the group. This partial analysis of the Linking process addressed the Russian identification with the BRICS concept of Multilateralism, international law, and the primacy of the UN. The outcome of this discussion presented that Russia has a positive construction of the BRICS archetype. The characteristics of the group, such as being a revisionist power with open critics to Western normative diffusion (Duggan, 2015), are presently combined under the Russian set of values. It is important to remember that Russia has another constructed archetype of NATO or the EU, for example, but those are constructed with the country's negative interpretation of the Other values, leading to a negative archetype and a Differentiation process. The arguments above support the idea of Russia Linking with the BRICS because of their similarities regarding a set of topics and norms interpretations, the lack of political coordination of Russia is not evidence of a non-positive relation. That movement can be understood as Russia's Othering with the BRICS and promoting its foreign policy toward the group, by the conditions created after the Linking process. The group has its agency and shares initial thoughts about the world and its dynamics - it was also introduced in the argumentation above the evolution of those initial thoughts as more solid common position -, it is possible to affirm that Russia projects its identity toward the BRICS. However, it is not possible to affirm that the country has the last word in the group. In this sense, the country seeks to instrumentalize the BRICS by understanding that the group has a construction that positively fits in the Russian values.

The second element is present in the BRICS's continuous manifestations of its will to introduce the group as a force that will help the international order reach a collective development of both developed and emerging countries. It is possible to perceive that the group had an early objective to include themselves as part of the decision-makers. Thus, the justification of this is that this would be positive for the whole international community:

*"In the economic, financial and development fields, **BRICS serves as a major platform for dialogue and cooperation.** We are determined to continue strengthening the BRICS partnership for common development and advance BRICS cooperation in a gradual and pragmatic manner, reflecting the principles*

of openness, solidarity and mutual assistance. We reiterate that such cooperation is inclusive and non-confrontational. We are open to increasing engagement and cooperation with non-BRICS countries, in particular emerging and developing countries, and relevant international and regional organizations. We share the view that the world is undergoing far-reaching, complex and profound changes, marked by the strengthening of multipolarity, economic globalization and increasing interdependence. While facing the evolving global environment and a multitude of global threats and challenges, the international community should join hands to strengthen cooperation for common development. Based on universally recognized norms of international law and in a spirit of mutual respect and collective decision making, global economic governance should be strengthened, democracy in international relations should be promoted, and the voice of emerging and developing countries in international affairs should be enhanced". (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2011).

In the Sanya Declaration, the points above introduce the BRICS argument regarding introducing non-developed countries in the decision-making process. The group promotes its vision that international relations lack the agency of that specific group of countries, the emerging and developing ones, and promoting their vision to update the actual dynamics of international governance.

The Russian position is similar to the BRICS position. It was already discussed that the country has its interpretation regarding multipolarity and the construction of multilateral relations. Those visions are based on the country's identity toward hostile Others, and in this sense, we can perceive, once more, the example of the Linking between the Russian and the BRICS identity. The Russian leadership already assumed that the BRICS represent the "*economic foundations of the multipolar world*" (Medvedev, 2010), and it is clear that both Russia and the BRICS share this idea of promoting multipolarity. The Linking process deals exclusively with the notion of a positive relation, which is possible because of the Russian preconception of commonly shared values:

"In the future, our organization can become one of the key elements in the global governance system. Russia believes that BRICS must be positioned

as a new model of relations, which is not based on stereotypes or structures such as bridges or mediators. This approach to the alliance of countries with a total population of nearly 3 billion people deliberately restricts their independence in implementing coordinated policies on the international arena. And now, in addition to economic issues, we are discussing international politics and the challenges facing humanity today." (Medvedev, 2012)

The speech that the former President Medvedev gave at the New Delhi Summit (2012) is reproducing the logic of the Linking process between Russia and the BRICS. The group can be a model for future cooperation, and Russia shares this same goal. The Russian position also indicates external resistance from the BRICS's capacities; this example is similar to the previous one about the intervention in Syria. The country has a previous objective and is instrumentalized via the Linking identity of Russia and the BRICS. Russia has a position that something is working against the BRICS. In this case, that obstacle is the one that takes their model of relations based on "*stereotypes or structures as bridges or mediators.*" This specific critic is not present in the Delhi Declaration, it is a Russian self-position and external perception, but the essence of both speeches is similar and presents a congruent ambition to promote their way of doing international relations. The BRICS address problems faced by the "international community" and Russia by the "humanity," those two forms to engage with the international society. However, the promotion of the non-Western multipolarity based on emerging actors' agency is the common element that is perceived as Linking Russia and the BRICS.

The following example will introduce more actual and BRICS and Russia declarations while still working with the second element. The previous ones are important to understand the collective construction of the relation of Russia and BRICS, especially to highlight where the Linking process is present. With the analysis of the most recent discourses, it is possible to check the evolution of the Linking process and its adaptation since the external environment directly influences the Russian and BRICS relations. In the last BRICS Summit, Moscow 2020, the group addressed its usual claims for a more inclusive and dynamic financial governance aligned with the already consolidated position regarding the reform of the UN System and security based on diplomatic solutions (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2020):

“We reaffirm our commitment to Multilateralism and the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, democracy, inclusiveness, and strengthened collaboration. We will continue working towards strengthening and reforming international governance so that it is more inclusive, representative, democratic with meaningful and greater participation of developing countries in international decision-making and better attuned to the contemporary realities. We acknowledge that current interconnected international challenges should be addressed by strengthened international cooperation in the interest of both nations and peoples through reinvigorated and reformed multilateral systems, including the UN, the WTO, the WHO, the IMF and other international organizations. We underline, in this regard, the imperative that international organizations be fully driven by Member States and promote the interest of all.”
(Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2020).

The possible difference from the BRICS newest Joint Declarations from the oldest ones is that the group now has a more solid internal agenda and a less ambitious external one. Indeed, the group, since the start of the Syrian crisis and its coordinates efforts at the UNSC at the moment, have assumed a strong orientation toward addressing regional issues; the instabilities in the Middle East and Africa are common topics in the security or regional challenges sections in the group joint declarations from 2014 to the last one in 2020 (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Nevertheless, the group has turned itself less ideological regarding the early years and has evolved into a more pragmatic partnership, including roadmaps for energy and business cooperation. It can be argued that the group was passing through a conceptualization period, in which the first point was addressing the basic foundations of the BRICS, and now they have a better understanding of their necessities and can expand their agenda to more micro cooperation goals. Another possible argumentation about the change in BRICS direction is justified by Duggan and Azalia (2020) as the rise of China as the second-largest economy, which caused the group to lose its equilibrium with the Chinese ascension, highlighting a disparity of the domestic objectives of the members. In this scenario, the Chinese reality is not an emerging market anymore, and its possible consolidation as an economic pole

by itself influenced the BRICS to move towards a more neutral agenda since the enlargement of the previous differences of the members.

The previous discussion is important to locate the BRICS actual moment, but it needs to have the Russian position toward this new period to move with the Linking discussion. The Russian presidency in the Moscow Summit celebrated that the BRICS *"have held 130 events, including some 25 ministerial meetings."* (Putin, 2020), manifesting the increase in the internal agenda of the BRICS, with the focus on more pragmatic decisions rather than the promotion of an agenda targeting the exterior environment. This declaration was followed by continuous support for the development of forums with sectors of the society of all BRICS members, such as women, business, and science forums (Putin, 2020). In direct relation to the Russian declaration, the action plan of the Moscow Summit was directly directed to the construction of guidelines, memorandums, and joint ministerial meetings (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, 2020). In contrast to previous actions plans with more concrete and active policies such as the creation of the NDB and the Treaty for the Establishment of a BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (2014), with direct impact on the monetary policy of the members and aiming to create a dissociate financial policy from the ones guided by the Bretton Woods institutions.

The NDB is an excellent example of the narrowing scope of the BRICS's actions and its subsequential open support by the Russian Federation. The bank was created in 2014, and it was designed to both be an alternative to the international financial institutions (Morozov, 2013) and also to promote an external image of the BRICS as capable of acting in developing and emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2014). During last year's summit, the NDB was instructed to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and promote PPP restricted to its members (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, 2020). In 2019 the same movement toward the support for PPP and infrastructure was combined with the decision for opening regional offices of the bank in the member states (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, 2019).

The foundation document of the bank also plans that nations external to the BRICS can become members of the NDB (Agreement on the New Development Bank, 2014), but since its foundation, no other national, despite its original five members, have

joined. Russia shares this position regarding the domestic activities of the NDB, especially in the actual healthy scenario, and stated that:

"The Bank has reserved \$10 billion to combat the Pandemic, while its overall portfolio of investment projects now exceeds \$20 billion. As many as 62 large projects are already being implemented in the BRICS countries. Incidentally, a regional branch of the bank will soon open in Moscow to implement lending programmes across the Eurasian space. I would also like to remind you that the BRICS countries have a special insurance tool in case of a crisis in the financial markets: the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement, with a \$100 billion fund." (Putin, 2020).

Putin's speech can be understood as the manifestation of the same intentions in the BRICS last summits, constructing economic and infrastructure improving mechanisms in the member states. Nevertheless, it is also possible to interpret the speech in a sense that it is announcing to the other BRICS members that there is a possibility for domestic, inter-BRICS, economic recovery that does not rely on recurring to international financial institutions. The Linking process is present in both hypotheses regarding the speech, on one hand, it is supporting the perpetuation of the BRICS understanding of the NDB as more relevant domestically, and on the other is strengthening the essence of the second element, which is the revision of the current financial governance institutions and the promotion of their agency regarding the theme.

Another point of the 2020 Russian speech related to the actual BRICS', thus also indicating the evolution of the group's current tone in their cooperation, was delivered by the Russian leadership regarding the sanitary cooperation:

"(...) the subject of medical cooperation is nothing new for BRICS. In this context, we are in a better situation, relatively speaking, than some other countries. Let me remind you that the Ufa Declaration we adopted five years ago included an agreement to work together to prevent the spread of infectious diseases" (Putin, 2020)

In the above declaration, it is possible to track the continuity of the BRICS construction of the policies regarding their internal cooperation to other areas and the Russian position supporting that movement. The Linking relation of the Russian identity toward the BRICS is present in the group's adaptation to a more restricted scenario. Even without the group's participation in significant security-related issues since the Syrian crisis, the positive perception of the group constituent signs and traits is present when Russia celebrates previous efforts regarding domestic cooperation. The Russian vision over the BRICS capacities and actions is made positively, which not only cooperation regarding the country's sensitive security issues, the Syrian case, is capable of promoting a positive foreign policy construction. In moments of warmer discussions, the positive interpretation of the BRICS identity is present, and the Linking process is still acting between both identities.

With the previous arguments presented above, it is possible to introduce a brief conclusion regarding the Linking process and move to the Dimensional aspect of identity. As discussed before, the Linking process is only possible with a positive interpretation of the Other Archetype. In the present study, the BRICS is the Other. According to the country's identity given values to other themes such as Multipolarity and Multilateralism, it is constructed by some specific traits that under the Russian interpretation are linked and construct the BRICS archetype. This subsection was exemplified by analyzing both Russia and BRICS declarations from 2009 to 2020 to construct a common ground of shared perceptions regarding identity and foreign policy. In the case of Russia Linking its identity with the BRICS, it was possible to perceive that the country shares values with the group, and it is also contributing to its construction by the foreign policy dedicated to it. The Russian agenda is not always fully supportive of the group's declarations and actions. In the examples mentioned above, it is possible to see diverse episodes in which the Russian position differentiated from the BRICS, but even with punctual differences, the core of the group's objectives was related to the Russian objectives.

The perception of those two elements, Rule of Law/Multilateralism and the emergent agency promotion, helped the analysis highlight the moments in which Russia was acting in its interests and the principles that guided the BRICS since its foundations. To conclude, the hypothesis of the previously mentioned cyclical effect of identity and

foreign policy as two mutually constructed forces (Hansen, 2006, Waever, 2002). In this sense, Russia promotes its agenda toward the BRICS, identity, and foreign policy, but even with particularities of the Russian objectives, it is possible to perceive that the positive interpretation of the BRICS characteristics, the Linking, was kept. The Russian actions resulted in the country's adoption of the BRICS values and their maintenance as a support and justification for its actions. The Russian identity was Linked to BRICS; the outcome of this was the continuity of common aspects of both identities and the Russian agenda introduction in the group meetings. In the next section, this study will discuss the dimensions of identity construction, going even deeper into the aspects that help drive the Russian identity construction toward the BRICS.

4.3 IDENTITY DIMENSIONS

4.3.1 THE SPATIAL DIMENSION

Moving forward with the discussion over the dimensional aspect of identity formation, we should start with the spatial dimension. As mentioned in the theoretical part, it is not the geographical space instrumentalized in the Spatial dimension. The construction of spatiality in the identity study of the Russian projection toward the BRICS will work with the abstract notion of a peripheral spatial belonging. In this sense, Russia shares its spatial exclusion perception with BRICS in its exclusion from the core of the decision-makers. The BRICS have the aspiration to become rule-makers instead of rule takers (Duggan, 2015). Russia shares this normative aspiration by the critical position the country has toward utilizing the international norms by the Western nations and have sought in the BRICS the possibility to strengthen its positions regarding the construction of a multipolar system in its terms (Makarychev and Morozov, 2011). In this partial analysis of the dimensional aspect of identity, like the others that will follow, it is necessary to work with both the literature on Russia's self-identity, its relation with the BRICS, and the discourse analysis of the country's rhetoric toward the group.

In the theoretical background, it was mentioned the possibility to work with Morozov's (2015) notion of Russia as a Subaltern Empire; with this possible classification of the country toward international politics, it is possible to understand the spatiality that

both Russia and the BRICS share. In its subalternity, Russia is both dependent economically and normatively on countries that can produce high attributed value goods and to the ones which are actual norms diffusers in the international system. That same subalternity can be applied to the general concept of the BRICS; even with the possible Chinese disruption with the economic subalternity (Duggan and Azalia, 2020), the group still has both economic and normative dependence from the core nations and institutions. To introduce the common Spatial dimension of the Russian identity construction, the preconceived subaltern and peripheral space that both identities identify with will be divided firstly with the normative dependence and later introduce the economic one in the Temporal dimension⁹, leading to the conclusion of the argument about the first introduced dimension.

It was possible to perceive during the BRICS joint declarations and the Russian speeches, diverse Western traditional institutions being recognized as the leading ones regarding normative diffusion and the support for the continuation of this arrangement. That dependency was not limited to only economic or financial issues, but also other areas such as security and environmental protection were present as being directly related to the action of those. The initial example is directly stressing the BRICS early objectives, as the promotion of the emerging participation in the governance decisions (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2011), and the Russian support for the creation of a new financial design (Medvedev, 2009), with the dependence of the G20 as a possible tool for promoting their agendas.

Both Russia and the BRICS have a revisionist and critical approach to the norms of today's institutional dynamics, but both also carry their critics in the same structure that the current debate is made, under the Western normative constructions. Russia has a critical position in Western politics and how institutions act. However, it is still claiming that it shares the liberal institutional set of norms, as a democratic supporter and market economy oriented, even though domestically, the reality differs from the rhetoric

⁹ As mentioned in Hansen (2006) the dimensions are not hierarchical and it is impossible to dissociate them from each other. In this sense, it is possible also to perceive the economic subalternity of Russia in the Spatial dimension as well, but the economic related aspect is better understood and creates a solid link with the BRICS in the Temporal dimension of their identities.

(Neumann, 2008). In addition to the Russian government's rhetoric to promote a confrontation and create an Othering process with the Western, the country dealing with its abroad partners and allies also promotes values of the European bureaucracy and institutional financial models. The structure of the EAEU is based on the EU model for integration and cooperation. Also, the BRICS major created institution, the New Development Bank, which was designed to finance the BRICS and others developing economies on infrastructure, is created based on the WB and the IMF (Morozov, 2015).

In the Russian rhetoric toward the BRICS, the country seems to perpetrate the institutional dependence logic. The Russian position is usually characterized by the support that the BRICS summits are a mechanism for their cooperation and preparation for the G20 (Putin, 2018). The BRICS leaders use those summits as another space to meet each other beyond the group regular meetings. In the G20 meeting in Argentina (2018), the BRICS have an extraordinary meeting in which the Russian leadership attested that:

*"In general, we cannot help noticing that unfair competition often takes the place of fair and equitable intergovernmental dialogue. **The nefarious practice of imposing unilateral sanctions and protectionist measures without regard to the UN Charter, WTO rules, and other generally accepted legal norms is spreading.**"* (Putin, 2018)

The Russian position in this situation is not only projecting its domestic agenda as previously noted in the speech above, which consists in addressing to combat the Western sanctions over the country and to seek alternative partnerships to compensate its losses due to being sanctioned (Kotkin, 2016), but also in projecting those institutions and organizations like the appropriate forums to solve disputes.

The BRICS also manifested the same intentions of the Russian leadership regarding the continuity of international financial institutions as having a pivotal role regarding world governance. That vision is both the maintenance of the structure and developing nations in the decisions.

*"We resolve to **foster a global economic governance architecture that is more effective and reflective of the current global economic landscape,***

increasing the voice and representation of emerging markets and developing economies. We reaffirm our commitment to conclude the IMF's 15th General Review of Quotas, including a new quota formula, by the 2019 Spring Meetings and no later than the 2019 Annual Meetings. We will continue to promote the implementation of the World Bank Group Shareholding Review. (...) We emphasize the importance of an open and inclusive world economy enabling all countries and peoples to share in the benefits of globalization. We remain firmly committed to a rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open, and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.” (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2017).

In the BRICS Xiamen Declaration, the fragment above highlights the leading role that the traditional Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO have in the group aspirations.

This mentality is also present in the Russian position, and in 2019 the Russian leadership recognized *"that BRICS states must act as initiators in building a more just and sustainable global development model on the principles of equality, respect for sovereignty and consideration for the interests of all countries"* (Putin, 2019). This declaration can be understood to lead the group toward a possible disruption with the actual governance norms and leadership. However, in the same declaration, the Russian President clarified its position regarding the actual world's economic design, with open support for the preservation of institutions such as the WTO as the milestone for the improvement in the economic situation:

"We think any attempts to destroy the WTO or diminish its role are counterproductive. WTO members need to agree on principles of cooperation in such new industries as e-commerce, online financial transactions, as well as formulate clear and unambiguous rules of cooperation in investment, services and infrastructure development. Of course, it is necessary to develop explicit and understandable rules of operation for transnational corporations that would prevent monopolisation of markets and guarantee free access to technology.” (Putin, 2019)

We can conclude that the subaltern spatiality of both Russia and BRICS is a conversion point to arrange those identities in a shared space. Both represent a peripheral relation to the normative governance practices and have a critical position with the desire and aspiration to exercise more influence. Even performing a critical role in questioning the influence over the global institutions, Russia shares with the BRICS countries the tactic to not clash entirely with the Western norms. It is not a project to abandon solid and abstract institutions, such as governance institutions and the globalized international trade regime, but still a project to shape them for their better relations in the already consolidated system. The subalternity of those norms is one side of the common spatiality of Russia and the BRICS; the other side is the peripheral status regarding the decision making. It was presented above both sides of Russia and the BRICS identities as belonging to a common Spatial dimension, one in which the two have a substantial dependency on the norms diffused by the Western institutions, with their developing plans also being dependent on those. Moreover, the second is the lack of participation and protagonism of both Russia and the BRICS. The Spatial dimension, constructed of both peripheral and subaltern self-perceptions, is shared by both Russia and the BRICS and directly engages in their identity construction processes, thus in the Russian perception of the group via the Linking process.

4.3.2 THE TEMPORAL DIMENSION

The Temporal dimension is directly related to a non-static conceptualization of the identity, with the capacity to change, improve or deteriorate the Self's identity conception, and assume a mutational aspect of identity (Hansen, 2006). The Temporal dimension manifests in the Russian identity toward the BRICS can be perceived in the Self's perception of its past. Before moving with the discussion on the Temporal dimension, it is important to highlight that this particular dimension of identity is more complicated to be perceived because of both the lack of historical background between the country and the rest of the BRICS, a colonial past and the Russian self-image as being part world's great powers group with an imperial legitimacy in acting beyond its borders (Neumann, 2008, Morozov, 2013). As in the dimension previously analyzed, it will also be necessary to enlarge the concept of temporality. It is proposed in the theoretical background that it

is not necessary to have a traditional colonial past, such as the ones the other four members of the BRICS had, to perceive the Self's interpretation of its actual material reality as common to the Other's reality by the lenses of the Temporal dimensional framework. This section will analyze the Russian self-construction that is directly Linking, as the dimensions are necessary for a Relational aspect (Hansen, 2006), with the BRICS one. Despite the absence of both a traditional and self-recognition of a colonial past, it is possible to perceive that Russia seems to create a shared identity with the group based on a Temporal construction.

It is essential to highlight that Russia has its colonial perception based in the context of the European Enlightenment; with a shared perception of itself as both being the heir of an imperial past, combined with the "great powerness" rhetoric from its past soviet identity, and which is under the pressure of Western neo-colonial policies via its economic position and subalternity to the international order norms (Morozov, 2015). Morozov (2015) argues that Russia's identity needs to be critically approached by the comprehension of that reality, that the country is at the same promoting a self-image of an imperial legacy and have its foreign policy based on countering what it perceives as the injustices of the West toward the country. With that construction, it is possible to justify that Russia has most of its subalternity justified by its relation with the West. A relation in the country's rhetoric is constructed by an unfavorable exchange between Russia and the Other. This study already discussed the hostile Other construction of Western institutions, such as NATO and the EU, alleging that those organizations have the country as an enemy and a threat (Pynnöniemi, 2018, Horvath, 2011, Gorenburg 2019). Russia was not essentially colonized during the European colonial period. Nevertheless, the postcolonial studies have in their basic assumption that the colonial relations between the former metropolis and the colonies are not over; the axis of the European colonial behavior toward the peripheral nations might have changed, but this specific literature have the enlarged concept those particles are present in different aspects on the present days (Morozov, 2015).

The combination of the hypothesis in the above chapter, about the country identity construction, and the new layer constructed in the theoretical background, related to constructing a shared temporality alongside the lack of a shared historical place, Russia has its economic situation more similar to the BRICS, and all the developing nations, than

to the Western ones. For example, the country is majorly an exporter of energetic mineral resources and other raw materials, increasing dependence on the industrialized and other high value-added products from more industrialized and modern economies¹⁰. As mentioned during the Spatial dimension discussion, the material side of the Russian subalternity deals with its economic dependency and position in the global chain of production, which are also present in the domestic characteristics of the country's economy. The Russian process of adaptation from a centrally planned economy to a market regime during the 90's - by the "shock therapy" policy in order to increase private participation in the country economic activity - was also responsible for the creation of the country currently economic problems: a powerful oligarchical elite that controls the mineral and energy sector with a significant political influence, the state-bureaucracy with ties to organized crime and the considerable amount of industrial, rural and urban workers that since the '90s have their living standards drastically reduced (Christensen, 2013). The extensive corruption regarding the private sector with state bureaucracy members have informal participation in the GDP that, according to the IMF is of 33,5% in 2018, is also an essential characteristic of the domestic economic reality of Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union (Barsukova, 2019) which lead the country to its actual moment.

It is possible to divide actual Russia's economic model into two different moments. According to Barsukova (2019), the first one was the market liberalization, and the process of erosion of the State power and control over diverse society aspects, and the second the stabilization of the Russian economy by the strengthening of the State and the consolidation of the oligarchical elite in power, especially under Putin's regime since the 2000s with an authoritarian orientation since then¹¹. The Russian economic reality after the '90s was also marked by the increase of the consumption and in both the country's GDP and per capita GDP; It is the period in which the most valued sectors in the Russian economy, such as oil and gas, had their significant enterprises consolidated as mostly

¹⁰ Eurostat and World Trade Center Moscow.

¹¹ This aspect of the authoritarian turn in Russia, by the consolidation of the government party and the suppression of the opposition, is also combined with a rhetoric based on the democratization of the international system. This indicates the country's subalternity to the nations and institutions of the core with its similarity to other regimes, from the periphery, which combine the criticism to the global economic norms alongside with a domestic repression to the opposition (Morozov, 2015, James, 1997).

state-owned and started to be an active tool for government agenda (Clarke, 2007). Even with crucial differences, in those two moments, there was intense and almost perpetual participation of the illegal and informal activities in order to conduct the country's economic policy, for example with corruption and concentration of power in the hands of political groups and families with ties to the government and the State bureaucracy (Barsukova 2019, Clarke, 2007).

The previous characteristics regarding the country's economic reality, both domestically and abroad, illustrate why the country can be considered a developing economy with an emerging market and the capacity to grow, however, with underdevelopment and stagnation due to exogenous factors, such as the commodity prices fluctuation. That particular Russian condition is justified by the country's position as a product of Western exclusion from the decision-making process and expansionism over the periphery; in the same movement of the country claims of neocolonialism as the way West perpetuated its actions toward the country.

In the BRICS joint declarations, it is perceptible the combination of the colonial aspect with other phenomena, even the group with its solid anti-colonial critical approach the tone. The temporal element is combined with others that possibly manifest a closer position to the Russian interpretation. It is possible to affirm that the BRICS are using that specific approach to the colonial aspect in a way to include Russia, mainly because the Russian domestic rhetoric instrumentalized the Second World War as a national constitutive factor as a nation that "*saved Europe against Nazism*" (Morozov, 2015). Also, in the previous BRICS Summit, 2019, the Russian position pushed forward for the group's condemnation of "*attempts to glorify the Nazis*" (Putin, 2019). The group indeed has a temporal position of colonialism based not only on the European actions toward the Americas, Africa, and Asia but also with a concept that covers a more extensive range of topics related to the issue.

"We recognize the Victory in the Second World War as our common legacy and pay tribute to all those who fought against fascism, tyranny and militarism, colonialism and for liberation of the colonized, for freedom of nations, and stress the importance of preservation and inadmissibility of desecration or destruction of monuments erected in their remembrance. We

*recall that, born out of the horrors of the Second World War, **the United Nations**, as a common endeavor for humanity, was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and since then has **helped to shape the very structure of relations between nations in the modern age**. We further urge for a **resolute stand against the rehabilitation of Nazi ideology, racism, xenophobia, colonialism and the distortion of history**." (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2020).*

This declaration by the BRICS in Moscow is essential because it manifests elements commonly present in the Russian identity's nationalistic rhetoric and discusses the Temporal dimension. It is manifested through the positive recognition of the UN's role in shaping the "*very structure of relations between nations in the modern age*," which manifests a negative interpretation of the previous way in which relations between nations were structured in the past. Alongside the introduction of "racism," "xenophobia," "colonialism," and "distortion of history," the Moscow Declaration reveal that the group's aspiration to achieve modernity is only possible by the end of those actions. The BRICS are, by this declaration, assuming that there is a Temporal shared dimension for them, which is manifested via the enlargement of the colonial period to a broader period of pre-modernity and inequality among nations.

The Russian rhetoric on the theme, at the same summit, was more contained than the BRICS's one when addressing the same topic, but it managed to relate Nazism to the same aspects that the group had:

*"In the year of the 75th anniversary of Victory over Nazism in World War II, the **BRICS countries have unanimously condemned the glorification of the Nazis and their henchmen and the attempts to revise the outcome of the war and to revive the ideology of aggression and intolerance**. Our countries consistently **advocate constructive relations with other states, integration entities and international organisations, including in the proven BRICS Plus and BRICS Outreach formats**. **In our common opinion, this interaction should continue to build on the principles of respect for the UN Charter and the fundamental rules***

of international law such as sovereign equality of states, non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful settlement of disputes" (Putin, 2020)

The construction of the Second World War, in the Russian speech, as a turning point for the construction of the UN and the creation of norms such as "*sovereign equality of states, non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful settlement of disputes*" can be placed in the same Temporal dimension as the BRICS's previous declaration. Both are related to a negative experience, including the past Self Othering with its actual Self, promoting a change in Self-identity perception. This dimension works directly with the Self's possibility to change. The Othering exercise is not done only with the past Self, but also with the context it was inserted in. In this case, the context is the moments before creating the UN and the pre-modernity period. A time in which Russia's construction assumes as being "a time for Nazism and disrespect to the country's sovereignty". The BRICS enlarge the problems present in this period, but both assume the same period as negative, creating a shared Temporal dimension for their identities.

Before moving into the discussion about the last dimension, the Ethical one, it is essential to conclude that the subalternity of Russia is what we can use to understand the construction of a shared identity with the BRICS based on the Temporal dimension. There is no common colonial construction between Russia and its four counterparts. Furthermore, the Russian government does not encourage the narrative of a colonial past. On the contrary, it promotes an imperial and great power self-perception, since the Temporal dimension was enlarged to not only recur to the past as the historical position but as the starting point of a process of exclusion. The actual Russian condition is constructed as the outcome of exclusion and neocolonialism by the country's elite, this without denying its self-imperial perception of greatness, thus it is possible to not only justify the construction of a Temporal dimension of exclusion with the BRICS but also to understand better the Russian self-perception of being a "besieged fortress" (Pynnöniemi, 2018).

Both the country's self-perception of its identity and position in world politics are combined to justify the country foreign policy not only toward the West, and in this case, we are using the BRICS as the Other in this Othering process since all foreign policy and identity are constitutive of Relational processes. Because of this, is it possible to perceive

why Makarychev and Morozov (2011) attested that Russia started to instrumentalize anti-colonial rhetoric when dealing with the BRICS? Regarding their exclusion from the Western normative diffusion norms also, it is possible to combine the self-threat perception of Russia with the other member's identities to justify their common peripheral position as the result of external influence - which in the Russian perception is a hostile one influencing it. However, for the other BRICS members, the reciprocal is not true. The exclusion was different regarding the methods inside former colonized BRICS members, the metropolis, and even the existence of a metropolis, but Russian construction was instrumentalized to construct a shared Temporal dimension with its BRICS counterparts. That movement can be perceived as the country's projection of foreign policy by its identity construction. After the consummation of the Othering with the BRICS, the anti-colonial rhetoric adoption in the country's positions supports the hypothesis that promoting its foreign policy is also constructing the Russian identity. Their Temporal mutual construction of identity is not based on a common temporal location, but instead in their actual position as excluded from the core by a process perpetrated by the same actors through time. The Russian dilemma in this sense, a country with a self-imperial perception sharing identity with others that have a postcolonial approach in their identities, can be understood as the country being the active and the passive part in the identity construction with the BRICS. The dilemma is the outcome of the Russian method to promote its identity toward the BRICS and reach its domestic agenda completion.

4.3.3 THE ETHICAL DIMENSION

The last dimension is the one that deals with the Ethical forces that are influencing and constraining the identity construction. In this construction, the Self manifests its ethical assumption in its policies and actions. As mentioned in the theoretical section, this manifestation can go beyond the borders of a nation-state and become foreign policy. In this sense, it is possible to have one concrete example of the Russian identity Ethical dimension manifestation and its subsequent projection toward the BRICS, which also have its own identity Ethical dimension. In the case of the Russian identity, as discussed before, the country supports the idea of a world order based on multipolarity mostly to promote its security and threat perception towards the Western multipolar and multilateral

organizations. This idea is different from the BRICS one, which consists in promoting a more inclusive world order for a specific group of nations, it has open support for multipolarity as well as the Russian position, but the objective is not based on threat perception and in the country's national interest as in the Russian case.

As analyzed before in the Linking process between Russia and the BRICS, the country projects its agenda toward the group in an exercise to include the other four nations arrangement in a possible tool for reaching its objectives. Nevertheless, even with the Russian BRICS' instrumentalization, there is a positive interpretation and construction of the BRICS. The group aspects agree with the Russian self-set of values, objectives, and interpretations regarding multipolarity. This dimension work with BRICS and Russia manifests as their values and interpretations of norms and the international system, directly connecting with the previously mentioned Linking exercise that Russia promotes toward the BRICS archetype.

Before engaging with the discourse analysis, it is essential to highlight that multipolarity, south-south cooperation, and the exportation of the "BRICS model of multilateralism" to the emergent and developing countries will be the tone in which both Russia and the BRICS share a common Ethical dimension in constructing its own identities. Since we are compromised with the Russian projection toward the group, with a poststructuralist approach assuming a cyclical process of mutual construction between identity and foreign policy, it is also essential to highlight the moments in which the Russian leadership also supports the idea of multipolarity but not only in its terms. Thus, with the defense of the BRICS as having the primacy in promoting non-Western cooperation among the emergent nations.

Firstly, it is important to highlight the BRICS's manifestations for the construction of multipolarity and their self-perception as the leading force capable of promoting the ascension of the emergent and developing countries. The group self-identification as "*leaders of the developed countries*" (Duggan, 2011: 22) is perceived in the BRICS, and it is a concrete manifestation of the Ethical dimension in the group identified as the part of a collective of countries that have reached a prominent place among the others. One vital characteristic of developing countries is that they are aware of their reality, as something in between being a "wealth" or a "poor" country, but also that developing countries are the group that most started multilateral cooperation among their equals in

the last decades (Thies and Nieman, 2017). Those two perceptions can be combined in order to understand that the BRICS are promoting their identity toward the developing countries but at the same time manifesting themselves as also non-developed ones, which the lenses of the Ethical dimension can understand as the Self-perception of the group as being external to the developed sphere of the rule-makers nations. The group gains with this movement of representing their similar developing nations counterparts and self-perceiving itself as part of the group seeking to represent a possible legitimacy.

That legitimacy is instrumentalized by Russia when the country openly seeks to promote cooperation to emergent nations via BRICS. The Russian President recognized that "*the BRICS countries are aware of their role and responsibility as global growth leaders*" (Putin, 2013) in the Durban Meeting, the first one in the African continent, and planned to have a more BRICS-Africa tone regarding external cooperation. The President once more highlighted the country's perspective regarding the BRICS and Russia's objectives in the region:

"Development assistance is another important aspect of our work together, and in this respect we have signed the **multilateral agreement on co-financing infrastructure projects in Africa. This shows the BRICS group's interest in expanding our cooperation with the African continent.**" (Putin, 2013)

It was already discussed the Russian ethical dimension regarding its multipolarity support. This subsection aims to highlight the possible Russian construction toward the BRICS; the above declarations support the hypothesis that the country shares the perception regarding the BRICS self-image of being a possible and capable leader for the developing nations.

The Russian position was to engage in possible new areas of cooperation and present itself as advocating for them.

"We must take purposeful steps to strengthen the foundations of international information security and use the BRICS countries' potential for launching initiatives in this area. It would be good to have the relevant agencies in our countries continue work on drafting a framework document that would set

out the BRICS countries' common policy in this area. We place priority importance on expanding cooperation in humanitarian areas too. Russia proposes that we speed up the work to approve the multilateral intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in culture. This work is already underway." (Putin, 2013)

Russia considers the BRICS as an essential tool for the promotion of multipolarity. Furthermore, the country also has the aspiration to promote its own domestic and self-interests in the group. It was mentioned in the theoretical discussion over that same dimension that it could be utilized to understand the Russian non-Hostile construction of the BRICS; This happens when the country seems to portray the BRICS in the same group of other organizations which Russia also has a positive relation with, as the SCO, and other with even more agency toward, such as the EAEU. During the Ufa meeting in 2015, the BRICS had engaged in activities with those institutions, representing the Russian promotion of its ideas of multipolarity and Multilateralism; represented by those multilateral projects:

"With the aim of consolidating our engagement with other countries, particularly developing countries and emerging market economies, as well as with international and regional institutions, we will hold a meeting with the Heads of States and Governments of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as the Heads of observer States of the SCO. Participants in this meeting share various issues of mutual interest. This lays a solid foundation for launching a broader mutually beneficial dialogue. All of us remain committed to upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law and we strive to achieve sustainable economic growth through international cooperation and an enhanced use of regional integration mechanisms in order to improve the welfare and prosperity of our people." (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, 2015).

Both Russia and the BRICS have their Ethical dimension manifested in their aspiration for constructing an international system that is positive according to their ethics. One with the perception that this multipolarity would leave a safer and more secure environment, and the other intends to shape the current global governance arrangement and become part of that same system with more prominent participation. We can argue that both have their Ethical dimensions based on promoting a system based on their assumptions of what a positive system might be. However, this hypothesis lacks the consideration that Russia and the BRICS are not equivalent actors: one is a nation-state, and the other is an international organization, even though without the usual international organization shape. The assumption of this difference is essential to understand that since this group is dealing with the Russian projection toward the BRICS, it is possible to perceive that this relation is different and carries some particularities, such as the group becoming part of the Russian framework in order to promote its agenda, and also by the country adopting the group dynamics, rhetoric and agenda to itself.

Since the Ethical dimension was already discussed, it is time to finish this section and move to the conclusion of the research regarding the Russian identity construction toward the BRICS. However, firstly, it is important to stick with the foundations of the Ethical dimension to analyze the identity construction in the present case and expand it to the Spatial and Temporal ones. Those dimensions act as the nuclear particle in which the Othering process will be later on developed. Firstly, it presents the Spatial, Temporal, and Ethical dimensions, in which those "*vehicles for identity construction*" (Waeber, 2002) have their participation analyzed as the initial moment of the identity construction of the country. Without that specific framework dealing with those sets of particularities, oriented by the principle of the Relational nature of identity, it would not be possible to deliver a proper interpretation of the Russian and the BRICS similarities and shared identity elements. By the dimensional interpretation, the Russian projection of BRICS adds a new layer in the argument about the construct of the Linking relation between the country and the BRICS's archetype, designed by the values that construct the country's identity. This archetype has elements of the three dimensions. It is necessary to have a proper tool capable of going deep into the two identities, as the dimensional perspective in this research, to identify the points in which the positive perception of the BRICS by Russia was initiated.

5. CONCLUSION

It is essential to go back to the previous thesis argumentation. Firstly, to understand the relation between Russia and the BRICS and the dilemma that the country faces in this process, we entered a deep discussion about identity. It was argued that identity is a complex aspect present in many research fields such as philosophy, social and political sciences, and international relations. The identity concept was analyzed by utilizing the poststructuralist and constructivist lenses to solidify the theme. In this exercise, we concluded that identity is Relational, only possible to exist by an Other in opposition to the Self. This duality of Self and Other was also discussed in two possible ways: the negative, by the presence of a hostile Other, and the positive, with the action of a non-hostile Other. This research was planned to focus only on the Russian perspective and how the Othering relation with BRICS is made. We found that this specific relation was constructed by the existence of a non-hostile Othering one. By the presence of that specific Othering process, the Linking process between Russia and the BRICS was possible. That process can be understood as the identification of Russia with BRICS, a process in which the country and the group construct a shared identity of common aspects that influence their relations. For example, in their foreign policy and identity construction.

To better comprehend the whole process of identity projection and dig deeper into the possible shared elements that drove Russia to construct a Linking with the BRICS, this research presented the four analytical steps of Hansen (2006). After using this specific framework, it was possible to find three dimensions that restrict and shape every existing identity: The Spatial, Temporal, and Ethical dimensions. With the first dimension, we enlarged the concept of spatiality from a geographically limited one to work with abstract concepts such as periphery and center. Russia shares with the BRICS the spatial identity dimension of exclusion from the normative diffusor center. The second one, the Temporal one, introduced a possible answer to the Russian dilemma. In this dimension, the possibility of a shared temporal place was detached from the personal background of Russia and BRICS. The central idea of a shared temporal dimension was shifted by the Russian rhetoric and the BRICS one, from a shared past to a shared present. Russia has managed to overcome its historical differences with the other BRICS members by

assuming that different trajectories lead to the same place in the present. The country denies a colonial past but does not deny a historical exclusion and harmful relations that constructed the possibility for a shared temporal dimension. The Ethical dimension revealed to us that Russia and the BRICS share a tendency to promote themselves as leaders. This leadership is oriented to their counterparts in the emergent and developing nations, with a neo-revisionist and "rule maker" aspiration (Allison, 2020; Duggan, 2015). Russia's position regarding this dimension is of promoting itself via BRICS, using the group to reach more distant regions and promote its own multilateral and multipolar visions.

Regarding the implications of this research, it is possible to affirm that the conclusions present in this study add a new layer to the Russian identity studies. This new layer is related to utilizing the BRICS as the target of Russian identity projection, including the semi-institutionalized organization in the debate strengthening the existing tools for approaching Russian actions with other non-Western organizations. The BRICS are not a Western organization, like the EU or NATO, or neither a Russian-oriented one, like the EAEU. It is possible to use this study's findings to help future research of Russian behavior in organizations or multilateral diplomacy between those two poles. It is not easy to imagine utilizing the Russian-BRICS case comparison to others in this same design, primarily because of the group particularities. As mentioned before, it is possible to place the BRICS in similar positions to other international and regional organizations, but Russia's presence alongside the other members transforms it into a unique construction.

This research is connected more to a broader debate on Russia's identity construction than other organizations' relations. The design of the research, its goals and methods, place it in Russian identity studies. The research proposes answers to questions such as: Is it possible to perceive a Russian intention to lead the BRICS? Or even: Is the country assuming a pragmatic position toward the group rather than an ideological one? The country shows its intention to promote its agenda toward and through BRICS. It is promoting the group as an ally for constructing its version of a multipolar world. Nevertheless, at the same time, the BRICS have not evolved to a Russia-oriented organization, and neither new coordination of security policies can be perceived as it was in the past. The Russian dilemma of adopting the anti-colonial narrative and promoting

itself as a possible group leader can be understood as a pragmatic movement of the country. Russia managed to promote a critical approach to Western norms, but on a pragmatic tone with the instrumentalization of its domestic agenda and identity. This research hypothesized that the Russian interaction toward the group also shapes the country's identity. One evidence of this is the presence of colonial and neocolonialism actions criticism in the country's discourses. However, the Russian position did adopt the same postcolonial rhetoric of its BRICS counterparts. It instead seems to instrumentalize and manipulate the concept to create an actual shared reality created on the actions of the Russian's hostile Others in the past.

It is possible to suggest that in the future, we will see the continuation of the actual dynamics of the group—an inter-BRICS-oriented debate with Russia using the group as a platform for the promotion of its multipolarity. The country is not in the same place as it was in 2009. The Russian situation changed after the Crimea Annexation in 2014, and how the Western powers deal with the country also changed. The context of the 2008 Financial Crisis and the 2009 Eurozone Crisis is different from the actual one. The BRICS seems not to address the contemporary challenges as it would do in the past, and neither Russia seems to have the group as a tool for globally promoting its agenda. It was debated in this research, and it would be a possible continuation of the same, the new role of China in the world economy and the increasing cleavage of the country and the rest of the BRICS, including the Russian position toward it. It is suggested by Duggan and Azalia (2020) that the Chinese consolidation as one of the world's most important economies has created a confusing environment for the BRICS. The members' differences never were a problem for their cooperation, but the increasing disparity of the Chinese reality the to rest might have tackled the core of the BRICS as an economic and collective development forum. Russian intentions regarding the group might not change. It is still the BRICS and Russia's goal to promote a change in the world's governance norms. Nevertheless, the country might not have consolidated its leadership in the group, and its efforts do not seem to mobilize the group to the new challenges.

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