

Rising Powers and Global Governance: dissecting the dynamics between Brazil and China

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Abstract: Rising powers have a nuanced relationship with the extant global governance (GG) system. This study draws upon China and Brazil as examples, and seeks to explain their different stances towards the GG, by contemplating the cases of BRICS, Responsibility to Protect (R2P) regime, Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and the United Nations Security Council reform. Therefore, this study serves as an attempt to dissect the dynamics whereby rising powers engage with each other *vis-à-vis* global governance.

Keywords: rising powers; global governance; China; Brazil; foreign policy.

Potências em ascensão e Governança Global: dissecando a dinâmica entre Brasil e China


Resumo: Potências em ascensão têm uma relação diferenciada com o sistema de governança global (GG) existente. Este estudo baseia-se na China e no Brasil como exemplos e procura explicar suas diferentes posições em relação a GG, contemplando os casos do BRICS, o regime de Responsabilidade de Proteger (R2P), a Iniciativa de Segurança Contra a Proliferação (PSI) e a reforma do Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas. Portanto, este estudo serve como uma tentativa de dissecar a dinâmica pela qual as potências em ascensão se relacionam umas com as outras em relação à governança global.

Palavras-chave: potências em ascensão; governança global; China; Brasil; política estrangeira.

Rising powers have a complex relationship with existing global governance (GG) architecture. In some instances, they support the GG and its norms and institutions, e.g. the United Nations (UN), the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) etc. In other instances, they join forces forming new regimes or institutions among themselves, seeking to reflect the evolving configuration of global power, and to contest the liberal hegemony in the West-dominated international order (Ikenberry & Lim 2017; Owen 2020). The formation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South America), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the IBSA Dialogue Forum comprising India, Brazil, and South Africa, and the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) demonstrate their reformist and sometimes revisionist international agenda.

Yet, in other issues, rising powers employ diverging approaches to the GG and its institutions. First, while some countries endorse liberal international organisations or regimes, the same countries oppose other liberal international regimes. To specify, while Beijing supports the Paris Agreement and has adopted decisive climate actions, it is neither a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC) nor the Paris Club or the Ottawa Landmine Treaty.¹ Or, take Brazil for example: although it has celebrated the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and is signatory to a number of international human rights treaties or agreements, it is opposed to the liberal element of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) regime and has not subscribed to the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Second, the same liberal international organisation or regime may have membership of some rising powers but not others: adopted by the UN General Assembly in the 1960s, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is backed by all BRICS members except China; the Global Compact for Migration has gained the endorsement of China but not of Brazil, whose current president withdrew from the non-binding agreement during his second week in office (Reuters 2019). Third, even if some rising powers have created institutions to counterbalance the liberal hegemony/intrusiveness of international organisations—an act coined by Börzel and Zürn (2021) as *withdrawal*—, they are at times less successful in securing other emerging powers’ support than usually expected. For instance, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by Beijing in 2013 has yet to garner endorsement from emerging economies such as Brazil and

1. See *Responding to Climate Change: China's Policies and Actions* issued by the State Council Information Office, 2021. Available at: <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1715506/1715506.htm>.

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India; and the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States (CELAC), created partly to shield the region from the United States hegemony and the Organisation of the American States (OAS), has seen the departure of Brazil under president Bolsonaro (Hakim 2014). Last but not least, some rising powers' efforts to enact reform in

the existing global governance architecture have collected support from their peers, whereas on other occasions they have failed to do so. While Brazil and China may jointly call for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reform, they nonetheless clash over the UN Security Council reform. In sum, rising powers' relationship with the GG is complex and multifaceted.

Why do rising powers sometimes work *together* within the liberal global governance structure and beyond to advance their shared agenda, be it to safeguard or to contest the liberal international order (LIO), while they do not support each other on other occasions? When can we expect their joint efforts and when can we not? Existing literature mainly focuses the analysis on individual rising power and the GG, and seldom considers the dynamics among those rising powers and the GG at large. Theoretically, one may draw insights from the neorealist scholarship regarding rising powers' potential strategies with regard to the global *hegemon*, e.g. soft balancing or bandwagoning, or from the institutionalist account concerning the benefits of cooperation within international institutions among powers and the socialisation effect of these institutions; nevertheless, they do not deal directly with the issue of rising powers and the GG (Walt 1985; Schweller 1994; Paul 2005; Pape 2005; Checkel 2005).

This article seeks to account for the different behaviours of rising powers with regard to the GG by contemplating the dynamics between Brazil and China. It posits that rising powers do not have static common foreign policies concerning the GG, and instead depend their foreign policies on specific issue-areas. In the remaining sections, the article will first review the major theories in explaining rising powers in the world system, and then put forward fourfold types of behaviour that rising powers display towards the GG, that is, coalition, cooperation, mutual neglect and clash. It maintains that the behaviour among these powers is determined by the convergence/divergence of their foreign policy goals, and the convergence/divergence on the *means* to achieve their goals. Afterwards, this article moves on to briefly analyse Brazil and China's individual relationship with the GG, before discussing specific

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cases and illustrate what conditions the two countries' behaviour presents towards the GG. Concluding remarks will be drawn based on the discussion of cases.

RISING POWERS AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Weiss (2013, 99) defines *global governance* as a “combination of informal and formal values, rules, norms, procedures, practices, policies, and organisations of various types that often provide a surprising and desirable degree of global order, stability, and predictability.” It involves both informal and formal arrangements. For Zürn (2018, 4), global governance refers to “the exercise of authority across national borders as well as consented norms and rules beyond the nation state, both of them justified with reference to common goods or transnational problems.” According to him (Ibid, 7), the global governance system consists of three interlinked layers, namely the normative principles (e.g. belief in international authority), political institutions (e.g. UNSC), and interactions between authorities beyond the state. Such characterisation of the global governance system echoes that of the international order proposed by Reus-Smit (2013, 169), who argues that the liberal international order is composed of not only institutions, but also *systemic configuration of political authority* and *constitutional norms and principles* that licence and legitimise liberal institutions and practices. To be sure, nonetheless, the global governance system consists of both regimes and norms with liberal character and those with illiberal ones. Just because there is normativity regulating the GG, it does not mean that those norms are necessarily good (Zürn 2018).

What is then the dynamics between the global governance system and rising powers? Answers vary. At first, we need to acknowledge that the extant global governance landscape is highly institutionalised and multilayered, fragmented into a myriad of issue-areas, and dominated by the U.S. and its allies (Ikenberry & Lim 2017). Concerning the question of why rising powers would join some GG institutions (even if they do not share the core values), hegemonic stability theorists contend that secondary states have the incentives to free ride the public goods and benefits provided by the *hegemon*, although rising powers may also have the urge to undertake the responsibility of global public goods provision in order to expand their sphere of influence (Gilpin 1987); while institutionalist posit that any state, a rising power or not, participates in the GG out of reputational and legitimacy concerns in order not to become a pariah state and thus suffer negative consequences (Lake et al. 2021). As to the reasons why status quo powers are willing to integrate external rising powers, institutionalists and most importantly constructivists highlight the socialisation effect of the international organisation (Lake et al. 2021; Checkel 2005); while realists term

it as *accommodation*, which, according to Chandra (2018, 14) is based on three conditions: a) the absence of the rising powers' willingness in challenging the system; b) the absence of the rising powers' practices in contesting the system; and c) the preference for cooperation from the dominant domestic groups in the established powers.

In addition, there is a growing body of literature concerning the relationship between rising powers and the LIO. Lake et al. (2021, 252) highlight that non-Western countries have in fact contributed to the consolidation of the Westphalian and liberal orders. In light of the recent developments, nonetheless, Aydin (2021, 1379, 1394) pinpoints the unsettling impact of *democratic backsliding* in those rising powers (i.e. Mexico and Turkey), due to “the loss of their influence as system stabilisers, legitimizers and norm diffusers at the periphery of the liberal international order.” In distinguishing *southern middle powers* from their western counterparts, Efstathopoulos (2021) draws upon the case of Brazil and India and characterises these countries' strategies *vis-à-vis* the LIO as ambivalent internationalism, restricted like-mindedness, and selective multilateralism. One of his arguments is that “[s]outhern middle powers often prioritise status-seeking strategies, and status competition takes precedence over multilateral commitments” (Ibid, 393). In problematizing the Sino-Russia nexus, Owen (2020) asserts that the cooperation between these two rising powers, with huge political and ideological divergences, concerns their common opposition to the *liberal hegemony*. Against the backdrop of the ascent of right-wing populist presidency in Brazil, Casarões and Barros Leal Farias (2021) note that anti-globalism, anti-communism, and religious nationalism of the current government have transformed Brazil from a traditional LIO follower to a contestant. Rather than focusing on individual rising states, Cooper and Alexandroff (2016, 1) take a more holistic approach and contend that rising countries' “[d]istance from the liberal world order does not necessarily mean [...] a fundamental rejection of the tenets of the established system”. Therefore, “the rise of these states from among the global South does not preclude the emergence of new institutions that can serve the interests of both the traditional powers and the rising powers” (Ibid.).

Most of the existing scholarship investigates the relationship between the GG and individual countries; and in cases where they do look at that between the GG and rising powers, they mainly study a singular position that these countries adopt with regard to the international system (cf. Owen 2020; Hurrell 2008; Casarões & Barros Leal Farias 2021). Nonetheless, as discussed earlier, sometimes rising powers externally contest the extant GG system by forming a bloc (Zürn 2018), other times they attempt to enact reform from within the existing system by cooperating with each other, and yet sometimes their behaviours conflict with one another's. Put differently, they do not have a consistent common approach *vis-à-vis* the existing GG system.

This behavioural complexity in reality, as Cooper and Alexandroff (2016, 6-7) suggest, is due to the fact that “[e]ach of the big rising states has its own national interests that it seeks to defend and promote, but each also sees itself in some form or another as a defender and promoter of the collective concerns of the global South and as a bridge between the top tier, to which it has now moved, and the bottom rungs.”

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In an attempt to fill the literature gap, this study focus on Brazil and China, and seeks to account for the differing conditions that have led to their variegated approaches to the GG. According to Hurrell (2008, 3), these two countries share three similar features: a) both possess a range of material powers and have a certain degree of internal cohesion to deliver external action; b) both search for higher prestige in the international hierarchy; and c) both lie “outside, or on the margins of, this formation [of the LIO].” Before we study the two countries’ approaches to the GG, it is essential to look at their respective stances towards the current international organisations (IOs) and regimes. Table 1 illustrates this point. While both countries support IOs like the UN or the BRICS and against the R2P and PSI regimes, their stances diverge on other issues, e.g. the ICC, CELAC and the BRI etc.

	China supports	China opposes
Brazil supports	UN system G20 Non-Proliferation Treaty BRICS IMF reform AIIB Common but differentiated responsibilities Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities	International Criminal Court UNSC reform Paris Club Ottawa Landmine Treaty Multistakeholder Internet governance International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
Brazil opposes	BRI CELAC* Global Compact for Migration* State-centred Internet governance	Responsibility to Protect Proliferation Security Initiative

Table 1: China and Brazil’s stance towards the current international organisations or regimes.

*Brazil opposes CELAC and the Global Compact of Migration under Bolsonaro.

To further distinguish their approaches and comprehend whether they coalesce, cooperate, neglect, or clash *vis-à-vis* these international organisations or regimes, I introduce two criteria to organise their approaches: the convergence/divergence of foreign policy *goals* and the convergence/divergence of foreign policy *means*. To put it simply, foreign policy goals refer to what an actor wants, and foreign policy means refer to how it acts (Tocci 2007). If two actors converge on both their goals and means with regard to an international regime, a coalition can be expected; if they diverge on both of them, a clash ensues. Nevertheless, if they converge on goals but diverge on means, they may still cooperate, albeit in a limited manner; and in case they diverge on their goals, even if they converge on the means, they are likely to mutually neglect each other's approaches. Table 2 visualises the stylisation of these fourfold modes of rising powers. As for the operationalisation of foreign policy goals and means, it is more of an empirical than a theoretical matter, as far as this study is concerned. Despite this, the existing literature may shed light on how we could approach these two concepts. With respect to the foreign policy goals, one could judge whether a country aims to keep the status quo or seeks change or, in other words, revision (Chandra 2018). Concerning the foreign policy means, we may benefit from Börzel and Zürn's (2021) typology of contestation towards the liberal intrusiveness of postnational IOs, i.e. pushback, reform, dissidence, and withdrawal.

	Convergent foreign policy goals	Divergent foreign policy goals
Divergent foreign policy goals	I. Coalition	III. Mutual neglect
Divergent foreign policy means	II. (Limited) Cooperation	IV. Clash

Table 2: Modes of interactions among rising powers vis-à-vis the global governance system.

Coming back to the countries of interest in this study, the formation of the BRICS conforms to type I of coalition, in which Brazil and China converge on a common foreign policy goal of enacting change in the West-dominated international system and on a shared foreign policy means of contesting the West-dominated GG from outside. The matter of UNSC reform and, to a lesser extent, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are the issue-areas that result in the type IV of clash, in which the two countries show both divergent foreign policy goals and means. Brasilia and Bei-

jing's approaches towards the R2P regime represents yet another type of interaction towards the international regime—(limited) cooperation, whereby both envision change but one only seeks reform and the other one a pushback (Börzel & Zürn). Finally, when it comes to their approaches to the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), both countries act independently, because of their divergent foreign policy goals despite their convergent means—withdrawal.

Coalition

In this study, *coalition* covers more than a traditional (military) alliance in the neorealist sense. According to neorealist thinking, alliance is primarily premised upon the balance against perceived common threats, and is facilitated by like-minded regimes or similar ideology and by instruments such as penetration or bribery (Walt 1985). However, factors other than threats can also motivate countries to coalesce with one another, insofar as they agree on common foreign policy objectives and the means to achieve them. A coalition is distinct from a (limited) cooperation approach to the extent that in the former case “[s]tates typically pool power and/or resources in bargaining coalitions to win negotiations or to gain leverage over parties outside their coalition” (Brütsch & Papa 2013, 305). It is the pooling of military, financial or human resources that characterises coalition. In terms of the purpose of coalition, it can be of either *hard revisionist* or *softly reformist* nature (Nalikar in Brütsch & Papa 2013, 309), with the former attempting to pursue equitable distribution “on the margins of the established multilateral venues”, and the latter to enhance “the efficiency and efficacy of existing multilateral processes.” It is worth clarifying here that in this article the focus is not so much on *how* the coalition or any type of approach functions, but rather on *why* these approaches come into being in the first place. As a result, the question whether the coalition *per se* is effective or cohesive is thereby not touched upon.

Cooperation

On the other hand, (limited) cooperation occurs when countries converge on foreign policy goals but differ on the means or approach. As argued by Keohane (1984), *cooperation* by no means is equal to absence of discord, for the latter entails harmony. He maintains that, in spite of discord, the pursuit of rational self-interests could lead states to cooperate in the context of international regimes without hegemony. Cooperation is possible when there is the possibility of reciprocity, which is also linked to the matter of reputation; and international regimes may foster cooperation by providing reiteration and information (Keohane 1984; Dai et al. 2010).

Despite the fact that there are various explanations as to what constitutes cooperation, here I regard limited cooperation more as a coordination effort by rising powers to achieve common policy goals albeit different approaches.

Mutual neglect

When the foreign policy goals of rising powers differ from one another's, even if they may share a common approach, it is not likely for them to work together but rather independently. Here, *mutual neglect* refers to an intentional or unintentional approach in which actors work separately from each other to advance their own purposes or agenda abroad, without collaboration or coordination. In other words, decisions are made without taking into account the others' views.

Clash

Lastly, *clash* is when an actor purposively dismisses or disapproves of another's initiative due to different policy goals and means. Clash need not take the form of or result in direct confrontation, but it rather simply refers to a situation where actors' interests and means are in conflict with each other that leads to dismissal or disapproval from at least one of them. In the next section, different cases will be illustrated to explain the varying approaches adopted by rising powers, i.e. Brazil and China, in relation to the liberal international order.

BRAZIL AND CHINA'S APPROACHES VIS-À-VIS GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Coalition in the BRICS context

Convened in 2009, BRICS (formerly BRIC) is a coalition between China, Brazil, and three other emerging economies. It represents a coalition approach, for the bloc reflects a *centralised* form of cooperation involving the pooling of material and human resources to institutionalise the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA).

Brazil and China (and also other member states) have convergent foreign policy goals when it comes to the BRICS, which envisions *change* rather than status quo within the extant West-dominated, highly institutionalised and *postnational* global governance landscape (Ikenberry & Lim 2017; Börzel & Zürn 2021). What made Brazil (a federal and democratic nation) and China (a one-party authoritarian state) co-create the BRICS jointly with other countries was the common

objective of de-concentrating the West *hegemony* of the international order, “both in terms of writing new rules as well as amending old ones of the post-1945 world order” (Nuruzzaman 2020, 52). While not seeking to overthrow the entire LIO, these rising powers have come to be mindful of their sovereignty being gradually encroached by the ever intrusive IOs, and hold that sovereignty should take precedence over all else (Läidi 2011). After all, as Börzel & Zürn (2021) mention, the current post-Cold War *postnational* LIO places human rights, the rule of law, and liberal democracy above the Westphalian notion of nation-state, permitting universalist principles to intrude into the domestic sphere of members of the system.

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For Brasilia and Beijing, being part of the BRICS helps them defend their national interests and serves the following foreign policy goals: first, it permits Beijing and Brazil to create a bloc of international actors who emphasise paramountly sovereignty. Particularly, China could draw upon the BRICS to “demonstrate to the West that stringent attachment to sovereignty is in no way linked to the nature of political systems” (Läidi 2010, 10). As noted above, the sovereignty principle is also adhered to by the democratic IBSA countries (India, Brazil and South Africa). Thus, BRICS may strengthen China’s *sovereignist* and non-interference claims against the liberal principles in the West-dominated GG with proclaimed universalist principles; second, it enables both countries to join other emerging economies to push for reform of the U.S.-controlled Bretton Woods institutions, i.e. the IMF and the World Bank. This crystallises rising powers’ objective of de-concentrating the status quo hegemony in the international system (Schweller & Pu 2011). The long primacy of the West in the IMF, for example, the US veto power over “some key decisions with regard to the management of the organisation, such as admission of new members, increases in quotas, allocations of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), and amendments of the Articles Agreement” (IMF 2002, 11-12), has caused frustration in emerging economies, especially after the 2008 GFC. Even after a series of reforms, at the time of writing, the U.S. still wields 16.5 percent of the voting share in the IMF² and 15.55

2. IMF Members’ Quotas and Voting Power, and IMF Board of Governors. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/About/executive-board/members-quotas> [accessed on 7 Feb 2022].

percent in the World Bank³, in comparison to China’s 6.08 percent in the IMF and 5.42 in the World Bank, or Brazil’s 2.22 percent in the IMF and 2.05 percent in the World Bank. This is even after a series of reforms, including the IMF’s 2010 *accelerated quota reforms* “which cut G7 voting rights from 43.4% to 41.2%”, and which saw the appointment of Zhu Min as deputy managing director (Brütsch & Papa 2013, 316).

Furthermore, Beijing and Brasilia, together with other BRICS member states, share the common worries about “the U.S. stewardship of the global economy”, and aim to concert efforts in establishing an increasingly resilient international reserve system (Ibid, 326). The collective bargaining efforts of the former BRIC pressured the IMF to revise in 2009 its previous surveillance decisions that were perceived unfavourable for Beijing and other developing countries (Ibid, 326). In effect, acting within a coalition of emerging economies, Brazil and China may well use the BRICS collective weight to realise their foreign policy goals of boycotting attempts by the LIO “to lock (or ‘socialize’) them into obligations where their interests and values are subordinated to those of the traditional powers” (Cooper & Alexandroff 2016, 8). In addition, “Brazil sees the BRICS as an intermediary political circle in between the West [...] and Latin America” under Lula, who injected activism and assertiveness in the country’s foreign policy (Läidi 2011, 11). In discussing Lula’s Southern orientation in his foreign policy, Hurrell (2008, 57) cogently puts: “Brazil’s approach reflects its relative power position. Brazil is a threshold state that seeks entry into the ranks of the powerful, but for whom coalitions with other developing countries continue to make political sense.”

The creation of the BRICS also demonstrates Brazil and China’s convergence on the foreign policy means regarding the GG, that is, counter-institutionalisation (Zürn 2018). This means “the creation of new liberal authorities, without necessarily leaving the existing ones” (Börzel & Zürn 2021, 290). In a similar vein, Ikenberry and Lim (2017, 7) note that rising powers—China in their research—could resort to external innovation beyond the preexisting IOs by creating new institutions, with the hope of “offer[ing] alternative node of cooperation” or even “promot[ing] alternative rules or norms within.” Concerning the BRICS, the establishment of new institutions, notably the NDB and the CRA, reflects to a great extent this foreign policy means of external innovation, as the former is often viewed, together with the AIIB, as an alternative multilateral development bank (MDB) to the World Bank, while the CRA is viewed as a countermeasure to the IMF in injecting liquidity to the member states at a financially critical juncture. From another perspective, this could also be interpreted as a shared *de-concentration* approach employed by the rising states

3. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Subscriptions and Voting Power of Member Countries. Available at: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/a16374a6cee037e274c5e932bf9f88c6-0330032021/original/IBRDCountryVotingTable.pdf> [accessed on 7 Feb 2022].

to disperse power more evenly throughout the international system, which could “lower the barriers to both the discourse and practice of resistance to hegemonic rule” (Schweller & Pu 2011, 47). This view is echoed by Nuruzzaman (2020, 58) who, again, argues that the creation of the NDB and the CRA “reveals a strong will of the BRICS countries to get rid of excessive U.S. control over the global economic and financial systems.” Besides, by operating within the financial institutions created by themselves, Brasilia and Beijing could gain more *autonomy* in defining their financing priorities and policy objectives, taking into account that each of the BRICS countries equally occupy 19.42 percent⁴ of the total share of voting power in the NDB, in contrast to their limited share in the Bretton Woods system. This is essentially a key rationale for Brazil to formally join the AIIB in search for an alternative financing source, partly because of its frustration over the unsuccessful attempts to participate in the Asian Development Bank (ADB) dominated by Japan and the U.S.⁵

Even though the current literature suggests that the BRICS suffers from the lack of internal policy cohesion, normative unity, or that it falls short of community-building prospects (Brütsch & Papa 2013; Thakur 2014; Hooijmaaijers & Keukeleire 2016), nevertheless, it by no means precludes Brazil, China and the rest from coalescing in the very first place, for they converge on a broader foreign policy goal of protecting sovereignty and de-concentrating the hegemony in the (postnational) LIO, and on the common *means* of external innovation/contestation. Hence, coalition represents the first approach utilised by rising powers as far as the LIO is concerned.

(Limited) cooperation around R2P

Brasilia and Beijing share a common foreign policy goal of changing the status quo with regard to the current Responsibility to Protect (R2P) concept—norm with a strong liberal nature in the global governance system—with the former proposing the notion of *responsibility while protecting* (also known as RwP) and the latter, *responsible protection*. This reflects their common concern over the R2P operationalisation, justification for the use of force, the accountability of military operations, and, most importantly, the potential *regime change* that infringes upon the enshrined Westphalian sovereignty both adhere to. Nonetheless, they do differ in their foreign policy means in accomplishing this goal. As a result, this has led to a limited cooperation or coordination between the two on this issue not only in UNSC but also within the BRICS (Spektor 2012; Stuenkel 2016).

4. Shareholding at the New Development Bank. Available at: <https://www.ndb.int/about-us/organisation/shareholding/> [accessed on 7 Feb 2022].

5. Interview with a former Brazilian foreign policymaker, September 8, 2021.

The concept of R2P has its origin in the 2001 ICISS Report⁶ (IDCR 2001), which replaced the *right to intervene* notion with the *responsibility to protect*. It would be misleading to claim that Brazil and China reject the entire R2P norm, because both have actually come to endorse the modified version of R2P in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document⁷ (WSOD). Furthermore, both acquiesced to the UNSC Resolution 1973⁸ proposed by Washington, Paris and London to topple the Gaddafi regime with military force. The latter decision has led to, *inter alia*, the imposition of a no-fly zone above Libya and the authorisation of *all necessary measures* to protect the civilians. Hence, it should be established here that both countries acknowledge the R2P regime.

Nevertheless, just because they acknowledge R2P or jointly abstained from the Resolution 1973, it does not mean that they are concordant with the present definition and operationalisation of the norm. In fact, both countries are suspicious about the controversial third pillar of the WSOD, which consists of the resort to non-consensual coercive measures in the case of failure of peaceful means to compel a state from committing mass atrocities. The approval of the UNSC Resolution 1973 and the subsequent development have generated deep frustration in countries like China and Brazil; and the eventual demise of Gaddafi regime has “renewed concerns among the BRICS [...] and other non-Western states over the potential for R2P to be used as a pretext for regime change” (Garwood-Gowers 2016, 96-97; see also Nuruzzaman 2020, 56).

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Both countries share the same foreign policy goals to enact change on the operationalisation of the R2P. On the one hand, China has a strict interpretation of sovereignty and upholds non-interventionism and the Five Principles of Coexistence as its foreign policy doctrine. In commenting Beijing’s stance concerning the degeneration of R2P into regime change, Gegout and Suzuki (2020, 394) contend that “[h]umanitarian intervention or R2P is vulnerable to abuse, as powerful states with access to sufficient military and other material resources can intervene when and where they choose.” Garwood-Gowers (2016, 99) concurs that “[a]cquiescing

6. Published by the International Development Research Centre. Available at: <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/the-responsibility-to-protect-report-of-the-international-commission-on-intervention-and-state-sovereignty-2001/>.

7. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf.

8. Available at: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/s/res/1973-%282011%29>.

to the passage of Resolution 1973 did not represent a sudden normative shift in favour of R2P's third pillar.” On the other hand, traditionally, Brazil has been suspicious about “the use of coercive strategies for both principled and practical reasons” (Stuenkel 2016, 2). In the Section 9 of the *Letter from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General* in 2011, Brazil called for attention to the “painful consequences of interventions that have aggravated existing conflicts, allowed terrorism to penetrate into places where it previously did not exist, given rise to new cycles of violence and increased the vulnerability of civilian populations”, and formally explained the notion of *Responsibility while Protecting*.⁹ Section 10 of the same *Letter* alerted about the degeneration of R2P to regime change, which “make[s] it even more difficult to attain the protection objectives pursued by the international community.”¹⁰ As the then non-permanent member of the UNSC, Brazil banded together with its BRICS peers “against the authorization of more aggressive action in Libya” (Spektor 2012, para. 23). Brazil and other non-West UNSC members criticised NATO and its allies for failing to share information with the UNSC, for failing to protect civilians, and for even defying the arms embargo and “supplying Libyan rebels with arms and [acting] as the rebels’ air force in the conflict” (Stuenkel 2016, 4-5).

This said, Brazil and other non-West UNSC members have divergences over the means they seek to achieve change in the R2P regime. First, they differ on the extent of change that should be enacted upon the working R2P concept. While Brazil, by proposing the *corrective* RwP notion, sought to reinforce the importance of non-coercive and diplomatic measures over the use of force, to establish the criteria for invoking military actions, and to improve monitoring and accountability of the operations (Torinho et al. 2015), China, together with Russia, wished to push back for a conservative revision (Börzel & Zürn 2021; Weiss & Wallace 2021). In 2012, the vice-president of the Institute of International Studies, Ruan Zongze, put forward the concept of *Responsible Protection*, suggesting a more restrictive reading of the third pillar of the RWP in the WSOD.¹¹ Consisting of six core elements, the Chinese *Responsible Protection* shares some similarities with the Brazilian RwP regarding the confinement of intervention to the last resort, the rejection of regime change and the UN accountability over the use of force; but it is also stricter in interpreting other dimensions of the R2P compared with RwP. Firstly, Beijing’s *Responsible Protection* second element¹² underlines that the UNSC is the sole legitimate entity to man-

9. The full text of the *Letter from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General* is available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/716109?ln=en> [accessed on 9 Feb 2022].

10. Ibid.

11. The full text of *Responsible Protection* is available at: http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-03/15/content_14838556.htm.

12. Ibid.

date intervention, which contrasts Brasilia's acceptance of UNGA as an alternative body to authorise intervention under RwP (Garwood-Gowers 2016, 106). Secondly, Brazil's RwP does not mention that interventions should ensure *regional peace and security*, whilst China's *Responsible Protection* lays paramount emphasis on it and places regional stability as the top element. Thirdly, even if China acknowledges the need to use non-consensual measures in the case of massive human rights violations, China's proposal also highlights the *responsibility to rebuild*, whereas Brazil's RwP does not include such responsibility. Garwood-Gowers (2016, 109) provides a nuanced reading of this difference, arguing that the reference to post-intervention reconstruction in the *Responsible Protection* entails that "reconstruction and development themes form a central part of China's broader perspective on peacebuilding, but [that] it does not assert that Beijing is specifically seeking to reintroduce the 'Responsibility to Rebuild' dimension of R2P." Instead, it only serves to strengthen Beijing's criticism of the destabilising effects of humanitarian interventions.

Because these two rising powers do not converge on the means to shift the status quo, this has led to limited cooperation between the two in global stages. First, RwP originally adopted a rigid chronological *sequencing* approach¹³, only to generate backlash from some Western countries for the fear that it may obstruct swift international non-consensual actions. This has pushed Brazil to distance itself from the sequencing later on (Benner 2013), signifying adaptation from Brasilia's side. This was exemplified by its "more flexible stances towards Western-supported proposals on Syria" (Garwood-Gowers 2016, 97). However, Beijing has remained resolute to its stringent interpretation of sovereignty and opposition against regime change, judging from its firm position shared with Moscow against Western intervention in or even condemnation on Syria (Gegout & Suzuki 2020). While Brazil seemed to side with China and Russia when it abstained from the UNSC Resolution No. 1973 authorising all necessary means to intervene in Libya¹⁴, and from the UNSC Resolution S/2011/612 condemning Syria and threatening non-military sanctions¹⁵, it later supported the UNGA's Resolution 66/253 B on Syria on which China cast a negative vote, which was a blow to the high expectation of BRICS solidarity on the issue. Beyond the UN, Brasilia also failed to introduce RwP into the BRICS final declaration in 2012 (Stuenkel 2016). In essence, Brazil's proposition of RwP "did not mitigate China's and Russia's worries that interventions cause more damage than necessary or support a hidden agenda" (Ibid, 8). Second, due to former president Dilma's indifference with

13. See Section 6 in the *Letter from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, op. cit.

14. See <https://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm>.

15. The full text of UNSC Resolution S/2011/612 is available at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Syria%20S2011%20612.pdf>.

RwP and other international agenda (Stuenkel 2016) and Brazil's departure from the UNSC non-permanent seat, RwP momentum waned and ceased being the country's foreign policy impetus. On the other hand, as a P5 member, China has been acting within UNSC, pushing back the intrusiveness of R2P, and calling for cautious use of force and stringent adherence to and respect for the Westphalian sovereignty of countries (Börzel & Zürn 2021).

All in all, Brazil and China have convergent goals of revising R2P but diverge on the means to enact that change, leading to limited ad hoc cooperation. Still, after all, both countries place paramount emphasis on sovereignty, as seen from the Section 5 of the Declaration following the XII BRICS Summit in 2020: "We stress further the imperative of refraining from any coercive measures not based on international law and the UN Charter."¹⁶ This represents yet another mode of interaction among rising powers *vis-à-vis* the extant global governance system.

Mutual neglect in the PSI

The third mode of interaction between rising powers *vis-à-vis* global governance can be termed as *mutual neglect*, whereby an actor acts individually without necessarily taking into account the other's position, primarily due to the divergent foreign policy goals. This is the case for Brazil and China's behaviour *vis-à-vis* the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Neither of the two has endorsed the hegemonic international regime in preventing the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Launched by former U.S. president George W. Bush in 2003, the PSI is "a loose consortium of states informally constituted around a common set of hortatory principles expressing an individual government's determination to act whenever possible, unilaterally or cooperatively, against WMD-related trafficking" (Cooper 2011, 324). It is centred on the *interdiction* principle, and fosters information sharing as well as law enforcement cooperation. China's foreign policy goal concerning the PSI is not so much about enacting fundamental change, for it recognises the concerns of PSI participants over WMDs proliferation. Its goal stems from the concern that the PSI violates core principles enshrined in the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, e.g. the flag state jurisdiction, non-use of force, non-discrimination and sovereign equality (Su 2011). Therefore, China's non-participation reflects its adherence to the legality of non-proliferation affairs. Moreover, it also stresses the need to achieve non-proliferation through political and diplomatic means.¹⁷

16. The full text of the XII BRICS Summit Moscow Declaration is available at: <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/xii-brics-summit-moscow-declaration> [accessed on 10 Feb 2022].

17. See the position of the PRC on PSI: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjtb_663304/zzjg_663340/jks_665232/kjlc_665236/fkswt_665240/200802/t20080229_599805.html.

On the other hand, Brazil's foreign policy goal of not joining the PSI is principally derived from the reason similar to that of the BRI, in the sense that the South American country cannot possibly shape the PSI negotiation because the decision-making pertains to the U.S., which runs against its preferred diplomatic style of negotiating within a multilateral setting (Martelli Contini 2013). It should be noted that the perceived incompatibility of the PSI with International Law has been also one of the key reasons why Brasilia stayed distant from the U.S.-led initiative. Whether the PSI is a liberal scheme within the LIO is an issue that receives little academic debate, but overall it reveals the tension of legality of international law in face of securitised issues. The legality can be relegated insofar as the action *per se* is *legitimate* in addressing security concerns, for instance. In sum, different policy goals pursued by the two rising powers, combined with the low centrality of the issue for their respective foreign policy agendas, render the two countries behave individually.

Clash on the UNSC Reform

Rising powers do not always coalesce or cooperate *vis-à-vis* the global governance system: when they have distinct foreign policy goals and means regarding a specific issue, clash is likely to take place. It should be reiterated that clash does not necessarily mean outright confrontation, but rather a conflictual situation that leads to dismissal or disapproval. This is the case for Brazil and China's stance on the UNSC reform and, more recently, on the BRI.

Although the broader UN system is a quintessential part of the GG with sustained legitimacy overtime in the postwar era (Barnett 1997), the UNSC remains an exclusive club for a small group of states that “derive their privileges from the power constellation at the end of World War II”, which is in dire need of reform (Binder & Heupel 2020, 93). To be sure, the discussion of UNSC reform concerns not only the categories of membership and veto power, but also regional representation, size of an enlarged UNSC, working methods and even amendment of the UN Charter.¹⁸ Albeit contesting the intrusiveness of some international regimes, as far as the UNSC is concerned, not only is China a status quo power but also has similar perspectives with the *hegemon*—the U.S.—about the reform agenda (Malik 2005). As Laidi (2011, 10) points out, “an alliance with other sovereignist states does not imply a willingness to share its assets of power with them.” Being one of the P5 with veto power, Beijing is reluctant to democratise the UNSC and to dilute its exclusive priv-

18. See UNGA Decision 62/557 available at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/decision-62-557.php> [accessed on 10 Feb 2022].

ilege with possible new entrants, while it is more open to discussing improvement of the working methods of the Council (Lei 2014).

Against the backdrop of the reform agenda pushed by the G4 (Group of Four—India, Japan, Germany and Brazil), China’s foreign policy goal has been to retain its great power status, especially as the only Asian country on the Council (Malik 2005), by opposing the candidacy of Japan and, to a lesser extent, India. In justifying its goal, China argues that “the status of permanent membership is deeply rooted in the historical background in the early days of the founding of the UN and is in the fundamental interests of the UN” (Wu in Malik 2005, 25). In the official discourse, China recognises the need to enact reform to augment the representation of developing countries, while ambiguously highlights that “reform cannot only satisfy the self-interests of a minority of states”¹⁹, alluding to the efforts pushed by the G4 group at the expense of countries from the Global South, especially from Africa. In pursuing the goal of retaining exclusive rights, China has resorted to a variety of means. This includes directly rejecting the UNGA Draft Resolution A/59/L64 proposed in 2005 by G4 and its co-sponsors on equitable representation and increase in the membership of the UNSC²⁰, and opposing any reform that sets a deadline without having the wide range of differences addressed. This points to its objection to the renewed G4 attempt in 2011 to rush for the initiation of negotiation on its agreed blueprint.²¹ Binder and Heupel (2020, 98) comment that, from the Chinese perspective, the G4 proposal falls short of “convincingly address[ing] shortcomings to the Council’s procedures.” Overall, China is opposed to the expansion of the UNSC permanent membership.

Beijing’s foreign policy goals and means *vis-à-vis* the UNSC reform run in conflict with those of Brasilia. While it does not explicitly preclude Brazil’s candidacy, it does clash with the latter’s demand, for it has never fully endorsed its application. Brasilia’s foreign policy goals on the UNSC are anchored in calls for both the membership expansion and the amelioration of the working methods.²² For the former, it sided with G4 pushing for the enlargement of both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council. In presenting the Draft Resolution A/59/L64 on July 11, 2005, the South American country’s delegation vehemently defended the draft resolution, asserting that “[r]estricting the

19. Speech by Ambassador Zhang Jun, China’s Representative to the UN, 2021. Available in Chinese at: http://chnun.chinamission.org.cn/chn/hyfy/202111/t20211116_10448761.htm [accessed on 10 Feb 2022].

20. See the full text of UNGA Draft Resolution A/59/L.64 on <https://undocs.org/en/A/59/L.64>

21. See the Statement from Ma Zhaoxu, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2011. Available at: http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2011-02/13/content_1802564.htm.

22. See *Brazil and the UNSC Reform* posted by the Ministry of Foreign Relations, published on 27 Sep 2021, available at: <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/Brazil-UNSC/brazil-and-the-uns-c-reform#:~:text=In%20January%202022%2C%20Brazil%20will,peace%20and%20international%20law%20prevail.>

expansion of the Council to the category of non-permanent members would not only mean maintaining the status quo, but also risk increasing the disparity in its composition”, which “would do nothing to correct its structural imbalances.”²³ In terms of the foreign policy means, Brasilia has coalesced in the G4 and the L69 setting to advance the reform agenda, and has also proactively participated in UN peacekeeping missions, something Schenoni et al. (2022) describe as an example of *foreign policy overstretch*. In addition, it has also utilised what Binder and Heupel (2020) describe as *rhetorical coercion* to pressure the P5 and other states to accept its advocacy, relying mainly on performance-based instead of procedure-based arguments. It has sought to demonstrate that “the G4’s economic and political weight as well as their material contributions to the UN would enhance the Council’s effectiveness in addressing international security threats and would improve compliance with Council decisions” (Ibid, 96). The divergent goals and means of Brazil and China with regard to the UNSC have led to, if not confrontation, a clash between the two, representing yet another mode of interaction of the rising powers *vis-à-vis* the extant GG system.

CONCLUSION

Existing scholarship on the relationship between rising powers and global governance is confined to either the analysis of individual countries or the *common* strategies adopted by rising powers in contesting the GG. By contemplating the dynamics between Brazil and China, we see that rising powers’ interaction *vis-à-vis* the GG is nuanced, contingent upon the convergence or divergence of their foreign policy goals and means regarding a certain international regime or institution. This gives rise to fourfold modes of interaction: coalition, limited cooperation, mutual neglect, and clash. Due to the common foreign policy goals and means, Brasilia and Beijing coalesce in the BRICS context, aiming to deconcentrate Western dominance on the global governance architecture by pooling material and human resources and establishing counter-institutions. Regarding the R2P, both countries seek to enact change on the operationalisation of the principle, but Beijing’s approach stems from a more conservative sovereignist rationale, and its privileged position in the UNSC enables it to push back the intrusiveness of the concept. The divergence on the means has led to limited *ad hoc* cooperation between Brazil and China in advancing their agenda, i.e. RwP and Responsible Protection, respectively. In terms of PSI, while neither country is signatory of the U.S.-led regime on combating WMD trafficking, there is, to some extent, divergence as far as their foreign policy goals are

23. See the official records A/59/PV.111 of the 111st Plenary on 5 July 2005, available at: <https://undocs.org/A/59/PV.111> [accessed on 11 Feb 2022].


concerned. Coupled with the low centrality of the issue in their external agenda, they made the respective decisions individually. Lastly, in the case of the UNSC reform, clashes might occur between rising powers, due to the divergence in both foreign policy goals and means.

This research attempts to dissect the dynamics between the rising powers and the GG. Future research is needed to further explore alternative explanations regarding the different modes of interactions among these rising powers, and what kind of implications it has on the evolution of the GG.

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