
Regional Security Complex- BRICs Case

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This essay develops Barry Buzan's¹ regional security complex theory in order to help us to understand how the concept of security currently shapes the international arena and how it is marked by intense interrelation intended to influence as far as it goes the security of unities taking it as part in order to understand the structure². On the course of the paper I will try to define the concept of region then what are the features of a regional security complex and how can we define it, the central question used in this essay is whether "the BRICs countries as whole, might be seen as a regional security complex or not?"

The essay will try to provide an answer to this question and even more than that because of using the realistic³ approach during the paper, at the end in order to have a counter balance of the essay I will propose a constructivist⁴ approach on the BRICs and I will try to find how this theory will help me in developing a regional security complex at the international level as far as possible to get the region to be the

¹ Buzan Barry and Waver Olle, **Regions and Powers, The Structure of International Security**, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, p.91

² Waltz, Kenneth N. **Theory of International Politics**, University of Berkeley, California, 1979

³ Rourke, John, Michael, Ryan, **International Politics On The World Stage**, Boyer, Mark A., New York: McGraw Hill, 2010, p. 16

⁴ Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen **Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches**, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 166

"Constructivism was introduced to IR by Nicholas Onuf (1989) who coined the term"

part of a large international network of economic development human social environmental and security⁵.

BRICS acronym have taken birth as a designation for the year 2003 in a report from the Goldman Sachs who spoke about possible areas for investment and economic development, behind it there are countries like Brazil Russia, India China and South Africa, that in the future will become an engine of growth, and the purchasing power will face a rise which in time will reduce the big and advanced economies spreading from their high soar that it has been demonstrated over the last years⁶.

In realistic terms this new conglomeration of states can only attract the interest of the great powers, especially now days when the economic crisis left its scars on Wall Street ego's. **Realists** as it is well known, have great affinity for great powers, and especially for emerging regions according to the desire of these great powers to penetrate such kind of regions, the so call penetration rate used by Buzan⁷.

Constructivists on the other side according to Alexander Wendt see as a fundamental principle of the theory, the idea that people act through objects or actors, given the interest in it cause those objects or institutions offers. ⁸

Basically, constructivists see reality as a social construct resulting from the interaction between actors on the constraints of opinions and interpretation of the international arena⁹. The lens most frequently applied to social actors –corporations (both licit and illicit), banks and other financial institutions institutionalized and independent media, philanthropies, terrorist, criminal traffickers in illegal goods of all kinds,

⁵ Buzan Barry, Hansen Lene, **International Security Studies**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009

⁶ Dominic Wilson, Roopa Purushothaman, “*Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050*”, Global Economics Paper No. 99, Goldman Sachs, 2003, p.2

⁷ Buzan Barry and Waever Olle, **Regions and Power, The Structure of International Security**, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, p.490

⁸ Wendt, Alexander, **Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics**, International Organization, MIT Press, 46/2: 396

⁹ *Ibid*

universities, and social and political movements –focuses on the power and influence that they exercise on governments rather than seeing them as autonomous players in global politics , so in regard to this strategist must look at all of these actors as participants in an ever-shifting landscape of networks¹⁰ .

Further, I will try to start from **Anne Marie Slaughter idea regarding international networks** and how they can help in developing regions and especially emerging economies, to develop a relationship with BRICS in a constructivist perspective.

Regarding security, the multitude of definitions of any guidance I will emphasize the one offered by David Lake, in accordance to it, security is not just a physical authority, or the ability, but also domination and coercion on securitization structure behind objects, here he includes economy and environment, or even more abstract concepts such as "mind and heart"¹¹ .

The Copenhagen School sees as a source of security the whole process of building the entire securitization concept that occurs throughout the 3 stages namely: the existence of a threat to a referent object, initiating emergency action to securitization target object, and acceptance of those threats by the relevant audience.

When approaching the regional security complex theory, at the first level, which is the domestic one generating vulnerabilities is where the state might be strong or weak, due to stability of domestic order and correspondence between state and nation. At the second level is the bilateral relations between units (which generate the region as such). The next level is about the bilateral interactions among regions. The last level approaches the role that great powers are playing for the analyzed area.

¹⁰ Slaughter, Anne Marie, **A new World Order**, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, New Jersey 2004

¹¹ Lake David, Morgan Patrick M, **Regional orders Building Security in a New World**, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p.21

The current regional security complex it is shaped by four main variables¹²: at first the main variable is given by the concept of boundary, which sets the region in different position with whole area; secondly the structure is considered to be anarchic, which would constitute the necessity for analysis to concentrate on minimum two actor relation, after doing this the next level be polarity, which will focus on the way in which the power is distributed and mainly what type of relations of amity or enmity covers, the type of relations is actually the last variable developed alongside the social construct concept.

Due to the fact that I will analyze the BRICs countries as a whole, from the starting point I have to say that the variables will remain the same namely:

- BRICS countries are not sharing same borders and are not delimited from other region or countries by same line. In this aspect, boundaries for BRICS remains undefined due to the B (Brazil) and S (South Africa) in the BRICS we cannot talk about common boundaries only if we take Russia and China or China, Russia and India, but as whole we can't.
- In respect with the **anarchic structure**, the main question is: "are the BRICS countries heading to become a global actor?"
- **Polarity**, which covers the distribution of power among units. We are talking about South Asia China, Southeast Asia India, South America, South Africa, and Eurasia, it is hard to talk about power distribution, the most suitable scenario would be to talk about the South – South relation of help.
- **Enmity** could be reduced in BRICS case because of collaboration between the members.

¹² *Ibidem*, p.45-59

Regarding Brazil, this state is by far the largest one in South America and Latin America region, Brazil is a political and economic leader in Latin America. However, social and economic problems have prevented it from becoming an effective global power¹³. In this case, I will modify the Four Level plan, by merging interregional with global level because the only relevant neighboring region is North America, all main interregional connections go via United States which is also a global power. Military spending has been going down sharply, but the political influence of the military profession still remains an issue, including questions about independent control over defense policy¹⁴. Indigenous people movements are politically influential in Ecuador, and race is potentially important in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia or Brazil.

Securitisation of social development means that spatial and social marginalization is presented as an existential threat¹⁵. Drugs, migration, environment and insurgents, are posing a real problem to the Brazilian government.

When it comes to the region's interaction with neighboring regions, at the inter-regional level, Brazil is increasingly worried about US universalistic interventionism as witnessed by humanitarian interventions, notably in Kosovo, and the risk of similar action against Brazil on the basis of environmental securitisation.

Mercosur is at the core of the emerging phenomena as a security community in the Southern Cone, thus South America will remain for a long time an RSC itself with two distinct centers, each with its characteristic dynamic. American anti-

¹³ Clendenning, Alan, "*Booming Brazil could be world power soon*", https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/economy/2008-04-17-310212789_x.htm, retrieved, at 2017.02.05, 12:16

¹⁴ Skidmore Thomas E, **Brazil: Five Centuries of Change**, New York Oxford University Press, 1999

¹⁵ National Congress of Brazil. Brazilian Federal Budget (2009) - Ministry of Defense (Ministério da Defesa), http://www.camara.leg.br/internet/comissao/index/mista/orca/orcamento/OR2009/Proposta/projeto/volume4/tomo2/07_md.pdf, retrieved, at 2017.02.05, 12:32

drugs strategy has required a controversial yearly certification of states regarding their participation in the war on drugs.

Vulnerabilities regarding Russia-Brics relationship, are subject of environmental degradation, migration, internal displacement, and rural vulnerabilities. The incidence of cardiovascular disease and cancer for the Russian population is among the highest in the world and accounts for the surge in Russian mortality rates¹⁶.

The ethnic changes¹⁷ process is consequential in central Asia, the region being a vulnerable source of Muslim migrants. The Russian military is failing to meet its recruitment targets because of a declining pool of fit conscripts and their semi-legal efforts to avoid the draft. It is also not clear that a majority Muslim, non-ethnic Russian army will willingly take on missions to carry the Russian flag forward either in the "near abroad" (in the 14th other former Soviet republics) or elsewhere. In addition, the workforce will further shrink in size and quality.

On the CIS matter, we see substantial efforts in order to consolidate it. Russian leaders see GUAM as a Trojan Horse, anti CIS, and anti-Russian. Regarding China, the relation between them has moved from threat to quasi-ally against American hegemony.

NATO and Russia agreed to cooperate on security issues at the 2002 Rome summit¹⁸ and have been gradually improving relations ever since. Along with the expansion of NATO alliance US-Russia relations had began to cold down especially with the Russian intervention in Georgia and moreover after Crimea. The two nations support each other in combating piracy in the waters of Somalia.

¹⁶ OECD Reviews of Health Systems OECD Reviews of Health Systems: Russian Federation 2012, OECD 31.05.2012

¹⁷ Michael Mainville, "Russia Has a Muslim Dilemma: Ethnic Russians Hostile to Muslims," San Francisco Chronicle, November 19, 2006, at <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Russia-has-a-Muslim-dilemma-Ethnic-Russians-2466527.php>, retrieved on 2017.02.05, 21:15

¹⁸ NATO-RUSSIA Council 2002, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0205-rome/rome-eng.pdf> retrieved on 2017.02.06, 10:45

Asia contains two great powers (China and Japan) and a third state (India) that is the leading aspirant to elevation from regional to great power standing. It also contains three nuclear weapon states (NWS – China, India, Pakistan) and an almost real fourth (North Korea), plus three nuclear threshold states (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan) practicing recessed deterrence as the capability to move quickly to NWS status should their local environment become more militarily threatening, or the promise of US support lose its credibility. The ending of the Cold war shifted the global power structure to 1+4, with two of the four great powers in Asia. Although the international arena switch the poles of power from the USSR-USA bipolarity through the Krauthammerian ¹⁹ Unipolar centered on USA, at the regional level changes were very important. Soviet / Russian penetration into the region largely reduces. US military engagement remained strong in the Northeast Asia and, after the 90' began also to reconsolidate its position in Southeast Asia. Japan remained subordinated to USA, China was the major beneficiary of the greatly reduce superpower penetration, and this strengthened the interregional dynamics, in Southeast Asia this situation led towards a based regional security regime along ASEAN.

In South-Asia a slow shift from bipolarity towards unipolarity while in Southeast the trend starts from conflict formation leading to security regime. The merging of the Northeast and Southeast Asian complexes means that levels are changing: what was regional becomes sub-regional, and what was interregional becomes regional²⁰ . In some cases, it feeds into contemporary securitizations between states (India and Pakistan, two Koreas, China and Vietnam) and in some within them (China, Indonesia, Pakistan, India). It also

¹⁹ Krauthammer Charles, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 70, No. 1, **America and The World** 1990/1991, p. 23-33

²⁰ Barry Buzan, *Ole Wæver, op.cit*

conditions how Asia relates to the global particularly to the great power claims of India, China and Japan²¹ .

India, on the other side is a large country in southern Asia. It is separated from the rest of Asia by the Himalayan Mountains. Having borders with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Burma. It emerges from a South Asian security complex where India and Pakistan were born fighting each other in 1947, on a religious path between the Muslim League and the Congress Party that led to an interstate conflict, military political between an Islamic Pakistan and a secular, multicultural, but dominantly Hindu India.

The general pattern of violent internal politics in most of the countries in the region remains much the same, as the trend of spillover from this level to the regional, interstate one. Spectacularly corrupt and chaotic government combined with internal violence to raise questions about long term viability of the state²², the national identity²³ is fully occupied by the split between secularism and Hinduism in Indian politics. Long-running insurgency in the Punjab, costs several hundred lives per year only in Kashmir.

Border problems with China (dating back from the 1950 along with Chinese annexation of Tibet) reaching war in 1962, mini crises 1987, and the sense of insecurity in India over China's partnership²⁴ though the reason of such feeling was not a possible alliance with the enemy, Pakistan in the 60's. Issues like, Pakistan question, army supply of USA to Pakistan led to war in 1971 between India and Pakistan and resulted in a durable securitisation of the USA in India. Military competition, which from 1998, acquired a nuclear dimension.

²¹ *Ibidem*

²² C. Raja Mohan, "India's Strategic Future" Foreign Policy (online), November 4, 2010. See also Daniel Twining and Richard Fontaine, "The Ties that Bind?: U.S.-Indian Values-Based Cooperation," Washington Quarterly, Spring 2011

²³ Zubair Ahmed, "Hindu Terrorism-Debate Grips India," BBC News, November 21, 2008; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7739541.stm

²⁴ Garver, J. W **Protracted contest: Sino-Indian rivalry in the twentieth century**, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.

But the trade cannot in the end prevent a conflict and actually there is a paradox because although trade relations are increasing so are the tensions, the rivalry is subtle but it still exists. The history itself can't show us some examples of this sort of relations with the purpose of encirclement, and how most analysts see today the actual relations between China and India resembles with former Imperial Germany.

The inter-regional level hinges on the pattern of relations between China India and Pakistan. China sustain support for Pakistan in order to maintain the bipolar conflict formation in the subcontinent. India and China have maintained a stable diplomatic relationship since the 80's. There are regular high-level visits, and sustained talks on border issues.

China's impact on India's domestic affairs is limited and does not threaten identity, instead performs strongly as a means for producing an Indian great power, for India the Asian Super Complex is the next step after Pakistan one. USA dominates world politics to an extent that limits India's autonomy and one of the greatest fears is that powerful outsiders will intervene regionally to constraint India (due to Afghanistan which in the current equation, still remains an insulator²⁵ and Kashmir area).

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh all supported the United States during the Gulf War despite internal dissension on the issue. After de Cold War relations between India and US remained cool, with Russia it has rebuilt some aspects of their military relationship (arms trade) but not elements of strategic alliance.

Officially the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a country in East Asia. It is the world's most populous country, with a population of over 1,3bn. Domestic troubles in the region that pitched the communists against anti-communists are hard to disentangle, and can attract extensive outside intervention,

²⁵ Aglaya Snetkov, **The Regional Dimensions to Security: Other Sides of Afghanistan**, Springer, 2013

China faces deep internal contradictions of market communism²⁶, the tensions of uneven development between the coast and the interior, the uncertain state of the ruling CCP and its problems of leadership transition, and the widening gap between central and provincial political authority all point towards a potentially much more erratic future.

Chinese support for Burma, allowed them to deploy intelligence facilities in the Indian Ocean while India thought that it was a proof of encirclement. Sino-Russian relations were due to arms trade, and both sharing same anti-hegemonic line against SUA as a sole superpower. Both supported the continued existence of North Korea.

Together with North Korea were allies of the Soviet Union, and under its nuclear umbrella. They did not allow the stationing of Soviet forces on their territory. After the end of Second World War a sort of fear and dislike came from China and the Two Koreas regarding Japan. The linkages between Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

China has border problems and historical enmities with several of its neighbors (wars among Burmese, Cambodian and Thai or the Vietnamese resistance) also its closest friend "Japan" let big scares on its past and also on Korea's one.

In September 2008, China surpasses Japan to become the largest holder of U.S. debt--or treasuries--at around \$600 billion²⁷. The United States and its allies contend China's quota on rare earth exports violates international trade norms, forcing multinational companies that use the metals in manufacturing to relocate to China.

In 1992 Sino-South African trade totaled 14 million, by the time the two countries had set up official relations in 1998 Sino-South African trade had swelled to US\$1.4 billion. By 2010 trade between the two countries had increased to US\$25.6

²⁶ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Hearing on Major Internal Challenges Facing the Chinese Leadership, testimony of Anne Thurston, 2006.

²⁷ Krueger Anne O, **China and the Global Economic Recovery**, Washington, IMF, 2005

billion with imports from South Africa reaching US\$14.8 billion²⁸.

South Africa's policy towards Africa has been shaped by a number of factors. The first is the continent's failure to develop. The second factor is South Africa's relative economic dominance, especially in Southern Africa, which is in part the consequence of the rest of the continent's low level of development²⁹. United States has enjoyed an excellent bilateral relationship with South Africa. Despite some misunderstandings along position on international affairs (for example Iraq is one of them) cooperation on key issues continues to be largely exploited.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to give an answer on the BRICS : well it is a union of regional complexes with the changing position of an emerging super power which will lead to a shift in the international relations system but the scheme remains the same as it was in the Cold War period with U.S. and now China (instead of former USSR / Russian Federation) as superpowers, and Russia, Japan, and the European Union as Great Powers, with India remaining a regional power and superpower to be, along with Brazil and South Africa as the regional power's from regional security complexes.

Taking it as a whole the BRICS is NOT a regional security complex, it is as I've pointed before the union of great power (Russia + India) and superpowers (China) and regional one's (Brazil + South Africa). As we see it, there is a mix, a coalition based on economical approach and economic agenda. In the constructivist view it is a new form of world wide

²⁸ Simon Freemantle, Jeremy Stevens (June 12, 2012). *"EM10 and Africa: South Africa in Africa - a steady, yet narrow, ascent"*, *Standard Bank*, retrieved on 2017.02.06, 20:14

²⁹ Stephen Gelb, "South Africa's role and importance in Africa and for the development on the African Agenda", Edge Institute http://www.sarprn.org/documents/d0000577/P467_RSA_role.pdf, retrieved on 2017.02.06, 20:14

government, the new world order, in a time when we have European Union as a great power, the U.S. as a superpower, China becoming one's and taking care of it's region.