

Dr. Gracjan CIMEK¹



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BRICS ACCORDING TO THE MODEL OF COMPETITION BETWEEN ACTORS OF THE “NEW” AND “OLD” ERAS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Abstract: *In order to fully understand the role of the BRICS in transforming the world order towards multipolarity, it is necessary to place it in the broader context of international competition, identifying different levels of influence according to the strength of the links between the actors involved. The means of achieving this scientific goal is the application of model based on ideal types used to compare the actors of the “new” and “old” eras of international relations. In 21st century, competition is growing at all levels of the research model described. It helps to understand the behavior of international actors who are reconstructing their geopolitical codes under the influence of the supervening processes of transformation of the international order towards multipolarity. BRICS promote a new paradigm of international relations and can essentially be characterized as an inter-civilizational association of countries for a “new era.”*

Key words: “New” and “Old” eras of international relations, BRICS, Multipolarity.

L'IMPORTANCE DES BRICS SELON LE MODÈLE DE COMPÉTITION ENTRE ACTEURS DES « NOUVELLES » ET « ANCIENNES » ÈRES DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES

Résumé : Pour bien comprendre le rôle des BRICS dans la transformation de l'ordre mondial vers la multipolarité, il est nécessaire de le situer dans le contexte plus large de la compétition internationale, en identifiant différents niveaux d'influence selon la force des liens entre les acteurs impliqués. L'objectif scientifique de cette approche repose sur l'application d'un modèle basé sur des idéaux-types, permettant de comparer les acteurs des « nouvelles » et « anciennes » ères des relations internationales. Au XXI^e siècle, la compétition s'intensifie à tous les niveaux

1. Professeur de Relations internationales à l'Académie navale polonaise (Gdynia).

du modèle de recherche décrit. Ce modèle permet de mieux appréhender le comportement des acteurs internationaux qui redéfinissent leurs codes géopolitiques sous l'influence des processus de transformation de l'ordre international vers la multipolarité. Les BRICS promeuvent un nouveau paradigme des relations internationales et peuvent être essentiellement caractérisés comme une association inter-civilisationnelle de pays pour une « nouvelle ère ».

Mots-clés : « Nouvelles » et « Anciennes » ères des relations internationales, BRICS, Multipolarité.

IN ORDER TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE BRICS in transforming the world order towards multipolarity, it is necessary to place it in the broader context of international competition, identifying different levels of influence according to the strength of the links between the actors involved. The means of achieving this scientific goal is the application of model based on ideal types² used to compare the actors of the “new” and “old” eras of international relations.

From a “long-term” perspective, the “Old Era” is a period in which Western powers dominated during the hegemonic cycles of the last 500 years, culminating in American hegemony. Its result is the emergence of a “global multi-crisis”: raw materials, food, energy, transport, health, and the environment³. At the BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro in 2025, Brazilian President Lula Da Silva pointed out that the world is in a deep structural crisis; international law had become a dead letter, as had the peaceful resolution of disputes. In addition to an unprecedented number of conflicts since World War II, progress is threatened by neglect of the climate system, trade wars, attacks on the global healthcare system, intellectual property laws restricting access to medicines, and finally, the fear of a nuclear catastrophe. Neocolonialism means that foreign capital is used to exploit nations, which is why emancipation emphasizes economic independence and diversification of the economy. The essence of neocolonialism is the “reverse Marshall Plan” implemented for decades by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), under which emerging and developing economies essentially finance the centers of Western capitalism. International aid flows have declined,

2. Max Weber’s “ideal type” is a heuristic tool, a mental construct, or an abstract model that accentuates key features of a social phenomenon to create a pure, simplified concept, serving as a measuring rod to compare and analyze messy, real-world situations, *not* a perfect or average reality. See: D. McIntosh, *The Objective Bases of Max Weber’s Ideal Types*, “History and Theory”, Vol. 16, N° 3, October 1977, pp. 265-279.

3. See: M. Lawrence, T. Homer-Dixon, S. Janzwood, J. Rockstöm, O. Renn, J. F. Donges, “Global Polycrisis: The Causal Mechanisms of Crisis Entanglement”, in *Global Sustainability*, 7 (e6) 2024, pp. 1–16 (accessed 3.05.25).

while the debt costs of the poorest countries have skyrocketed⁴. Moreover the neo-liberal model only exacerbates inequalities. For example, 3,000 billionaires have earned a combined \$6.5 trillion since 2015⁵.

The pressing economic and social problems include: eradicating hunger and poverty, stopping corruption and money laundering, alleviating the credit burden and manipulation of interest rates, ending the predatory exploitation of natural resources, especially in the Global South, ending the dominance of the US dollar in global trade and investment, creating new jobs and reducing unemployment, and the widespread use of modern technologies and innovations to stimulate economic development. In this situation, block thinking, zero-sum relationships, ideas of uniqueness and exceptionalism become the antithesis of the international activity necessary for human progress and overcoming these problems. Therefore, a paradigm is needed that will allow for the establishment of effective anti-crisis barriers, ensure economic regeneration, equalize developmental, income, technological, and other disparities between the Global South and the Global North, reform the old economic and financial system, and introduce a new system and effective methodology and coordination for its management. That is why the category of “a new era” began to appear in the BRICS narrative.

The theme of the 14th BRICS Summit in China in 2022: “*Strengthening the High-Quality BRICS Partnership: Entering a New Era of Global Development*”, is worth highlighting, as it reveals the direction of the group’s evolution in the second decade of the 21st century. During the summit in Durban in 2023, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that “BRICS is an equal partnership of countries that have different views but a shared vision of a better world”⁶. While the old era was based on the profit-loss paradigm generated by the dominant Western powers, the first prerequisite for creating a new era is the sovereign equality of states striving to implement profit-profit paradigm, as clearly explained

4. “BRICS: President Lula’s speech at the 2nd session – Strengthening Multilateralism, Economic-Financial Affairs, and Artificial Intelligence”, *Brazilian Government*, published 6 July 2025, link: <https://www.gov.br/planalto/en/follow-the-government/speeches-statements/2025/07/brics-president-lula2019s-speech-at-the-2nd-session-2013-strengthening-multilateralism-economic-financial-affairs-and-artificial-intelligence> (accessed 7.07.25).

5. “New wealth of top 1% surges by over \$33.9 trillion since 2015 – enough to end poverty 22 times over – Oxfam”, Oxfam, published 26 June 2025, link: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/mc/drjj9v/> (accessed 26.06.2025).

6. Patrick Stewart, “BRICS Expansion, the G20, and the Future of World Order”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 9 October 2024, link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/brics-summit-emerging-middle-powers-g7-g20?lang=en> (accessed 9.10.24).

by the President of Brazil during the 2025 Brazilian summit, pointing out that “*The world has changed. We don’t need an emperor; we are sovereign nations*”⁷.

In the remainder of this article, we will focus on analysing the multilevel model shown in the diagram that will highlight the importance of the BRICS among different actors in international system.

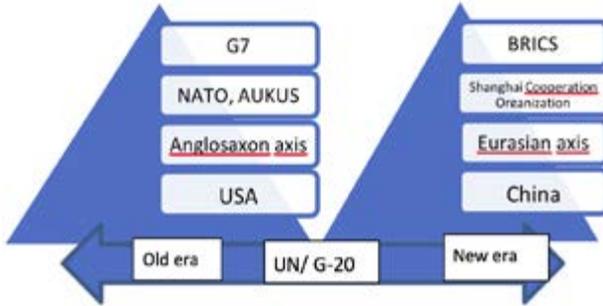


Figure No. 1: Competition between actors of the “old era” and “new era” of international relations⁸

Hegemonic war

The basic level of rivalry in the 21st century involves the struggle between the United States and the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which Graham Allison describes using the category of Thucydides’ Trap. A weakening hegemon provokes warfare out of fear of collapse at the hands of a new power. Of sixteen historical examples, the author proves that only four did not end in hegemonic war, citing the conflict between Athens and Sparta in ancient times as a prime example⁹.

Re-elected president in 2024, Donald Trump stated in his inaugural speech that the US was entering a “New Era”, updating the myth underlying US policy by pointing out that “*America will soon be bigger, stronger, and far more exceptional than ever before*”, and, more specifically, “*will fulfill Manifest Destiny on the way to the stars, sending American astronauts to plant the stars and stripes on the planet*

7. Manuela Andreoni, Lisandra Paraguassu, “Lula tells Trump world does not want ‘emperor’ after US threatens BRICS tariff”, *Reuters*, 8 July 2025, link: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/brics-nations-resist-anti-american-label-after-trump-tariff-threat-2025-07-07/> (accessed 8.07.25).

8. Source: own work.

9. See: G. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’ Trap?*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, 384 p.

*Mars. Ambition is the driving force of a great nation, and right now our nation is more ambitious than any other. There is no nation like ours (...) We will be a nation like no other, full of compassion, courage, and uniqueness. Our power will stop all wars and bring a new spirit of unity to a world that has been evil, brutal, and completely unpredictable*¹⁰.

With its ability to impose its interests waning, the US changed its method of conducting great power politics by updating the 19th-century concept of American historian Frederick Jackson Turner, based on the rhetorical figure of the dynamic frontier. The key to bringing civilization here is to “tame” space, expand the “free land”, and wrest it from the hands of “barbarians”. A manifestation of this geostrategic change is the cancellation of the model of the Empire as a deterritorialized vehicle of individual freedom, liberal democracy, human rights, and the global market in favor of territorially rooted imperialism and the superior rights of American citizens with a specific identity. Instead of global information network and institutional governance, classic expansionism is now a main aim. It promotes spheres of influence and thus updating the principles of classical geopolitics from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries or later theories of offensive realism. Examples of this process include open demands to annex Canada as the 51st state, attempts to take over Greenland, establish control over the Panama Canal, change the name from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, attack of Iran in support of Israel’s aggression, threats against Nigeria and last but not least sending the navy to put pressure on Venezuela.

The goal of the new geostrategy is to weaken China, which is rightly considered the most significant threat to American dominance, including the disintegration of BRICS. Hence the threat of imposing a 100 percent tariff if a new currency is created that threatens to weaken the dollar, accompanied by the narrative of the “death of BRICS”¹¹, the desire to pull India away, the departure from a confrontational stance towards Russia, the imposition of sanctions on South Africa, pressure on Brazil, and attempts to keep Saudi Arabia on its side. Unlike globalists, Trumpists do not treat the sabotage of the process of multipolarity as an end in itself. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged the end of the unipolar

10. “President Donald J. Trump’s Inaugural Address in Washington”, *The White House*, 20 January 2025, link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/01/the-inaugural-address/> (accessed 6 January 2026).

11. Nicholas Gordon, “Trump threatens a 100% tariff on ‘dead’ BRICS group if they ‘play games with the dollar’”, *Fortune.com*, 14 February 2025, link: <https://fortune.com/asia/2025/02/14/trump-threatens-brics-tariffs-challenge-us-dollar/> (accessed 14.02.25).

era, pointing out that, apart from the US, China and to some extent Russia have become the foundation of a multipolar world. Emphasizing the pursuit of national interests and pragmatism in assessing opportunities and threats, allies and adversaries alike rejected the messianic vision of the United States as a “savior” and, in fact, a “policeman”. *“It is not normal for the world to have only one pole of power; it was an anomaly, it was the result of the end of the Cold War. But ultimately, we will return to a multipolar world... we are seeing this now in China and, to some extent, in Russia”*¹². In the new geopolitical context, American imperialism has transformed economic pressure into a powerful tool. Tariffs have become a modern weapon used by Wall Street and the Pentagon.

Geostrategic blocs

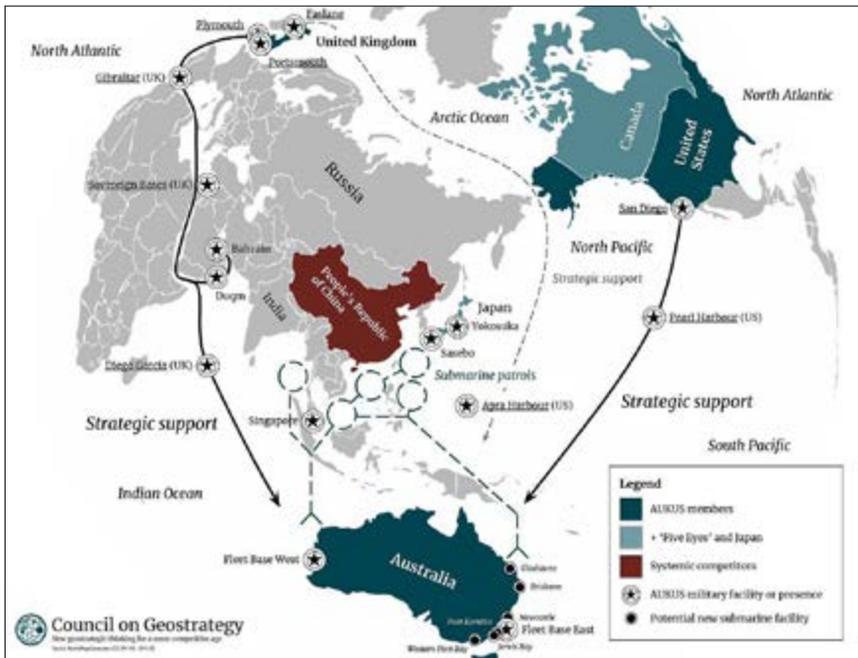


Figure No. 2: AUKUS and Five Eyes Alliance countries¹³

12. “Secretary Marco Rubio with Megyn Kelly of The Megyn Kelly Show” (interview), *US Department of State*, 30 January 2025, link: <https://www.state.gov/secretary-marco-rubio-with-megyn-kelly-of-the-megyn-kelly-show/> (accessed 30.01.25).

13. Source : “Geopolitics: AUKUS member states (US, UK, Australia) and Five Eyes”, *Techpedia*, link: <https://www.techpedia.pl/index.php?str=tp&no=45217> (accessed 6 January 2026).

At the next level, geostrategic rivalry based on alliances becomes apparent. The Anglo-Saxon Heartland (Kees Van der Pijl) countries, the so-called Five Eyes alliance comprising the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, are involved in defending American hegemony. Three of them have formalized their ties by creating AUKUS in 2021, to which they are attracting the other two, as well as Japan. This process is a clear example of the implementation of the 2012 American “pivot to Asia” doctrine, currently formalized as “*integrated deterrence*” and, in practice, the containment of China’s development.

At this level, the countertrend is expressed by the emerging Russia-China-Iran-North Korea axis, formed during the Russian-Ukrainian war, which can be called the Eurasian bloc, sometimes referred to as CRINK, as confirmed by a report from the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). According to the report, the United States is facing a new international sub-coalition in which each actor closes its own area instead of creating a hierarchy – a decentralized interdependence that could undermine the foundations of the unipolar model. Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea do not form a formal bloc, but a network system with redistribution of functions. China legitimizes this diplomatically and visually, but avoids open arms supplies. Iran supplies drones and will exchange technologies. North Korea is the main supplier of artillery and manpower. According to the DIA, Moscow is not building a union around itself, but a diversified logistics and technology chain. China is playing on two fronts: on the one hand, it is increasing its participation in joint exercises and patrols with Russia, including in the Arctic, and on the other hand, it is avoiding direct supplies of lethal aid for fear of sanctions and loss of reputation. This underscores Beijing’s strategy of “*deep partnership without an open alliance*”. However, recognizing the importance of BRICS and participating in global forums alongside the Russian Federation consolidates Beijing’s position as a key player in a new, multipolar world where its status is no longer secondary. According to the report, Iran is acting pragmatically: by supplying armed unmanned aerial vehicles, it expects access to advanced Russian military technologies. For Tehran, this is a way to circumvent Western restrictions and expand its capabilities in the field of aviation and missiles. However, the DIA acknowledges that Russia has limited capacity to share advanced technologies, fearing Iran’s growing ambitions in its spheres of influence. North Korea is presented as a supplier of military resources. According to the DIA, Pyongyang has supplied millions of artillery shells, dozens of missiles, and sent 12,000 troops to assist the Russian Federation. In return, it received air defense and electronic warfare equipment, missile systems, strategic support, and a new political status. The signing of the

Comprehensive strategic partnership agreement marks North Korea's emergence from China's shadow and an attempt to rely on a more flexible and direct alliance with Russia¹⁴. The presence of these countries' leaders at the military parade in Beijing to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War II in Asia—and their fulsome commitment to a new world order that the United States no longer dominates—suggests that these countries increasingly constitute an anti-US bloc, united not by shared values but by shared grievances¹⁵.



Figure No. 3: Eurasian axis¹⁶

Alliance ties in CRINK are formed on the basis of various legal forms. The “*Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Cooperation*” between China and North Korea was signed in 1961, while the latter country entered into an alliance with Moscow in 2024¹⁷. Currently, similar functions are also fulfilled by the “*Comprehensive*

14. See: *2025 Worldwide Threat*, Assessment Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations United States House of Representatives, Defense Intelligence Agency, 11 May 2025, 45 p., link: https://armedservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2025_dia_statement_for_the_record.pdf (accessed 6 January 2026).

15. Angela Stent, “The CRINK: Inside the new bloc supporting Russia’s war against Ukraine”, *Atlantic Council*, 23 October 2025, link: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/russia-tomorrow/the-crink-inside-the-new-bloc-supporting-russias-war-against-ukraine/> (accessed 6 January 2026).

16. Source: “CRINKs: Russia’s expanding web of military partners” (video), *DW News* (on YouTube), 21 October 2024, 12 min., link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGSvn-Ki2Rw> (accessed 28 October 2024).

17. “*DPRK-Russia Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership*”, *KCNA*, 20 June 2024, link: <http://kcna.kp/en/article/q/6a4ae9a744af8ecdafa6678c5f1eda29c.kcmsf> (accessed 12.11.25).

Strategic Partnership of Coordination for a New Era” between Moscow and Beijing, which is the result of Russia’s “pivot to the East”¹⁸. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping announced their “no limits” partnership on February 4, 2022, three weeks before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and the “*Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Russia and Iran*” was signed in Moscow on January 17, 2025 to “*deepen and develop relations in all areas of mutual interest, strengthen cooperation in the field of security and defense, and closely coordinate their actions at the regional and global levels*”¹⁹.

Moving on to the next element of the developing Eurasian axis at first glance, it seems that Chinese-Iranian relations are primarily geo-economic in nature. The 2021 China-Iran agreement includes \$400 billion in Chinese investments to be made over 25 years in dozens of areas, including banking, telecommunications, ports, railways, healthcare, and information technology. But in fact it also provides for deeper military cooperation, including joint training and exercises, joint weapons research and development, and intelligence sharing. In return, China will be able to purchase Iranian oil, gas, and petrochemical products at a guaranteed discount. Although the agreement is essentially geo-economic, it cements strategic ties, as exemplified by the joint exercises between China, Russia, and Iran that have been taking place in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman since 2019. Moreover, both Russia and China began selling modern weapons to Iran after the end of the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June 2025. In a joint letter to the United Nations, Iran, China, and Russia also opposed Europe’s attempt to impose sanctions on Tehran as legally unfounded as “*constructive diplomatic partnership*”²⁰. These strategic ties are a manifestation of the power of the three countries that belong to BRICS.

The role of formal organizations

Another level of rivalry involves formalized organizations existing across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian spaces.

18. See: Gilbert Rozman (ed.), Gaye Christoffersen (ed.), *Putin’s “Turn to the East” in the Xi Jinping Era*, Taylor & Francis, 2023, 246 p.

19. “Full text of Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement”, *Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 17 January 2025, link: <https://irangov.ir/detail/456479> (accessed 17 January 2025).

20. “Europe’s reinstatement of Iran sanctions ‘baseless, invalid’: Russian senators”, *Tehran Times*, 9 December 2025, link: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/521454/Europe-s-reinstatement-of-Iran-sanctions-baseless-invalid> (accessed 9.12.2025).

The ideal type of old era actors is represented by NATO (*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*), which forms the foundation of the power projection capabilities of the “*Collective West*” bloc of states, which is a collective participant in international relations. With the collapse of the USSR and the loss of its legitimacy, NATO sought a new one. At the beginning of the 21st century, it became part of the American geostrategic code of the “*war on terror*”, then replaced by a “*rules-based order*”. The alliance’s potential was strengthened by the admission of Sweden and Finland in 2023-24, while still emphasizing the need for further expansion towards Ukraine and Georgia, and even Argentina. In terms of defense spending, it appears to be the strongest military bloc.

As regards the assessment of the current geopolitical situation, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte says the West is not ready for what awaits it “*in four to five years*”, calling for a “*shift to war mode*” and “*increased production and defense spending*”. The justification is that Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran are “*trying to weaken North America and Europe*” and “*transform the global order*”²¹. Due to the new US geopolitics, the alliance is entering a phase of crisis. The NATO summit in The Hague (June 24-25) was minimalist in form and content. It was followed by the publication of a record-breakingly concise five-point declaration. The summit therefore focused on programming an unprecedented increase in member countries’ defense spending, with a new target of 5% of GDP by 2035. Interestingly, there were no references to the challenges posed to the Alliance by the PRC. Washington’s new geopolitics is moving away from the paradigm of two interconnected theaters of action (European and Indo-Pacific), ceding to Europe its involvement in the war between Ukraine and Russia²².

At the same level of formal organizations good example of the actor of “new era” is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was formalized as an intergovernmental international organization on June 15, 2001²³. It positions itself as an alternative to the Collective West bloc, proposing a formula of indivi-

21. “Sekretarz generalny NATO wezwał do “przełączenia się na tryb wojenny”, *Polska Agencja Prasowa*, 12 December 2024, link: <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/sekretarz-generalny-nato-wezwal-do-przelaczenia-sie-na-tryb-wojenny> (accessed 13 December 2024).

22. P. Szumański, “Szczyt NATO w Hadze – powrót Trumpa i dwuskładnikowe 5% PKB na obronność”, *OSW (Center for Eastern Studies)*, 26 June 2025, link: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2025-06-26/szczyt-nato-w-hadze-powrot-trumpa-i-dwuskladnikowe-5-pkb-na> (accessed 26.06.25).

23. See: Gracjan Cimek, “Szanghajaska Organizacja Współpracy w kształtowaniu procesów region alnych i globalnych”, in *Przegląd Zachodni*, 2019 / 2 (371), pp. 229-256.

sible security in Eurasia based on the recognition that “*humanity is an indivisible security community. The security of one country should not come at the expense of the security of others*”. In this way, the SOW fits into the Chinese agenda, and in particular the Global Security Initiative²⁴, according to which “*all countries, large or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. Their internal affairs must not be subject to external interference, their sovereignty and dignity must be respected, and their right to independently choose their social systems and development paths must be respected*”²⁵. Iran recently hosted militaries from China, India, Russia, and six other countries for the first-ever Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) military exercise on Iranian soil. The five-day “*Sahand 2025*”²⁶ exercise sent a clear geopolitical signal of Tehran’s full integration into the multilateral partnership led by China and Russia²⁷.

The Tianjin 2025 Declaration emphasizes the pursuit of a multipolar world order based on international law and the central role of the United Nations (UN). Perhaps the most important outcome of the summit in China is the further transformation into an economic bloc that will become the focal point of economic integration in the global South in Eurasia. A key decision in this regard is the creation of the SOW development bank, which would have possibility to cooperate closely with other Eurasian financial institutions, in particular the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB). This institution mirrors the BRICS bank based in Shanghai and is parallel to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a multilateral bank based in Beijing. The new bank will be the basis for financing joint projects. Infrastructure, energy, and transport corridors require long-term financial resources. It is worth mentioning the already functioning SCO University.

24. See: Elzbieta Proń, *International Institutions in China's Foreign Policy: The Case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, Toruń, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2021, 303 p.

25. “Full text: The Global Security Initiative. Concept Paper”, *Embassy of the PRC in Costa Rica*, 22 February 2023, link: https://cr.china-embassy.gov.cn/esp/ndle/202302/t20230222_11029046.htm (accessed 22.02.2023).

26. “SCO Member States Launch ‘Sahand 2025’ Counter-Terrorism Exercise in Iran”, *Iran Press News Agency*, 1 December 2025, link: <https://iranpress.com/content/313457/sco-member-states-launch-sahand-2025-counter-terrorism-exercise-iran> (accessed 6 January 2026).

27. See: Eva Seiwert, “Iran’s first-ever SCO military exercise solidifies ties with China and Russia”, *Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)*, 18 December 2025, link: <https://merics.org/en/comment/irans-first-ever-sco-military-exercise-solidifies-ties-china-and-russia> (accessed 18.12.25).

In addition to synchronization in terms of expansion, there is also growing convergence between SCO and BRICS in terms of membership in the core and partnership belt. At the current stage, four members of the BRICS core – India, Iran, China, and Russia – are also members of the SCO core. The BRICS core currently also includes two dialogue partners from the SOW – the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. The newly created BRICS partnership belt also included two SCO core members from Central Asia—Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan—and one SOW core member from Europe, namely Belarus. In addition, some SCO core members and partner economies have been granted membership in the New Development Bank (NDB) in recent years, notably Uzbekistan (an SCO core member) and Bangladesh (which has applied for SCO dialogue partner/observer status). With the expansion of the SCO to other Eurasian economies, the bloc launched the SCO format in 2024. In particular, the institutionalization of BRICS may partly follow the institutionalization patterns within the SCO and EAEU (*Eurasian Economic Union*), including with regard to the establishment of a commission/secretariat. If we can speak of a new moment of qualitative development for BRICS during the Kazan summit in 2024, then the SOW repeated this move during the Tianjin summit in 2025. The timing is not accidental²⁸.

The adoption of the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Program until 2035* sets the strategic course for the organization for the next decade as an instrument for coordinating Eurasian initiatives that are the foundation of a multipolar world. The organization is currently considering applications from around ten countries seeking observer or dialogue partner status – direct evidence of growing interest in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as an alternative center of power in global politics. Therefore, BRICS and SCO operate in a coordinated manner, as their main goal is to gradually become independent from Western paradigms, while at the same time combating the effects of sanctions, which have not coincidentally severely affected the four leading members of both BRICS and SCO: Russia, China, India and Iran.

At the same time, the Western bloc is seeking to contain China's power by promoting an "East Asian NATO" based on the Japan-South Korea-Philippines cooperation or QUAD, an informal but real group consisting of the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. At this level, the difference between the Old and New

28. Yaroslav Lissovnikov, "Forging greater alignment between BRICS and the SCO", *BRICS+ Analytics*, 26 August 2025, link: <https://brics-plus-analytics.org/forging-greater-alignment-between-brics-and-the-sco/> (accessed 26.08.25).

Era paradigms becomes very apparent. The attitude of India and Turkey, which are implementing a policy of balancing, is a manifestation of strategic uncertainty. In response to pressure from Washington to force India to stop buying Russian oil, Delhi responded by seeking to ease tensions with Beijing during the summit of SCO and strengthen its strategic partnership with Russia, which was sealed during President Putin's visit to India in December 2025. Turkey, on the other hand, is seeking to overcome the crisis in relations with the US that began after the attempted coup in 2016, as evidenced by its attempt to return the Russian S-400 systems needed to purchase the F-35.

Informal institutions with real goals

The final level of confrontation between the “old” and “new era” models involves informal institutions with real goals: G7 and BRICS.

The first brings together the centers of the capitalist West. The main goal of this format was to maintain the purchasing power of the key currencies of the capitalist economy, the dollar and the euro, and thus the dominance of their economies. In 1997, the G7 attempted to assimilate the Russian oligarchic elites that dominated during Boris Yeltsin's presidency by creating the G8. The geopolitical conflict over Ukraine that began in 2014 led the West to suspend Russia from the G8, and in 2017 Moscow left the group. The G7 once again became the foundation of the market democracies of the Collective West. The narrative based on classic definitions of liberal values was revived, emphasizing the importance of freedom and democracy and their universality. This phrase was then repeated at almost all G7 meetings²⁹.

In order to counter the appeal of China's Belt and Road Initiative, it was within the G7 that the “*Build Back Better World*” project was proposed, arguing that private capital would provide developing countries with \$40 billion in “*aid*” in the form of investment. A more recent example of the G7's shift towards geopolitical rivalry is its stance on Israel's aggressive policy. On 17 June 2025, the G7 countries issued a statement at their meeting in Canada blaming Iran for the Israeli attack on June 3, reaffirming Israel's right to self-defense and support for Israel's security. Core of western states highlight that Iran is a major source of regional instability and terrorism³⁰. It is clear evidence that G7 countries apply double standards to

29. *Op. Cit.*, Patrick Stewart, “BRICS Expansion, the G20, and the Future of World Order”...

30. Alberta Kananaskis, “G7 Leaders' statement on recent developments between Israel and Iran”, *Prime Minister of Canada*, 16 June 2025, link: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/>

Israel and Russia by selectively approaching the UN’s prohibition on the use of force. The breakthrough of the G7 meeting was the opinion of the invited BRICS member, the president of Brazil³¹ related to official stance of BRICS which is condemning Israel’s aggression and the genocide of Palestinians, who are granted the right to their own state.

It is at this level of the analysis model that BRICS as an informal body should be situated as a part of ideal type of new era’s actors. Group promotes a new paradigm of international relations alternative to those of G7. Its essence is a model or pattern of action for international actors, including: guiding principles, recognised institutions, accepted methods, postulated effects and recognition of a specific structure allowing for necessary hierarchies. It therefore defines what is common to all members of the international community, forming the axis for shaping the international system at a given time.

| Paradigm of international relations | Old era | New era |
|--|---|---|
| Basic assumption | Exclusivism : | Inclusivism |
| Ideas on international governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jungle versus gardens • The west versus the rest • Value-based order • Win- lose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue between civilizations and mutual learning • No enemy figure • Order based on mutual recognition of subjectivity • Win-win |
| Economy | Global capitalism in the interests of private corporations without social responsibility | Adapting the economy to social development regulated by sovereign national states |
| Security | Closed. Based on block’s mentality | Open. Indivisible |
| Political system | Liberal democracy legitimizing social inequalities | Locally contextualized, but focused on social development |

statements/2025/06/16/g7-leaders-statement-on-recent-developments-between-israel-and-iran (accessed 6 July 2025).

31. See: Rodrigo Chagas, “Lula contradicts G7 leaders and condemns ‘indiscriminate massacre’ in Gaza and Israeli attacks against Iran”, *Brasil de Fato* (BdF), 18 June 2025, link: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2025/06/18/lula-contradicts-g7-leaders-and-condemns-indiscriminate-massacre-in-gaza-and-israeli-attacks-against-iran/> (accessed 18.06.25).

| Paradigm of international relations | Old era | New era |
|--|--|--|
| Basic assumption | Exclusivism : | Inclusivism |
| Science | Scientism, positivism, methodological individualism, mechanism, eurocentrism | Organicity, holism, critical realism, synthesis of the achievements of many cultures |

Figure No. 4: A comparison of the “old era” and “new era” paradigms in international relations³²

The UN and the G20 remain the arena for cooperation between actors of the new and old eras. However, the former is beginning to resemble the League of Nations more and more, losing its ability to regulate the international system. The latter, despite its great ambitions, has been unable to overcome the economic injustice favored as a model of action by the states of the old era. Therefore, competition is growing at all levels of the research model described. It helps to understand the behavior of international actors who are reconstructing their geopolitical codes under the influence of the supervening processes of transformation of the international order towards multipolarity.

Summary

With ten full members, a growing circle of partner countries, and more countries applying for membership, BRICS is no longer just a diplomatic forum. It is becoming a gravitational force in the emerging multipolar world and a structural response to the growing contradictions of Western-led globalization. It ensures the coordination of the interests of the global majority as a key pillar of multipolarity, which objectively replaces the system of neoliberal globalization as the final chord of the “old era” of international relations.

BRICS, as a new type of organization, brings together the world’s oldest civilizations, which are characterized by much greater stability and long-term dynamics than ordinary nation states. Centers of power may vary in size and strength, but in each case the question is how to reconcile their interests, avoiding new discrimination between different centers of power and different nations, and introducing

32. Source: own work.

quality and justice into the world order, which are currently lacking³³. To meet these aspirations, BRICS rejects the mechanism of subordination to a single leader who would impose discipline on other members and force them to achieve common goals. Each country pursues its own national interests in practical matters related to the global economy and politics, which are not always convergent. This reality limits the possibility of making and, most importantly, implementing joint decisions, which is usually easier in institutions based on leadership. It therefore stands in contrast to the “old era” paradigm. Therefore, BRICS can essentially be characterized as an inter-civilizational association of countries for a “new era”. ■

20 December 2025.

Bibliographie

- Allison G., *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, 384 p.
- “BRICS: President Lula’s speech at the 2nd session – Strengthening Multilateralism, Economic-Financial Affairs, and Artificial Intelligence”, *Brazilian Government*, published 6 July 2025, link: <https://www.gov.br/planalto/en/follow-the-government/speeches-statements/2025/07/brics-president-lula2019s-speech-at-the-2nd-session-2013-strengthening-multilateralism-economic-financial-affairs-and-artificial-intelligence> (accessed 7.07.25).
- Chagas Rodrigo, “Lula contradicts G7 leaders and condemns ‘indiscriminate massacre’ in Gaza and Israeli attacks against Iran”, *Brasil de Fato* (BdF), 18 June 2025, link: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2025/06/18/lula-contradicts-g7-leaders-and-condemns-indiscriminate-massacre-in-gaza-and-israeli-attacks-against-iran/> (accessed 18.06.25).
- Cimek Gracjan, “Szanghajaska Organizacja Współpracy w kształtowaniu procesów regionalnych i globalnych”, in *Przegląd Zachodni*, 2019 / 2 (371), pp. 229-256.
- “CRINKS: Russia’s expanding web of military partners” (video), *DW News* (on *YouTube*), 21 October 2024, 12 min., link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGSvn-Ki2Rw> (accessed 28 October 2024).
- Страны БРИКС в современной мировой экономике, Совместное издание МГИМО МИД России, Национальный комитет по исследованию БРИКС, Университет Мировых Цивилизаций, 2024, pp. 6-7.
- “DPRK-Russia Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”, *KCNA*, 20 June 2024, link: <http://kcpa.kp/en/article/q/6a4ae9a744af8ecdfa6678c5f1eda29c.kcmsf> (accessed 12.11.25).

33. Страны БРИКС в современной мировой экономике, Совместное издание МГИМО МИД России, Национальный комитет по исследованию БРИКС, Университет Мировых Цивилизаций, 2024, pp. 6-7.

- “Europe’s reinstatement of Iran sanctions ‘baseless, invalid’: Russian senators”, *Tehran Times*, 9 December 2025, link: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/521454/Europe-s-reinstatement-of-Iran-sanctions-baseless-invalid> (accessed 9.12.2025).
- “Full text of Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement”, *Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 17 January 2025, link: <https://irangov.ir/detail/456479> (accessed 17 January 2025).
- “Full text: The Global Security Initiative. Concept Paper”, *Embassy of the PRC in Costa Rica*, 22 February 2023, link: https://cr.china-embassy.gov.cn/esp/ndle/202302/t20230222_11029046.htm (accessed 22.02.2023).
- “Geopolitics: AUKUS member states (US, UK, Australia) and Five Eyes”, *Techpedia*, link: <https://www.techpedia.pl/index.php?str=tp&no=45217> (accessed 6 January 2026).
- Gordon Nicholas, “Trump threatens a 100% tariff on ‘dead’ BRICS group if they ‘play games with the dollar’”, *Fortune.com*, 14 February 2025, link: <https://fortune.com/asia/2025/02/14/trump-threatens-brics-tariffs-challenge-us-dollar/> (accessed 14.02.25).
- Kananaskis Alberta, “G7 Leaders’ statement on recent developments between Israel and Iran”, *Prime Minister of Canada*, 16 June 2025, link: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2025/06/16/g7-leaders-statement-on-recent-developments-between-israel-and-iran> (accessed 6 July 2025).
- Lawrence M., T. Homer-Dixon, S. Janzwood, J. Rockstöm, O. Renn, J. F. Donges, “Global Polycrisis: The Causal Mechanisms of Crisis Entanglement”, in *Global Sustainability*, 7 (e6) 2024, pp. 1–16 (accessed 3.05.25).
- Andreoni Manuela, Paraguassu Lisandra, “Lula tells Trump world does not want ‘emperor’ after US threatens BRICS tariff”, *Reuters*, 8 July 2025, link: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/brics-nations-resist-anti-american-label-after-trump-tariff-threat-2025-07-07/> (accessed 8.07.25).
- Lissovolik Yaroslav, “Forging greater alignment between BRICS and the SCO”, *BRICS+ Analytics*, 26 August 2025, link: <https://brics-plus-analytics.org/forging-greater-alignment-between-brics-and-the-sco/> (accessed 26.08.25).
- McIntosh D., *The Objective Bases of Max Weber’s Ideal Types*, “History and Theory”, Vol. 16, N° 3, October 1977, pp. 265-279.
- “New wealth of top 1% surges by over \$33.9 trillion since 2015 – enough to end poverty 22 times over – Oxfam”, Oxfam, published 26 June 2025, link: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/mc/drj9v/> (accessed 26.06.2025).
- Stewart Patrick, “BRICS Expansion, the G20, and the Future of World Order”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 9 October 2024, link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/brics-summit-emerging-middle-powers-g7-g20?lang=en> (accessed 9.10.24).
- “President Donald J. Trump’s Inaugural Address in Washington”, *The White House*, 20 January 2025, link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/01/the-inaugural-address/> (accessed 6 January 2026).
- Proń Elzbieta, *International Institutions in China’s Foreign Policy: The Case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, Toruń, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2021, 303 p.

- Rozman Gilbert (ed.), Christoffersen Gaye (ed.), *Putin's "Turn to the East" in the Xi Jinping Era*, Taylor & Francis, 2023, 246 p.
- "SCO Member States Launch 'Sahand 2025' Counter-Terrorism Exercise in Iran", *Iran Press News Agency*, 1 December 2025, link: <https://iranpress.com/content/313457/sco-member-states-launch-sahand-2025-counter-terrorism-exercise-iran> (accessed 6 January 2026).
- "Secretary Marco Rubio with Megyn Kelly of The Megyn Kelly Show" (interview), *US Department of State*, 30 January 2025, link: <https://www.state.gov/secretary-marco-rubio-with-megyn-kelly-of-the-megyn-kelly-show/> (accessed 30.01.25).
- Seiwert Eva, "Iran's first-ever SCO military exercise solidifies ties with China and Russia", *Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)*, 18 December 2025, link: <https://merics.org/en/comment/irans-first-ever-sco-military-exercise-solidifies-ties-china-and-russia> (accessed 18.12.25).
- "Sekretarz generalny NATO wezwał do "przełączenia się na tryb wojenny", *Polska Agencja Prasowa*, 12 December 2024, link: <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/sekretarz-generalny-nato-wezwal-do-przelaczenia-sie-na-tryb-wojenny> (accessed 13 December 2024).
- Stent Angela, "The CRINK: Inside the new bloc supporting Russia's war against Ukraine", *Atlantic Council*, 23 October 2025, link: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/russia-tomorrow/the-crink-inside-the-new-bloc-supporting-russias-war-against-ukraine/> (accessed 6 January 2026).
- Szymański Piotr, "Szczyt NATO w Hadze – powrót Trumpa i dwuskładnikowe 5% PKB na obronność", *OSW (Center for Eastern Studies)*, 26 June 2025, link: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2025-06-26/szczyt-nato-w-hadze-powrot-trumpa-i-dwuskladnikowe-5-pkb-na> (accessed 26.06.25).
- *2025 Worldwide Threat*, Assessment Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations United States House of Representatives, Defense Intelligence Agency, 11 May 2025, 45 p., link: https://armedservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2025_dia_statement_for_the_record.pdf (accessed 6 January 2026).