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Workshop No. 1

Towards a Global Coalition: Gulf countries, BRICS+, and the Future of the Global Order

1. Directors

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2. Abstract

The BRICS+ (Argentina, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates) consortium is widely recognized as a manifestation of the broader trend termed the 'Rise of the Rest' in contrast to the West. This phenomenon, emblematic of contemporary international relations, reflects the evolving economic, political, and military capacities of individual states and their alliances, contributing to a discernible decline in the once-hegemonic dominance of the Western powers. Concurrently, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has traditionally been perceived as an alliance formed during an era when Western collaboration with oil-producing nations was imperative.

Nevertheless, there exists potential for enhanced connectivity between the GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman) and BRICS+, particularly with the inclusion of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, grounded in their complementarities and capacity to manage differences. This potential is rooted in BRICS' ascendance to a pivotal role in international development and cooperation, juxtaposed with the GCC countries' continued centrality as key global energy suppliers. The amalgamation of these blocs has the potential to fortify their respective positions on the global stage.

This evolving landscape provides an intriguing case study wherein the combination of GCC and BRICS dynamics occurs in the context of the United States maintaining its significant role as a global player. Amidst the ongoing power struggles and substantial geopolitical realignments, strategic and economic convergences between BRICS and the GCC may emerge, further shaping the global geopolitical landscape.

The goal of this workshop is to comprehensively explore from multiple perspectives the evolving dynamics between the GCC and the BRICS consortium. It aims to attract participants from diverse disciplines and sectors such as policymakers, educators, researchers, innovators, and experts in relevant fields. The resulting exchange of knowledge is crucial to enriching and contributing to a nuanced and well-informed discourse on the evolving relationship between the GCC and the BRICS+. The emphasis is placed on garnering practical insights and formulating actionable recommendations, thereby equipping stakeholders with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of this transformative geopolitical landscape.

3. Context

The landscape of global governance has undergone a profound transformation, contrasting the ascendancy of Western powers with the growth trajectories of prominent Global South countries (Niblock, 2017). The BRICS, which was first composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, has emerged as an alternative new coalition in global governance, challenging established groups such as the G-7. The BRICS embarked on a trajectory of economic and international political ascendancy characterized by rapid economic growth, expanded geopolitical influence, and the assertion of their positions on the global stage. Rooted in diverse regions and representing a substantial portion of the world's population and resources, they collectively aimed to challenge the status quo of global governance. Their rise is driven by inter alia economic and geopolitical growth in the 21st century, which has significantly reshaped global governance and amplified the voices of the global South. Notably, in 2023, the BRICS expanded by welcoming two GCC countries, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Iran, Egypt, Argentina, and Ethiopia (from now on we refer to the expanded coalition as BRICS+).

The workshop aims to delve into the importance of the BRICS in international relations, evaluating its role in global governance and providing an overview of existing theoretical perspectives. The goal is to understand both the national and institutional successes and failures of the BRICS while exploring the theoretical discussions surrounding global governance and regionalism. The inclusion of Gulf nations enriches the identity of the BRICS and broadens its influence in global politics. The workshop seeks to comprehensively investigate the multifaceted dimensions of this relationship, which includes economic partnerships, diplomacy, public policy exchanges, and collaborative efforts to address global challenges.

One significant aspect of BRICS' collective action is their commitment to reshaping global governance by incorporating ideas and interests from the global South onto the international agenda. These nations aimed to foster a more equitable and inclusive international order, reflecting the changing power dynamics in a multipolar world. They have challenged the dominance of traditional informal organizations such as the G-7, advocating for greater representation and decision-making power for emerging economies and developing nations.

Over the years, the BRICS has evolved from a loose coalition of emerging powers to a more institutionalized entity, establishing the BRICS Development Bank and a think-tank network dedicated to policy research and coordination. However, one of the most significant developments

occurred in 2023 when the BRICS coalition expanded its membership. This move underscores the BRICS+ aspiration to be a more inclusive and representative coalition, encompassing a diverse array of countries and regions.

4. Focus/objectives

This workshop's rationale is rooted in the growing importance of the BRICS and GCC partnership on the global stage, driven by several key factors that necessitate a comprehensive examination.

First, the emergence of non-western coalitions, such as the BRICS+, challenges traditional global governance structures. As China, India, and Brazil rise as economic and political powerhouses, their interactions with GCC countries introduce a new dynamic to international relations. Understanding how these agents shape global agendas is crucial. Second, the economic partnerships between BRICS countries and GCC nations are expanding rapidly, encompassing trade, investment, and development initiatives. These interactions hold immense economic potential and have implications for global trade routes and resource distribution. Third, the diplomatic initiatives between these regions play a pivotal role in addressing regional conflicts, contributing to peace and stability, and asserting their collective influence on global issues. Examining their diplomatic strategies and engagements offers insights into their evolving roles as regional and global actors.

The primary aim of this workshop is to address the existing knowledge gap by fostering a multidisciplinary dialogue on the BRICS+ and GCC partnership. We aim to provide a platform for scholars, policymakers, and experts to engage in critical discussions, share insights, and advance our understanding of the evolving dynamics between the BRICS+ and GCC. Through rigorous analysis, we aim to shed light on the motivations, challenges, and potential impacts of this burgeoning coalition on global affairs.

It seeks to discuss the evolving relationships, challenges, and opportunities that arise from the BRICS' expansion to include GCC countries. Despite the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and geopolitical orientations of the BRICS+ and the GCC, they share common interests and concerns. The evolving dynamics of this collaboration in an altered geopolitical landscape require thorough examination. We expect papers discussing different issues, concepts, and theories from the perspective of the BRICS+. Paper proposals can focus on thematic or country case studies about the BRICS+, as well as comparative studies between one or more BRICS+ countries and one or more Gulf countries. For example, Brazil and GCC or Brazil and Qatar or China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates or the BRICS+ and the GCC, and so on. Finally, analysis can also focus on the BRICS+ and other formal and informal organizations (e.g., the African Union, the OECD, G7, G20, etc), as well as on its relation with civil society and the private sector.

5. Papers focus/topics

1. BRICS+ and GCC in the global agendas

1.1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): One of the central themes of this workshop is to analyze how the BRICS+ consortium is influencing global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, or the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The inclusion of GCC nations in this partnership extends its reach, potentially impacting global actions in different areas of human life, such as in fighting against hunger and poverty, industry innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities, among other topics related to the themes of the 17 United Nations SDGs. We expect

papers to discuss the roles of BRICS+ nations in shaping global agendas and providing policy solutions and advice for global problems.

1.2 Global Climate Change Action: Climate change is a pressing global issue. This theme explores how the BRICS+ and GCC partnership can contribute to fostering transnational coordination among countries towards climate adaptation and mitigation policies, as well as promoting sustainable development. The Conferences of the Parties (COPs) are a major global arena for addressing climate change. Last year COP 27 was hosted by Egypt, in 2023 COP 28 is going to take place in Dubai (UAE) and COP 30 in 2025 will be held in the city of Belém in the Brazilian Amazon region. Different actions are being undertaken by these countries, which include not only taking part in the formulation of the climate agenda, but also investing in soft power, through hosting global conferences. Papers are expected to discuss the BRICS+ nations in climate change.

2. BRICS+ and GCC in politics and geopolitics

2.1. Reshaping Global Governance from Non-Western New Coalitions. This theme focuses on the BRICS+ challenge to Western hegemony and the strategies they employ to assert influence. The BRICS+ is an informal international organization of countries with different interests, sizes, and international positions. We expect papers targeting the challenges and potentials for BRICS+ to expand its influence in global governance.

2.2. The composition of the BRICS+ became more heterogeneous with the expansion, and with the inclusion of more African and Middle Eastern countries. China plays a significant role in the organization but has strategic divergences with India. Meanwhile, Iran and Russia received different sanctions from the United Nations. How might these differences pose a barrier to internal governance and politics within the BRICS+? What are the dynamics of cooperation and conflict within the organization? We expect also to tackle different aspects of the political life of the BRICS+ after the expansion.

2.3. International conflicts are a major issue in international relations. For more than one year Russia and Ukraine have been at war. In October 2023, a conflict involving Israel and Hamas was disrupted. BRICS+ and GCC countries have assumed different positions towards these conflicts, not only in multilateral arenas but also in bilateral negotiations. The Israel-Hamas conflict occurred during the Brazilian presidency of the Security Council and this country's diplomacy made important efforts to write a United Nations Resolution, meanwhile Qatar played a major role in negotiating hostage liberations with Hamas. What are the roles of BRICS+ and GCC countries in international conflicts? Which positions and actions are countries following? How can the BRICS+ foster diplomatic and peace goals?

3. BRICS+ and GCC in economy and trade

3.1. Economic partnerships play a pivotal role in the BRICS+ and GCC relationship. This theme delves into trade relations, investment initiatives, and development projects that are at the heart of their collaboration. Papers discussing not only relations among BRICS+ and GCC countries, but also with the private sector are welcomed in the workshop.

3.2. Economy and trade are an important driver of BRICS+ relations. These countries together represent more than 30% of the World's GDP. Brazil plays a key role in the export of commodities, meanwhile, GCC countries have economies based on oil and gas exports. China is important in boosting trade among members and The One Belt One Road Initiative is also a key element for understanding perspectives for trade with Gulf countries. How will commercial relations change after

the expansion? What is the trade impact for Gulf countries? We expect papers addressing these issues of economy and trade.

4. BRICS+ and GCC in international cooperation

4.1. Collaborative Approaches to Global Challenges: The BRICS+ and GCC partnership is expected to address various global challenges. This theme explores their collaborative approaches to issues like public health, humanitarian aid, counterterrorism, and security. Papers discussing not only relations among BRICS+ countries, but also with the civil society organizations are welcomed in the workshop.

4.2. BRICS+ and Development: different types of development cooperation actions are implemented by BRICS+ countries, such as foreign aid or technical assistance. In the past years, Brazil, Russia, and China, have been engaging with developing countries, especially in Africa with different approaches. Brazil has been a supplier of social policy knowledge via development cooperation to different countries in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, for example. The Bank of the BRICS is also becoming an important player in funding public infrastructure for development. What is the future of development and aid with the membership of GCC countries? How might policy and knowledge transfers be operationalized between BRIC+ and GCC countries?

Papers should focus on one of the topics indicated in this section, keeping in mind the indications in sections 4, 6, and 7.

6. Paper structure, referencing, and format

Prospective authors should structure their papers coherently, addressing chosen topics from the provided list. Each paper should include an introduction, clear objectives, methodology, findings, and a conclusion. Papers should aim to be research-driven and substantiated with empirical insights, contributing to the edited volume's comprehensive understanding of the BRICS-Gulf partnership.

Authors should also adhere to the [GRM Paper Guidelines](#).

Participants who do not submit a completed paper by the 31 May 2024 deadline or whose submitted paper does not meet the requirements will be disinvited by GRCC.

7. Publication plans

The directors endeavour to publish an edited book that serves as a comprehensive resource on the topic of the Gulf Arab States and the BRICS. The editors have a proven track record of successfully producing edited volumes and will target publishers such as Cambridge or Oxford University Press and we already have a manifestation of interest from three publishers, including Palgrave, Springer, and Edward Elgar. We are also exploring additional publishing options to ensure wide dissemination of the workshop's findings.

Provisory structure of the book

Part I: BRICS and Gulf Relations in Global Governance

- Introduction: Unveiling the Significance of the BRICS-Gulf Partnership
- The BRICS: A Non-Western Approach to Global Governance

- Gulf Countries as Emerging Global Players

Part II: The Role of BRICS-Gulf Economic Partnerships in Global Trade

Part III: Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution, and Regional Stability

- Diplomatic Cooperation: A Key Driver for Peace and Stability
- Assessing BRICS-Gulf Mediation in Regional Conflicts
- Enhancing Regional Security and Promoting Stability

Part IV: Global Agendas and Collaborative Approaches

- BRICS-Gulf Response to the Ukraine Conflict
- Mitigating Climate Change: Joint Commitments and Strategies
- International Cooperation in Counterterrorism and Security

Part V: Soft Power, Global South, and Policy Exchange

- Soft Power Initiatives of BRICS and Gulf States
- The Collective Role of BRICS and Gulf in the Global South
- Policy Exchange and Impact on Domestic Policymaking

Part VI: Comparative Studies and Empirical Insights

- Comparative Analysis of Individual BRICS and Gulf Countries
- Case Studies on Key Phenomena: Insights into Dynamic Collaboration
- Bilateral and Multilateral Aspects of International Cooperation

Part VII: Conclusion and Future Trajectories

- Synthesizing Key Findings and Implications
- Future Trajectories for BRICS-Gulf Partnership in Global Affairs

Papers that may not be publishable in the edited volume will still be reviewed by the directors and considered for individual publication in either a peer-reviewed journal or as a GRM paper. Directors will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all accepted papers are published in one of these three forms.

8. References

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9. Directors' bio notes

Dr. Esmat Zaidan is an Associate Professor at Hamad Bin Khalifa University's College of Public Policy. She holds a Ph.D. degree and a master's degree from the University of Waterloo, Canada. Her professional experience includes her appointments with the World Bank, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These engagements have enriched her understanding of global development challenges and policy implementation. Dr. Zaidan's research is characterized by its interdisciplinary nature, encompassing the fields of engineering, sustainability, and policy such as sustainable development policy and planning, the dynamics of sustainable cities and societies, the sociological dimensions of sustainable technologies, energy policies, energy transition, and climate change. Dr. Zaidan has contributed over 60 articles to top-tier ISI/Scopus journals, mainly in Q1.

Osmany Porto de Oliveira is a Tenured Assistant Professor in the International Relations Department at the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP) and coordinator of the International Public Policies Laboratory (LABOPPI). He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science, from the University of Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III (2015) and a Ph.D. from the University of São Paulo (2013). His research centers on policy transfer, development cooperation, international organizations, democracy, and climate change. He received the Early Career Award of the International Public Policy Association – IPPA (2019). His main books are *Brazil and China in Knowledge and Policy Transfer* (Palgrave, 2022), with G. Romano; *Handbook of Policy Transfer, Diffusion and Circulation* (Edward Elgar, 2021); *Latin America and Policy Diffusion* (Routledge, 2020), with C. Osorio, S. Montero, and C. Leite; *International Policy Diffusion and Participatory Budgeting* (Palgrave, 2017). He is also an Associate Editor of *Policy Sciences* and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Policy and Politics*.