

MERCOSUR AND BRICS OPERATING AS  
INTERNATIONAL COALITIONS (2003-2014)

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1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2003, the recently elected presidents of Brazil and Argentina (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Néstor Carlos Kirchner) signed a declaration which became known as Buenos Aires Consensus. Speaking on behalf of the two biggest South American nations, they decided that social welfare would constitute the main goal of their governments. Furthermore, they reaffirmed their will to intensify bilateral and regional cooperation in order to guarantee for all citizens the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to development based on social justice.

The new consensus has emerged after the major context of economic crisis and political turbulence in the history of Southern Cone integration. As it is known, the Southern Common Market (Mercosur, in Spanish) was created in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The economic bloc displayed excellent outcomes in terms of trade and investment until 1997. In the following years, the shaking of financial markets caused by the Asian and Russian crisis brought difficulties to Mercosur. Thus, positive numbers were no longer observed for some years.

In 1999, the Brazilian government was no longer able to sustain its exchange-rate bands regime. The strong devaluation of the Brazilian currency was one negative factor, among others, to hit the Argentine economy. Thereby, a series of accusations from both sides have led analysts to believe the bloc would disappear in that moment.

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After a period of crisis, new administrations were elected in both countries. They had critical views regarding to past experiences. Thus it configured a propitious scenario to once again launching the regional integration process. Pointing possible errors committed by previous leaders, the new presidents insisted to bring new themes to the agenda in the occasion of the Buenos Aires Consensus. The new goals included poverty reduction, hunger eradication, fighting unemployment, and reducing regional imbalances and inequalities. Moreover, they also encouraged the four member countries to act in concert in international politics in favor of themes beyond economy and trade.

Regarding to this last aspect, it is important to state that since then Brazil has invited different developing countries to gather in meetings and search for opportunities to act together at multilateral fora where global governance rules are conceived. The aim was adding up power resources to increase the effectiveness of advocating for common goals at the international arena. Among these South-South coalitions, including those constituted by regional partners, as Mercosur and the Union of South American Nations (Unasur, in Spanish), they also created the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA), the South America-Africa Summits (SAA), the South America-Arab Countries Summits (SAAC) and the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa Summits (BRICS)<sup>1</sup>, these four last groupings having global reach.

In this article Mercosur's operation as an international coalition in Lula's administration (2003-2010), extending until 2012<sup>2</sup>, will be analyzed in the context of theses South-South global coalitions' foundation. After this introduction in the second section the voting convergence among the four Mercosur founding countries for United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions is compared with the voting convergence of Brazil, Russia, India,

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<sup>1</sup> South Africa became a member in 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Last available data.

China and South Africa at the same organism. The goal is to verify in which of these contexts Brazil has found greater similarity of political preferences.

After that in the third section the position statements on subjects of international politics found in joint communiques resulting from semiannual Mercosur summits (2003-2014) are compared with those found in final declarations produced by the other South-South summits of which Brazil is part of: SAAC (2005, 2009, 2012), SAA (2006, 2009, 2013), IBSA (2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011) and BRICS (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014). Last, the fourth section brings final remarks on the subject.

## 2. VOTING BEHAVIOUR AT UNGA

Differently from some other institutions of the United Nations (UN) system, UNGA is a plural organism constituted by all UN member countries. Since 1945, which is the year of its first session, many questions related to peace and security have been discussed at UNGA, as it is provided by article 11 of the UN Charter. Moreover, UNGA has also promoted studies and recommendations intended to foster international cooperation on political, economic, social, cultural, educational and health issues, as it is provided by article 13.

At that forum, the rule is “one country, one vote”. In every annual session, hundreds of resolutions on various fields of international politics are approved – on average, three- quarters of them without voting and the rest by absolute majority. The resolutions deal with a comprehensiveness of themes, in a large geographic reach and broad time lapse. Therefore, analyzing the voting patterns of countries at UNGA can be considered a good indicator of the international profile of nations. It also indicates proximity of political preferences among members of international coalitions.

Table 1 displays the number of resolutions in which Mercosur countries votes converged and diverged from 2003 to 2012. Resolutions approved without

voting were excluded. Table 2 displays the same data for BRICS. Convergence is understood as all votes equal for the same resolution, which can be “yes”, “no” or “abstention”. Divergence occurs when at least one vote is different from the others<sup>3</sup>.

TABLE 1  
VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF MERCOSUR COUNTRIES AT UNGA  
2003-2012

<b>Year</b>	<b>Convergent</b>	<b>Divergent</b>	<b>Total</b>
2003	56	20	76
2004	50	22	72
2005	61	13	74
2006	75	12	87
2007	65	12	77
2008	61	12	73
2009	58	11	69
2010	53	9	62
2011	56	9	65
2012	59	9	68
2003-2012	594	129	723

Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
Author’s elaboration.

TABLE 2  
VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF BRICS COUNTRIES AT UNGA  
2003-2012

<b>Year</b>	<b>Convergent</b>	<b>Divergent</b>	<b>Total</b>
2003	43	33	76
2004	44	28	72
2005	44	30	74
2006	57	30	87
2007	50	27	77
2008	45	28	73
2009	43	26	69
2010	38	24	62

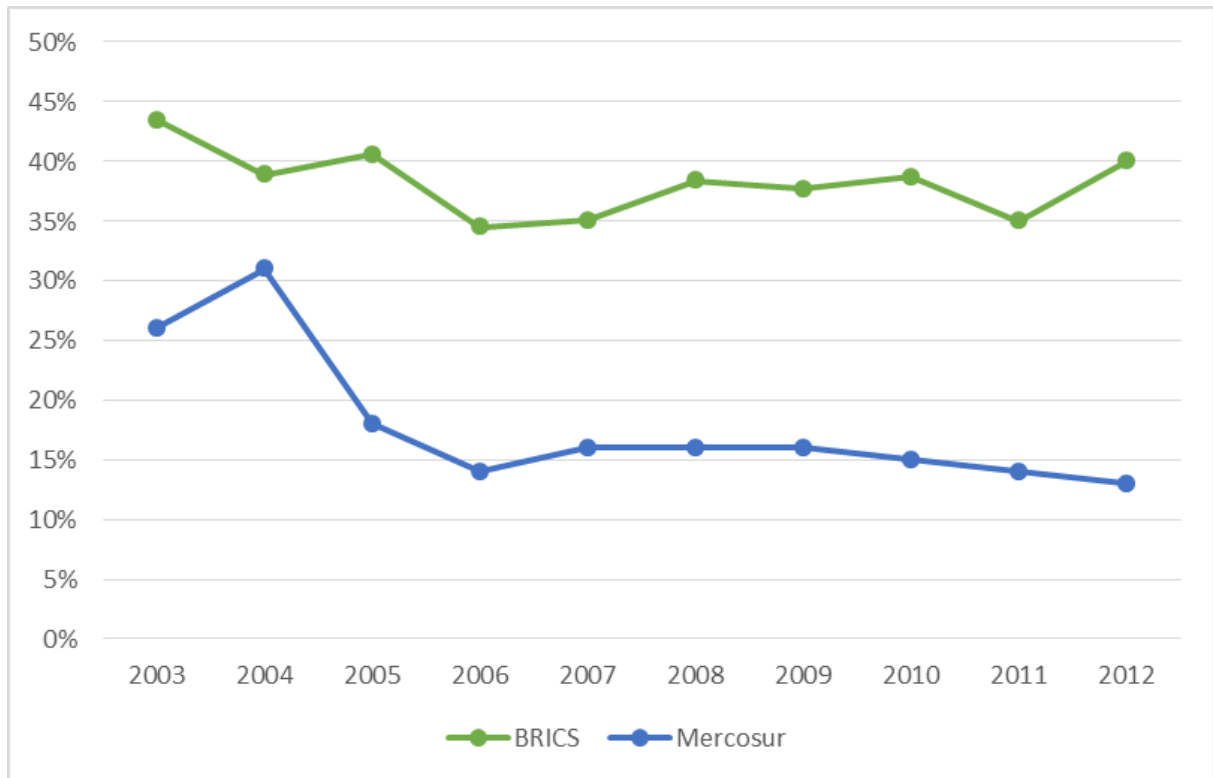
<sup>3</sup> There are cases in which for some reason the diplomats of a country are absent from the Assembly when a resolution is being voted (registered as “absent vote”). Absent votes were not computed as divergent. In any case, the truth is this rarely happens.

2011	42	23	65
2012	41	27	68
2003-2012	447	276	723

Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
 Author's elaboration.

It can be inferred from these two tables that the frequency of divergences among Mercosur countries throughout the whole period was 18%, while among BRICS the frequency was 38%. In 2004 it was observed a marked reduction on the number of Mercosur divergences. They stabilized around 15% from 2006 on. As for BRICS, the number of divergences was higher on average and remained nearly stable throughout the period (Graphic 1). These data reveal Brazil has more affinity with Mercosur partners than with BRICS in terms of political positions.

GRAPHIC 1  
 DIVERGENT VOTES AT UNGA (PERCENTAGE) – MERCOSUR AND BRICS  
 2003-2012



Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
 Author's elaboration.

Table 3 displays the number of cases in which each Mercosur member diverged from the bloc when voting for UNGA resolutions from 2003 to 2012. In other words, these data refer to the amount of cases in which certain country has voted differently from the other three in that period. As it is revealed by the numbers Argentina accounted for more than one-third of the bloc divergences while Brazil was responsible for one-quarter. Cases in which both countries were responsible for divergence as pairs<sup>4</sup> (not distinguished in the table) represented 1.5%. Therefore, in the majority of times divergences occurred by putting one of the two biggest partners against the three others.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Brazil and Argentina vote “yes” and the others vote “no”.

TABLE 3  
 CASES IN WHICH EACH MERCOSUR COUNTRY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIVERGENT VOTE AT  
 UNGA – TOTAL  
 2003-2010

Country	Cases	%
Argentina	46	36%
Brazil	34	26%
Uruguay	18	14%
Paraguay	9	7%
Couples of countries	22	17%
Total	129	100%

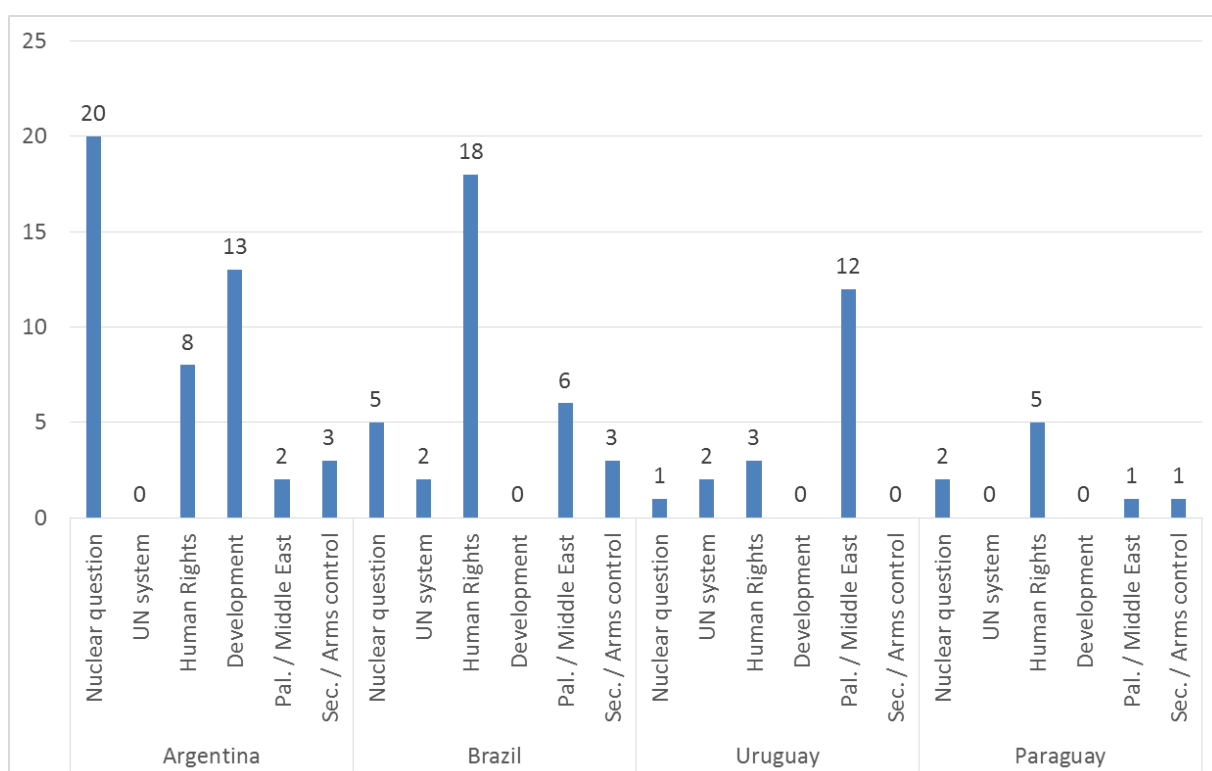
Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
 Author's elaboration.

Graphic 2 decomposes Table 3 data by the issue areas to which each resolution is related with<sup>5</sup>. Taking Argentine cases into consideration, almost half the resolutions dealt with the nuclear question. As for the Brazilian cases, 62% of the resolutions discussed Human Rights. The majority of Uruguayan cases were about Palestine/Middle East, while Paraguayan resolutions treated of Human Rights. In this section, it is worth only identifying the issue areas. In the next section will focus on analyzing how they were addressed by semiannual Mercosur joint communiqués.

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<sup>5</sup> “UN system” refers to resolutions designed to create or modify competences and functions of any UN organism. UNGA is authorized to do so as it is provided by article 10 of UN Charter. “Nuclear question” involves disarmament, non-proliferation and pacific use of nuclear technology. “Security/Arms control” resolutions are related to more comprehensive security issues, occasionally determined by the conjuncture. The other issue areas are self-explanatory.

GRAPHIC 2  
 CASES IN WHICH EACH OF MERCOSUR COUNTRIES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIVERGENT  
 VOTE AT UNGA – BY ISSUE AREA  
 2003-2012



Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
 Author's elaboration.

Table 4 contains the number of cases in which each of BRICS countries diverged from the others when voting for UNGA resolutions from 2003 to 2012. The main countries shown in that position were Russia, with almost one-third of the cases, and India, with nearly one-quarter. It is worth noticing that, differently from what happened in Mercosur, there was no polarization between the two main nations responsible for divergence. Differently, it was observed a certain



likeness of positions between them in some cases. As pairs<sup>6</sup> (not distinguished in the table), Russia and India diverged from the other three partners in 9% of the cases. Taking into account the cases in which they diverged alone, it totalizes 63%. Thus, it can be inferred that without these two countries the convergence within the remaining coalition would double.

TABLE 4  
CASES IN WHICH EACH OF BRICS COUNTRIES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIVERGENT VOTE AT  
UNGA – GENERAL  
2003-2012

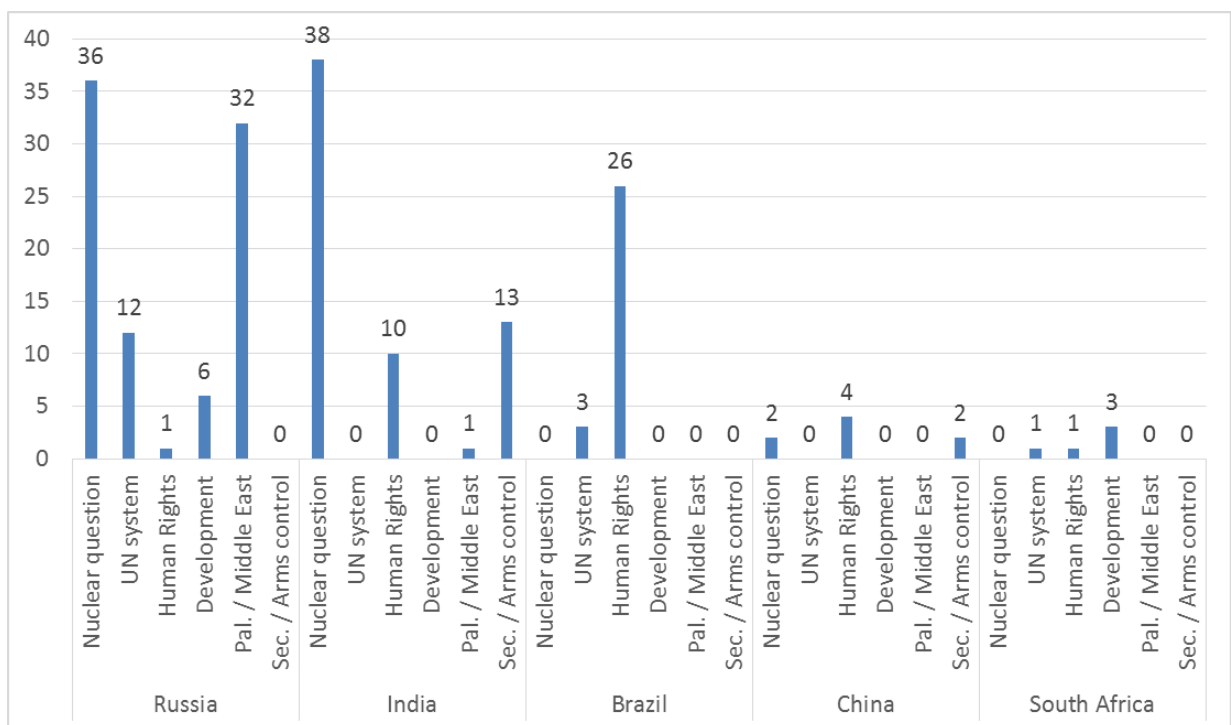
Country	Cases	%
Russia	87	32%
India	62	22%
Brazil	29	11%
China	8	3%
South Africa	5	2%
Pairs of countries	85	31%
Total	276	100%

Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
Author's elaboration.

Graphic 3 decomposes Table 4 data by the issue areas to which each resolution is related with. For Russia, the nuclear question and Palestine/Middle East corresponded to 41% and 37% of its divergent cases. 61% of Indian cases were related to the nuclear question. The main issue in which Brazil diverged from BRICS partners was Human Rights, totalizing 90% of cases. For China the main issue area was the same of Brazil's, although with a lower participation (50%). Last, it is curious to verify that South Africa hardly voted differently from the four others. In these rare cases the resolutions dealt with trade and development issues.

<sup>6</sup> For example, India and Russia vote "yes" and the others vote "no".

**GRAPHIC 3**  
**CASES IN WHICH EACH OF BRICS COUNTRIES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIVERGENT VOTE AT UNGA – BY ISSUE AREA**  
**2003-2012**



Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
 Author's elaboration.

Table 5 separates by issue area the cases in which Mercosur countries diverged when voting for UNGA resolutions from 2003 to 2012. There is

equilibrium between the nuclear question and Human Rights, which reflects the main fields in which Brazil and Argentina diverged from the others. In other words, the thematic distribution of divergent votes for UNGA resolutions reflects the polarization of the two bigger partners due to the fact that their divergences are concentrated on these two matters.

TABLE 5  
CASES IN WHICH THERE IS VOTING DIVERGENCE AMONG MERCOSUR COUNTRIES AT UNGA – BY ISSUE AREA  
2003-2012

<b>Issue area</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>%</b>
Human rights	42	33%
Nuclear question	34	26%
Palestine / Middle East	25	19%
Development	13	10%
UN system	10	8%
Security / Arms control	5	4%

Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
Author's elaboration.

Table 6 separates by issue area the cases in which BRICS countries diverged when voting for UNGA resolutions between 2003 and 2012. The sum of cases in which Russia and India diverged from the three others in resolutions related to the nuclear question concentrated 41% of cases. Curiously, China, although possessing nuclear arsenal, votes alongside Brazil and South Africa (and probably the great majority of the Third World) for this matter.

TABLE 6  
CASES IN WHICH THERE IS VOTING DIVERGENCE AMONG BRICS COUNTRIES AT UNGA – BY ISSUE AREA  
2003-2012

<b>Issue area</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>%</b>
Nuclear question	116	42%
Human rights	60	22%
Security / Arms control	40	14%
Palestine / Middle East	33	12%
Development	19	7%
UN system	8	3%

Source: Strezhnev e Voeten (2013).  
Author's elaboration.

The data analyzed in this section lead to three main conclusions. First, it demonstrates that in both cases (Mercosur and BRICS), there are more convergent than divergent votes for UNGA resolutions. Second, taking divergences into account, there is a coincidence of issue areas in which they occur in both groups. This confirms the widespread sensibility of these matters in international politics. Last, the data reveal Brazil displays more affinity with Mercosur partners than with BRICS in terms of political positions.

### 3. CONTENT OF JOINT STATEMENTS AND JOINT COMMUNIQUEs OF SOUTH-SOUTH SUMMITS (REGIONAL AND GLOBAL)

This section compares the approaches adopted for international political issues found in Mercosur joint communiques with those exhibited by IBSA, SAAC, SAA and BRICS joint statements. The idea is to demonstrate in which of these South-South coalitions – regional and global – Brazil has had greater likeness of political positions taking into consideration the content of declarations resulting from the meetings. The period examined is 2003-2014.

Since it was created by the Treaty of Asunción in 1991, Mercosur has adopted the routine of organizing semiannual meetings of its Common Market Council (CMC). The goal has been discussing advances accomplished and difficulties faced by the actual *pro tempore* presidency. Since the beginning of the bloc activities, these meetings have become in practice summits. As Malamud (2005) argues, due to Mercosur intergovernmental status, presidential intervention has been characterized as an important decision-making procedure to stimulate the integration process and to solve every kind of controversies.

During the period in analysis, for each summit organized by Mercosur at the end of every semester (in general, one in June and the other in December) has resulted two final documents (joint communiques): one signed solely by the

presidents of Mercosur full members, the other one signed by full and associate members<sup>7</sup>.

Considering joint communiqués signed only by full members, the exam reveals they deal essentially with matters related to the integration process itself. There are rare exceptions in which international politics issues are mentioned. However, in joint communiqués signed by full and associate members, appearances of global issues are frequent and political positions are highlighted. Therefore, these were the communiqués most employed by this analysis.

On the other hand, the analysis of IBSA, SAA and SAAC summits leads to the following conclusion: their joint declarations share the same format, which is characterized by a amount of political position statements roughly balanced with a list of areas to advance international development cooperation among members. In the case of BRICS summits, until 2010 their joint statements used to concentrate on stablishing political positions for a smaller set of themes. Since 2011, development cooperation among members started to be mentioned and the amount of political statements has grown annually. In some way, it means that, with the entrance of South Africa, BRICS has taken advantage on IBSA past experience. In fact, BRICS joint statements became so similar to IBSA joint statements since 2012 that it can be considered as a plausible explanation for not having IBSA summits since then.

Table 7 contains the list of themes that are addressed in a very similar manner by Mercosur summits and these aforementioned global South-South coalitions. It must be pointed out it does not mean these issues appeared in each and every summit. Otherwise, it means that, when they did, they have not been treated in a different way from the one displayed at the table. As for BRICS

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<sup>7</sup> For the record, it must be highlighted that until 2003 the category “associate member” did not formally exist. Until then only Bolivia and Chile had such kind of agreements with Mercosur. In the first semester of 2004 this nomenclature was adopted, also comprising Peru. In the next semester, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela have also become associate members. In 2013, Venezuela became a full member. Finally, in 2013 Guyana and Surinam also became associate members. In other words, nowadays the very same members of Unasur are in some way part of Mercosur.

summits, until 2010 they had only mentioned climate change, Millennium Development Goals, Doha round and 2008 financial crisis. The other themes – world drug problem, Syria and Palestine – have appeared progressively since then.

TABLE 7  
ISSUES ADDRESSED IN A VERY SIMILAR WAY AT MERCOSUR AND AT IBSA, SAA, SAAC AND BRICS SUMMITS  
2003-2014

<b>Issue area</b>	<b>Approach</b>
2008 financial crisis	Request for reform, strengthening of legitimacy, capitalization and increase of resources of international financial institutions. Moreover, developed countries are the ones to blame for the crisis
Climate change	Support to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Support to the Rio+20 Conference
Doha round	Trade and development issues. Condemnation of tariff barriers, domestic support and export subsidies practiced by developed countries in the agricultural sector, which distort trade and hinder the multilateral system advancement
Millennium Development Goals	For them to be accomplished, developed countries must offer international development cooperation projects and resources regularly. Likewise, it is important to grant market access to developing countries exports and to create innovative financing mechanisms. There is also a concern with the post-2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals
Palestine	Support to the right of Palestinian people to constitute a State, based on 1967 lines and living alongside Israel
Syria	Against external intervention. A Syrian-led political process leading to a transition can be achieved only through broad national dialogue that meets the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society and respect for Syrian independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty
World drug problem	Holistic focus, based on the principle of shared and common responsibility (regional and global), in accordance with the International Law

Source: Mercosur Summits joint communiques and IBSA, SAA, SAAC and BRICS Summits joint declarations. Author's elaboration.

Recapturing last section data, it is worth noticing none of these global issues has been a frequent matter of divergence among Mercosur and BRICS countries when voting for UNGA resolutions in the same period. Therefore, it reveals those data are good indicators for likeness of political positions from a methodological point of view.

In this regard, it is worth adding that two of the main issue areas in which BRICS countries have diverged at UNGA, which are the nuclear question and

arms control, received no mention in any of the six joint declarations. As for the Human Rights, it only appeared for the first time in 2013 in a vague form, expressing the intention to “examine possibilities of cooperation”. In 2014 the issue received a little more attention. In any case the argument remains valid bearing in mind the data consulted for UNGA roll-calls ends in 2012.

Looking at Table 7 issue areas and the way they were addressed, an overview permits to affirm in these cases Brazil was able to reach a minimal consensus with South American, African, Arab and emergent partners. The perspective adopted by them can be broadly labeled as third-worldist and developmentalist. Moreover, there is a constant complainant position against developed countries. In these issue areas, the communiqués and declarations examined revealed the existence of a common Southern vision, which is connected to development concerns.

There are three more issues that also received typically third-worldist approaches. However, they were not mentioned by all coalitions. The first one is migration. The perspective adopted was a non-discriminatory vision, without prejudice to the migrant and its family legal status, seeking to guarantee, to respect and to promote their Human Rights. In the cases of IBSA and BRICS, it received no mention. By exclusion, it can be inferred that India was possibly the dissenting vote. Bangladeshi migrants must be the reason. The second issue is intellectual property. It received a focus related to development and public policies, frequently concerned with rights upon biological resources and/or traditional knowledge attached to them. BRICS joint declarations did not comprise the theme. In this case, China must be the dissenting vote, in face of the accusations its industrial products receive. Last, the support for Argentina in the Malvinas Islands dispute with Great Britain was not mentioned by IBSA and BRICS. Considering Russia has recently declared its support for the Argentine – mostly because of the Ukrainian issue – China and India must be the dissenting votes. Their territorial issues with some neighbor countries are well known.

At the same time, there are four other issues that although are mentioned by all groupings, they are addressed in different ways by them. When they are taken into consideration, the perspectives adopted from one forum to another display important nuances so they cannot be grouped together as the same approach.

First, when it comes to weapons of mass destruction, Mercosur joint communiques have addressed the issue under the discussion of the Security Council Resolution 1540/2004<sup>8</sup>. Since 2010, the importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference started to be highlighted as an opportunity to advance commitments previously established.

Differently, in the context of IBSA summits, the text reflects the Indian position on the theme. Since India has nuclear weapons and it is not subscriber of the NPT, this international regime receives no mention by joint declarations, although Brazil and South Africa are both part of it. It is explicit the demanding position on disarmament against traditional powers. In fact, it is viewed as a condition for non-proliferation, as follows:

The leaders reiterated their commitment to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons and expressed concern over the lack of progress in realization of that goal. They emphasized that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring continuous irreversible progress on both fronts, and reaffirmed, in this regard, that the objective of non-proliferation would be best served by systematic and progressive elimination of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive, universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable manner (1<sup>st</sup> IBSA SUMMIT, 2006).

In the case of SAAC and SAA summits, the discourse is similar to Mercosur's. Actually, there is even a calling for those who did not signed the NPT to do it. This does not mean the complainant tune is not present; it is just

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<sup>8</sup> It decides that all States should refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, particularly for terrorist interests.



not the focus. At BRICS summits, as it was mentioned before, the issue is absent.

Second, on terrorism, the issue is treated by Mercosur in a perspective linked with International Law and the respect to Human Rights. It is good to notice although these nations condemn the phenomenon in all its forms and manifestations, they assert it must be fought in strict compliance with International Law, Human Rights principles, and countries integrity and sovereignty. It is a cautious position in face of potential American onsets, taking into account the United States used to consider Cuba a state sponsor of terrorism. This concern is also related with the presence of drug dealers identified as terrorists in the Andean region, and the accusation of terrorist activities in the triple frontier of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.

This cautious position is very similar to the one found at SAAC summits. Indeed, at this forum the necessity to define the terrorist crime and to study the phenomenon is highlighted. As an additional element, which is not contradictory to Mercosur's approach, they reject any linkage between terrorism and any specific people or religion, ethnicity or culture. This perspective is also found in SAA joint declarations. In both cases it reflects a defensive position against islamophobia. It is consistent with the principles of self-determination and non-intervention, broadly defended by the Brazilian foreign policy, which is also not complaisant with the American policy of Global War on Terrorism.

When it comes to IBSA and BRICS summits, there is an important nuance of treatment. In these contexts, terrorism is considered one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Likewise, the conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism is supported. It is necessary to consider, for example, that according to the website *Global*

*Terrorism Database*<sup>9</sup>, India was listed as the third country in the world to receive more terrorist attacks in 2010 (MELLO E SOUZA; MORAES; 2013).

Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> IBSA Summit, held in October 2008, the activities of Taliban and Al Qaeda are condemned by the joint declaration, mainly due to the attacks against the Indian embassy in Kabul, which have happened in July. This condemnation also appears in the 6<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit. This kind of nominal accusation is not a typical attitude of the Brazilian foreign policy. Therefore, Brazil has moved away from its traditional positions in solidarity for India.

Third, as for the Human Rights, the approach adopted by Mercosur joint communiqués generally appears as values, at the beginning of the text, in a very generic way, without conceptual detailing nor linkages with obligations.

In some occasions, the issue was related to the military dictatorships held in the region until the mid-1980s, as the rights to memory, truth and justice. Thus, the commitment with democracy, which is an important pillar of the political dimension of regional integration, comes associated with Human Rights. This is the emphasis given by the region to this issue, which avoids going deeper. Mentions to gender issue, human traffic, and children and adolescents rights are also frequent, but vague.

At SAAC, SAA and IBSA summits the issue is treated, by one hand, with more conceptual detailing, reaffirming Human Rights and fundamental freedoms universality, indivisibility, interdependence and inter-relation. By the other hand, there are rare mentions to specific issues within the area. Furthermore, there is a frequent linkage with development concerns. In the specific context of IBSA summits, the substitution of the Human Rights Commission by the Human Right Council at the UN is celebrated.

Even though it seems these are subtle differences of perspective, it is important to observe that the common history in the regional case brings the

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<sup>9</sup> Available at: <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>>.

approach closer to traditional positions advocated by the Brazilian foreign policy. It is important to remember Brazil avoided for a long time subscribing treaties related to Human Rights. Only since the returning to democracy the main international mechanisms on the matter were ratified. In any case, Brazilian diplomacy continues to avoid signing resolutions in which countries are accused of disrespecting Human Rights. The country defends developed countries have a double behavior on the matter: they accuse other nations but have domestic problems. In the words of the ex-minister for external affairs from 2003 to 2010, Celso Amorim (2009, p. 239), “in this field, as in many others, preaching by example achieve far greater results than rhetoric”.

Last, the only issue in which Brazil showed more affinity with IBSA countries than with Mercosur partners refers to UN reform. In one hand, in Mercosur joint communiques, and also at BRICS, SAA and SAAC summits, it is only stated that for UN to accomplish its goals a broad, integral and urgent reform is needed, especially for the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, so they can be more efficient, democratic, representative and transparent. In the other hand, only in the case of IBSA summits there is a recurrent detailing for the Security Council reform, as it follows:

The leaders emphasized that the reform of the Security Council is central to this process to ensure that the UN system reflects contemporary realities. They expressed their full support for a genuine reform and expansion of the Security Council, in permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with greater representation for developing countries in both. They reiterated that inter-governmental negotiations on the issue of Security Council reform must commence forthwith. They agreed to further strengthen cooperation amongst their countries and with other member states interested in a genuine reform of the Security Council (2<sup>nd</sup> IBSA SUMMIT, 2007).

They particularly emphasized that no reform of the United Nations will be complete without a reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC), including an expansion in both the permanent and nonpermanent categories of its membership, with increased

participation of developing countries in both. Such reform is of the utmost importance for the UNSC to reflect the representativeness and legitimacy it needs to face contemporary challenges (5<sup>th</sup> IBSA SUMMIT, 2011).

In this field, the Indian and South African pleas for permanent seats at the Security Council in some eventual reform of the organism confer greater likeness with the Brazilian discourse when compared with the other contexts. Bearing in mind that the Argentine are contrary to the Brazilian candidature to permanently represent South American continent at the Council, in Mercosur joint communiques the speech is superficial. In the case of BRICS summits, due to the positions of China and Russia which already are permanent members of the Security Council, it is only stated (in the same way in all six summits) that the two countries “reiterate the importance we attach to the status of India and Brazil in international affairs, and understand and support their aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations”.

One last comment must be done in regard to the analysis of these documents. There are some issues which were only mentioned by one meeting or another due to the fact that they only regarded to that specific geographic context. To name some examples, these are the cases of Americas Free Trade Area (AFTA) at Mercosur, New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) at ASA, UN operations in Lebanon at SAAC and Ukraine at BRICS, among others. Considering these issues could not be compared from one forum to another, they were certainly not the focus of the analysis.

#### 4. FINAL REMARKS

Three main conclusions can be summarized from both the analysis of i) the voting behavior of Mercosur and BRICS countries for UNGA resolutions and ii) the content of final documents resulting from Mercosur, IBSA, SAA,

SAAC and BRICS summits (2003-2014). First, as it was mentioned before, there is a consistence of political positions for a series of themes in both Brazil's regional and global South-South contexts according to the list displayed by Table 7. For these issue areas, there is a common vision related to development concerns. It is also observed a complainant tendency against developed countries, which is a historical feature of third-worldist coalitions, like the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77.

Second, due to the common history and culture, the closeness of relations, and the regional integration process, in the regional context the proximity of political positions is greater when compared to the global one. Therefore, according to the data, Mercosur has operated as an international coalition since 2003 for issue areas that go beyond the economic spectrum, as it was proposed by the Buenos Aires Consensus.

Third, it must be clarified that the political impact of the regional coalition is lower in comparison to the weight of the global ones, mainly IBSA and BRICS. In other words, the sum of power resources is the lowest at the regional level. However, it was observed that the higher the gain in political impact, the higher the amount of edges to be overcome regarding to some traditional discourses of Brazilian foreign policy. This is because in these weighty coalitions each member country tends to manifest more independent worldviews.

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