

Joining hands or diverging interests?
Sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the
United Nations General Assembly

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Abstract

The formation of informal groupings of states is a manifestation of the global shift in economic power, and the birth of the BRICS, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is a clear example of such a grouping on the international stage. Despite the numerous differences between these states they have flexed their muscle to gain influence in the Western-led world order, and scholars have noted that this grouping stands out for its importance, due to its economic weight and its coverage across continents.

Ever since their start in 2011, the BRICS have expressed their intentions to extend their cooperation at the United Nations. Proposals in the United Nations General Assembly take the form of resolutions, which can be written and co-written by the United Nations member states. Since this sponsoring of resolutions is a way to push forward agenda items and policy changes, one would expect the BRICS to cooperate and align their sponsorship activities. In turn, this would increase their power in the international field.

The purpose of this thesis is to test which of the three major streams in international relations, realism, liberal institutionalism and constructivism, is best able to explain the co-sponsorship activities of the BRICS in the UNGA. Closely following the development of the BRICS grouping and their activities at the United Nations is relevant to assess the possible changes in the global order resulting from a shift in economic power. Through the use of a large-N network analysis, I examine the patterns of co-sponsorship of the BRICS of resolutions adopted in the United Nations General Assembly plenary sessions. Additionally, I test their sponsorship behaviour in three of the Main Committees of the General Assembly.

The results of my study show that of the three theories discussed in this thesis, liberal institutionalism is best able to explain the patterns of BRICS cooperation in the sponsorship of United Nations General Assembly resolutions. This theory expects the BRICS to cooperate on fields such as economic issues and human rights, which is indeed supported by my findings. However, the results of this study show that even though the BRICS declare to cooperate on the United Nations level, they do not form a coherent bloc when it comes to resolution sponsorship.

My research implies that further research should be conducted on both the concept of the BRICS and United Nations General Assembly resolution sponsorship and raises the question in what way the BRICS actually cooperate at the United Nations level.

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List of abbreviations

BICs	Brazil, India, China
BRICs	Brazil, Russia, India, China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
DSM	Dispute Settlement Mechanism
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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1. Introduction

The formation of informal groupings of states is a manifestation of the global shift in economic power. These groupings often focus on intergovernmental interaction and examples include the G8 and G20 (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). The grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) lacks geographical convergence, economic similarity and convergence in internal politics, which makes that the so-called BRICS are not an obvious set (Armijo, 2007). Nonetheless, scholars have noted that this grouping stands out for its importance, due to its economic weight, and its coverage across continents (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). Some say the BRICS have grouped together to enhance their power on the international stage and collectively challenge the Western-led world order (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014).

1.1 Development of the BRICS

The current BRICS grouping initially consisted of Brazil, Russia, India and China, known as the BRICs, which was a mere investment category as named by Jim O'Neill in 2001. While this research director from Goldman Sachs initially recognised these four states as an investment category and labelled them based on their economic potential, the BRICs have grown to be something much more than that. They were later joined by South Africa, reforming the acronym from BRICs to BRICS, using a capitalised S. Despite the numerous differences that exist between the initial four states, they have managed to expand their cooperation to more and more fields throughout the years. Their first official meeting in 2006 was the starting point of a series of summits, leading to common positions and statements. Starting there, a process of political dialogue and cooperation followed. The fields of cooperation continued expanding, and the BRICs turned out to be rather effective in finding common grounds and have indeed been able to affect global governance as well as the way the states are viewed as a group (Scaffardi, 2014). 2011 marked an important year for the BRICS, as South Africa officially joined the grouping and they all occupied a seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

In their joint statements, the BRICS express their intentions to extend their cooperation at the United Nations (UN) (Ferdinand, 2014). The UN is the world's largest intergovernmental organisation, currently consisting of 193 member states. The UN is concerned with a multitude of topics, among which are security and sustainable development. Its structure allows for its member states to cooperate and solve global problems together (United Nations, n.d. B). The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is widely considered as the most important platform in which international politics are played out (Kim & Russet, 1996). It is the only forum in which nearly all states come together to address issues concerning the international community (Hooijmakers & Keukeleire, 2016; Voeten, 2000). The UNGA meets on an annual basis, and its meetings are called sessions. Each session starts in September and lasts until all issues of the

agenda have been addressed (United Nations, n.d. A). Then, in next year's September, a new session starts. Currently, the UNGA is in its 72nd session. Due to the workload of the UNGA, it is divided in a plenary session, in which all major statements are made and broad-ranging debate takes place, and six Committees, which are more focused on specific fields and which undertake in-depth discussion of issues in these fields (United Nations, n.d. C). Cooperation in this body is meaningful, since it implies member states take shared stances in world politics and have aligned foreign policy preferences (Bailey et al, 2015).

1.2 Cooperation at the UN

Cooperation and joint positions in the UN can be measured in different ways. A widely covered topic is UNGA voting patterns. A less studied subject is the realisation of the proposals that are voted upon in the UNGA. Proposals in the UNGA take the form of resolutions, which can be written and co-written by the UN member states. This writing of resolutions is called sponsoring or co-sponsoring. Resolution sponsorship is a way to push forward agenda items, and is thus a way for member states to address policy changes or topics as they see fit. Resolutions can either be written (sponsored) by a single member state or by a multitude of member states. By co-sponsoring resolutions, member states are able to express common positions and collectively address issues they consider important. Given the expressed wish of the BRICS' to cooperate on the UN-level, I expect them to work together more closely on policy proposals, in other words: to engage in more co-sponsorship activities with the other BRICS states compared to the time before birth of the BRICS concept. Moreover, the BRICS have already organised as a network outside of the UNGA (Scaffardi, 2014); consequently, one would expect them to behave in a similar manner within the UNGA.

In this thesis, I examine whether the BRICS behave as a coherent bloc in the UNGA since this will allow them to better push forward agenda items (resolutions) that they would like to address, using a large N of 803 resolutions. I explain "more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions" as the degree to which the BRICS are able to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences by formally presenting proposals for consideration in the UNGA. Increased cooperation would mean that the states part of the BRICS grouping are more often, and in higher numbers, co-sponsors of the same resolution. In turn, this would increase their power in the international field, since by sponsoring resolutions they can push forward policy changes that are aligned with their own interests. By examining different aspects of the network formed by their co-sponsorship activities I am able to scrutinise the BRICS' cooperation in the UNGA. I focus on the behaviour of the BRICS in the UNGA plenary sessions.

1.3 Social and scientific relevance

The relevance of the rise of the BRICS states for global governance is clearly described by Cooper and Flesher: “China, India, Brazil and to some extent South Africa—are beginning to reverse the historically weak mechanisms of collective action associated with forums such as the G77, and the splintering effects of the policy competition that has often arisen among developing states as a consequence of economic globalisation” (2013, p. 944). What is more, their development and influence has been covered extensively by numerous scholars, which is only rightful considering the BRICS count for 43% of the world’s population, 20% of the world’s GDP and 18% of trade globally (Mielniczuk, 2013).

My research is relevant since it shines a light on the actual implementation of the intentions of the BRICS to coordinate their activities on the UN level. Also, it could contribute to the scientific discussion of BRICS cooperation in two ways. Firstly, it fills the gap with regard to BRICS sponsorship activities that exists in the current literature. Whereas the voting behaviour of the BRICS in the UN is studied by a number of scholars, this is not the case for BRICS’ sponsorship activity in the UN. Sponsorship can tell us something about the behaviour of the BRICS as a coherent political bloc and is thus relevant to study. The relevance of sponsorship is illustrated by the multitude of studies on this subject, not only in the UNGA but also in the different organs of the US political system such as the US House of Representatives, House of Congress and state legislatures (Box-Steffensmeier & Christenson, 2014; Browne, 1985; Campbell, 1982; Kessler & Krehbiel, 1996). Secondly, on a more general level, the study of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) is relevant given the increasing importance of international institutions, among which are formal IGOs (Stein, 2008). To understand and explain the international political arena, incorporation of International institutions is essential. Martin and Simmons (2012) add to this that IGOs can be used by states to impose norms and values and influence outcomes. More specifically, the relevance of the UNGA is clearly explained by Voeten: “The UNGA is the only forum in which a large number of states meet and vote on a regular basis on issues concerning the international community. Even if the UNGA is seen as ‘merely a passive arena for the political interaction of member states,’ studying this interaction over a long period of time and across different issue areas should reveal changes in the behaviour of states and in the dimensionality of global conflict” (2000, pp. 185-186).

Besides this, the study of BRICS co-sponsorship behaviour is socially relevant because it shows another facet of possible BRICS cooperation, which will contribute to the discussion of their political coherence. It reveals whether their declared intentions to cooperate at the UN level are reflected in their sponsorship activities and the resolutions they propose. The cooperation of the BRICS at this level may lead to shifting power structures or a change of behaviour by other states.

1.4 Structure of the paper

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, the existing literature on UNGA voting, sponsorship behaviour in the UNGA and other institutions and the role of the BRICS in the UNGA is reviewed. In section 3, the theoretical assumptions adopted for this study are presented, and different international relations theories are discussed. Section 4 discusses the methodology and data used for empirical analysis. The results of this analysis are presented in section 5 and 6, and lastly section 7 outlines the conclusions drawn based on this study, as well as the limitations of it and recommendations for further research.

2. Literature review

The practices behind the adoption of resolutions in the UNGA have been a regular object of study for years. In this section I assess studies examining the voting and resolution sponsorship behaviour in the UNGA and other relevant institutions. Also, I address the development of the BRICS and their coherence with regard to UNGA voting behaviour. Lastly, formulate my research question based on the existing literature.

2.1 UNGA voting

Numerous studies have been conducted analysing the voting cohesion of different groups of states within the UN, showing different results. Voeten (2000) discusses UNGA voting behaviour in the years 1946-1988 and 1991-1996, and discovers that the dominant voting alignment in the UNGA is the East-West dimension, and that a less strong North-South dimension is visible. He shows that both this division as well as the positions of states remain stable after the end of the Cold War. Statements that global politics has become multidimensional and that states form different alliances based on the issues discussed, are not supported by his findings. He does find an “emerging counterhegemonic voting bloc” (2000, p. 213) composed of rising powers that challenge the US-led global order. In an earlier study, Jacobsen (1969) finds a trend towards a more bi-polar system, in which the East-West conflict is stable and the North-South conflict is becoming more aligned with the East-West conflict. Hooijmakers and Keukeleire (2016) discuss a limitation of measuring voting behaviour, namely that voting cohesion is only a measurement of the output of the processes active within the UNGA. It thus shows only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover, cohesion between states with regard to resolutions to which almost all member states agree is less relevant, since this may not reflect cohesion but rather general consensus. Being aware of this limitation, Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten (2015) present a more complex, dynamic ordinal spatial model to research the meaning behind UNGA votes which is better able to reveal underlying foreign policy stances of UNGA voting and differentiates between changes in the UN agenda versus changing foreign policy preferences. They find that during the Cold War, there was a clear conflict between communist and capitalist states. After the Cold War however, the non-Western pole has shown less cohesion than before.

2.2 UNGA voting & the BRICS

Besides the division between East-West and North-South, ever since the birth of the BRICS formation, the grouping's voting cohesion has been studied extensively. For example, Ferdinand (2014) analyses the voting cohesion of the BRICS in the years 1974 to 2008 and finds a greater and sustained tendency of the BRICS voting compared to the five permanent members of the UNSC to vote in favour of UNGA resolutions. Voting cohesion among BRICS is higher than in the UNGA as a whole, but a little less than in the developing

world caucuses. Within the BRICS there has been a clear divergence between the greater cohesion of India, Brazil and South Africa and the somewhat lower cohesion of Russia and China. His figures suggest a high degree of convergence of foreign policy positions among BRICS, as least as far as the issues that come before the UNGA are concerned. In contrast to this, Hooijmakers and Keukeleire (2016) state that in general, there is no cohesive BRICS voting bloc in the UNGA in the years 2006 to 2014. Moreover, they discuss a number of BRICS' statements in which the UN is mentioned and in which the commitment to cooperation is expressed, but find that there is no significant increase in voting cohesion between the BRICS since the start of the consultations in the BRICs framework in 2006.

2.3 Resolution sponsorship

The foreign policy positions of member states in the UNGA can also be observed by analysing their resolution sponsorship activity, as done by Jacobsen (1969). He defines a sponsor as "a nation which formally presents a proposal for consideration" (1969, p.237). In his study, both UNGA voting and co-sponsorship of resolutions are discussed. He analyses states' behaviour across two conflict dimensions: East-West and North-South and finds that in the East-West dimension, the West displays more coherent co-sponsorship behaviour. When comparing the North and South, the South shows more convergent sponsorship behaviour than the North. Other research on sponsorship of UN proposals has been done by Mower (1962). According to him, member states "measure the relative values of direct or indirect sponsorship and critically appraise the various purposes to which the sponsorship process can be put, as well as the political ground that may be lost by injudicious entry into the list of sponsors" (1962, p. 661). He discusses both direct sponsorship, when proposals are made openly by delegations, and indirect sponsorship, when a government chooses to work through other delegations in getting its policies before a committee in the form of a draft resolution. Even though both these studies are not recent, they provide an interesting framework for researching the sponsorship behaviour of member states in the UNGA.

Research on sponsorship has also been done within the US' political system. Examples of studies include Campbell (1982) and Schiller (1995). Campbell examines possible reasons for differing levels of co-sponsorship activity within the US' Congress. He finds multiple explanations for this phenomenon: "the goals of securing re-election, gaining influence within the Congress, and producing good public policy, as well as the member's general level of legislative activity examined as influences on co-sponsorship activity" (1982, p. 415). Both ideology and general behaviour in the Congress thus seem to play a role (Campbell, 1982). Schiller (1995) does not focus on co-sponsorship, but highlights the importance of the studying sponsorship activity. Similar to Hooijmakers and Keukeleire (2016), he states that sponsorship data provides information about how legislators interact within their institution. In contrast to this, voting

analysis provides information about the outcome of the position taking process only, and scrutinises the actors' choice from a predetermined set of alternatives on which they have no further influence.

Thus, studying sponsorship activity yields more information on the behaviour of actors. Besides the US' political system, research has been done on co-signing in the US' judicial system. Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson (2012) discuss the co-signing of *amicus curiae* before the Supreme Court and find that coalition formation is the most important practice of lobbying, illustrating the functioning and importance of networks. They prove that coalitions are often used to "pursue strategic goals at reduced costs, shape public debate by influencing a broader platform, gather information, and receive symbolic benefits" (2012, p. 82). This is in line with Onderco's (2018) research, who finds that for states, networks are a way to push forward their preferred agenda items. Informal structures can be a way to enhance bargaining positions. The insights on networks provided by Box-Steffensmeier (2012) and Onderco (2018) can be used for the study of sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the UNGA.

2.4 BRICS cooperation

When scrutinising the behaviour of the BRICS in the UN, one assumes that the BRICS cooperate on the international political level, rather than just in the economic arena. Their efforts to coordinate policies are reflected in their strategies and inter-ministerial processes (Armijo & Roberts, 2013). Heads of governments have been meeting since 2008, and from 2013 onwards the leaders also meet during G20 summits (Ferdinand, 2014). Moreover, they have been publishing joint statements and action plans. According to Laïdi (2012), the impact of the BRICS can be assessed based on the degree of political coherence among them, as well as their capacity to influence the international system. Much comments have been made that the BRICS have not been diplomatically effective, for example by Pant (2013). One should however take into account that international institutions are resistant to change (Onderco, 2018) and that UN resolutions seem to be fairly repetitive (Keohane, 1984; Koremenos et al., 2001; Ikenberry, 2009; Voeten, 2013). Ferdinand (2014) adds to these difficulties that the BRICS states are heterogeneous in many ways, such as size, governance system and relative power in their region.

The importance and relevance of studies on sponsorship is illustrated by the extensive literature that has been written so far. Furthermore, one can agree that the rising powers that form the BRICS have had an influence of the global order. Taking into account both factors, one can only note that the existing literature has, until today, not combined the two. The literature on BRICS cooperation on the UN level is limited to studies of their voting cohesion, leaving their co-sponsorship behaviour undiscussed. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the existing literature and elucidate the patterns of co-sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS states, and discuss the influence that the emergence of their grouping has had on their cooperation. Moreover, to explain these patterns of cooperation, I scrutinise them by examining three international

relations theories. These objectives are reflected in the following research question that I will answer in this research:

What theory best explains the development of BRICS' cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions?

3. Theoretical framework

In this section, I present the theoretical assumptions used to answer my research question. I outline the theories that I use in my study and formulate expectations of the BRICS cooperation based on those theories. These theories provide a framework for the discussion of past BRICS cooperation and possible BRICS cooperation in the UNGA. I start with presenting the role of intergovernmental organisations in the current international field and the development of the BRICS.

3.1 The role of intergovernmental organisations

In my research, I define international institutions as “sets of rules meant to govern international behaviour of states”, based on the definition by Martin and Simmons and Mearsheimer (Martin & Simmons, 2002, p. 328). These institutions can be informal, but could also take the shape of formal intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), which describe interstate associations of actors with membership criteria, that often make use of bureaucracies in order to be able to function well (Martin & Simmons, 2002; Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014).

According to Abbott and Snidal (1998), IGOs allow different states to pursue shared goals. Moreover, they state that formal IGOs have become a vital part of contemporary international life and allow for “centralisation of collective activities” and have “the capacity to operate as neutral actors in managing interstate disputes and conflicts” (1998, pp. 4-5). Likewise, they can be a means to lower transaction costs and to share information (Abbott & Snidal, 1998). Within the field of international relations, different theories have dissimilar views on the role of IGOs and the cooperation of states within those organisations. In this study, I discuss the three major streams in international relations: realism, liberal institutionalism and constructivism. Realism is the largest stream in the study of international relations, and is indispensable in the study of possible cooperation between states, as the theory is very critical on this as well as on the effectiveness of IGOs. In contrast to this, liberal institutionalism and constructivism recognise the importance of IGOs and allow for states to cooperate to reach common objectives. Constructivists claim their theory is the answer to the perceived flaws of realism, and comparing these two theories in my study is thus meaningful. Lastly, liberal institutionalism recognises the importance of IGOs, making it a relevant theory to include as the UN is central in this study.

Before addressing those theories, I consider the development of the BRICS in other IGOs, which I assume sets the stage for the sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the UNGA.

3.2 Development of the BRICS

Past patterns of cooperation between the BRICS provide a base for the expectations of BRICS cooperation of different international relations theories. In his work 'The BRICS and the future of the global order' Stuenkel (2015) describes the formation and advancement of the BRICS from a mere investment category devised by Goldman Sachs in 2001, to economic cooperation and finally an international political formation. The inclusion of South Africa was an important step to take ownership of their formation and to move away from their image as constructed by Goldman Sachs. Their political cooperation started with intra-group security issues, but quickly expanded to fields such as internal security issues and financial cooperation. Moreover, the BRICS states cooperate in areas as agriculture, business, competition, development and finance (Stuenkel, 2015). Their efforts to form a coherent and cooperative bloc are reflected in the development of their own international institutions such as the New Development Bank and the BRICS Contingency Reserve Agreement (Stuenkel, 2015). Although this institutionalisation was seen by some as lacking significance, it did mean a next step in the advancement and intra-group cooperation of the BRICS formation. Contrary to what many expected earlier, the BRICS made no efforts to, likely will not be able to and do not seem to aim to drastically turn over the current world order. Stuenkel finds that rather, the rising powers will challenge the status quo within the existing institutions and IGOs, strengthened by their newly gained economic weight. Armijo and Roberts (2014) add to this that until this day, not one rising power has expressed the wish to revolutionary reorder the international arena. This may partly be explained by the fact that the current order has served some of the BRICS well, complemented by fears that a new order will leave the BRICS worse off (Stuenkel, 2015).

In the past years, the world has witnessed this rise of the BRICS and the consequences this may have for the current global order. Even though these rising powers are not near challenging the United States in its hegemony, it is clear that in their upswing the BRICS have flexed their muscle to advocate for a more prominent role in the current Western-led international order, and are likely to continue to do so. Several scholars have stated that the BRICS' increase in economic power is followed by a greater willingness, assertiveness and ability to exert influence, as they have already shown in multiple IGOs (Narlikar & Kumar, 2012; Stuenkel, 2015; Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). To illustrate this, I address their role in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and UNSC. The increasingly important role of Brazil, India and China (BICs) in the WTO is discussed by Narlikar et al. (2012). They have not included South Africa in their analysis, which is no surprise given that it only joined the BRICS in 2011. Additionally, Russia has only entered the WTO in 2012 and is thus not part of this study, leaving the three states of the BICs. Narlikar et al. find an important role for the BICs in two fields especially: coalition formation and the WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM). In the past years, developing countries and rising powers have flexed their muscles in WTO trade negotiations and although collective bargaining in the multilateral regime is not

something new, Narlikar et al. (2012) find that the coalitions formed in the negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda were different than for example coalitions formed during the GATT negotiations. First of all, the coalitions have shown to be much stronger than before. Developing countries had greater external weight due to their economic development and stronger internal cohesion. Moreover, the coalitions proved to have a real institutional impact and received clear recognition. It is important to point out that common positions of a coalitions are not mere coincidence but rather the result of conscious coordination. Coalitions are especially important for developing countries, where they serve as a mechanism to raise their voice and be heard, rather than being marginalised (Narlikar et al., 2012). The role of the BICs in these new coalitions was important: the coalitions that were led by Brazil, India or China had greater external weight due to the economic power of these states. Narlikar et al. (2012) even go as far as saying that the BICs had a significant impact on the workings of the WTO by exerting influence as to achieve more evenly distributed power within the organisation. The rising activism of the BICs was due to growing confidence as a result of “strong economic growth and trade performance, along with institutional adaptation and learning in the WTO” (Narlikar et al., 2012, p. 261). Their newly gained confidence is also reflected in their use of the DSM in the WTO, in which the BICs have been particularly active; Brazil and India have been most active out of all developing countries in the WTO (Narlikar et al., 2012). The BICs thus made use of their new position both by bringing points to the agenda as well as challenging the structure and objectives of the WTO. It is important to note that Narlikar et al. (2012) state that within the WTO the BICs have not behaved as “radically revisionist powers” (p. 271), and have pushed for moderate reforms only, in line with Stuenkel’s (2015) findings.

Another body in which the BRICS showed cooperative behaviour is the UNSC, on which they all occupied a seat during the year 2011; China and Russia as two of the five permanent members and Brazil, India and South Africa as rotating members. As members of the UNSC, they showed coherent voting behaviour, moreover on UNSC Resolution 1970 that imposed sanctions and an arms embargo on Libya. Later, the BRICS abstained from supporting a draft resolution treating the crisis in Syria and the following human rights violations (Armijo & Roberts, 2014; Stuenkel, 2015). According to Armijo and Roberts (2014) these joint positions are a sign of conciliation and coordination between the different BRICS states, given that some of the positions seemed to not necessarily reflect self-interest. In their New Delhi Declaration published in 2012, the BRICS look back on their shared year in the UNSC and state to “underscore our commitment to work together in the UN ... in the years to come” (BRICS Information Centre, 2013). However, in the year 2012, when all BRICS except for Brazil were still serving the UNSC, Russia and China vetoed resolutions for which India and South Africa voted in favour. A common denominator for the BRICS in the UNSC can be found in their shared disapproval of the use of force or sanctions (Armijo & Roberts, 2014). In contrast to the WTO, the BRICS’ efforts to reform the UNSC and to gain influence have been

rather unsuccessful (Armijo & Roberts, 2014). This could partly be explained by the differences in power that exist between China and Russia as permanent members on the one hand, and the other BRICS states on the other hand. A limitation of the studies concerning the cooperation of the BRICS in the UNSC is that both the time period and the number of resolutions covered in these studies is only limited, since 2011 is the only year in which all five states occupied a seat in the organ.

3.3 Predicted cooperation

Cooperation between the BRICS has increased considerably since the conclusion of their current formation in 2011. The BRICS have joined hands and participated in the international field following the current, Western based rules of the world order (Stuenkel, 2015). They have displayed cooperation in a number of IGOs in order to reach common objectives and push forward shared interests. As stressed by Abbott and Snidal, the role of IGOs in the international field is one that cannot be taken lightly: “formal IGOs have played a major role in many, if not most, instances of interstate collaboration” (1998, p. 29). IGOs allow states to reach objectives that they would not have been able to reach without them. The UNGA is special in this regard, as it is considered the eminent platform to push forward foreign policy preferences. I thus assume that the BRICS will show coherent sponsorship behaviour as to pursue their shared interests. I argue that the BRICS cooperate in the UNGA since the UNGA is a platform in which “international politics is played out” (Kim and Russett, 1996, p. 529) and in which foreign policy preferences can be expressed (Bailey et al., 2015). As discussed by Voeten, the UNGA is “the only forum in which a large number of states meet and vote on a regular basis on issues concerning the international community” (2000, pp. 185-186). Thus, resolution sponsorship in the UNGA is the preeminent way to push forward policy preferences, which can allow the BRICS to successfully exert influence.

3.4 Realism

In his work, Voeten (2000) presents the ‘counterhegemonic bloc hypothesis’. This realist hypothesis argues that the hegemony of the US led to a counterhegemonic bloc to be formed. According to realism, cooperation between states happens when states face a common threat and pool their resources to defend themselves against this threat (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). Moreover, states consider “unchecked power as a potential threat to their survival” (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014, p. 97). Through this counterhegemonic bloc, rising powers challenge the power of the hegemon, in this case the US. The formation of such a bloc can be seen as self-help behaviour of the states to ensure their own survival in the anarchic environment that they operate in. Also, these states challenge the existing rules and principles of the international system. Voeten (2000) finds that in the years 1991 to 1996, such a counterhegemonic voting bloc existed in the UNGA, of which, among others, China and India were part. This proves that

states, notwithstanding their internal differences, can form a coherent voting bloc to challenge the US hegemony.

Evidence suggests that the BRICS states have taken steps to challenge the US-led world order separately as well, ranging from expressing wishes to reform global institutions to summits and initiatives to balance the established power and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Harden, 2014), which strengthens the argument that they indeed wish to challenge this world order. Moreover, they “have declared a shared diplomatic ambition to restructure global governance so as to play a more important role in the international arena” (Harden, 2014, p. 14). Following this line of reasoning, I argue that the BRICS can display coherent co-sponsorship behaviour as well, despite their widely discussed internal differences. Following the realist thought, the BRICS states will only cooperate if this cooperation enhances their individual position in the existing Western-dominated international structure of power. Thus, according to this theory the BRICS will cooperate on resolutions that cover topics related to peace and security and challenge the US hegemony. I therefore formulate the following expectation:

Expectation 1: the development of the cooperation of the BRICS before and after the grouping’s emergence can best be explained by realism, which implies the states show cooperative behaviour in areas concerning peace and security and rebalancing the world order.

3.5 Liberal institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism evolves around the idea that states can cooperate to achieve common goals and do so especially through international institutions. It expects states will hand over more and more authority to international institutions (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). It recognises some parts of realism, especially the idea that there is a certain degree of anarchy. However, institutionalists say that realism puts too much emphasis on conflict and underestimates the capacities of international institutions and the possibilities that these institutions offer (Grieco, 1988). A core notion of institutionalism, in contrast to realism, is that institutions actually matter and that “they make a difference in the behaviour of states and in the nature of international politics” (Stein, 2008, p. 212).

In line with Abbott and Snidal (1998), Stein (2008) notices an increasingly important role for institutions in the international field. According to liberal institutionalism, institutions are more than simply the rules of the game and allow for increased and enhanced cooperation between states and can support states in achieving their ends (Grieco, 1988; Abbott & Snidal, 1998). The role of institutions is also discussed by Narlikar et al. (2012), who state that institutions have an influence on the distribution of costs and benefits of state interaction and that through international institutions, states are, to a certain extent, able to control other states’ behaviour. Institutionalism sees the birth and proliferation of IGOs as formal

expressions of the institutionalisation of international politics (Martin & Simmons, 2002). It assumes that valuable public goods can be provided by global governance institutions (Armijo & Roberts, 2014).

Thus, according to liberal institutionalism, we can expect the BRICS to cooperate in the UNGA to achieve a common goal. As their goal is to achieve collective objectives and to push forward their interests and they have cooperated in other IGOs before, I expect them to exhibit coherent sponsorship behaviour in the UNGA. For liberal institutionalists, international institutions are a means to enhance cooperation. In particular, this theory emphasises cooperation in economic issues (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). This would for example explain the active role of Brazil, India and China in the WTO as discussed by Narlikar et al. (2012). As the BRICS have already shown economic cooperation outside of the UNGA, liberal institutionalism predicts this is the type of behaviour the BRICS display when it comes to co-sponsorship of resolutions. Additionally, liberal institutionalism argues that non-aggression, human rights and peaceful relations is of much importance in the international social structure (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). This theory argues that the global order is not solely about hard power and has an optimistic view on the prospect of progress of the global condition. This applies to for example international cooperation as well as improvement of human right situations. Thus, the following expectation is formulated:

Expectation 2: The development of the cooperation of the BRICS before and after the grouping's emergence can best be explained by liberal institutionalism, which implies the states show cooperative behaviour in areas concerning economic policy and human rights.

3.6 Constructivism

As stated by Adler, “constructivism is the view that the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world” (1997, p. 322). Constructivism clearly explains that power is not limited to the traditional forms of hard, military power, but it can be embedded in social understandings and practices (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). In line with liberal institutionalism, this theory values fundamental ideas related to peaceful relations and human rights (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). For constructivists, processes of changes in the human social conventions form the base for the study of the world order. Within this world order, IGOs are able to shape and change social reality (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). Different from the other two theories discussed, constructivism sees IGOs as autonomous actors with authority who are responsible for independent effects (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014). “They act to promote socially valued goals by means that are mostly rational, technocratic, impartial and non-violent” (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014, p. 150). They are “in part both reflections of and participants in ongoing social prevailing ideas” (Abbott & Snidal, 1998, p. 8). The ideas of states are thus reflected in their behaviour in IGOs. According to constructivism, institutions are based on collective understandings and cooperation is possible if states

share identities and interests. Given that the BRICS are actively promoting their intra-state cooperation in the international field, I can thus assume that the BRICS share a similar outlook of the world and their cooperation in different IGOs and fields implies shared identities and interests. An example of a view shared by all BRICS states is that they all perceive the current world order as being unfair (Mielniczuk, 2013). Additionally, in his work on the BRICS, Mielniczuk (2013) explains how the interests of the BRICS states became more convergent over time, and how they increasingly focused on the same topics. The BRICS show conformity in the areas of non-intervention, respect for international law, restructuring of the global order and developmental issues. On the other hand, one has to point out that this perceived shared outlook of the world may be limited by the numerous differences that exist between the BRICS states, for example but not limited to, their internal governance structures, economic policies and views on human rights issues (Armijo, 2007). Although literature on constructivism pays extensive attention to human rights, I do not consider constructivism as a suitable explanation for possible BRICS' cooperation in the field of human rights, since the BRICS have very different views on this (Armijo, 2007), which, according to constructivism, is essential for cooperation.

Given the BRICS' clear wish, as proven by their past records, to exert influence in a number of fields in the current world order, and assuming the UNGA is an important platform for international politics, one can only expect them to engage in co-sponsorship activity in the UNGA. Thus, the predicted co-sponsorship of the BRICS would, according to this theory, evolve around topics on which the BRICS have shared values and interests, leading to the following expectation:

Expectation 3: the development of the cooperation of the BRICS before and after the grouping's emergence can best be explained by constructivism, which implies the states show cooperative behaviour in areas in which they share common values such as non-intervention, respect for international law, restructuring of the global order and development.

4. Methods

In the light of the current global order, it is interesting to have a new look at the current sponsorship behaviour within the UNGA and see whether the BRICS show sponsorship cohesion. Moreover, Ferdinand (2014) recommends further research into the diplomatic behaviour of the BRICS within the different bodies of the UN. Browne (1985) finds patterns of sponsorship behaviour in different US state legislatures, but recommends further research to develop theories for these patterns. With this research, I aim to further clarify the patterns of BRICS co-sponsorship activities and provide a theoretical explanation for this. In this section I present the methodology and data used for my study. I address network analysis, the analysis of the BRICS in the UNGA plenary sessions and additional research on the First, Second and Third Committee of the UNGA.

4.1 Network analysis

As discussed earlier in this paper, I aim to answer the following research question:

What theory best explains the development of BRICS' cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions?

I explain “patterns of BRICS' cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions” as the degree to which the BRICS are able to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences by formally presenting proposals for consideration in the UNGA, based on Hooijmakers and Keukeleire's (2016) definition of the concept of “cohesion”. An increase in coherence would mean that the states part of the BRICS grouping are more often, and in higher numbers, co-sponsors of the same resolution.

The interaction of states as observed by their co-sponsorship activities can be conceived as a network as it allows one to observe the relations between states (Onderco, 2018). Thus, in my research, the UNGA resolution sponsorship activities of the BRICS will be mapped as a network. To answer the research question and to find and define the patterns of cooperation of the BRICS in the UNGA, I therefore scrutinise the BRICS network following network analysis using a large-N design. Network analysis emphasizes the structures that exist between the different social actors within a network. It is used to research and analyse network structures and serves as an instrument to identify patterns and identify and measure the properties of a network (Hafner-Burton et al., 2009). Moreover, it allows for research on who the powerful actors are within a network and which of the actors are better connected in comparison to other actors. The actors in a network can be any group of actors, for example individuals, companies or IGOs. In network analysis, the actors involved are called agents or nodes and the relations that exist between those actors are called ties or edges. For clarity, I will use the terms nodes and ties. Any set of nodes and ties can form a network, and ties can vary in strength based on the frequency of their activities,

the intensity of the use of that tie and other factors. Avant and Westminster (2016) discuss the different aspects that allow one to differentiate between different networks. In this, the distribution of ties is important; are all actors equally related, is the network broken into several parts and are the ties among the actors in a network dense or sparse? Secondly, they discuss the position of actors within the network. Lastly, one should look at the quality of the ties between different actors. The nodes in my networks are the UN member states and the ties are the connections between these states, in other words, the resolutions on which they cooperate. The more resolutions states co-sponsor together, the stronger the tie between them.

Network analysis has been widely used to research cooperation in different fields. An example is Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson's work (2014), in which they use network analysis to research the cooperation of different interest groups. This way of measuring cooperation is widely understood to be a reliable one (Kirkland and Gross, 2014). Just like co-signing of an amicus curiae brief, co-sponsorship of UNGA resolutions is a coordinated action of member states, which indicates the position of the particular member state in question. By co-sponsoring a resolution, member states contribute to or at least indicate their support for the content of the resolution, and can in this way express and coordinate their policy preferences. Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery (2009) further discuss the relation between network analysis and international relations, which was first addressed in the late 1960s. They state that network analysis allows for a set of theories for the identification and measurement of structural properties. They state that networks in international relations are able to influence the outcomes of international processes the actors are involved in, as well as have an influence on the actors itself. Given their significance in international politics, networks are important objects of research. In this setting, network analysis is particularly relevant since according to Laïdi (2012), the impact of the BRICS can be assessed based on the degree of political coherence among them, as well as their capacity to influence the international system. Additionally, network analysis is a relevant research strategy for international relations because of the insights the analysis offers in the behaviour of member states in the international system and the possibilities to map changes and stability in international politics. Lastly, network analysis is "a meaningful way to compare a large number of relationships and attributes of members of the system across space and over time" (Maoz and Terris, 2003, p. 16).

To execute my network analysis, I make use of Gephi, which is a tool for the analysis and visualisation of different types of networks. Multiple tools are available both in online and offline form to perform network analyses, although not all are suited to perform the analysis for this research. One reason for this is that not all tools are able to handle the large amount of data involved in this study, and other lack the strong visualisation techniques that Gephi does have.

4.2 Data

The timeframe selected for my research are the years 2000 to 2018. For purposes of analysis and to examine the effects of the BRICS cooperation on their co-sponsorship activities, I divide these years into two periods. The first period covers the years 2000 to 2010 and represents the pre-BRICS observations. The second period covers the years 2011 to 2018, in which the BRICS have been actively cooperating and have coordinated their policies. 2011 marks the year South Africa joined the grouping and thus the year the BRICS obtained their composition as we know it today. To obtain as much information on the patterns of cooperation since the birth of the BRICS acronym as possible, the second period logically consists of the years as described above. As for the first period, in order to be best able to observe changes, the two periods should be contiguous. Thus, the last year of the first period is chosen to be 2010. As goes for all research, the more data one is able to obtain, the higher the reliability of the conclusions one draws from these data. Nonetheless, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to study all resolutions of the UNGA since 1946, and I thus have to choose a shorter time period. To obtain reliable data whilst taking time constraints into account, I choose to set the time period for the pre-BRICS observations at ten years.

The data for this study is retrieved from the United Nations Digital Library. For this study, I include all draft resolutions approved in the UNGA plenary sessions within the timeframe of my research, the years 2000 to 2018. Moreover, for separate parts of the analysis, I include resolutions discussed in other configurations of the UNGA, more specifically the First, Second and Third Committee of the UNGA. Initially, I aimed to include all resolutions of the years 2000-2018 as voted upon in all different configurations of the UNGA, but this proved to be unfeasible. The first reason for this are time constraints. Second, Gephi, the programme used for empirical analysis, turned out to have difficulties processing such a large amount of data. Hence, I run analyses using only the resolutions approved in the UNGA plenary sessions and run separate analyses to see if my findings hold for the other configurations of the UNGA as well.

Due to the fact that the United Nations Digital Library does not mention the sponsors of adopted resolutions, I am forced to use draft resolutions as my data source, on which the sponsors are mentioned. This has no influence on the internal validity of my study since the adoption or failure of a draft resolution has no influence on the sponsorship of that resolution. Draft resolutions are thus an appropriate data source for research on UNGA sponsorship activities. Some of the resolutions adopted in the UNGA plenary sessions are written by full Committees, the president, chairman or vice-chairman of a Committee. Since these resolutions do not have individual states as sponsors, these resolutions are left out of my analysis. Likewise, resolutions written by only one member state are also discarded, since these resolutions do not tell anything about the patterns of co-sponsorship behaviour. Deleting these resolutions from my data set, I am left with 803 resolutions adopted in the UNGA plenary session.

4.3 Research design

4.3.1 Themes

Examining the two different time periods as mentioned before allows me to research how the network has developed over time. In order to establish whether the BRICS indeed show more coherent sponsorship behaviour in the years 2011-2018 than in the period before, I compare the sponsorship activities of the BRICS before and after the beginning of the BRICS phenomenon.

Furthermore, to test the expectations as formulated in the theoretical framework, I divide the resolutions in different themes by labelling them based on the subject addressed in the resolution. The labels assigned to the resolutions are based on the pillars of the UN and earlier work of Voeten (2013), who extensively studied voting behaviour in the UNGA. He allocated descriptions to each resolution based on the topic of that particular resolution. The labels he used are: Middle East, disarmament, nuclear disarmament, human rights, colonialism and economic issues. As the UN itself describes its main pillars as peace and security, human rights and development (United Nations, n.d. D), I also include development in my analysis. Since human rights is already part of Voeten's classification and I consider peace and security addressed in the categories of Middle East, disarmament, nuclear disarmament and colonialism, I do not add separate labels for these themes. Finally, I recognise resolutions that concern internal UN affairs. This group of resolutions discusses the structure, tasks and role of the UN. These topics do not fit the themes as created by Voeten, nor do they fit into the category of development. Thus, for these resolutions the theme of 'internal UN matters' is created.

These themes, combined with further examination of the topics of the resolutions provide a clear image of the issues prioritised when it comes to the BRICS' sponsorship cooperation and enables me to scrutinise the different theories that predict cooperation. To do so, I relate the themes between the different theories that are addressed in the theoretical framework. To test realism, I use the following themes: Middle East, disarmament, nuclear disarmament and colonialism. Liberal institutionalism is covered by economic issues and human rights. Development and internal UN matters are relevant for the discussion of constructivism. Table 1 provides an overview of the theories and themes addressed in this research.

Theories	Addressed in
Realism	Middle East, disarmament, nuclear disarmament, colonialism
Liberal institutionalism	Economic issues, human rights
Constructivism	Development, internal UN matters

Table 1: Overview of the theories and themes

In order to study these areas of cooperation, I formulate sub questions. Following the assigned themes, the first sub question addresses resolutions on the Middle East and is formulated as follows:

SQ 1: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to the Middle East than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The time dimension as mentioned in the sub question is necessary to see how the patterns of cooperation between the BRICS states have developed since the birth of their grouping, and will thus be repeated in each of the sub questions. In this way, I am able to contribute meaning to their formation, and see whether or not this formation has had influence on their co-sponsorship activities.

Secondly, I examine the BRICS cooperation in the field of disarmament, leading to the following sub question:

SQ 2: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to disarmament than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

In addition to general disarmament, Voeten (2013) pays special attention to nuclear disarmament by labelling this as a separate category. To study the sponsorship of resolutions concerning nuclear disarmament, I formulate sub question three:

SQ 3: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to nuclear disarmament than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

To study the sponsorship activities of the BRICS of resolutions on colonialism, I devise sub question four:

SQ 4: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to colonialism than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

Next, I formulate sub questions for the themes related to liberal institutionalism. To examine the BRICS' cooperation in the field of economic issues, the following sub question is derived:

SQ 5: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to economic issues than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

Additionally, I address human rights. To scrutinise the development of BRICS' co-sponsorship behaviour in this field, the following sub question is expressed:

SQ 6: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to human rights than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

To test the explanatory power of constructivism for the sponsorship activities of the BRICS, the following sub question for development is used:

SQ 7: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to development than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The last sub question relates to internal UN matters and is formulated as follows:

SQ 8: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to internal UN matters than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

Not only will my research provide an insight on the strength and development of this cooperation, it will also explain what the underlying reasons for this cooperation are. Ideally, I would also compare overall sponsorship activities of the BRICS, including all resolutions of all different themes in one analysis. Unfortunately, Gephi is not able to process a dataset of that size. Consequently, this will not be included in my analysis and instead I focus on the different themes separately. The following Table 2 lists all themes as used in this thesis, as well as examples of the topics of resolutions for each theme.

Theme	Examples of resolutions in period 2000-2010	Example of resolutions in period 2011-2018
Middle East	Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine; The Syrian Golan	The situation in the Syrian Arab Republic; Jerusalem
Disarmament	Cooperation between the UN and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; Report of the International Criminal Court	Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict; Zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic
Nuclear disarmament	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	-
Colonialism	Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade	Self-determination of French Polynesia; Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade
Economic issues	Special emergency economic assistance for the recovery and the development of the Comoros; Towards global partnerships	Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes; Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Day
Human rights	Measures to be taken against political platforms and activities based on doctrines of superiority and violent nationalist ideologies which are based on racial discrimination or ethnic exclusiveness and xenophobia, including neo-Nazism; Emergency humanitarian assistance to Malawi	Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome; Global health and foreign policy: addressing the health of the most vulnerable for an inclusive society
Development	Agricultural technology for development; Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community	A global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development; New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support
Internal UN Matters	Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of UN personnel	Enhancement of the administration and financial functioning of the United Nations; International Association of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations

Table 2: Themes of resolutions and examples

4.3.2 Other configurations of the UNGA

The main focus of this study are the resolutions written in the plenary session of the UNGA. Given that this is where major statements are made and debates on a broad range of topics are undertaken (United Nations, n.d. C), the relevance of these plenary sessions is unambiguous. Nonetheless, the other Main Committees of the UNGA are an essential part of this institution, as they provide for in-depth discussion and problem solving. The UNGA knows six Main Committees, which are listed in Table 3.

Committee	Focus
First Committee	Disarmament & International Security
Second Committee	Economic & Financial
Third Committee	Social, Humanitarian & Cultural
Fourth Committee	Special Political & Decolonisation
Fifth Committee	Administrative & Budgetary
Sixth Committee	Legal

Table 3: Main Committees of the UNGA

Source: United Nations (n.d. A)

Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to address the resolutions written in these different configurations of the UNGA for all of the years addressed in this study, such an analysis still yields valuable information. In order to still obtain part of this information, I run my analysis for the 50th and 72nd session of the UNGA First, Second and Third Committee. These sessions cover the years 2000-2001 and 2017-2018, respectively. The two sessions of these three configurations include 161 resolutions in total. I choose these years to compare the patterns of sponsorship behaviour before and after the birth of the BRICS grouping. Since the development of coordinated cooperation may take time, I do not use a session directly after the start of the BRICS. Thus, I select the earliest and latest year of my dataset.

The analysis of these Committees is an addition to my research on resolutions adopted in the UNGA plenary session, and may serve as support for my findings for these resolutions. In order to do so, I assign the different Committees to the theories discussed in the theoretical framework. The First Committee relates to matters of security and can thus be used to test the explanatory power of realism. The Second and Third Committee focus on matters as expressed in my expectation for liberal institutionalism, and are thus assigned to this theory.

It would be more reliable to run the analysis for a longer period of time, but this is not feasible within this thesis. Nonetheless, extending my study with this analysis of two years of these configurations of the UNGA allows me to see if patterns as observed in the plenary sessions extend to the other UNGA configurations, thus providing insights on the patterns of cooperation of the BRICS in a broader sense. I do not run my analysis for the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Committee of the UNGA because most or all of the resolutions written in these Committees are written by the Committee as a whole, by the chairman or the vice-chairman of the Committee. These resolutions do not provide insight in the patterns of cooperation of states and I thus deliberately do not include these committees in this study. Ideally, the Sixth Committee would be analysed to address international law as discussed in my expectation for constructivism. However, since this is not feasible within my research design, I will leave international law out of my analysis. Likewise, non-intervention is mostly addressed in the UNSC, which I will not address in my study.

4.3.3 Metrics

Examining these different characteristics allows me to obtain a complete image of the co-sponsorship activities of the BRICS and to scrutinise their cooperation and relationships within the UNGA. For all of the sub questions discussed above, I assess the following four characteristics of the BRICS network in the UNGA sponsorship activities:

Density of the network

The actual density of the network of the BRICS is relevant as it compares the number of connections, i.e. the number of resolutions the different BRICS states co-sponsor together with the potential number of connections. In this case, the potential connections are related to the total number of resolutions the BRICS could have sponsored collectively. A complete network has a value of 1, meaning that it contains all possible edges. The number of potential connections can be easily calculated through the following formula:

$$PC = \frac{n*(n-1)}{2}$$

In this formula, "PC" is potential connections and "n" is the number of nodes in the network.

I compare the density of the BRICS' network as cooperation on resolutions in the UNGA in the years after their development as a common group with the years before that. An increased density of their networks would imply enhanced cooperation in the UNGA.

Weighted degree centrality

Weighted degree centrality assigns an importance score based purely on the number of ties held by each node and the weight of these ties. It reveals how many direct connections each agent has within the network. Nodes with high degree centrality often hold most information (Cambridge Intelligence, n.d.). Hafner-Burton et al (2009) describe that the strength of a tie is dependent on both the magnitude and the frequency of interactions between two nodes. In my research, the weight of a tie is based on the number of resolutions the different states (nodes) have co-sponsored together. In other cases, ties may be stronger in one direction than the other however, in this research, this is not the case since ties are based on the cooperation between the two states by working on a resolution, an activity in which the two states are equal partners in a joint activity.

Communities

An essential part of network analysis is the identification of different groupings within a network. These groupings are based on the connections between nodes in the network and show communities of those nodes. In my network, communities consist of states that show aligned sponsorship activities. In other

words, this means states that co-sponsor the same resolutions often and that show above average levels of cooperation. In Gephi, one is able to identify communities through the modularity statistic, which looks for the nodes that are more densely connected with one another than with the rest of the network. This statistic identifies different modularity classes of the states in the UNGA.

Weight of ties

Besides characteristics of the nodes within the network, one can also identify certain characteristics of the network's ties. The ties in my network tell something about the strength of the cooperation between two states. Thus, for each network I discuss the weights of the ties between the different BRICS states. The more resolutions two states co-sponsored, the higher the weight of the tie.

To obtain a complete image of the sponsorship workings in the UNGA, I also obtain the density and weighted degree centrality for the UNGA as a whole. Running my analyses for the UNGA as a whole yields important information, as it provides an insight on the general trends in sponsorship behaviour in the UNGA. This information will help to better put the findings on the BRICS into context and attach relevance and importance to them.

4.4 Variables

As discussed before, my analysis consists of the ties and nodes in the UNGA plenary sessions, the resolutions and the sponsors of those resolutions, respectively.

4.4.1 Sponsors

For each resolution, the sponsors are observed. In order to perform the analysis of the network, Gephi requires its users to upload a list of all the nodes in the network, in my case all the states sponsor to at least one resolution of the UNGA plenary session. In this list, I assign the label 'BRICS' to each of the BRICS states. This will allow me later on to filter out all other states and only visualise the five BRICS states. Gephi uses the term 'ID' and 'Label' for analysis and visualisation purposes. As an example, consider Table 4, which could be a part of the nodes list.

ID	Label	BRICS?
Brazil	Brazil	BRICS
Canada	Canada	
China	China	BRICS
Costa Rica	Costa Rica	
Denmark	Denmark	
Djibouti	Djibouti	
Japan	Japan	

Table 4: Snapshot nodes list

4.4.2 Resolutions

In addition to a list of all the nodes, a document containing all the ties is required. Since my analyses are divided by theme, my list of ties contains all resolutions concerning one of the eight themes as specified earlier. In addition to this, the lists are divided between the first and second period. Thus, eight different themes assessed in two different time periods leads to a total of sixteen lists. Additionally, the 50th and 72nd session of the three Committees examined lead to six more lists of ties. As Gephi needs to know how to make the different connections between the different nodes, these lists should contain all possible pairs of nodes, in my case all possible pairs of states sponsoring a resolution. In this list, a source node and target node are to be identified. Furthermore, Gephi requires its users to define the type of relationship between two nodes. Such a relationship could either be directed or undirected. An example of a directed tie could be person A phone calling person B, implying that the tie is directed from person A to B. The activity of co-sponsoring is not directed since it does not imply an activity from one state to another but rather a shared activity. Thus, the ties in my network are defined as undirected. In order to assign a value and significance to a connection between two states, the tie is assigned a weight which represents the number of resolutions the two states were both sponsors of. As an example, Table 5 contains a snapshot of a possible list of ties for my network.

Source	Target	Type	Weight
Canada	China	Undirected	7
Costa Rica	China	Undirected	9
Costa Rica	Djibouti	Undirected	5
Japan	China	Undirected	4
Japan	Denmark	Undirected	4
Brazil	China	Undirected	5
Brazil	Djibouti	Undirected	10

Table 5: Snapshot ties list

4.4.3 Visualising the network

The combination of the two datasets discussed above allow Gephi to analyse and visualise the network. Taking the nodes and ties from Table 4 and 5, a possible network graph could be displayed as follows.

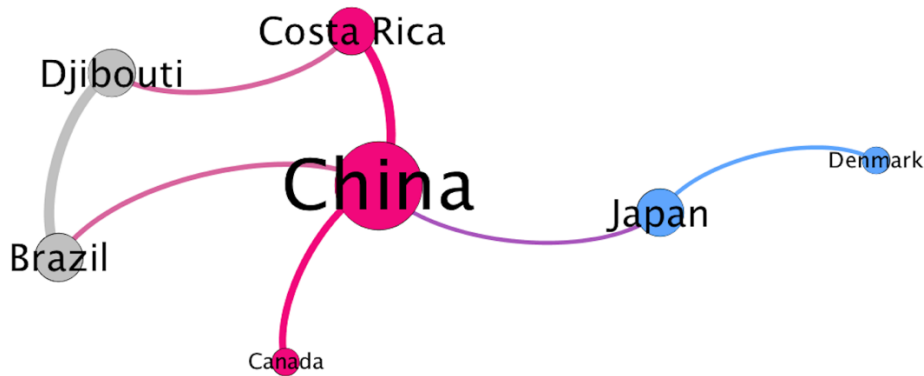


Figure 1: Deriving a sample network

Gephi provides multiple options on how to visualise the network. In this example graph, the colours represent the groups of communities, thus states that cooperate together. These communities are identified for the whole UNGA, after which I filter out the BRICS states, not showing any of the other states involved in resolution sponsorship. Different colours represent different communities; however, the colour itself is randomly picked and does not have an additional meaning. Moreover, the colours of different figures are not related to one another, meaning that colours in one figure do not imply a relationship to that same colour in other figures generated by Gephi. The size of the node represents the weighted degree centrality of the node in question, whereas the thickness of the tie is related to the weight of it. The thicker a tie, the stronger the connection between the two states. If there is no tie between two states, this means that the two states have not co-sponsored a resolution together.

5. Results UNGA plenary sessions

In this section, I describe the results as found through my analysis of the resolutions adopted in the UNGA. The different sub questions are addressed by comparing patterns of cooperation during the periods before and after the birth of the BRICS acronym for each of the previously defined themes. For completeness, network analysis will be applied to both the whole UNGA as well as the BRICS states separately. By doing this, I am better able to assign meaning to the outcomes of the analysis of the BRICS states.

5.1 Middle East

5.1.1 UNGA as a whole

In this analysis concerning resolutions on the Middle East, the first statistic I address is the density of the network. In the first period, this variable has a value of 0.719. In the second period, this has decreased to 0.539. A network which contains all possible ties has a value of 1. Thus, for this theme, the number of actual connections as compared to the number of potential connections has decreased. This means that the potential for cooperation is less utilised in the second period than it was in the first period. Secondly, my analysis shows that the weighted degree distribution also declined in the second time period. In the years 2000-2010, the average weighted degree was 459.6, and during 2011-2018 this was 324.7 (Appendix Figure 1 and 2). As the weighted degree distribution tells us something about the number of connections the nodes in the network have and their corresponding weights, I can conclude that on average, the nodes have less connections or that at least these connections have become less strong. In my network, this means that the different states have cooperated with fewer states in the second period than they did in the first period, or that they cooperated with other states less frequently. These observations are important to provide context for the results as found for the BRICS states, as discussed in the next section.

5.1.2 BRICS states

When filtering my network so that it shows only the BRICS states, I can run statistics for these five states. As for the whole UNGA network, I run analyses for the density and the weighted degree distribution of the BRICS network. If all BRICS states would engage in co-sponsorship with each of the other BRICS states, the number of actual ties in the network would be equal to the number of possible ties, leading to a density value of 1. In the first period of analysis, the BRICS network holds a density value of 0.8. However, as can be seen from Figures 2 and 3, the network in the second time period contains less ties, and the corresponding density value is 0.2. The weighted degree centrality shows that in the first period, the average weighted degree was 8.4 (Appendix Figure 3). In the second period, this value decreased to 1.2 (Appendix Figure 4). This decline thus means that the BRICS have become less connected in the network

on resolutions related to the Middle East. This could indicate a decreased level of cooperation, however, one should be aware that the weighted degree centrality declined for the UNGA as a whole as well, and thus it is no surprise that it takes on a lower value for the BRICS, given this was the general trend.

When visualising the BRICS networks for either period, Gephi provides the graphs as depicted in Figures 2 and 3. In the figures, the nodes are coloured. These colours are determined by communities the states are part of and are identified through the modularity statistic in Gephi. Thus, the colours of the communities in Figure 2 show that Brazil, Russia, India and China are relatively well connected, whereas South Africa is part of a different community. This means that South Africa is more connected to other states which are not part of the BRICS. Additionally, as can be seen from the ties in Figure 3, South Africa did not co-sponsor any resolution with one of the other BRICS states in the second period. In the earlier period before the birth of the BRICS acronym, South Africa cooperated with India and China, although the thickness of the ties shows that the connection between South Africa and the other BRICS was relatively weak. This thickness is related to the weight of the ties, in other words the number of resolutions the two nodes cooperated on.

Brazil is rather involved on this subject in the years 2000-2010. However, this involvement seems to disappear in the years after 2011, given that in these years Brazil does not sponsor a single resolution on the Middle East (Figure 3). This causes Brazil to be in a different community, without the other four BRICS states. This decrease in sponsorship of resolutions on the Middle East matches with the strategy of Brazil's President at the time, Rousseff, who was much less involved in international affairs than her predecessor Lula da Silva (Stuenkel, 2014). Furthermore, when comparing the two figures, one can see that in the years 2000-2010 all BRICS states are connected, while in the second period of study the only connections are between Russia and China and between Russia and India. The size of the nodes is determined by the weighted degree centrality of the node in the UNGA network and tells that in both periods, of the five BRICS states, South Africa is best connected.

As discussed earlier, topics of resolutions written in the UNGA tend to be repetitive throughout the years. This repetitiveness allows me to clearly study the topics of the resolutions that the BRICS co-sponsor, as well as the topics they do not write resolutions on. In the first period, South Africa, Russia and India co-sponsored, together with a number of other states, a resolution on the situation in Afghanistan. In a later session of the UNGA, the BRICS showed themselves involved with this topic again when Russia, India and China, together with other states, sponsored another resolution on Afghanistan. Analysis of the topics of the individual resolutions in the years after the start of the BRICS cooperation shows that India and Russia co-sponsor two resolutions on this subject and Russia and China are co-sponsors of a different resolution on Afghanistan.

It is interesting to note that South Africa shows high levels of cooperation with a small group of other states in the first period of analysis. None of these states are BRICS members, but are rather states such as Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Sudan, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. Even in the years after the birth of the BRICS grouping, South Africa shows more cooperation with these states than with the other BRICS members. With these states, it writes resolutions on different topics such as the Syrian Golan, and different aspects of the conflict in Palestine.

From this analysis, I can conclude that BRICS cooperation on resolutions concerning the Middle East has decreased in the years after the start of their grouping.

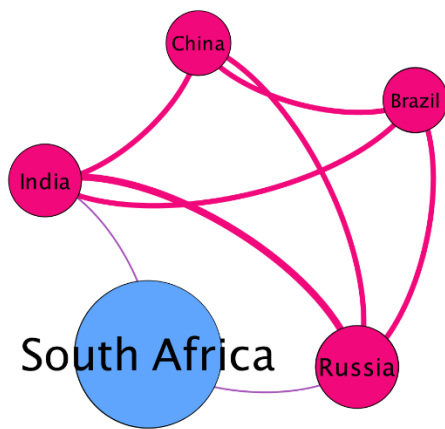


Figure 2: BRICS cooperation on Middle East (2000-2010)

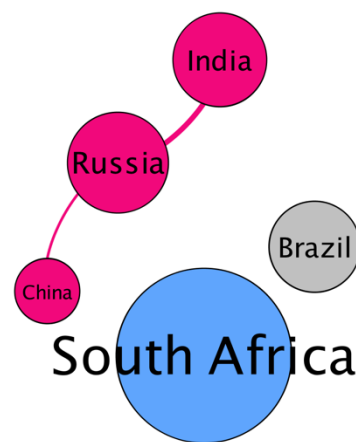


Figure 3: BRICS cooperation on Middle East (2011-2018)

5.2 Disarmament

5.2.1 UNGA as a whole

The first thing that stands out from the analysis of the network evolving around resolutions concerning disarmament is the high density of the network for the first period of analysis: 0.918. In the second period of study this measure is still high with a value of 0.749. This high value indicates that the nodes in the network are highly connected to the others, meaning that states co-sponsored resolutions with a high number of the other states in the network. Similar to the network on the Middle East, the average weighted degree decreased for this network as well. First, this measure obtained a value of 640.5 but in the second time period this dropped to 441.5 (Appendix Figure 5 and 6) Thus, the weight of the connections in the network decreased together with the number of actual connections (density).

5.2.2 BRICS states

Appendix Figure 7 and 8 show the average weighted degree of the BRICS network for the resolutions concerning disarmament. This weighted degree has decreased only a little from 25.2 to 22.8. Given the declining trend in the UNGA as observed in Appendix Figure 5 and 6, this drop is not necessarily a sign of deteriorated cooperation between the BRICS, but could also be part of the general trend in the UNGA. Analysing the graphs in Figure 4 and 5 allows for a number of observations. The most apparent one is that the graphs are very similar, implying that the patterns of cooperation in the two periods have not radically changed. Secondly, one can see that again one of the BRICS states is part of a different community than the others, as depicted by the colours of the nodes. In both time periods, Brazil was relatively less connected with the four other BRICS states. Analysis of the resolutions Brazil has sponsored provides further information of the states Brazil cooperates with. Against what one may expect, Brazil shows high levels of cooperation with mostly European states. Both in the first and second period of analysis, Brazil co-sponsored more resolutions with European states such as Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Netherlands, Portugal and others than with the other BRICS states.

When studying the ties, one can see that all nodes are connected to all other nodes in the network. Thus, the density of the networks is 1 for both periods of analysis. However, the thickness of the ties shows that some states have co-sponsored more resolutions together than others. For example, the tie between China and Russia is thicker than the tie between China and India for both periods. In the first period of analysis, the weakest connection is between China and India. In contrast to this, Brazil and South Africa have the strongest tie, co-sponsoring resolutions most frequently. India and South Africa have the weakest tie in the next period. Examining the topics addressed in the first period of analysis unveils that Brazil and South Africa cooperate on resolutions concerning a 'zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic'. They do not do so in the years 2011-2018, even though resolutions on this topic continue to be written.

In both periods the BRICS, except for India, are active sponsoring resolutions on 'the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict'. Also, in both time periods, they were all sponsors on a resolution which focused on 'building a peaceful and better world through the Olympic ideal'. Likewise, they all co-sponsored a resolution on 'the declaration and programme of action of a culture of peace' in the two periods of analysis. Nevertheless, these resolutions had many sponsors, making the cooperation of the BRICS on them slightly less meaningful.

The findings from Figure 4 and 5 on BRICS cooperation show that their patterns of cooperation have not changed much since the start of their declared cooperation in 2011. Also, the topics of interest to the BRICS seem to be relatively stable. Nonetheless, Brazil is part of a different community than the other BRICS in both time periods, which indicates that Brazil more actively cooperates with other states than with its fellow BRICS members.

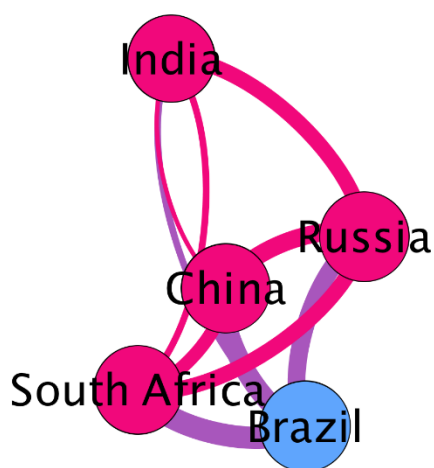


Figure 4: BRICS cooperation on disarmament (2000-2010)

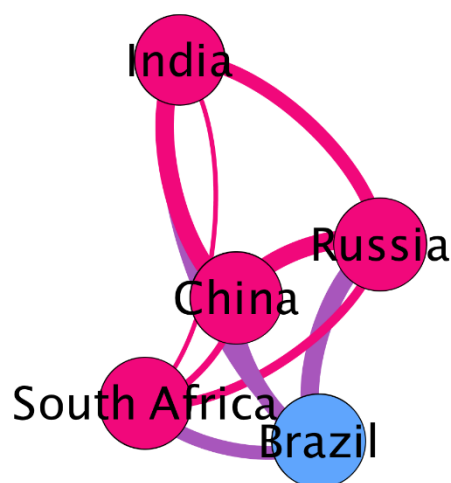


Figure 5: BRICS cooperation on disarmament (2011-2018)

5.3 Nuclear disarmament

Based on Voeten's (2013) classification of resolutions, I included a theme concerning nuclear disarmament. However, in the process of labelling the resolutions, there is only a very small number of resolutions that concern nuclear disarmament. In addition to that, all but one of these resolutions are written by only one member state. Given that, as discussed in part '4.3 Data', I leave out the resolutions that are sponsored by a single member state, there is only one resolution left that is suitable for analysis. Since I need at least one resolution in either time period in to be able to draw any conclusions, I decide to not include the theme nuclear disarmament in my analysis.

5.4 Colonialism

5.4.1 UNGA as a whole

Similar to the other themes discussed so far, the density in the UNGA concerning resolutions on colonialism has decreased. The value lowered from 0.913 to 0.775 in the first and second period, respectively. The average weighted degree experienced a sharp drop as it decreased from 145.6 to 67.1 during the two periods of analysis (Appendix Figure 9 and 10). This decrease suggests that the number of resolutions states cooperate on has lowered considerably.

It is important to point out that colonialism is one of the smaller themes and contains less resolutions than most of the other themes. Due to this lower number of resolutions, individual resolutions have a higher influence on the statistics than they would with a higher total number of resolutions. Thus,

the results are more sensible to resolutions written, or not written, and this should be taken into account when analysing them.

5.4.2 BRICS states

In contrast to the sharp decline of the average weighted degree as seen in the whole UNGA, the weighted degree of the BRICS has increased from 4.8 to 5.6 (Appendix Figure 11 and 12). The fact that they worked together on more resolutions against the general trend of the UNGA, could be a sign of enhanced cooperation. Nevertheless, the density of the BRICS network has decreased from 1 to 0.6.

When looking at Figure 6 and 7, some interesting outcomes are visible. Figure 6 shows the cooperation in the years 2000-2010 and although all states are connected to one another, Brazil was not part of the same community as the other four states. Ties are strongest between India and Brazil and between India and Russia, and node size shows that all states are more or less equally connected, based on degree centrality. From these years to the years 2011-2018, an interesting shift in the patterns of BRICS cooperation can be observed. First of all, in contrast to the enhanced cooperation as shown by the degree centrality, South Africa is no longer connected to any of the other nodes (Figure 7), meaning that it did not write any resolution on colonialism with any of the other BRICS states. Unsurprisingly, South Africa was thus part of a different community as can be seen by the grey colour of the node. Moreover, Brazil is now part of the same community of China and India, and Russia is no longer in the same community with China, India and South Africa it was before. The ties in Figure 7 show that Brazil, Russia, India and China are all connected and that this connection is strongest between Brazil in India. The node size reflects that these states are also the most central nodes of the BRICS. Thus, of all the BRICS states, Brazil and India co-sponsored the most resolutions concerning colonialism in both time periods. In the years 2000-2010, all BRICS sponsored a resolution dedicated to 'the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade'. In the second period of analysis, the four original BRICS states sponsored a resolution on 'the permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade'.

Although colonialism is one of the smaller themes of this study and contains fewer resolutions, one can only conclude there is no visible development of joint BRICS cooperation in this field, since South Africa did not co-sponsor a single resolution with any of the other BRICS states in the years 2011-2018. Nonetheless, the other four BRICS did sponsor resolutions collectively.

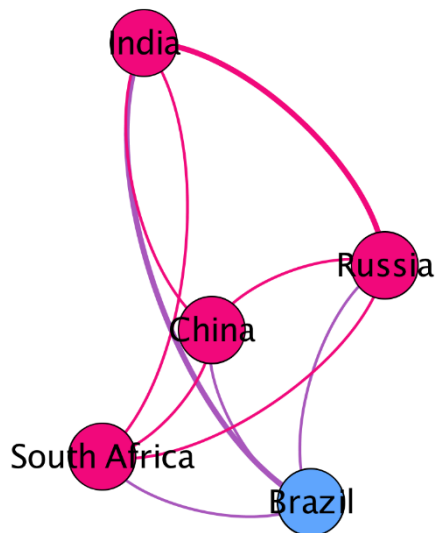


Figure 6: BRICS cooperation on colonialism (2000-2010)

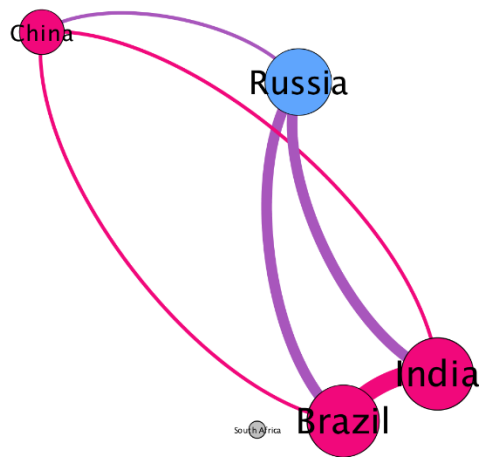


Figure 7: BRICS cooperation on colonialism (2011-2018)

5.5 Economic issues

5.5.1 UNGA as a whole

The density of the UNGA network evolving around economic issues in the years 2000-2010 is rather low compared to the other themes, namely 0.385. In the second period, this density increases to 0.548, meaning that there are more connections in the network and the possibility of cooperation is utilised to a larger extent than before. In contrast to this, the weighted degree centrality decreases from 135.9 in the first period to 112.2 in the second period of analysis (Appendix Figure 13 and 14). Thus, the connections in the network have become less strong. In this study, that means that the states that co-sponsor resolutions do so less frequently, making the ties less strong. As for the theme of colonialism, this theme is one of the smaller themes with relatively few resolutions, which makes my results more sensitive to exceptional cases.

5.5.2 BRICS states

Similar to the density of the whole UNGA, is the density of the BRICS in the first period of analysis relatively low with a value of 0.5. As can be seen in Figure 8 and 9, the number of ties increases in the years 2011-2018 and so does the density, to a value of 0.9. Additionally, the weighted degree centrality strongly increases from 3.2 to 8.8, implying that the number of resolutions the BRICS co-sponsored with other BRICS members increased (Appendix Figure 15 and 16). Moving from the years 2000-2010 to the years 2011-2018, Figures 8 and 9 show enhanced patterns of cooperation. Not only are the BRICS state more

connected to one another, the ties are also thicker which confirms the increased weighted degree centrality. The colours in the figures show the communities the BRICS are part of in the network of the UNGA. In the first period, the five BRICS states are divided between two communities; India, China and South Africa are part of one community and Brazil and Russia of another. In the years 2011-2018 the division between communities is different. As can be seen from Figure 9, all BRICS except for South Africa are part of the same community in the UNGA. This implies that the four original BRIC states showed above average levels of cooperation, whereas South Africa co-sponsored more often with some European states and Australia. In the years 2011-2018, Brazil and China cooperate most frequently, although the differences with the other BRICS states are small. The size of the nodes in Figure 8 and 9 is derived from the weighted degree centrality of the different states. The larger the size of the node, the more central a state is. Thus, the figures show that in the first period, Brazil is the most central actor of the BRICS in the network of the UNGA. In the second period of analysis, China and Brazil are the most central actors. When comparing the topics of the resolutions the BRICS worked on in the both periods, a change can be observed. In the first period, the focus is on economic assistance to states as well as international cooperation. In the years thereafter, smaller scale economic issues are subject of the resolutions.

The fact that this theme contains only a small number of resolutions makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the patterns of BRICS' cooperation. Nonetheless, the measures of density and weighted degree centrality show a positive development towards enhanced cooperation. However, the BRICS are part of three different communities in the first period, and this has not changed in the second period of analysis. Thus, even though cooperation may have enhanced, the BRICS states do not form a coherent bloc when it comes to resolutions on economic issues.

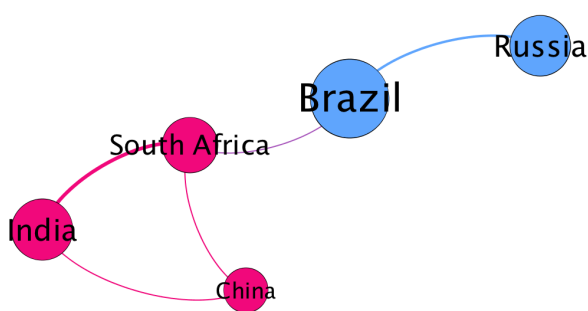


Figure 8: BRICS cooperation on economic issues (2000-2010)

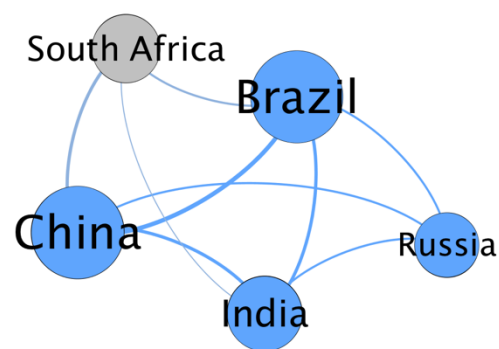


Figure 9: BRICS cooperation on economic issues (2011-2018)

5.6 Human rights

5.6.1 UNGA as a whole

The density of the network of the UNGA has decreased in the second period as compared to the first period of analysis, from 0.880 to 0.629. This means that the number of actual connections as compared to the number of potential connections has decreased. Thus, the potential for cooperation is less utilised in the second period than it was in the first period. Likewise, Appendix Figure 17 and 18 show that the weighted degree centrality has decreased slightly from 452.7 to 414.9, implying that the number of weighted connections of the nodes in the network has somewhat reduced.

5.6.2 BRICS states

The weighted degree centrality of the BRICS network takes a higher value in the second period than in the first, strongly increasing from 4.0 to 12.4 (Appendix Figure 19 and 20), meaning that the value of the connections between the BRICS is higher; they are better connected now than they were before. This figure could suggest increased cooperation between the BRICS, especially when taking into account the weighted degree centrality of the whole UNGA has not increased, but even slightly decreased. The density of the network is equal for both periods of time; since in both periods each of the BRICS members co-sponsored at least one resolution with each of the other BRICS states, the density is complete and holds a value of 1.

Figures 10 and 11 are derived from Gephi, and show the patterns of co-sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the UNGA plenary sessions for the two different periods of study. Filtering out the BRICS states shows that in neither of the two periods, the five BRICS were part of the same community. In both time periods, China and South Africa showed an above average level of cooperation, just like Brazil, India and Russia, as depicted through the modularity statistic in Gephi. These results are interesting, as these combinations of states may be not the combinations one would directly expect. Other observations that can be made from the figures are that China is the most central actor in both periods, as can be seen by the size of the node which is based on the degree centrality of the nodes. Lastly, the thickness of the ties slightly went down and tells that in both periods India and Brazil had the most intense patterns of cooperation. In both periods, the tie between China and Brazil was the least strong.

When examining the topics of the resolutions, I find that all of the BRICS sponsored one or more resolutions on 'strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations' in the first period of analysis. Although the BRICS states are sponsors of the same resolutions multiple times, there is not one resolution in either time period of which they are all a sponsor. Examples of resolutions they sponsor are 'international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of

natural disasters from relief to development’ and ‘permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade’.

In the field of human rights, I find a relatively strong development of intra-BRICS cooperation as compared to the other themes discussed so far. The weighted degree centrality of the network increased and in both time periods it had full density. However, as for the other themes, the BRICS are not part of the same community, meaning that they cooperate with other states more frequently than they do with their fellow BRICS states. The topics of the resolutions one or more BRICS states are sponsors of are relatively stable in the first and second period.

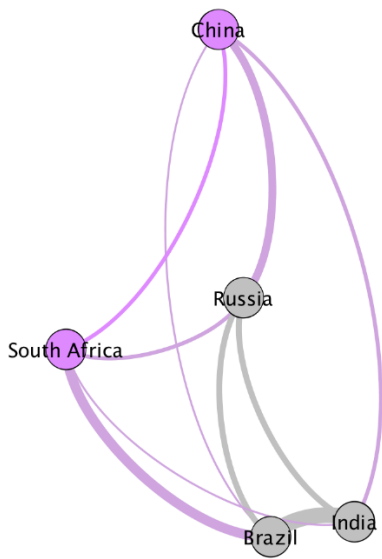


Figure 10: BRICS cooperation on human rights (2000-2010)

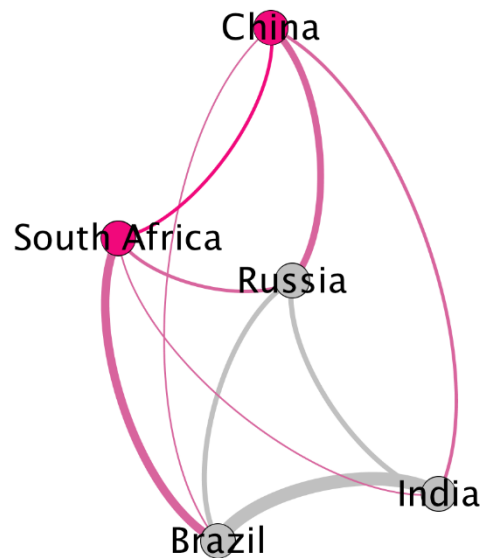


Figure 11: BRICS cooperation on human rights (2011-2018)

5.7 Development

5.7.1 UNGA as a whole

The first period of analysis for the theme of development contains a very high number of resolutions, and has a high density of 0.929. In the second period, this number is lower and thus it is no surprise that the density of the network has also decreased in this period, to a value of 0.761. This high number of resolutions leads to a weighed degree of 1619.5 in the years 2000-2010 (Appendix Figure 21). Appendix Figure 22 shows that this number strongly declines in the years 2011-2018, in which it obtains a value of 645.2.

5.7.2 BRICS States

Similar to the rest of the UNGA, the BRICS sponsored a relatively high number of resolutions on development. Expectedly, this leads to a density of 1 in both periods of analysis. In contrast to the density, the weighted degree centrality is higher in the years 2000-2010 than in the years thereafter, decreasing from 64.4 to 28.8 (Appendix Figure 23 and 24). Relatively, this decline is smaller than the decrease of the weighted degree centrality of the whole UNGA, and I therefore do not consider this lowered value as a sign of deteriorated cooperation.

The Figures 12 and 13 visualise the patterns of co-sponsorship of the BRICS. The first thing that stands out from Figure 12 is the division of the BRICS between different communities as derived from the UNGA network. From this I can conclude that the BRICS show stronger cooperation with other states than they do within their own grouping. In these years, Brazil and Russia were part of the same community, and they showed cooperation with mostly European states. Additionally, within their community, Brazil shows high levels of cooperation with Latin American states and Russia with some Asian states. South Africa's preferred partners in this field are rather diverse, as these states are from all over the world. The state South Africa co-sponsored resolutions with most often is France. As becomes clear from the analysis, most western European states are rather involved with resolutions on development. On the other hand, India and China showed higher levels of cooperation with mostly Asian states. In the years 2011-2018, a shift between the different communities can be observed. The BRICS still cover three different communities, although the groupings within the BRICS have changed. India cooperated mostly with European and East Asian states and Brazil and South Africa with European. For Russia and China, their patterns of co-sponsorship show cooperation with other Asian states, as well as some European states. As mentioned before, the colours of the groupings are randomly generated and the colours of one figure do not relate to the colours of another figure.

When comparing the two figures, the thickness of the ties visualises the lower number of resolutions the BRICS co-sponsored in the second period as compared to the first time period. In both periods, the tie between Russia and China is the strongest. Even though Russia, China and South Africa are not part of the same communities, the ties show that they engage in co-sponsorship relatively frequently. In contrast to this, the tie between Russia and South Africa in the years 2011-2018 is the least strong of all ties in the BRICS network. In neither of the two periods there is an obvious central actor in the BRICS network.

An analysis of the topics addressed in the first period learns that the BRICS were all sponsors of a resolution on 'responding to global threats and challenges', as well as a resolution that aims at 'enhancing capacity-building in global public health'. Lastly, they cooperated, together with other states, on a resolution to 'build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal'. In the years 2011-

2018, this topic of the Olympic ideal returns; and this is the only resolution all of the BRICS are sponsors of.

The development of the patterns of BRICS' co-sponsorship is marked by the shift in communities of the different states, something that is less present in the other themes discussed in this thesis. The weighted degree centrality of the BRICS network decreased, but not as strongly as it did for the UNGA as a whole, and thus this does not necessarily imply a decreased level of cooperation between the BRICS. In any case, although the five BRICS states cooperate on resolutions in both periods, a clear development of enhanced, coordination cooperation is not visible from this analysis.

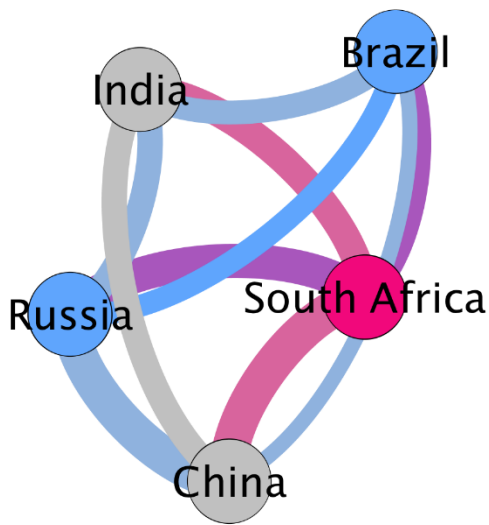


Figure 12: BRICS cooperation on development (2000-2010)

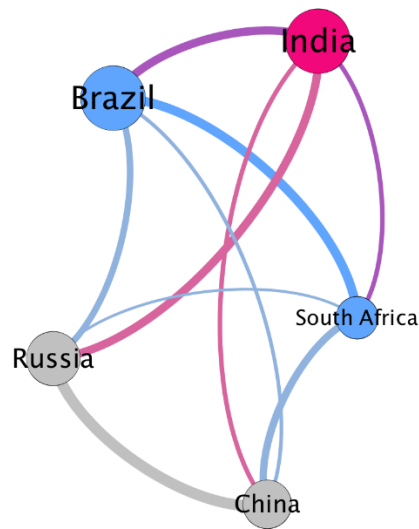


Figure 13: BRICS cooperation on development (2011-2018)

5.8 Internal UN matters

5.8.1 UNGA as a whole

The last theme to be analysed is internal UN matters. Here, my analysis shows a decrease in density of the network from 0.592 to 0.476. Furthermore, the average weighted degree centrality also showed a drop. In the first period of analysis, this measure holds a value of 291.3 which decreases to 123.8 in the second period (Appendix Figure 25 and 26). These two declining measures tell us that fewer of the possible connections are actually made, and that the states that do cooperate do so less frequently.

5.8.2 BRICS states

In the first period of analysis, the BRICS network on internal UN matters has a density of 1, meaning that each BRICS state sponsored at least one resolution with each of the other BRICS members. This value decreases to 0.4 in the years 2011-2018. This decrease in ties is reflected in Figure 15, where can be seen that Russia co-sponsored no resolutions with the other BRICS states, and South Africa only worked together with Brazil. Moreover, the weighted degree centrality has strongly declined from 22.4 to 2.8 (Appendix Figure 27 and 28). With regard to communities in the network of resolution writing, the analysis displays a reoccurring pattern. Figure 14 visualises the co-sponsorship of the BRICS in the first period. The colours of the graphs are determined by the communities in the UNGA the BRICS are part of, generated by running the modularity statistic for all the states in the UNGA. The figure shows that the BRICS cover three different communities, with Brazil, India and China being part of the same one. In the second period (Figure 15), Russia is the only state that is not part of the community of the other BRICS members. Instead, the states Russia cooperates with are from all over the globe and are more or less the same for the first and second period of analysis. Likewise, South Africa shows enhanced levels of cooperation with states from different continents in the first period, although the strongest ties are with states from Europe. Not only are the BRICS states less connected in the years 2011-2018, the states that do co-sponsor resolutions together do so less frequently, as can be seen by the thickness of the ties. The size of the nodes indicates that none of the BRICS states takes in a very central position in the UNGA, and all of them are more or less equally central.

In the years 2000-2010, all BRICS sponsored a resolution on 'participation of volunteers "White Helmets" in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development'. Moreover, they all worked on a resolution concerning 'the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations'. In the second period, this pattern of cooperation is not continued, as Russia did not co-sponsor any resolution with a fellow BRICS member. While Brazil and South Africa showed the strongest cooperation in the first period of analysis, this cooperation is the second weakest in the years 2011-2018, only after Russia which did not cooperate with the other BRICS states. The topic of 'participation of volunteers' is a returning topic, as Brazil, India and China co-sponsor a resolution on this subject once more.

All aspects of the analysis as discussed above show that their declaration of cooperation in 2011 has not lead to enhanced BRICS cooperation on internal UN matters. Rather, the figures shows a breakdown of BRICS' cooperation in the field of internal UN matters.

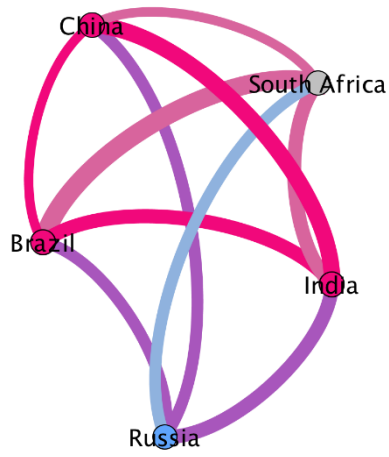


Figure 14: BRICS cooperation on internal UN matters (2000-2010)

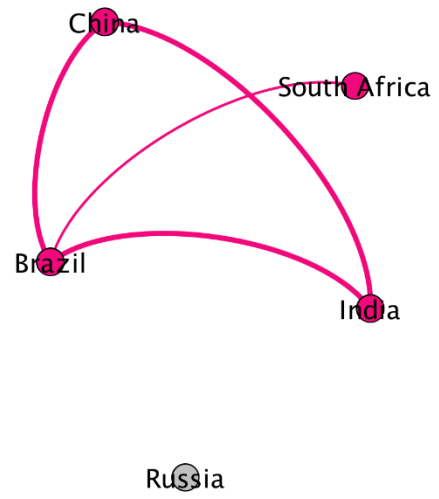


Figure 15: BRICS cooperation on internal UN matters (2011-2018)

6. Results UNGA First, Second and Third Committee

This section addresses the outcomes of the analysis of the networks present in the UNGA First, Second and Third Committee. As for the discussion of the networks in the plenary sessions of the UNGA, network analysis is applied to both the full Committees as well as the network consisting of the five BRICS states. In order to analyse the development of the BRICS, I analyse their network in the 50th session of the Committees, which covers the years 2000-2001 and is prior to the start of the BRICS grouping. Secondly, I analyse their co-sponsorship activities in the 72nd session of the Committees, during the years 2017-2018 and after public declaration of their intentions to coordinate activities at the UN level.

6.1 First Committee

6.1.1 The committee as a whole

The network in the First Committee shows less cooperation in the years 2017-2018 compared to the years 2000-2001, which is demonstrated by the density and weighted degree centrality of the network. The density decreased from 0.732 to 0.471 and as can be seen from Appendix Figure 29 and 30, the weighted degree centrality lowered from 409.2 to 127.7. This decreased density reveals that there are less ties between the different states that are part of the First Committee. As ties are representing the resolutions states cooperated on, this means that the states co-sponsored resolutions with fewer states than they did before. The weighted degree centrality is influenced both by the number of ties as well as the weight of those ties. These findings are relevant since they provide context to the development of the cooperation of the BRICS in the UNGA First Committee.

6.1.2 BRICS in the First Committee

The density of the BRICS network in the First Committee in the years 2000-2001 is 1, meaning that all states cooperated with the other states. However, this statistic decreases to 0.3 in the second period of analysis. The BRICS are no longer as well connected as they were before and the only ties present are between South Africa and Brazil, China and Russia and China and India (Figure 17). This division is likely to be the result of different interests of the BRICS caused by the fact that some of them do (China, Russia, India) and some of them do not possess nuclear weapons (Brazil, South Africa). Unsurprisingly, the weighted degree centrality also decreased from 11.6 to 1.2 (Appendix Figure 31 and 32). This reduction is caused by the smaller number of ties as well as the decreased weight of these ties. The weight of the ties is represented by the thickness of the ties in Figure 16 and 17, and shows that in the 50th session the relation between Brazil and South Africa was strongest. The ties in Figure 17 are all equally strong, as each of them only represents one resolution the BRICS co-sponsored. The colours of the nodes in the figures

are generated for the whole First Committee through the modularity statistic in Gephi and represent communities of states that show above-average levels of cooperation. After running the modularity statistic, the network is filtered in such a way that only the BRICS states remain. By doing this, Figure 16 shows that China and India were part of the same community, as can be seen by colour of their nodes. Additionally, in the years 2017-2018, although they did not all cooperate, Brazil, India, China and South Africa were part of the same community. This is possible if they co-sponsored with the same other states in the First Committee. Lastly, the sizes of the nodes are derived from their weighted degree centrality. Since all nodes are more or less the same size, I can conclude there is no clear central actor in the network of the BRICS in the First Committee.

Most of the resolutions the BRICS co-sponsored in the first period concern measures against mass destruction weapons, such as the 'Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty' and the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction'. In the second period, the resolutions focus on disarmament. In neither of the two sessions analysed, all five BRICS states cooperated on the same resolution. Russia sponsored only one resolution, which focuses on the 'Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia', and was co-sponsored by a large number of states.

The analysis clearly shows that cooperation between the BRICS has not improved in the years 2017-2018 as compared to the period 2000-2001. Although these years showed a general trend of less co-sponsorship in the First Committee, it seems that the BRICS have not taken steps to enhance their cooperation.

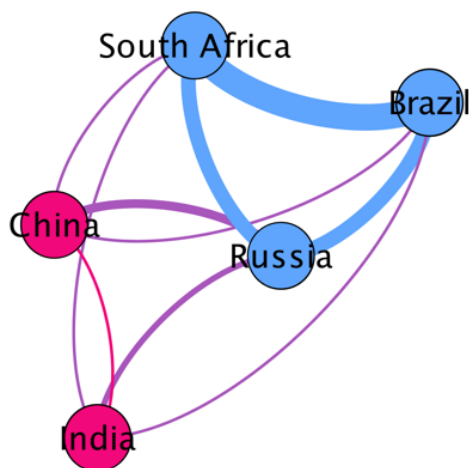


Figure 16: BRICS cooperation First Committee (2000-2001)

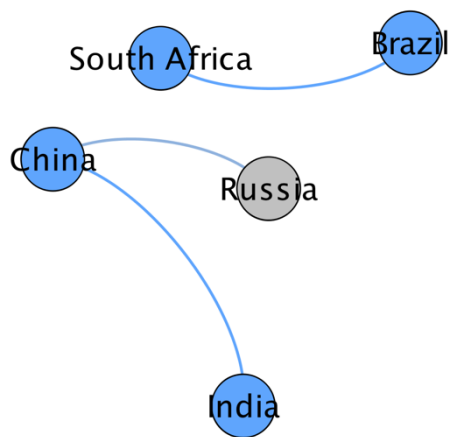


Figure 17: BRICS cooperation First Committee (2017-2018)

6.2 Second Committee

6.2.1 *Second Committee as a whole*

In contrast to the results I have found for most of the themes of the UNGA plenary sessions, the weighted degree centrality of the Second Committee has increased significantly throughout the years. Appendix Figure 33 shows that in the years 2000-2001 the weighted degree centrality is 157.4, whereas in the years 2017-2018 this value is 242.6 (Appendix Figure 34). In addition to this, the density of the network in the Second Committee has increased from 0.766 to 0.939, making it a rather dense network. This figure indicates that there are more ties between the different states, meaning that the states cooperated with more other states than they did in the first years of measurement.

6.2.2 *BRICS in the Second Committee*

Figure 18 and 19 show the development of the BRICS in the Second Committee. The figures unveil increased cooperation, as the number of ties between the BRICS states has increased. This is also confirmed by the density of the network, which is only 0.3 in the 50th session and grows to 1 in the 72nd session, implying that all the BRICS states have co-sponsored at least one resolution with each of their fellow BRICS members. In line with the general trend in the Second Committee, the weighted degree centrality of the BRICS network has strongly enlarged from 1.2 in the years 2000-2001 (Appendix Figure 35) to 6.4 in the years 2017-2018, as can be seen in Appendix Figure 36. This may mean that not only the number of ties has increased, but also the weight of these ties, thus the number of resolutions the BRICS cooperated on. Furthermore, the colours of the nodes in Figure 18 show that the BRICS were highly divided in the years 2000-2001, with only China and Brazil being part of the same community. South Africa, India and Russia were all more cooperative with states other than the BRICS, which is demonstrated by the fact they were all part of different communities. The lack of ties shows that India and South Africa did not co-sponsor any resolution with one of the other BRICS states. Moreover, Brazil, China and Russia only co-sponsored one resolution, which concerns the 'status of preparation for the International Year of Mountains, 2002'. In contrast to this, it seems that the BRICS were much more cooperative in their sponsorship behaviour in the second period of analysis. All but South Africa were part of the same community, which is shown by the colour of their nodes (Figure 19). South Africa was part of a community that consists of a group of states from Africa, Asia, Europe and Central and Latin America. Within the BRICS, Brazil and India cooperated most frequently, and although cooperation improved, the BRICS did not co-sponsor a resolution all together. A central topic in the resolutions the BRICS co-sponsored is sustainable development.

From this analysis, I conclude that the BRICS have mostly followed the general development of the Second Committee, with increased weighted degree centrality and density. Nonetheless, the fact that the

BRICS moved from a density of 0.3 to a density of 1 with ties between all actors is a sign of enhanced cooperation. In addition to this, all BRICS except for South Africa are part of the same community in the years 2017-2018, which implies more aligned co-sponsorship behaviour.

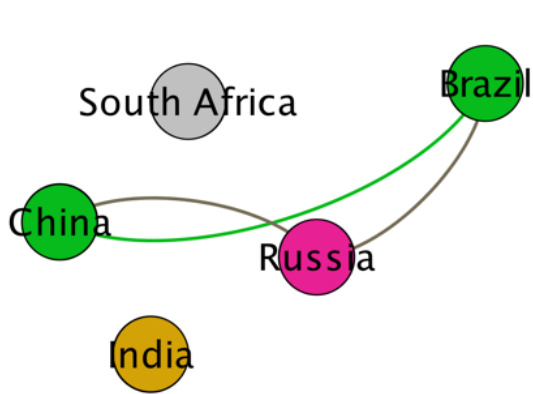


Figure 18: BRICS cooperation Second Committee (2000-2001)

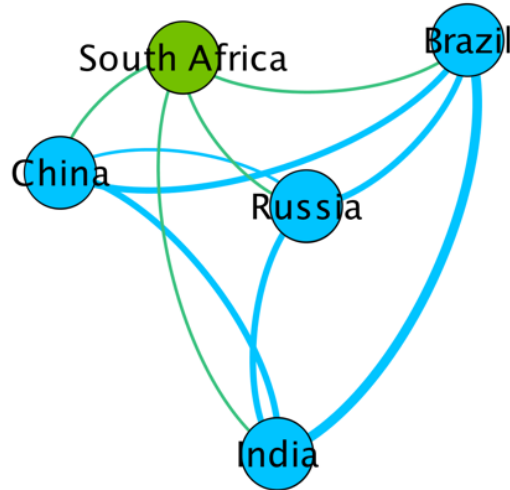


Figure 19: BRICS cooperation Second Committee (2017-2018)

6.3 Third Committee

6.3.1 Third Committee as a whole

In contrast to the Second Committee, the density of the Third Committee has decreased from 0.889 in the first period of analysis to 0.612 in the second period of analysis. Besides this, the weighted degree centrality decreased from 662.6 to 244.6 (Appendix Figures 37 and 38). This general trend of less co-sponsorship is relevant when analysing co-sponsorship activities of the BRICS in the UNGA Third Committee.

6.3.2 BRICS in the Third Committee

The density of the BRICS in the Third Committee remains rather similar in the two sessions of analysis: in the 50th session this is 0.9, and 0.8 in the 72nd session. On the other hand, the weighted degree centrality decreases more significantly. As can be seen in Appendix Figure 39, this statistic takes on a value of 14.8 in the years 2000-2001, but declines to 8.8 in the second period (Appendix Figure 40). Given that the number of ties (density) of the BRICS remains more or less similar, this lower value of the weighted degree centrality can be explained by a decrease in the weight of the ties between the BRICS; in other words, the number of resolutions the BRICS co-sponsored. This decrease in the weight of ties is also visible when comparing Figure 20 and 21. In Figure 21, the ties are much less thick than in Figure 20. Brazil and South

Africa had the strongest cooperation in the years 2000-2001, and for the years 2017-2018 this was the case for China and Russia. Another difference between the two figures are the communities visible in the Third Committee. The colours of the nodes show that within this Committee, the BRICS are part of different communities. In the years 2000-2001 Brazil, India and South Africa are part of the same community; China and Russia are part of another. This changes in the years 2017-2018, in which all but Brazil are in the same community. Instead, Brazil showed higher levels of cooperation with states from Latin America and Europe. Although the size of the nodes, derived from the weighted degree centrality of the states, does not unveil a clear central actor within the BRICS network, China and South Africa are relatively well connected as they cooperate with each of the other BRICS members in the years 2017-2018.

The topics of the resolutions co-sponsored by the BRICS are somewhat different in the first period than in the second period, with the 50th session focusing on human rights and the 72nd on ‘promotion of a democratic and equitable international order’ and ‘combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance’.

The development of the co-sponsorship activities of the BRICS shows mixed results. On the one hand, density and weighted degree centrality of the BRICS network decreased, although it should be noted that this is the case for the whole UNGA Third Committee. On the other hand, Russia, India, China and South Africa are part of the same community in the second time period, which proves that their activities are more aligned than they were before.

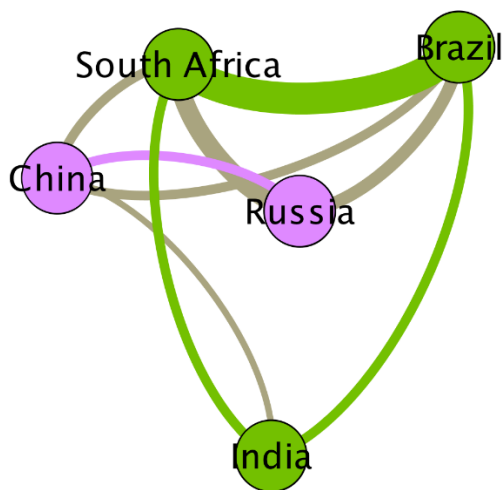


Figure 20: BRICS cooperation Third Committee (2000-2001)

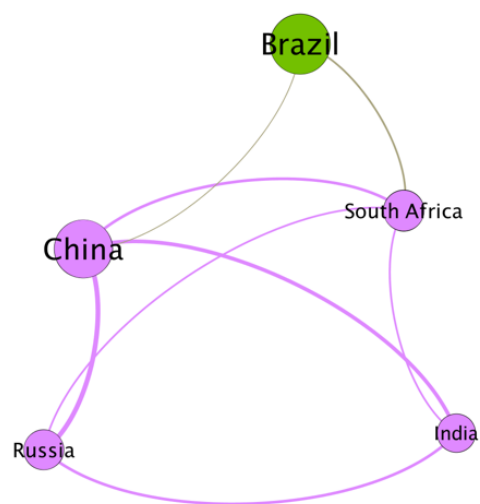


Figure 21: BRICS cooperation Third Committee (2017-2018)

7. Conclusions

In this chapter I examine my findings and aim to answer the sub questions and central research question. Moreover, I discuss how the results of this study fit into existing literature and the international relations theories discussed in the theoretical framework. Lastly, I address limitations of my study and provide recommendations for further research in the field of UNGA resolution sponsorship as well as the activities of the BRICS.

7.1 Answer to the central research question and sub questions

Once more, the research question of this study is:

What theory best explains the development of BRICS' cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions?

Based on the theories of realism, liberal intuitionism and constructivism, I formulated three expectations. In order to answer the research question correctly and discover which expectation is right, I included eight sub questions. Each sub question addresses a theme of the resolutions presented in the UNGA and help to identify the areas in which the BRICS cooperate. In the following part, I answer each of the sub questions of the research, after which I answer the central research question.

7.1.1 Answers to the sub questions

The following table (Table 6) provides an overview of the statistical results of my empirical analysis. These results will help to answer each of the sub questions and eventually, the research question.

Themes/ Committees	Density	Degree centrality	Communities	Weight of the ties
Middle East	Decreased from 0.8 to 0.2	Decreased from 8.4 to 1.2	All but South Africa part of the same community	Decreased
Disarmament	1 in both periods	Decreased slightly from 25.3 to 22.8	All but Brazil part of the same community	More or less similar
Colonialism	Decreased from 1 to 0.6	Increased from 4.8 to 5.6	In the first period all but Brazil part of the same community; all but Russia part of the same community in the second period	Slightly increased
Economic issues	Increased from 0.5 to 0.9	Increased from 3.2 to 8.8	In the first period India, China and South Africa are part of the same community; in the second period all but South Africa are part of the same community	Slightly increased
Human rights	1 in both periods	Increased from 4.0 to 12.4	South Africa and China part of one community, and Brazil, India, Russia of another	Slightly decreased
Development	1 in both periods	Decreased from 64.4 to 28.8, but less than whole UNGA	In the first period India and China are part of the same community and Brazil and Russia share a community; in the second period Russia and China are part of the same community and Brazil and South Africa share a community	Decreased
Internal UN matters	Decreased from 1 to 0.4	Decreased from 22.4 to 2.8	In the first period only Brazil, India and China part of the same community; in the second period all but Russia part of the same community	Decreased
First Committee	Decreased from 1 to 0.3	Decreased from 11.6 to 1.2	In the first period Brazil, Russia and South Africa share a community, as well as China and India; in the second period all but Russia are part of the same community	Decreased
Second Committee	Increased from 0.3 to 1	Increased from 1.2 to 6.4	In the first period only Brazil and China are part of the same community; in the second period all but South Africa are part of the same community	Increased
Third Committee	Decreased from 0.9 to 0.8	Decreased from 14.8 to 8.8	In the first period Brazil, India and South Africa share a community, as well as China and Russia; in the second period all but Brazil are part of the same community	Decreased

Table 6: Overview statistical results

The first sub question of this research concerns resolutions on the Middle East and is formulated as follows:

SQ 1: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to the Middle East than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

As can be seen in Table 6, the statistical outcomes of my analysis do not imply that a pattern of enhanced cooperation is present. Both the density as well as the weighted degree centrality of the BRICS network have decreased, although the same should be said for the whole UNGA network. Additionally, the ties between the different BRICS states have become less strong. Thus, answer to sub question one is: no, the BRICS do not show more cooperation in the sponsorship of resolutions related to the Middle East.

The second theme discussed is disarmament, leading to the following sub question:

SQ 2: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to disarmament than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The statistical results (Table 6) show more positive results than for the theme of Middle East, and imply that the patterns of BRICS' cooperation remained similar throughout the two time periods. Considering that the overall density and weighted degree centrality of the UNGA have decreased, these numbers could indicate equal continued cooperation of the BRICS, against the general trends in the UNGA. Nevertheless, the results are not sufficiently strong to claim enhanced cooperation and for that reason the answer to sub question two is: no, the BRICS do not show patterns of enhanced cooperation in the sponsorships of resolutions related to disarmament.

As discussed earlier, my research is unfit to discuss BRICS' cooperation on resolutions related to nuclear disarmament in the UNGA plenary sessions, due to the fact that my data set does not include sufficient resolutions on nuclear disarmament to draw any conclusions. Therefore, I will not address sub question three:

SQ 3: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to nuclear disarmament than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

Nonetheless, the theme of nuclear disarmament is addressed in the First Committee of the UNGA and thus the results from this Committee may add to the discussion of BRICS' cooperation on nuclear disarmament.

The fourth sub question addresses colonialism and is formulated accordingly:

SQ 4: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to colonialism than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The patterns of cooperation of the BRICS in the field of colonialism are mixed. Rather than a shared coordination of sponsorship activities between the five BRICS states, my analysis shows a pattern of cooperation between the original four BRIC states. While Brazil, Russia, India and China showed more coherence in the years 2011-2018 than they did before, South Africa was not part of this cooperation. Moreover, even though Russia cooperated with the other three BRIC members, it was part of a different community. As is clear from the results in Table 6, cooperation between the BRICS has not increased after the emergence of the BRICS concept and I thus answer sub question four negatively.

To assess the cooperation of the BRICS on resolutions concerning economic issues, the following sub question was formulated:

SQ 5: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to economic issues than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The cooperation between the BRICS on sponsorship of resolutions concerning economic issues seems to have improved from the years 2000-2010 to the years 2011-2018. The number of ties between the five states has increased and nearly all states are connected to one another. Similar to the development of cooperation on colonialism, the co-sponsorship activities of the original four BRIC states on economic issues are better aligned than the co-sponsorship activities with South Africa, which is part of a different community. Nonetheless, it is clear that cooperation between the BRICS has improved and thus the answer to sub question five is: yes, the BRICS show more cooperation in the field of economic issues.

A theme that is extensively addressed in the UNGA plenary sessions is human rights, leading to the following sub question:

SQ 6: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to human rights than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The BRICS show fairly strong patterns of cooperation in the field of human rights for both periods of analysis. Even though each of them works together with all of the four other states, there is not one resolution sponsored by all five of them after the birth of the BRICS phenomenon. In addition to this, they are part of three different resolution writing communities, implying that their sponsorship activities are more aligned with other states than with their fellow BRICS members. Concrete, common action to implement their intentions to cooperate on the UN level therefore seems to be lacking. Nevertheless, cooperation between the different BRICS states has improved as can be seen by the increased weighted degree centrality, against the general trend in the UNGA. This, combined with the fact that all BRICS states cooperate with one another leads to the following answer to sub question six: yes, the BRICS states show

more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions concerning human rights than before the birth of the BRICS grouping.

Numerous resolutions on development are written in the UNGA plenary session, and to examine the BRICS' cooperation on this theme I used the following sub question:

SQ 7: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to development than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The patterns of cooperation of the BRICS in the first and second period on resolutions related to development are rather similar when observing Figure 12 and 13. However, the BRICS still cover three different communities and the weighted degree centrality has declined, in line with the decrease of this measure of the whole UNGA. This decrease is reflected in the lowered weight of the ties between the BRICS. Accordingly, I conclude that the BRICS do not show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to development.

The last theme addressed in this study is internal UN matters, with the following sub question:

SQ 8: Do the BRICS states show more cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions related to internal UN matters than before the emergence of the BRICS grouping?

The BRICS states showed relatively high levels of cooperation in the field of internal UN matters in the years 2000-2010. However, after that, the coherence seems to deteriorate, and South Africa did not even sponsor any resolution with any of the other BRICS members. Both the density and the weighted degree centrality of the BRICS network decreased. The cooperation of the BRICS in the sponsorship of resolutions related to internal UN matters clearly did not improve and for that reason the answer to sub question eight is: no, the BRICS do not show more cooperation.

7.1.2 Answer to the research question

Based on the three different international relations theories discussed in the theoretical framework, I formulated three expectations that may answer my central research question. After this, I linked these theories to the different themes of the resolutions discussed in this thesis, as well as three of the Main Committees of the UNGA. In this section, I discuss each of the expectations formulated and aim to answer my research question.

The first expectation I discuss is:

Expectation 1: the cooperation of the BRICS can best be explained by realism, which implies the states show cooperative behaviour in areas concerning peace and security and rebalancing the world order.

This expectation was tested through resolutions adopted in the UNGA plenary sessions focusing on the Middle East, disarmament, colonialism and resolutions adopted in the First Committee. As discussed above, the BRICS do not show more cooperation in the sponsorship of resolutions concerning any of those themes, nor in the First Committee. I therefore conclude that expectation one is not correct and the sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the UNGA cannot be explained by realism.

Secondly, I discussed liberal institutionalism which lead to the following expectation:

Expectation 2: the cooperation of the BRICS can best be explained by liberal institutionalism, which implies the states show cooperative behaviour in areas concerning economic policy and human rights.

The themes discussed within this theory are economic issues and human rights. Additionally, both the Second and Third Committee focus on topics relevant for liberal institutionalism. My analysis shows that the cooperation between the BRICS on co-sponsorship of resolution concerning economic issues, human rights and resolutions adopted in the Second Committee improved after the start of the BRICS grouping. The development of the BRICS cooperation in the Third Committee is less clear. Based on these findings, I conclude that expectation two is correct and that liberal institutionalism is able to explain co-sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the UNGA.

Lastly, I expressed an expectation based on constructivism:

Expectation 3: the cooperation of the BRICS can best be explained by constructivism, which implies the states show cooperative behaviour in areas in which they share common values such as non-intervention, respect for international law, restructuring of the global order and development.

To test this expectation, I examined resolutions that focus on development and internal UN matters. For both of these themes, it is clear that the BRICS do not show more cooperation after the birth of their grouping. Thus, I can conclude that expectation three is not correct and that constructivism is not able to explain the patterns of BRICS co-sponsorship behaviour in the UNGA.

Thus, the research question ‘what theory best explains the development of BRICS’ cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions?’ can be answered as follows: from the theories discussed in this thesis, liberal institutionalism is best able to explain the patterns of BRICS cooperation in the sponsorship of UNGA resolutions. This theory expects the BRICS to cooperate on fields such as economic issues and human rights, and my research proves that this is indeed the case.

7.2 Discussion of findings

Ever since the BRICS acronym got introduced in 2011, the BRICS have published joint statements on their cooperation and their intentions on future cooperation, both outside as well as within the UN framework. For example, the Sanya Declaration published in 2011 contains a paragraph on the UN and the BRICS' concern about "the turbulence in the Middle East, the North African and West African regions" (BRICS 2017, 2011). Since then, the BRICS leaders have met annually alongside the UNGA sessions, after which they publish declarations which have become increasingly more detailed on their positions regarding foreign policy issues throughout the years (Hooijmakers & Keukeleire, 2016). In 2012 the BRICS published their New Delhi Declaration in which they stress their commitment to continued cooperation in the UN (BRICS Information Centre, 2013). They continued to do so in later declarations, for example the Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan in 2014 (Hooijmakers & Keukeleire, 2016). One would expect this cooperation to result in concrete action within the UN structures, for example through coordinated and aligned voting behaviour or the co-sponsorship of resolutions. The voting behaviour of the BRICS has been studied by Ferdinand (2014) and Hooijmakers and Keukeleire (2016), who find opposing outcomes on the voting coherence of the BRICS. Although resolution co-sponsorship in the UNGA has been studied before (for example: Jacobsen, 1969 and Mower, 1962), the co-sponsorship activities of the BRICS of the UNGA had not been studied earlier. My study finds that although the BRICS show enhanced cooperation in some fields since the start of the RBICS consultations, a clear and joint strategy among the BRICS seems to be lacking. The BRICS fail to form one coherent bloc, which is for example illustrated by the fact that in all of the years analysed in this study, the BRICS never sponsored a resolution as a grouping or with just the five BRICS states. At least, such a resolution has not been adopted by the UNGA plenary sessions nor one of the three Committees examined. Additionally, in all of the themes and Committees evaluated, the BRICS are part of different communities in the UNGA, which proves that their co-sponsorship behaviour is not strongly aligned. Laïdi (2012) assesses the impact of the BRICS on the degree of political coherence among them. Considering aligned co-sponsorship behaviour as political coherence, I conclude that their political coherence in the UNGA is rather low. In addition to this, Ferdinand (2014) finds that there is greater voting cohesion between Brazil, India and South Africa than between Russia and China. This is not reflected in my research, as China, India and Brazil are often better connected than South Africa and Russia. Neither is Ferdinand's finding that the BRICS are divergent on human rights, as this is one of the themes for which the BRICS have developed enhanced patterns of cooperation. The lack of coherence of sponsorship activities of the BRICS in the UNGA matches Pant's (2013) findings that the BRICS have not been diplomatically effective. This may be caused by the heterogeneity of the states as discussed by, among others, Ferdinand (2014).

In line with existing literature, my analysis shows no signs that the BRICS aim to revolutionary turn over the international order. Rather, Stuenkel (2015) expects the BRICS to challenge the current world order within international institutions and IGOs. Although the BRICS push for a reform of the UN (Armijo & Robert, 2014), they do not use resolution sponsorship to this end.

Moreover, the results do not support the realist assumptions that states cooperate to defend themselves against a common threat. The BRICS do not show enhanced cooperation on the typical, hard power realist themes such as disarmament, the Middle East, colonialism and resolutions in the First Committee and they surely do not only cooperate on resolutions if this resolution enhances their individual position in the global order. The counterhegemonic bloc hypothesis that Voeten (2000) presents in his work does not seem to hold for the co-sponsorship activities of the BRICS, as the BRICS do not form one coherent bloc.

According to constructivism, the behaviour of states in IGOs reflects their ideas and cooperation between states happens when they have shared identities, values and ideas (Abbott & Snidal, 1998). Thus, for the BRICS to cooperate a similar outlook of the world is required. Declarations and statements published by the BRICS unveil topics the BRICS agree on, such as the unfairness of the current global order and developmental issues (Mielniczuk, 2013). Nonetheless, this agreement does not translate into more coherent co-sponsorship behaviour on these topics. The outcome that constructivism is not able to explain the patterns of BRICS co-sponsorship activities is in line with existing literature as numerous scholars (Akinola, 2011; Pant, 2013; Stuenkel, 2015; Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014) have written about the broad ranging heterogeneity of the BRICS, and it is thus no surprise that their cooperation is not based on shared identities and values.

Instead, the cooperation of the BRICS could be explained as an aim to achieve a common goal, following the assumptions of liberal institutionalism. Of the three theories discussed in this study, my results best fit with this theory. The BRICS cooperate on the topics addressed by liberal institutionalism. However, liberal institutionalism would expect the BRICS to utilise the potential of co-sponsorship of resolutions even more, since the extent to which the BRICS use resolutions to push forward their interests is only limited.

7.3 Limitations and implications for further research

The use of network analysis allows for a quantitative evaluation of the sponsorship activities of the BRICS in the UNGA. Although this analysis provides empirical evidence of the existing patterns in the UNGA, past trends are no guarantee for future patterns of BRICS behaviour, nor behaviour of any state in the international field. Nonetheless, the possibilities of network analysis in IGOs are still to be fully revealed.

Yet, in order to further assess the cooperation of the BRICS states in the UNGA, future research could opt, in addition to this quantitative approach, for a qualitative design. For such a research design a congruency analysis could be applied, following the example of existing literature in the field of international relations (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). On the other hand, future research may focus on the individual BRICS states and their cooperation with states in their region, as these states may focus as some sort of control group used to put the results as presented in this paper into a broader context, as no control group was used in this research.

Due to the specific focus on the BRICS states, the results of this study are not easily generalizable to other groupings of states, which affects the external validity. Nevertheless, the results presented can serve as an interesting comparison for the study of BRICS cooperation in other IGOs. Studying the behaviour of the BRICS in other IGOs is relevant since, although the prominence of the UN in the international field is evident, some scholars have criticised the UN as a platform for researching foreign policy behaviour of states. According to Kim and Russett, the UN is not entirely suited for studying international politics and are power relationships in the real world not correctly represented due to the “one-nation one-vote principle and to the fact that it is not a world government with authority to enforce its decisions” (1996, p. 327).

As is clear from the discussion above, both the concept of the BRICS and UNGA resolution sponsorship provide much ground for future research. First of all, the BRICS are unique in their composition and closely following their development and activities at the UN are relevant to assess the possible changes in the global order resulting from a shift in economic power. Secondly, more research on UNGA resolution sponsorship could provide an insight on how states use resolution sponsorship in the UNGA to push forward their interests. Thirdly, the results of this study show that even though the BRICS declare to cooperate on the UN level, they do not form a coherent bloc when it comes to resolution sponsorship. Research on why the BRICS do not do so could understanding of this. Is it because they are not willing to give up individual interests or are they simple not able to align their interests to begin with because they are too diverging? Are their interests more aligned with other states? Lastly, if the BRICS claim to cooperate at the UN level but if they fail to do so through sponsoring resolutions and the literature on their voting cohesion is mixed, then how do they cooperate?

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Appendix

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 459,592

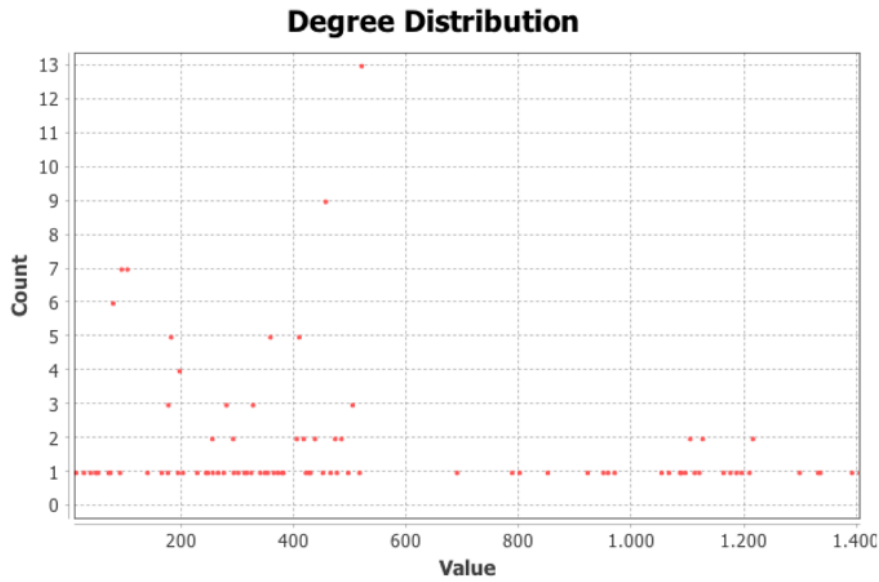


Figure 1: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of Middle East (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 324,701

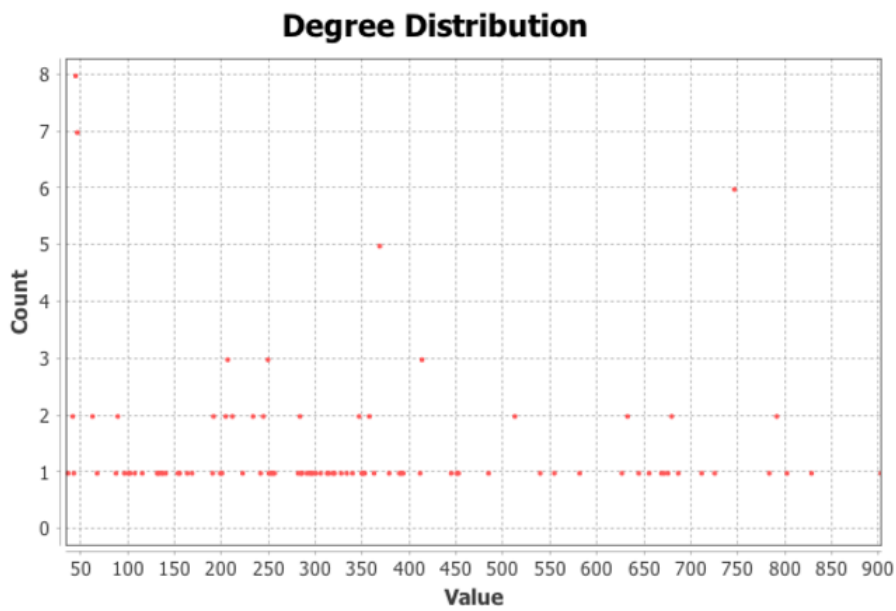


Figure 2: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of Middle East (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 8,400

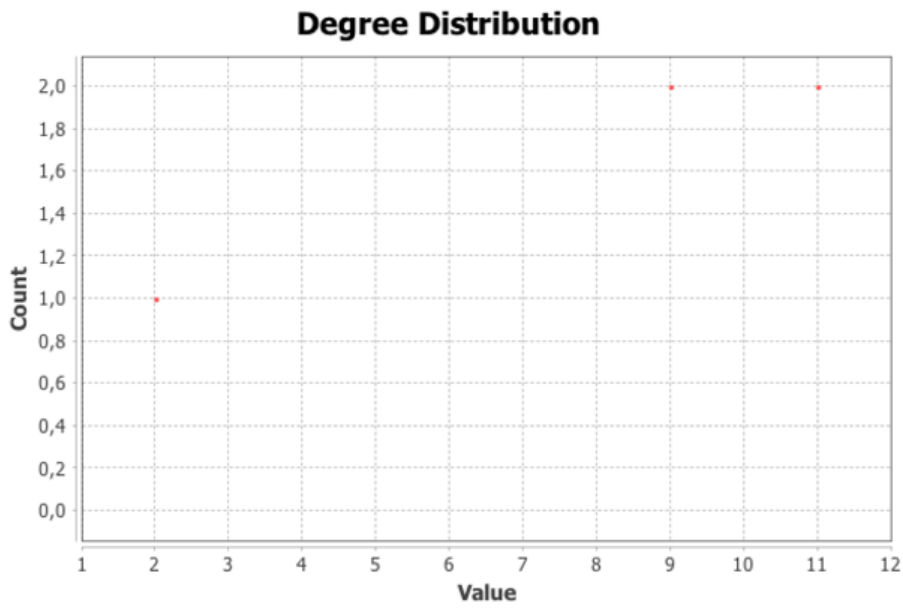


Figure 3: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of Middle East (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 1,200

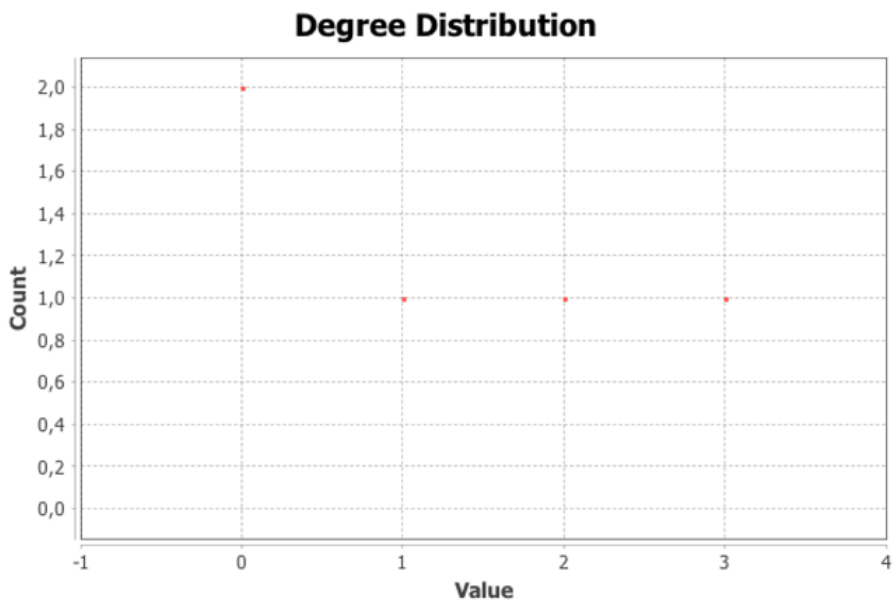


Figure 4: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of Middle East (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 640,497

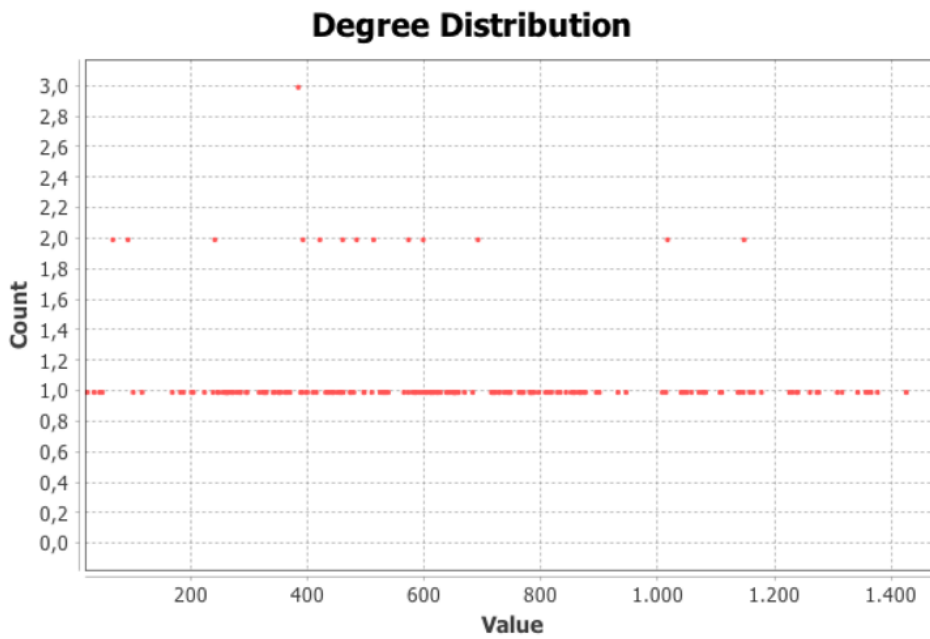


Figure 5: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of disarmament (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 441,454

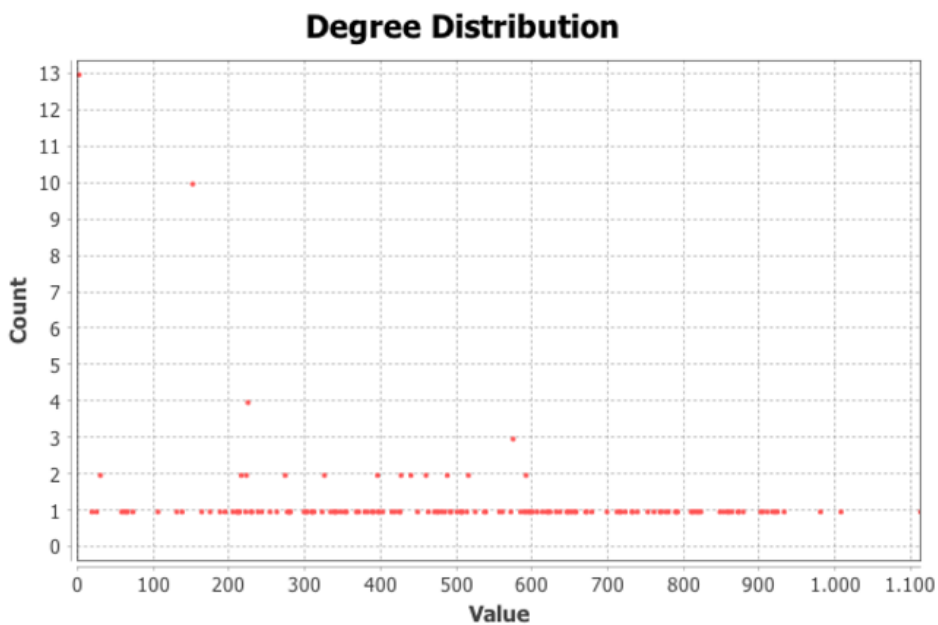


Figure 6: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of disarmament (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 25,200

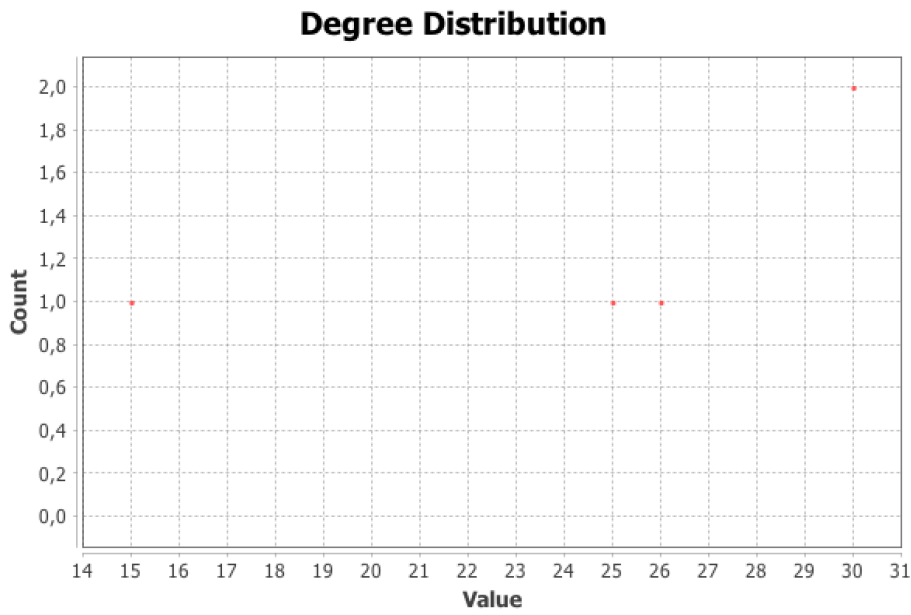


Figure 7: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of disarmament (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 22,800

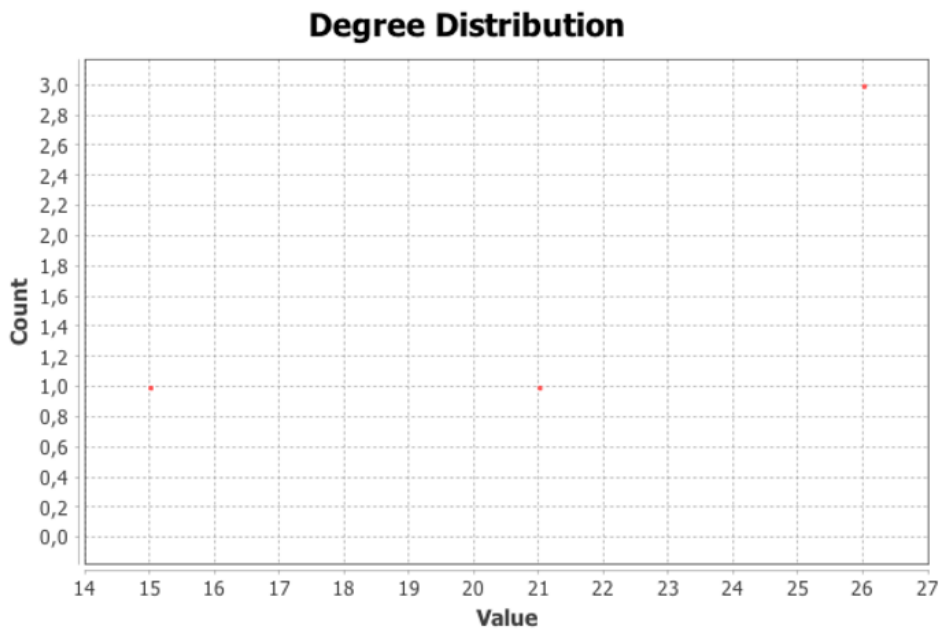


Figure 8: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of disarmament (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 145,563

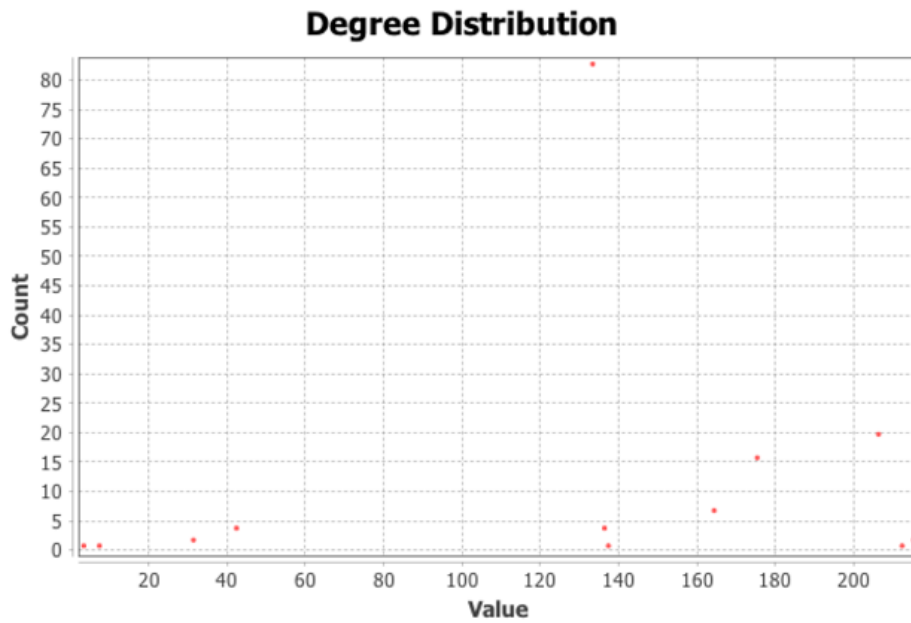


Figure 9: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of colonialism (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 67,113

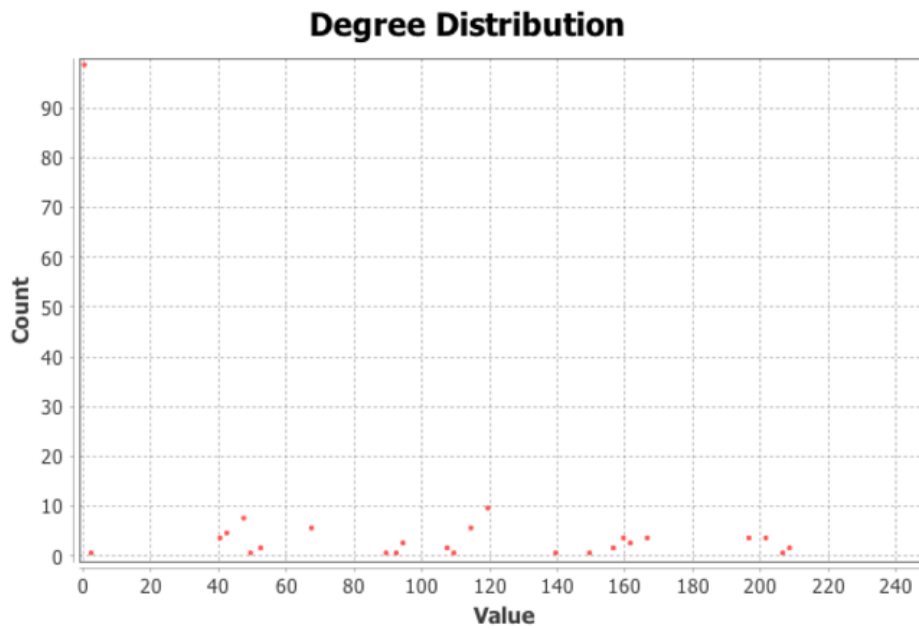


Figure 10: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of colonialism (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 4,800

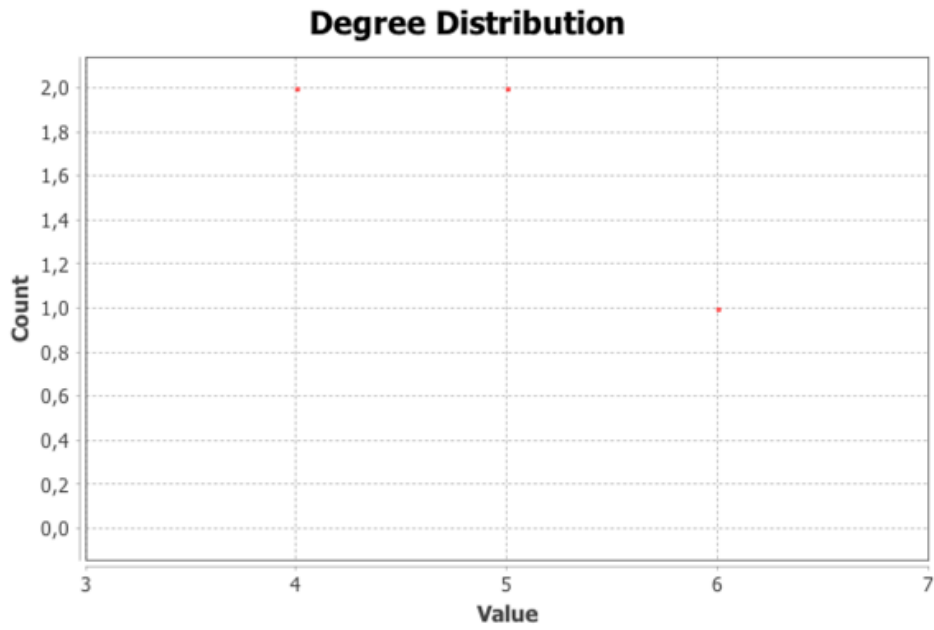


Figure 11: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of colonialism (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 5,600

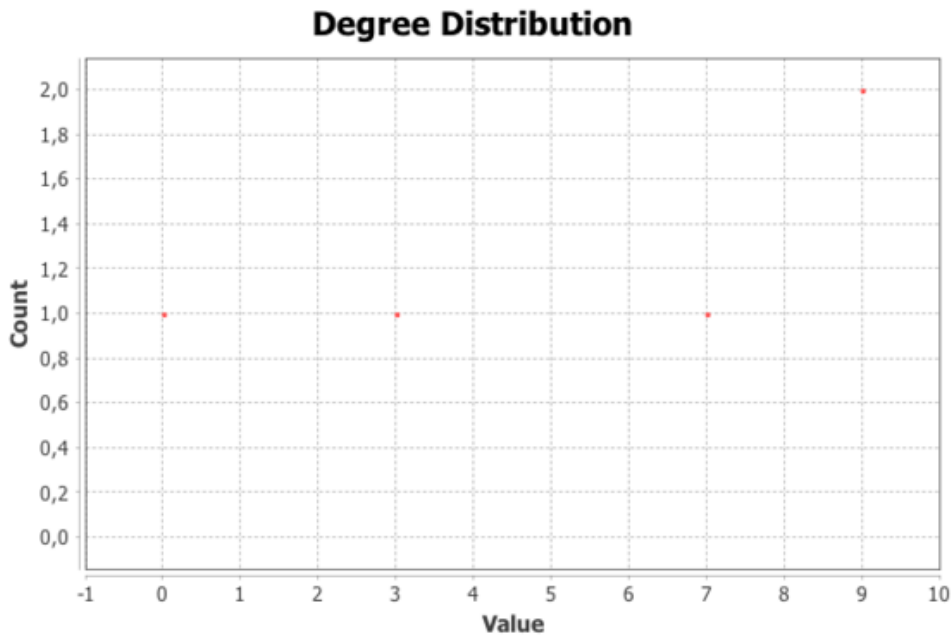


Figure 12: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of colonialism (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 135,882

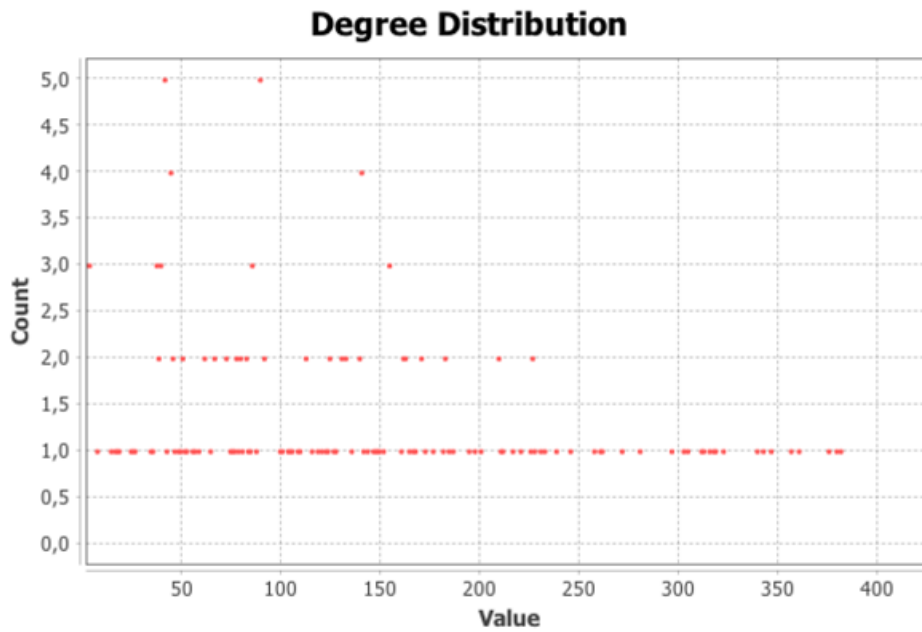


Figure 13: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of economic issues (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 112,190

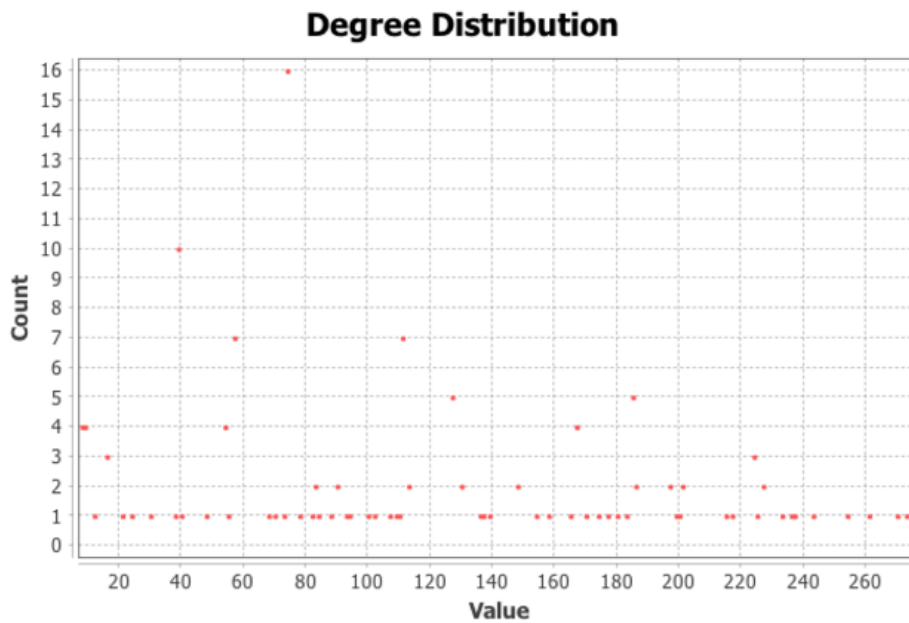


Figure 14: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of economic issues (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 3,200

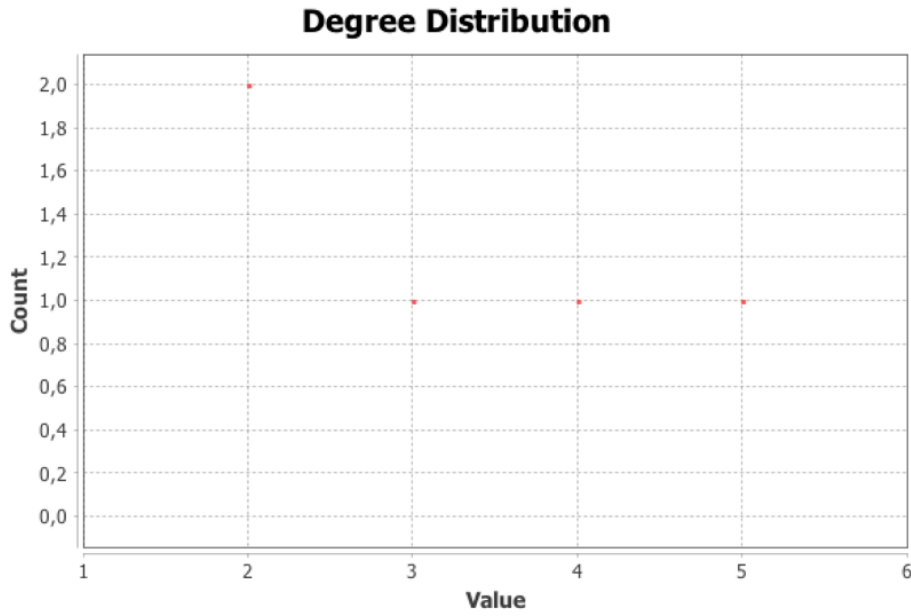


Figure 15: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of economic issues (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 8,800

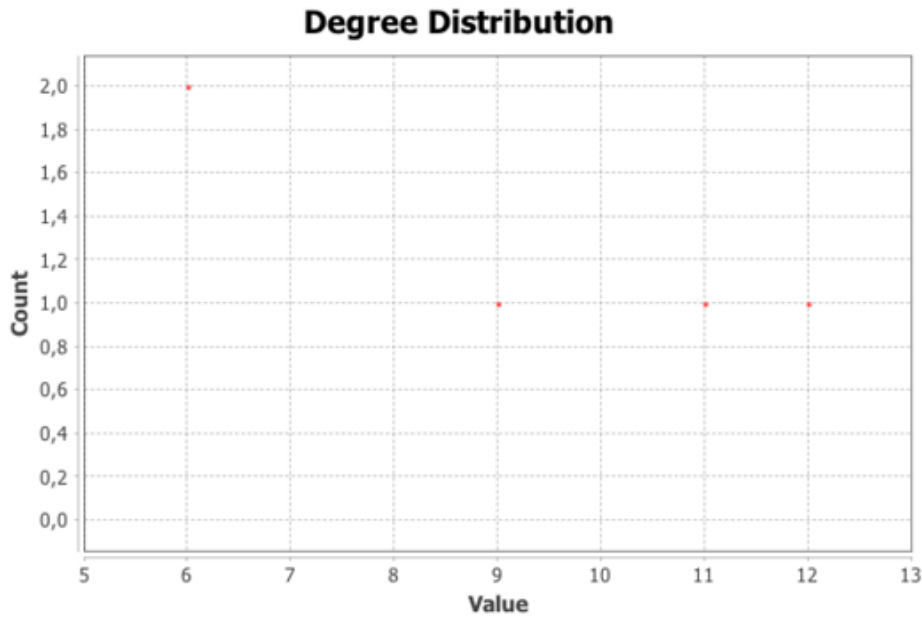


Figure 16: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of economic issues (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 169,814

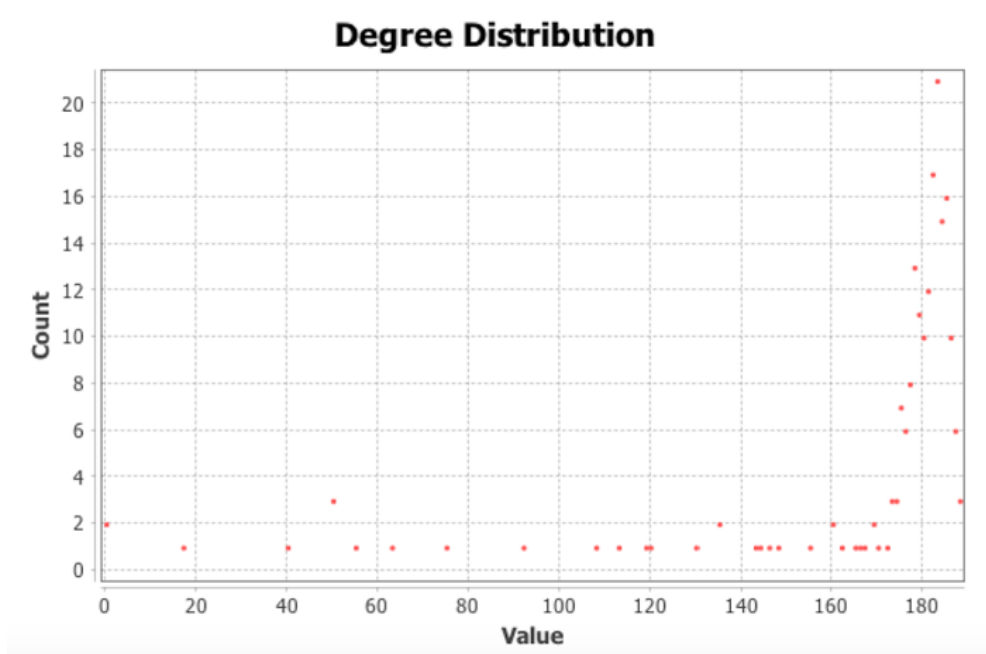


Figure 17: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of human rights (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 414,867

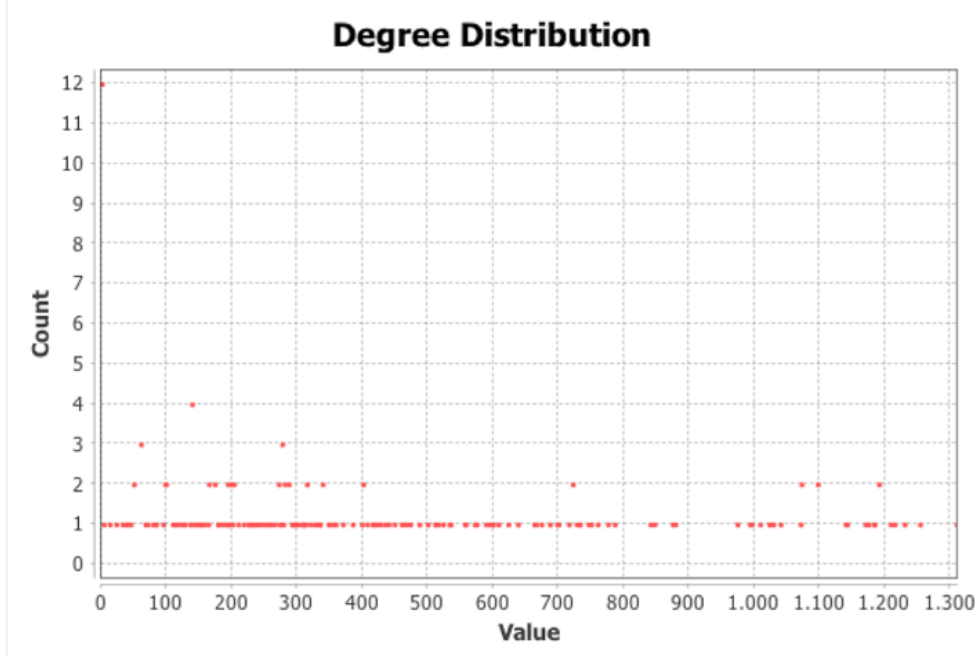


Figure 18: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of human rights (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 4,000

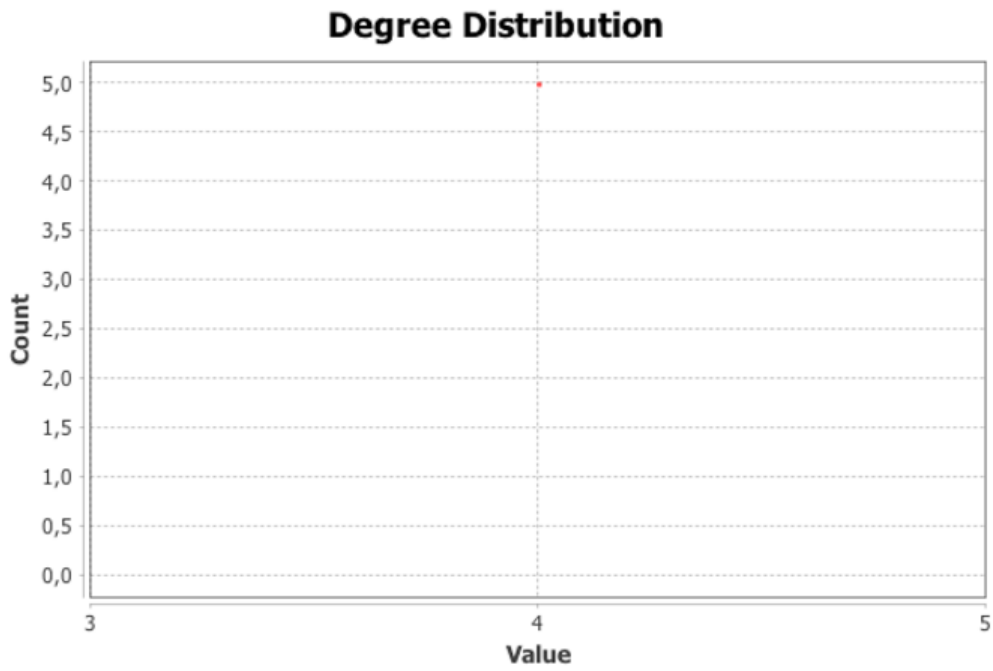


Figure 19: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of human rights (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 12,400

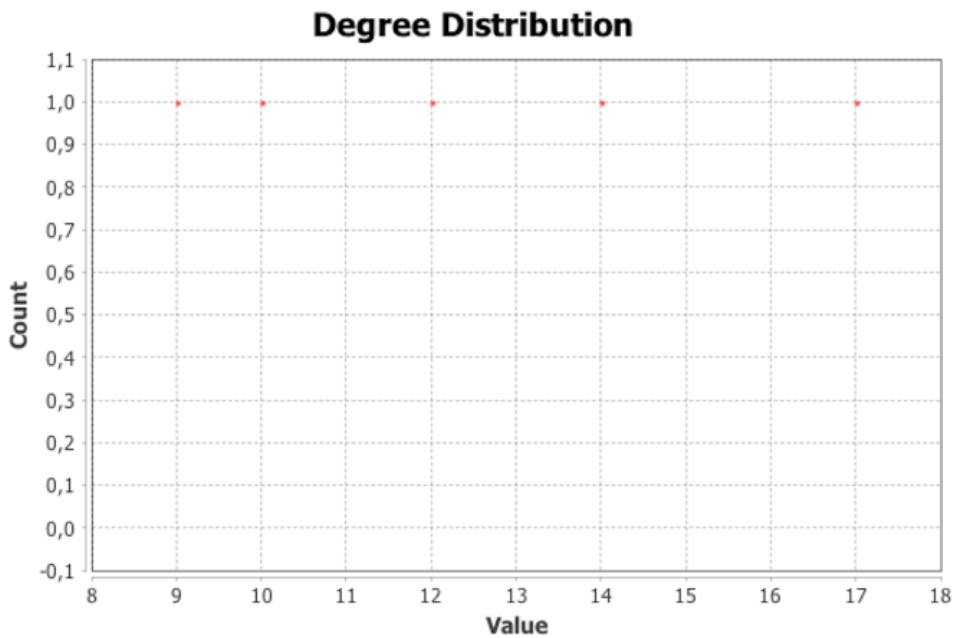


Figure 20: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of human rights (2010-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 1619,495

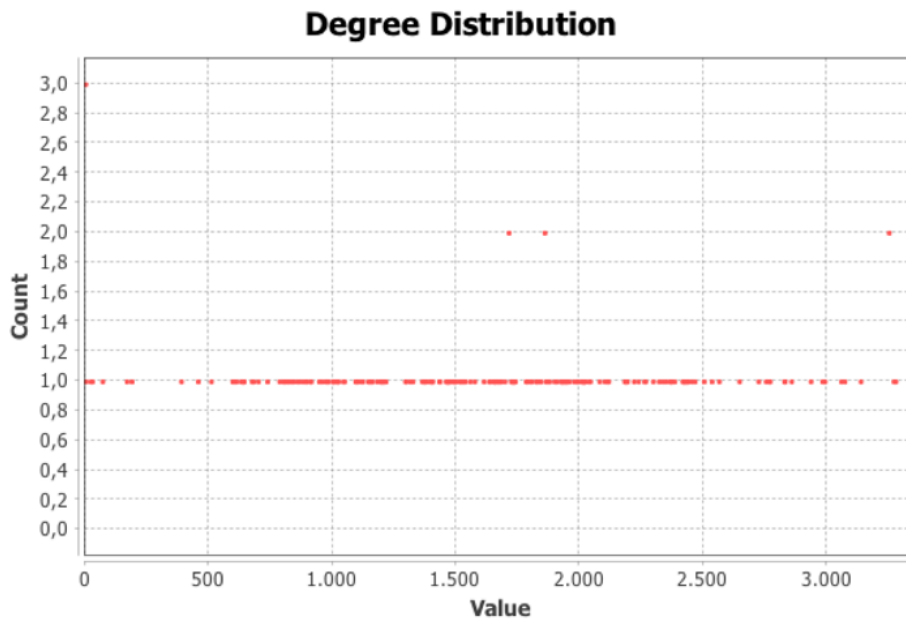


Figure 21: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of development (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 645,239

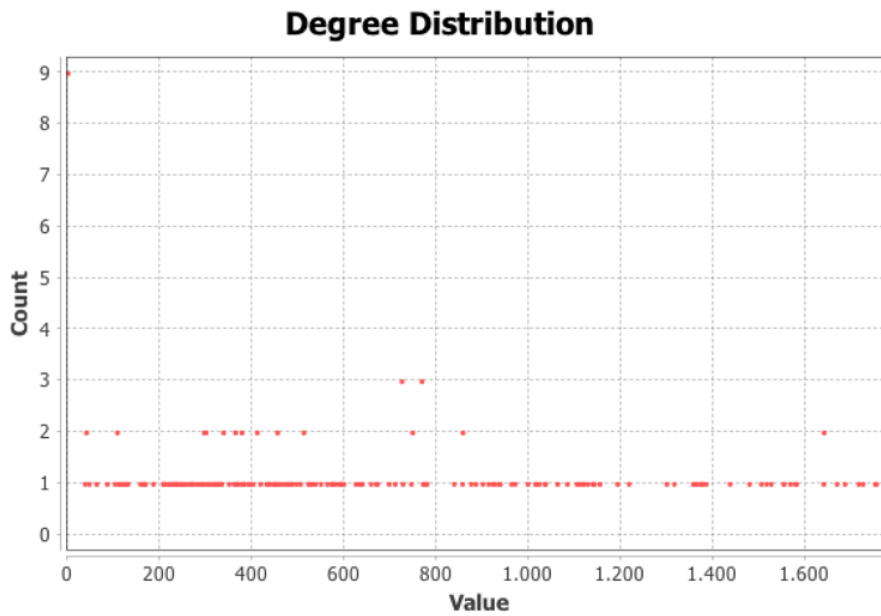


Figure 22: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of development (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 64,400

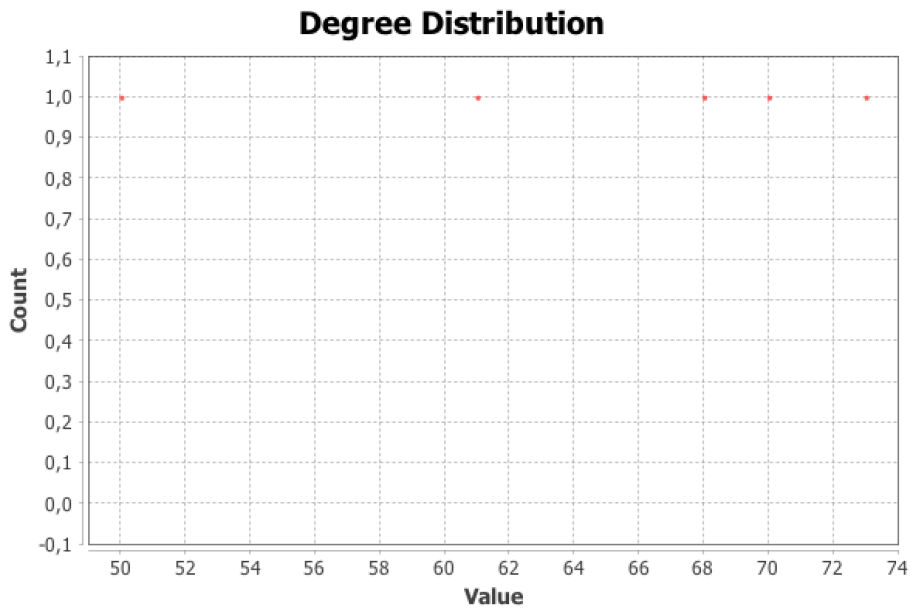


Figure 23: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of development (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 28,800

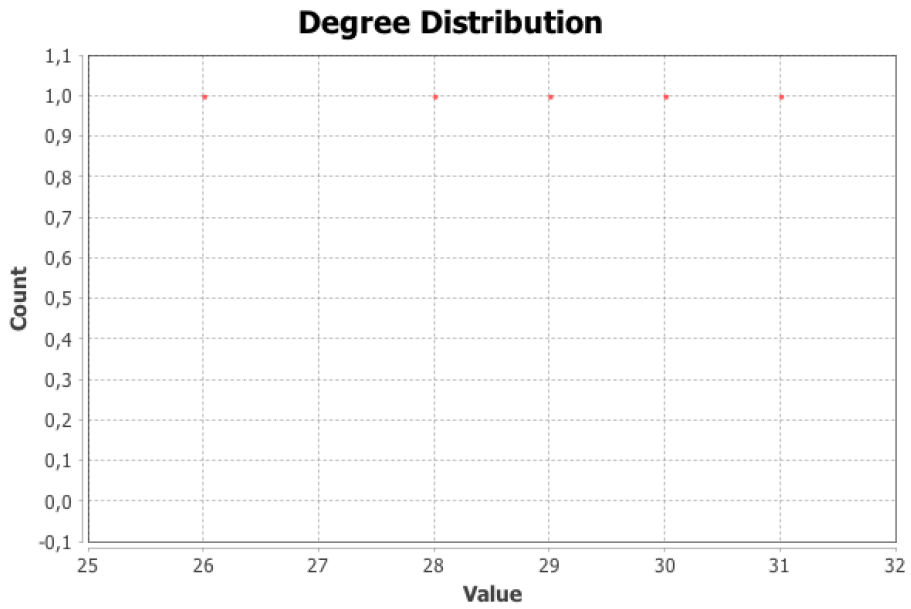


Figure 24: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of development (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 291,321

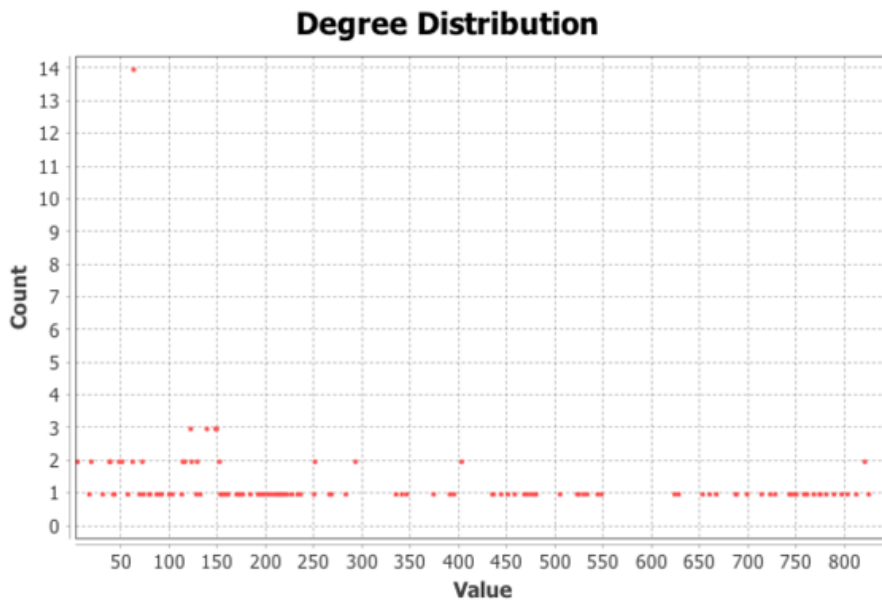


Figure 25: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of internal UN matters (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 123,779

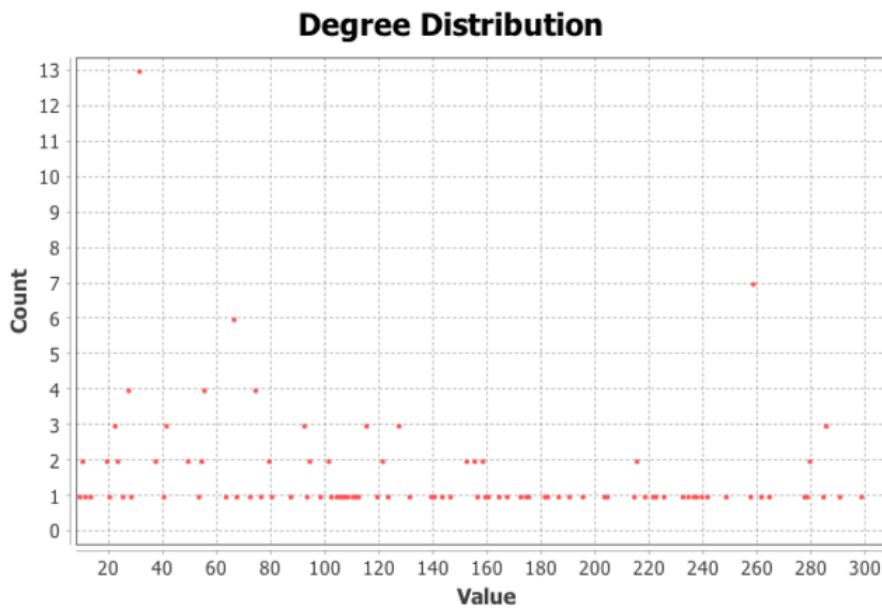


Figure 26: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA for the theme of internal UN matters (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 22,400

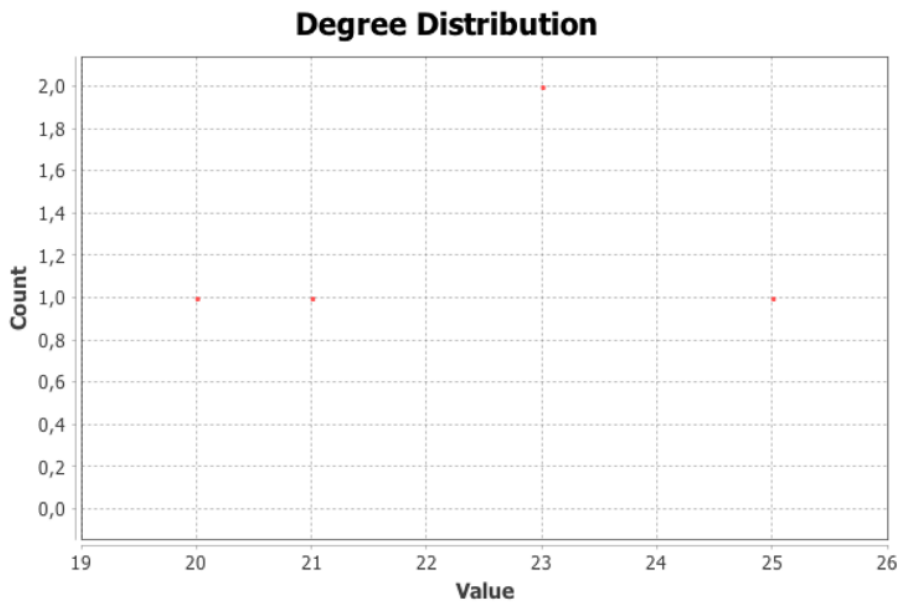


Figure 27: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of internal UN matters (2000-2010)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 2,800

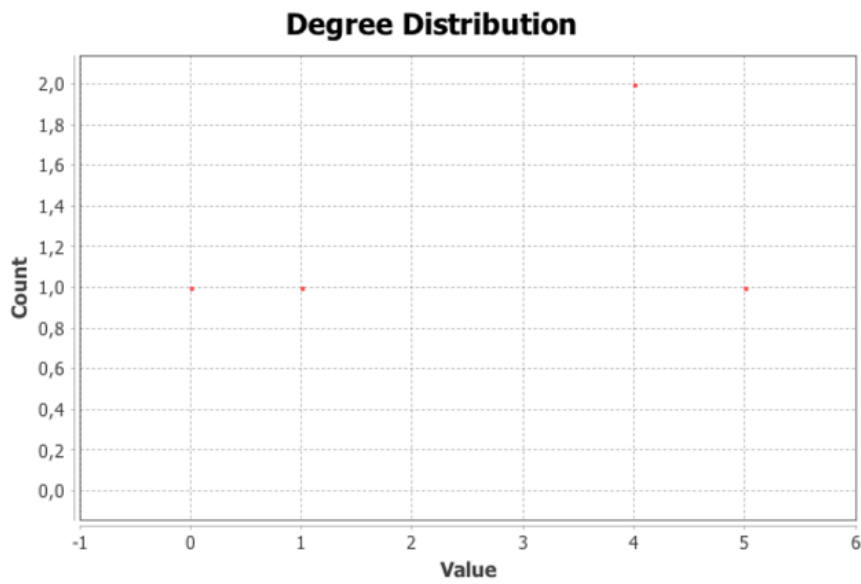


Figure 28: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS for the theme of internal UN matters (2011-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 409,181

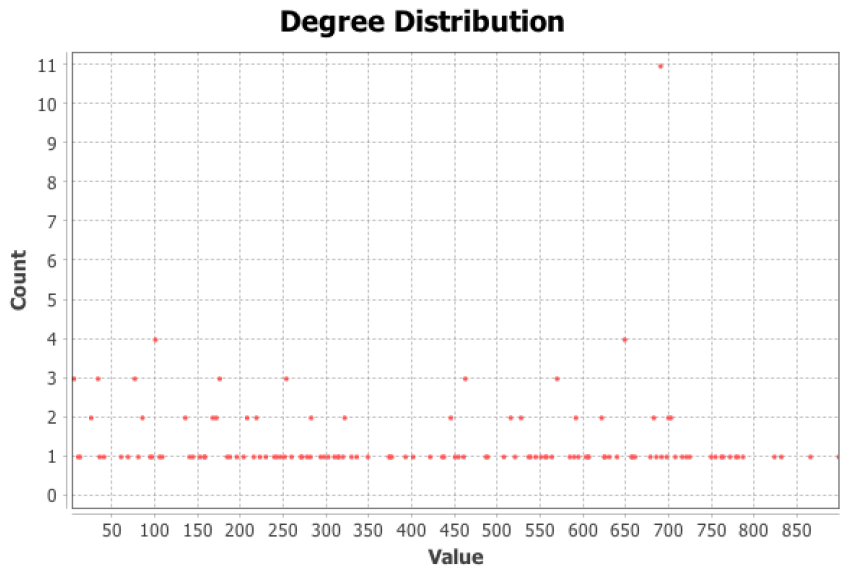


Figure 29: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA First Committee (2000-2001)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 127,703

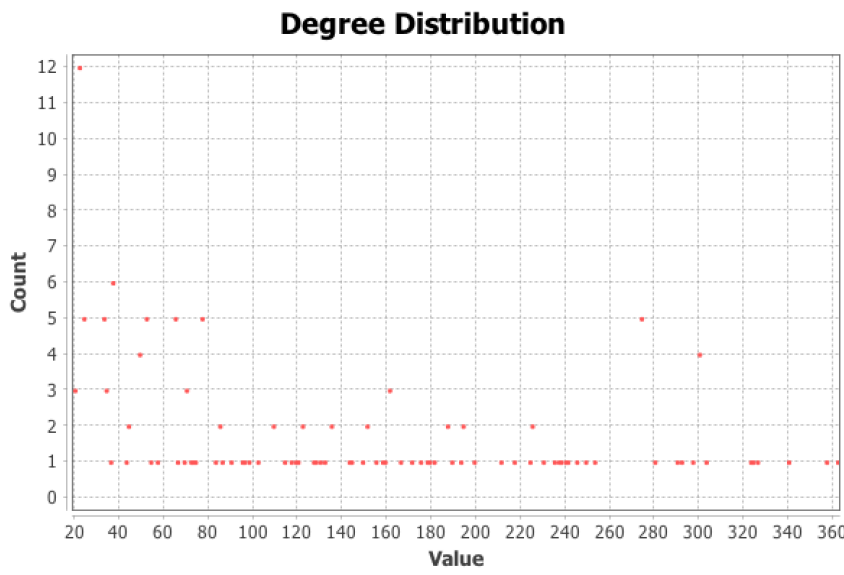


Figure 30: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA First Committee (2017-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 11,600

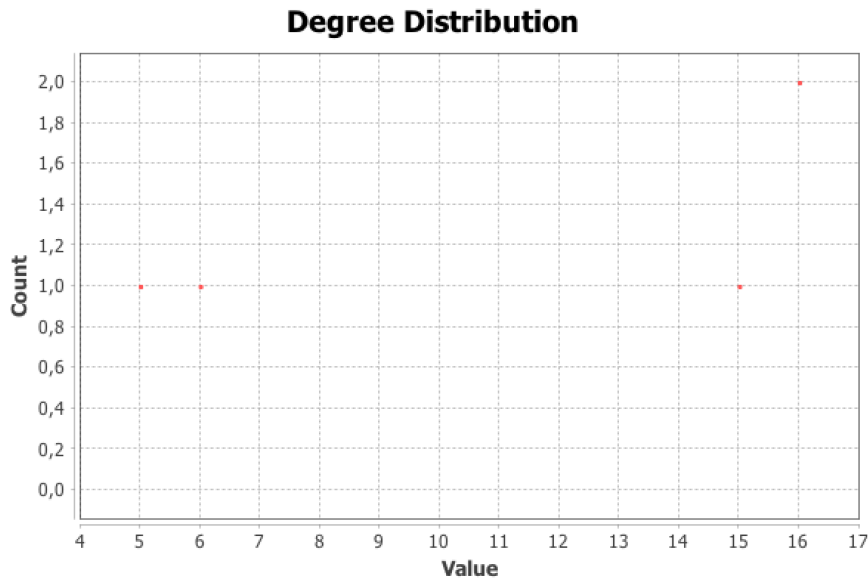


Figure 31: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS in the UNGA First Committee (2000-2001)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 1,200

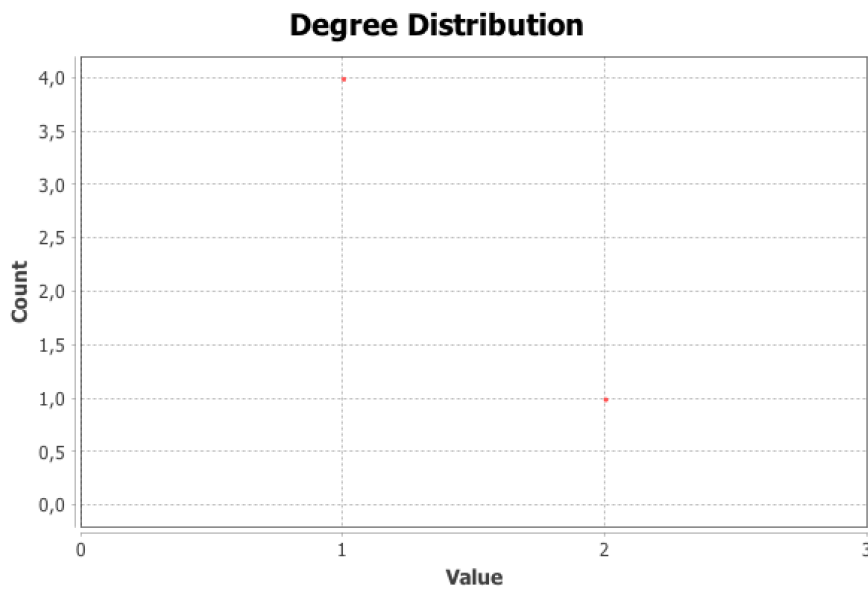


Figure 32: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS in the UNGA First Committee (2017-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 157,422

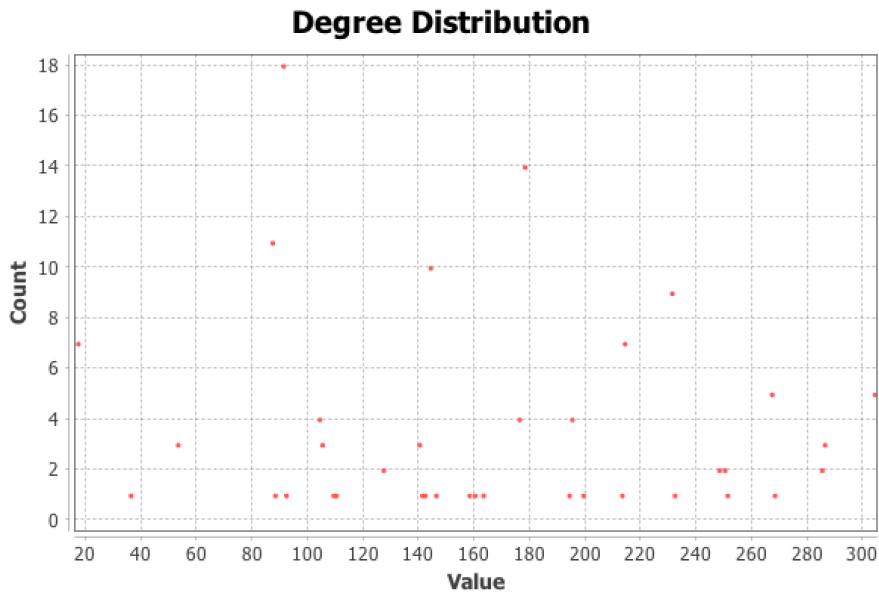


Figure 33: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA Second Committee (2000-2001)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 242,551

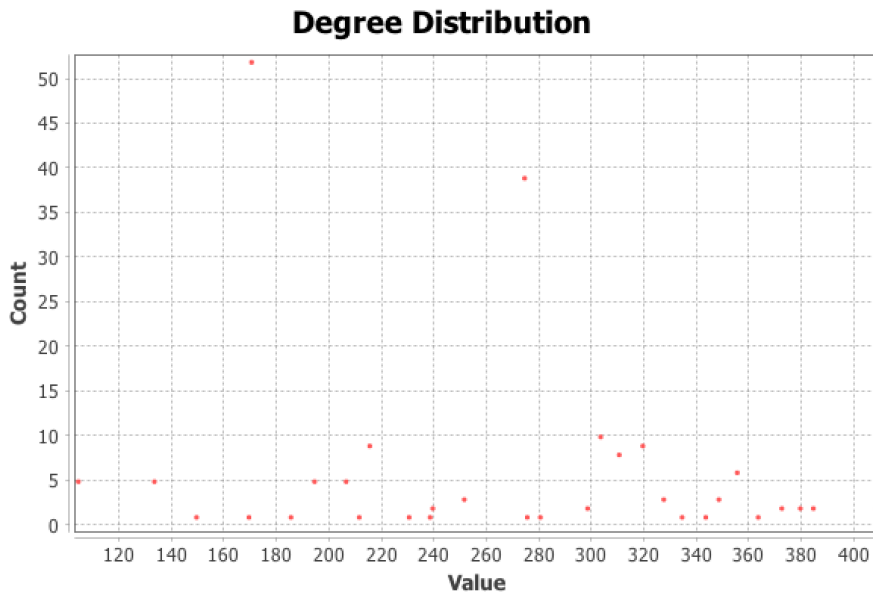


Figure 34: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA Second Committee (2017-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 1,200

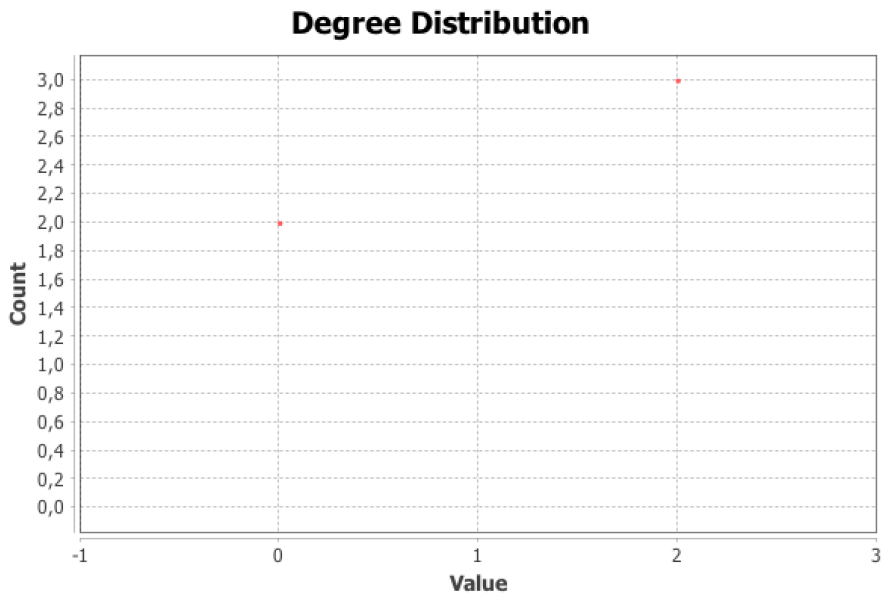


Figure 35: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS in the UNGA Second Committee (2000-2001)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 6,400

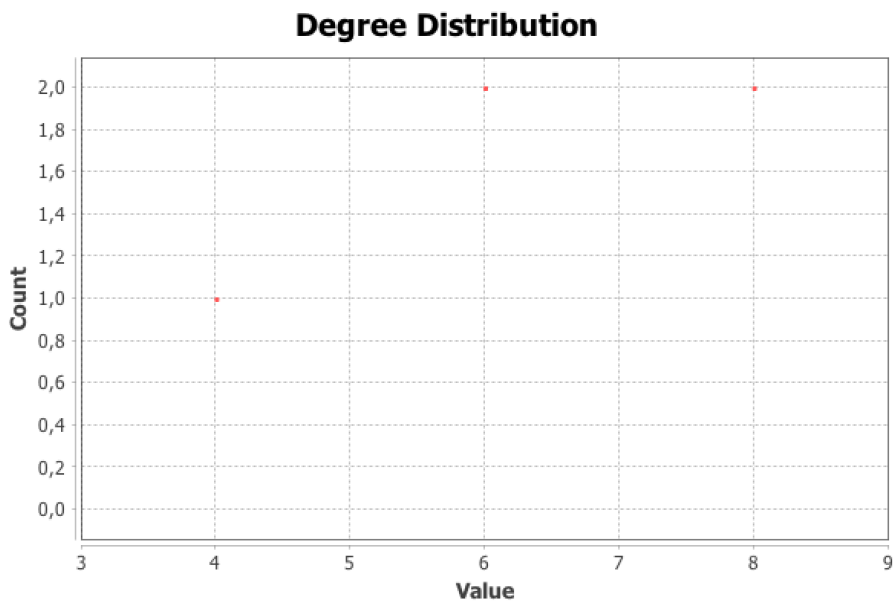


Figure 36: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS in the UNGA Second Committee (2017-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 662,567

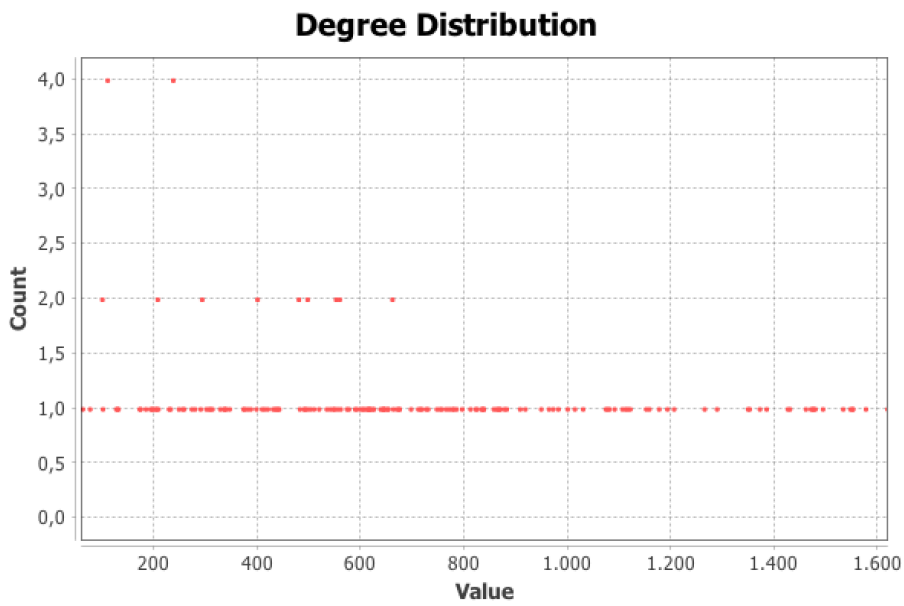


Figure 37: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA Third Committee (2000-2001)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 244,630

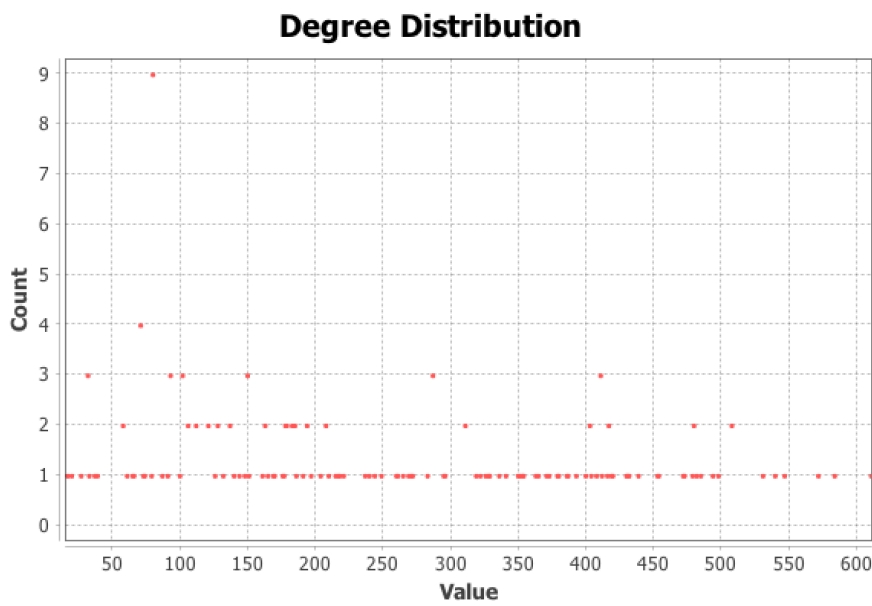


Figure 38: Weighted degree centrality of the UNGA Third Committee (2017-2018)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 14,800

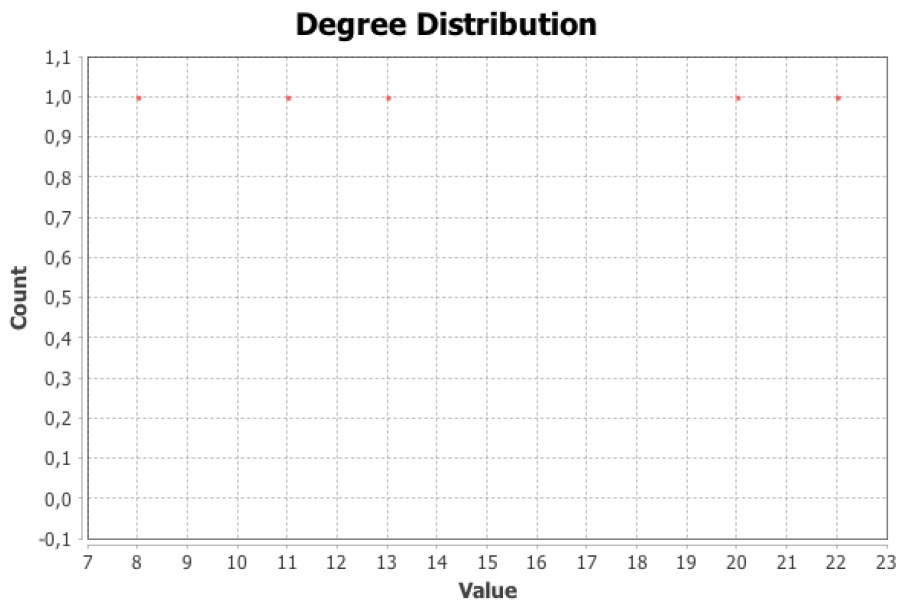


Figure 39: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS in the UNGA Third Committee (2000-2001)

Results:

Average Weighted Degree: 8,800

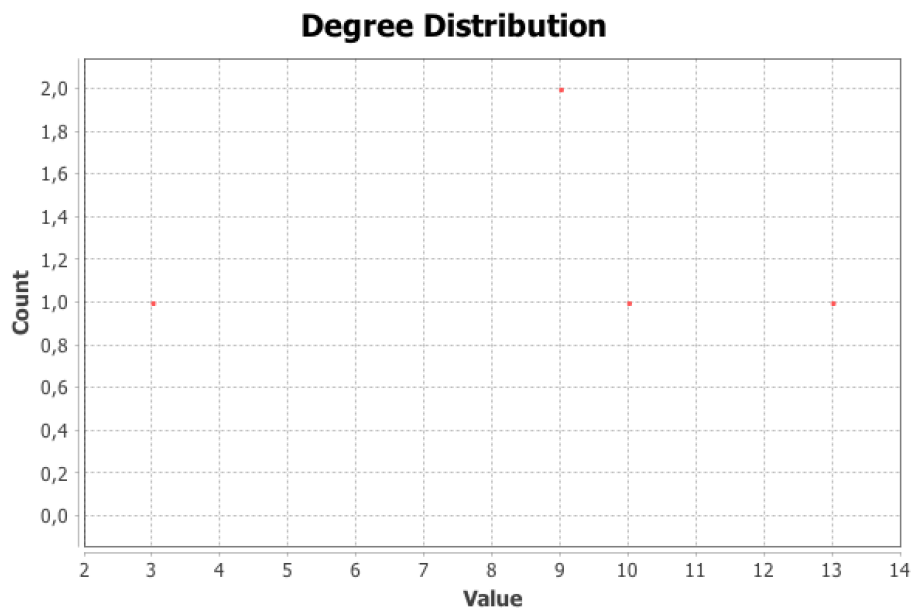


Figure 40: Weighted degree centrality of the BRICS in the UNGA Third Committee (2017-2018)