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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPANDING THE OLIGARCHY: THE G4 AND THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

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ABSTRACT

Based on the neo-realist approach developed by Joseph Grieco, the aim is to explain the strategic interests of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan with the creation of the G4 and the main obstacles to the group's success. The main argument indicates that these states defend the preservation of the UNSC's effectiveness and functionality to deal with challenges to international security and peace, not the Council's effective democratization. They saw in G4 the opportunity to pressure for a common interest of the four states: the UNSC reform. With permanent seats at the UNSC, they all want to have greater participation in international decisions related to international security and peace and delay, frustrate or undermine policies by P5 states that damage their specific interests. However, the two intermediate powers want to enhance their voice opportunities in their relations with the two G4 richer and more powerful states, while these states want to rationalize the exercise of their power towards the G4 emerging nations and the developing world.

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INTRODUCTION

The G4 states (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) reiterated their common vision of an enlarged United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 21st century, expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. This enlarged UNSC would take into consideration the contributions made by its possible new members to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the need for increased representation of developing states in both categories to better reflect today's geopolitical realities. The foreign ministers of the G4 states discussed the initiative to promote consultations with UN member states regarding a draft resolution on the expansion of the UNSC in both categories and the improvement of its working methods. The initiative has been supported by a wide coalition from all UN regional groups. Such strong support should be considered as the basis for further discussion in the intergovernmental negotiations to create the momentum needed for real negotiations among member states on this matter (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2011). The G4 foreign ministers reiterated the commitments of their states as aspiring new permanent members of the UNSC, as well as their support for each other's candidatures, and also reaffirmed their view of the importance of Africa to be represented in the

permanent membership of an enlarged Council (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2012). More precisely, they call for new permanent members from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Western European and Others Group. New non-permanent seats would be allocated to Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. This would also ensure improvement in the participation of smaller states in the UNSC. According to the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN in New York, most states in the UN want a true shift in the power structure and the dynamics of the UNSC, which also remedies the underrepresentation of the developing world. The UNSC reform would be in line with Article 23 of the UN Charter, taking into consideration the contributions made by member states to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the organization, and to equitable geographical distribution (Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations, 2014). In 2013, the G4 foreign ministers underscored that, almost 70 years after the creation of the UN, the difficulties of the UNSC in dealing with international challenges have further highlighted the need for UNSC reform to better reflect geopolitical realities of the 21st century and make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions. The ministers recalled that, in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, international leaders committed themselves to an early reform of the UNSC and stressed the

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need to intensify efforts to translate, at the latest by 2015, the existing agreement into concrete outcomes. The G4 states emphasized the importance to enhance dialogue and outreach with African states on the UNSC reform and welcomed Japan's initiative in having convened the first Japan-Africa Summit Meeting on UNSC Reform in 2013. They also noted with appreciation the directive of CARICOM Heads of State and Government in 2013 calling for "greater urgency in achieving lasting Security Council Reform" and the initiative of CARICOM to reinvigorate the intergovernmental negotiation process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2012). One might ask why four states that have so different power positions joined in a common effort to promote the reform of an organ in an international institution. Based on the neo-realist approach developed by Joseph Grieco, the main purpose of this article is to explain the strategic interests of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan with the creation of the G4 and the main obstacles to the group's success. I argue that those states defend the preservation of the UNSC's effectiveness and functionality to deal with challenges to international security and peace, not the Council's effective democratization. The argument of democratization is useful for those states to gain the support of emerging and underdeveloped nations at the UN for the UNSC reform and strengthen the legitimacy of their demands. They saw in G4 the opportunity to pressure for a common interest of the four states: the UNSC reform, especially their quest for permanent seats. With permanent seats at the UNSC, they all want to have greater participation in international decisions related to international security and peace and delay, frustrate or undermine policies by P5 states that damage their specific interests. However, the two intermediate powers want to enhance their voice opportunities in their relations with the two G4 richer and more powerful states, while these states want to rationalize the exercise of their power towards the G4 emerging nations and the developing world, making it more legitimate and less costly. The oligarchical nature of G4's bid lies in their defense of an extended power structure in which power effectively still rests with a small number of actors that control the institution and create limits on the participation of the actors outside the center of the decision-making process. The more flexible character of the G4 gives its members the leverage to construct different alliances and coalitions to achieve the UNSC reform. Nevertheless, some mid-sized states believe that elevating the status of their neighbors will not help represent their needs and may lower their international status in comparison to their neighbors.

Theoretical framework and methods

Joseph Grieco conceives states as substantively and instrumentally rational actors in world politics, which are sensitive to costs and tend to choose instrumentally among policy options based on which are more likely to help them protect and promote their security and independence. Non-state-centric approaches say that state actions result from multiple domestic processes such as the bargain between different governmental sectors, party politics and pressures from interest groups and civil society organizations. The neorealist perspective adopted by the author does not deny the existence of domestic politics and actors within the state, but it considers that the terms of interaction between those actors and the abilities and powers they have to influence politics are defined by the state, which has internal cohesiveness and coherence to establish rules and norms for the interaction

between domestic actors and to act in the international level. This makes the state the predominant actor which can respond to the external pressures from the international system in the light of its autonomy for decision and independence for action. According to Grieco, the state has sufficient autonomy from their national societies to recognize and pursue the interests of the nation. It also can establish goals and strategies that run counter to the preferences of specific groups. That is why decision makers can respond on the behalf of the state as whole to the opportunities and dangers in the international system (Grieco, 1997). As one of the main concerns in this article was to explain the state's reply to international pressures through its participation in international institutions, I see the employment of Grieco's neorealist perspective as more adequate than non-state-centric approaches.

Some neorealists such as Kenneth Waltz and Stephen Krasner argue that states find it hard – although not impossible – to cooperate because of fears about cheating, dependency and relative gains (Waltz, 1979; Krasner, 1991). Other neorealists such as Stanley Hoffmann defend that international institutions are not able to dampen these fears and states do not ascribe much importance to them because of that (Hoffmann, 1973). Grieco overcomes the limitations of these arguments when he suggests analytical alternatives for the institutionalized cooperation that were underdeveloped or ignored by other neorealists. According to Grieco, for weaker partners, the rules constituting a joint arrangement could provide them with opportunities for having an effective voice in the process of deciding how cooperation will proceed and how they will be treated by stronger partners. If states share a common interest in a collaborative arrangement, the weaker partners may seek to ensure that the arrangement will provide sufficient opportunities for them to voice their concerns and interests and prevent or at least ameliorate their domination by stronger partners. The stronger partners may want to rationalize their dominance and make their power more legitimate and less costly through international institutions (Grieco, 1995). I apply Grieco's perspective in this article because it is possible to observe that G4 states have common interests regarding the UNSC reform, but they have different positions in the distribution of power internationally, which can generate specific interests in the light of the difference in their relative power.

With possible permanent seats at the UNSC, they all want to have more participation in international decisions regarding the use of force and the maintenance of international peace and security, besides creating obstacles to positions of today's permanent members that can damage their interests. However, intermediate powers such as Brazil and India might have been expected from a neo-realist viewpoint to view Germany and Japan as being challengers as the P5 states – United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France and China – which already have permanent seats. However, cooperation with Germany and Japan which share with them common interests regarding the UNSC reform could not only enhance the bargaining power of Brazil and India, but also create communication channels with these two developed and powerful states and avoid their indiscriminate domination even before they could possibly achieve the permanent seats. Germany and Japan may have come to believe that they needed to accept cooperation with emerging states as the price for fostering a more effective coalition to pressure for the UNSC reform. Joining efforts with the intermediate powers at the G4 would enhance the

legitimacy of their cause, strengthen the bargaining power with the P5 states and the emerging world and reduce the costs of exercising their power. However, all the G4 states can speak in terms of the UNSC “legitimacy”. They may use it as a universal cover for their real particularistic national interests in gaining a permanent seat. The legitimacy rhetoric, while perhaps not the true concern of states contending for a permanent seat, is an effective moral argument (Hurd, 2008).

Regarding the methodological considerations, I use a qualitative case study approach, with which it is possible to identify the oligarchical nature of G4's bid, once they suggest their enhanced participation in a power structure in which power effectively still rests with a small number of actors, distinguished by their institutional control. In practice, the bid is for a controlled extension of a “government by the few”, in which power is exercised by a small and privileged group for their particularistic purposes. It is also important to say that G4 proposals should not be treated in a static way. They were susceptible to change as negotiations evolved and other bloc positions came to the fore, as the following sections will show. The more flexible G4 character brought to its members the possibility to construct other alliances and coalitions with different actors to achieve the UNSC reform. The negotiation as a group was only one of the strategies used by its members to try to extend the oligarchical structure of the UNSC.

RESULTS

The UNSC can determine collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and the suppression of acts of aggression, including economic sanctions and military force. Chapter VII of the Charter empowers the UNSC to determine which acts do and do not constitute a threat to international peace and security (Imber, 2006). The UNSC builds on the experience of the League of Nations, but with clear improvements: it has enforcement capabilities, discards the unanimity role and gives veto power to a small number of powerful states to guarantee the cooperation among the great powers in the decisions. It was immobilized during the Cold War in the light of the difficulty of the UN to apply its comprehensive economic sanctions and collective security provisions in the bipolar order. Many IR analysts indicate that, since then, it failed to act in the face of horrific human suffering in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, for example. However, this argument should not be taken for granted, because each major power holds responsibility regarding many of those events in the early 1990s and failed to live up to post-Cold War high expectations.

As many of those powers controlled the decision-making in the UNSC, this institution reflected the misguided decisions of its members. One of the major criticisms against the UNSC is its lack of representativeness. Reform efforts focused on the size of an enlarged UNSC, the categories of membership, the regional representation, the veto power, the working methods of the UNSC and its relationship with the General Assembly. The debates on the UNSC reform are largely about formal and informal rules that shape the roles of the veto powers and the ways in which other member states can attain a seat on the Council. The rules governing the powers of the UNSC raise questions of legitimacy and authority, once the expansion of the membership could help enhance the UNSC authority, and a review of the working methods could make it more transparent. A great number of developing states claims that

the UNSC is increasingly illegitimate and ineffective, given the lack of geographic balance in the UNSC's permanent membership, its failure to include regional leaders that could contribute to international security and offer political support for the UN and its inability to ensure compliance with binding resolutions (Imber, 2006). The G4 states' formal goal was to win a General Assembly resolution effectively endorsing their aspirations for UNSC permanent seats. Under UN rules, this would need the backing of two-thirds of states. Even though diplomats from G4 states were optimistic that they could get the votes, the technical obstacles to reforming the council are complex. Even if governments agreed on a reform package, this could take years to be ratified. The priorities of G4 members can bring difficulties for the cohesion and coherence of their proposals: Brazil and India may want permanent seats for prestige reasons, but they do not want the UN to have a major role in their neighborhoods, and Germany and Japan have to ponder how the reform may affect their relations with the US and their Western allies. Despite the difficulties, the G4 at least brought debates about the role and the reform of the UNSC over the past decade.

It mounted a drive for council reform in 2005 and came close to securing the necessary level of support to initiate change. However, the U.S. and China – which was especially concerned by Japan's ambitions – undermined the initiative. The G4 launched another reform drive in 2009 that also faltered. US President Barack Obama endorsed India's ambitions for a permanent seat in late 2010, but, when he visited Brazil, he failed to offer Brazil the sort of endorsement he had given India. Three of the G4 countries – Brazil, Germany and India – had temporary seats on the Security Council in 2011, which offered a window of opportunity to talk about UNSC reform, but the Libyan campaign also created frictions within the G4. Brazil and India took a harsh line toward NATO, embarrassing Germany and Japan (Gowan, 2013). The table below brings a list of terms of G4 states as UNSC members:

Table 1. Terms of G4 members as elected members to the UNSC

G4 members	Terms as elected member to the UNSC
Brazil	1946 – 1947, 1951 – 1952, 1954 – 1955, 1963 – 1964, 1967 – 1968, 1988 – 1989, 1993 – 1994, 1998 – 1999, 2004 – 2005, 2010 – 2011
India	1950 – 1951, 1967 – 1968, 1972 – 1973, 1977 – 1978, 1984 – 1985, 1991 – 1992, 2011 – 2012
Germany	1977 – 1978, 1987 – 1988, 1995 – 1996, 2003 – 2004, 2011 – 2012
Japan	1958 – 1959, 1966 – 1967, 1971 – 1972, 1975 – 1976, 1981 – 1982, 1987 – 1988, 1992 – 1993, 1997 – 1998, 2005 – 2006, 2009 – 2010, 2016 – 2017

In spite of multiple challenges to its relevance and competence and the fact that great powers might act without its support, the UNSC retains a capacity to dramatize and polarize attitudes to rules on the use of force in the international system which govern the expectations of state behavior. States seek to justify their behavior by reference to some superior rule, or interpretation of other UN Charter rules, such as claims to be acting in self-defense. The UN rules confer effective decision-making power on a small minority of the member states and are fundamental to legitimating the idea that the use of force between states might be subject to rules (Imber, 2006). Even if it expands, the UNSC will never be as representative as the UN General Assembly, which represents all states. The UNSC was specifically not supposed to be inclusive, but functional, while

the UN General Assembly would satisfy the need for inclusiveness. Critics question whether increasing the inclusiveness to some degree is a worthwhile exercise if it can bring a strong reduction of effectiveness (Stuenkel, 2010). The G4 states argue that their inclusion in the UNSC as permanent members – as well as other two permanent members and four non-permanent members – could enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions with the contributions made by those states to the maintenance of international peace and security. To some states, reforming the UNSC is about increasing their own power, because a permanent seat could potentially translate into increased influence over much of the UN system. Many specialists indicate the relevance of the veto power the permanent members have today. They have at their disposal not one, but four vetoes. The first that is generally addressed is that of the adoption by the UNSC of any substantive and binding decisions pursuant to Article 25 of the UN Charter. The others include a veto over the recommendation to the General Assembly of a person to be appointed UN Secretary-General; a veto over applications for membership of the United Nations; and a veto over any amendment to the UN Charter. Any attempt to change their positions and powers must be agreed to by all P5 states, who have permanent seats and veto power.

There is also the “double veto”, which arises in the context of a possible difference of opinion within the Council on whether a proposed decision is of a procedural or substantive character. There is also the “pocket veto”, as on many occasions permanent members managed to keep an issue off the UNSC agenda or lessen the language of a resolution without casting a veto by mere threats of using that power. Until now, the veto powers exclude major UN funders such as Japan and Germany and rising powers such as India and Brazil, and all of Africa and Latin America. Some argue that enlargement could provide opportunities to manage power transitions and socialize regional leaders into “responsible” global actors that shoulder a greater share of international security (Vicente, 2013). The veto powers also contributed to the lack of transparency in the working methods of the UNSC. The P5 states discuss an issue behind closed doors and, when they make their decision, they invite the non-permanent members to read and sign the resolution. The UNSC, which has five permanent members and ten non-permanent members elected for two years, was reformed in the 1960s when four new non-permanent seats were created. After a first proposal in 1997 by the President of the General Assembly, the “Panyarachun report” in 2004, requested by Kofi Annan, suggested expanding the Council (Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York, 2012). Annan sought to include debate on the membership issue in preparations for the 2005 World Summit, originally called to debate the Millennium Development Goals.

African states such as Egypt highlighted the regional imbalances between North and South, while others such as Brazil and India focused upon the exclusion from permanent member status of several powers. Opponents of the UNSC reform – specially the United States – reinforced the need for effective decision-making over representative principles. Annan’s *In Larger Freedom* reform agenda offered a choice between two models. Model A suggested six additional permanent seats, two for Africa, two for the Asia/Pacific region, and one each for Latin America and Europe, with a further three non-permanent seats creating a Council of 24

seats. Model B proposed to add eight non-permanent seats with a four-year term, each renewable, and one additional two-year seat, also creating a Council of 24 seats. No package was agreed either before or subsequent to the 2005 Summit (Imber, 2006).

The G4 states suggested creating six new permanent seats (the four members of the G4 plus two African states) without veto power and four new non-permanent seats. The G4 brought Western supporters on board by dropping the veto requirement. However, discord within the African Union has stifled compromise on this issue; Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa were vying for the two proposed seats and could not arrive at an agreement. The G4 also faced competition from the larger but less influential coalition *Uniting for Consensus* (UfC), which favors expanding the UNSC by adding 10 temporary seats and keeping the same 5 permanent, veto-carrying members. Many of the UfC’s core members are neighbors of the G4 states – including Argentina, Mexico, Pakistan, Turkey, Italy and South Korea – who have a vested interest in thwarting the growth of regional influence among the individual G4 members (Berger, 2011).

The tension related to UNSC reform in Asia, Europe and Latin America is connected to the fear of mid-sized states who believe that elevating the status of their neighbors will not help represent their needs and might lower their international status in comparison to their neighbors. African states have gathered around the “Ezulwini consensus”, advocating the creation of two permanent seats with veto power and two additional non-permanent seats for Africa (Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York, 2012). The G4 states believed they would gain enough additional influence merely by accepting reform without veto powers and would be granted veto powers once they became further integrated into the UNSC structure. African states believed that, without veto powers, permanent seats would have no more weight than non-permanent seats. Besides, they feared the possibility that the G4 states would be granted veto rights in the future, but that those rights would be denied to the African seats (Minor, 2010).

The endorsement of the reform initiatives by the P5 states does not lead necessarily to action. China pledged support for UNSC reform, but opposes Japan’s bid due to the “historical baggage”. China evokes the still unresolved public atonement by Japan for conduct in the occupation of China in the 1930s. Chinese leaders have not been outspoken in expressing support for India in fears of upsetting their close ally Pakistan. The United States supported India’s bid as a sign of appreciation of their robust relationship and the recognition of the US’ geopolitical complexities in South and East Asia – and the need to place a check on China’s economic and diplomatic influence. The US also backs Japan’s bid and supports Germany’s ambitions in the light of their military and economic power. Although Brazil and the United States have expressive trade flows and collaborate on multiple political initiatives, the two states have clashed on diplomatic terms regarding critical global issues. For example, Brazil’s and Turkey’s refusal to place sanctions on Iran in the light of the controversial status of the Iranian nuclear program created a rift between Brazil and the US (Berger, 2011).

France supports the accession of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan to permanent member status, as well as African states

within the UNSC, particularly among its permanent members. Acknowledging the difficulties to bridge the gap between the different positions, France and the United Kingdom proposed the option of an intermediate reform at the 2008 UK-France Summit. This could include a new category of seats, with a longer term than that of the members currently elected. On completion of this intermediate period, a review should take place to convert these new seats into permanent seats. France and the United Kingdom renewed their proposal in 2009 (Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York, 2012).

DISCUSSION

Germany and Japan

Germany and Japan are still growing contributors to the UN budget, make their payments in full and on time and have very substantial unused defense capabilities, with major reservations concerning the use of that potential. Both were constitutionally barred from contributing to operations abroad, including peacekeeping, until the mid 1990s (Imber, 2006). German aspirations split the EU, as many European states would prefer an EU permanent seat. The UK and France supported German aspirations as a way of putting off future demands that they give up their seats for a united EU seat (Stedman, 2007). Germany argues that its booming economy merits it a spot on the UNSC and its exclusion is an unfair relic of post World War II world order. Italy and Spain object to any scheme favoring Germany and prefer an increase in non-permanent seats for which all Western European states would compete (Minor, 2010). The transatlantic and European institutions that had rationally allowed Germany's return as an accepted European partner were well received by German leaders, who committed themselves to multilateralism and international law and developed a distinct aversion to the use of military force. In the light of emerging security threats in the international system, the taboo concerning the deployment of German troops abroad has been gradually overcome, and its commitment to institutions such as NATO and the EU was strengthened despite the euro zone crisis. Germany gives emphasis on stability over many other foreign policy objectives (Lehne, 2012).

As a status quo power, Germany wanted to rationalize its power and make it more legitimate and less costly, according to Grieco's approach. Germany sought to harmonize its nonmilitary identity with new security threats caused by state and societal dysfunction and indicated that military responses to many of these threats were inappropriate. Germany preferred conflict abatement, civilian crisis prevention, multilateralism and the rule of law and described a world of increasing interconnectedness in which the use of force could exacerbate instability. Causes of conflict could not be eliminated through military solutions, nor does military power promise the necessary leverage to bring about durable stability. Germany defends the long-term transformative role of international institutions and the socializing effects of rules, norms, and reciprocity in the promotion of development. The networks of institutionalized governance should advance the rule of law and the use of force may complement the veracity of institutions.

However, force neither defines the rationale of institutions nor sustains them. Institutions anchor German power in universally

accepted structures of governance and make it more acceptable to its neighbors, which brings the rationalization of its power in Grieco's perspective. Regarding international peace and security, Germany sustains the primacy of preventive diplomacy, and its desire to gain a permanent seat on the UNSC reflects this thinking. If Germany becomes a permanent member of the UNSC, one of its main priorities would be to strengthen the UN's capability to manage civilian crises, not to enhance the organization's ability to authorize the use of force per se (Karp, 2005/2006). That is why many adjustments in the UN and its Security Council would be necessary. As the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations recalls:

Germany believes that the United Nations' credibility, legitimacy and scope for action will depend largely on the will of its members to adjust the organisation to the realities of the 21st century. Reform of the United Nations Security Council remains a key concern of the German Government. As long as essential regions and main contributors to the United Nations system are inadequately represented, the Security Council runs the risk of losing its authority. Germany, together with its partners of the G4 Group – Brazil, India and Japan – stands ready to assume greater responsibility in a reformed Security Council. Reform of the United Nations (Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations, 2014).

Applying Grieco's perspective, it is possible to say that there is a clear intention from Germany in having more opportunities to limit or constrain actions of great powers such as Russia, China and even the US with which Germany does not always agree, even if it lacked the veto power as a possible UNSC permanent member. Germany could create coalitions with other states that did not share the same positions of specific P5 states and not approve resolutions of their interest. At the same time, engaging with G4 emerging states – Brazil and India – is a good strategy to enhance the legitimacy of its proposals for the UNSC reform in the developing world and, at the same time, rationalize the exercise of its power towards those two states, making it less costly with the opening of more communication channels for debate on common proposals.

Japan is the second ranking contributor to the UN preceded only by the US and has a track record of nuclear disarmament and peace building. China balks at the suggestion that Japan has paid its dues for the atrocities of World War II, an argument that is used to preserve China as the only Asian UNSC permanent member. North Korea and South Korea also opposed to Japan gaining a permanent seat. President Bill Clinton strongly advocated for the 'fast track' solution to the misrepresentative permanent UNSC composition by simply adding Germany and Japan without any other reforms. However, this proposal held no major benefit for most General Assembly members. Japan is now engaged with both the G4 and its independent route to the UNSC – reminiscent of the 1990s 'fast track' approach (Minor, 2010). It is possible because of the more flexible character of the G4: it is a group, not a robust international institution which creates binding and precise commitments among its members. They have the leverage and the freedom to build different alliances and coalitions in order to achieve the UNSC reform. A low level of institutionalization as the G4 has can give greater agility in the implementation of commitments, greater flexibility to perform policy choices and greater independence from third parties. As Grieco says, the state has more freedom to act in relation to

external partners and to respond to international pressures in the light of its autonomy to decide and independence (Grieco, 1997).

Japan tried to show its capacity to deal with the responsibilities of maintenance of peace and security to sustain that it deserves a permanent seat in the UNSC, including issues such as disarmament and non-proliferation. According to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Japan is committed to promoting international disarmament and non-proliferation while firmly maintaining its Three Non-Nuclear Principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into its territory. Since 1994 Japan has submitted draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament at the UN General Assembly, which have been adopted with overwhelming support. Japan actively contributed to the success of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and has been taking the initiative in facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Moreover, Japan has been playing a leading role in disarmament of conventional arms, including small arms and landmines. It has provided substantial financial assistance for this purpose, and in 2000 established the Small Arms Fund within the United Nations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014).

Japan proved – despite US requests – to be reluctant to put military pressure on North Korea because of its controversial nuclear weapons program and pursued a policy of engagement with Pyongyang through multilateral efforts – such as the six party talks – and bilateral initiatives. At the same time, Japan took steps to strengthen the US-Japan alliance, most notably through Japan's active participation in the US "global war on terrorism", while it embarked on a wide-reaching force reconstruction for all its military branches. Besides Japan announced it would strive to build a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests with China and expressed their common concern over the North Korean nuclear weapons test and their determination to resolve the East China Sea dispute surrounding China's development of gas fields which could drain away Japan's deposits (Stengel, 2007). The normalization of relations with China would be important to mitigate Chinese opposition to the Japanese bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC. In the future, being a permanent member of the UNSC could create more opportunities for Japan to limit Chinese initiatives that could damage Japanese interests in Asia through the creation of coalitions which might frustrate the approval of Chinese proposals. The G4 was a promising way to achieve its goals, in which Germany, another great contributor to the UN, shared the same interest – the UNSC reform – and the cooperation with two emerging states would make Japan's power more legitimate and acceptable in the emerging world even before the permanent seat was conquered.

Besides, cooperation in a possible reformed UNSC with emerging nations could bring benefits for Japan and those states. Japan is Asia's biggest donor of foreign aid and could be an ally in India's efforts to stabilize its economically underdeveloped neighbors. They both want access to energy sources, prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, sea-lane security and cooperation to fight terrorism. India would also be a partner in the contention of a rising China. Japan and India agreed to improve bilateral

relations and to move towards a strategic and global partnership through intensified economic, political and security cooperation. Japan also gave its support for the "U.S.-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Pact", aimed at US support for the development of an Indian nuclear program for civilian purposes. India and Japan agreed on a program on strategic cooperation, especially on sea-lane security, exchanges in defense issues and regular meetings of navy officials. The two states can profit significantly from closer cooperation, as Japan is rich in high technology and investment capital, whereas India has a young and well-educated work force, which can complement Japan's ageing population (Stengel, 2007). Permanent seats in the UNSC could create a more institutionalized communication channel between the two states and an arena for the creation of coalitions against common threats.

Brazil and India

Brazil and India have intermediate economic and political power resources, which gives them the ability to contribute to the making of international order in the regional and global levels. They have a level of self-perception as regional powers and emerging markets and the recognition of this international status by other states, especially great powers. Their foreign policies are articulated around two main objectives: economic development and political autonomy. Both value multilateral arenas and collective action with states in similar positions to act as interlocutors between weak and strong nations (Lima, 2005). They also criticize the asymmetries between powerful and emerging nations in formal and informal international institutions and develop coalitions with other emerging states in order to challenge unilateral or aggressive policies by great powers. In the light of their intermediate power position, Brazil and India can use international institutions to signal reassurance to weaker states, particularly within their regions, and, in Grieco's perspective, search for "voice opportunities" multilaterally to make known their interests and bid for political support (Grieco, 1997).

They also tame great powers through established rules and procedures and adopt informal understandings, ad hoc cooperative efforts or eventual collaboration in multilateral institutions aimed at raising the costs of some policies adopted by great powers. Non-military tools can delay, frustrate or undermine unilateral policies (Hurrell, 2006). Brazil tries to act as a 'catalyst' to promote global issues, a 'facilitator' to build coalitions, and a 'manager' acting within the developing world to promote and enforce institutions. It engages with emerging states in response to specific policies adopted by the US, but crucially does not challenge the underlying structures of the international system. However, it formally keeps struggling for more representativeness in those structures. Brazil has stressed that its inclusion in the UNSC – seen as the only organ with a legitimate enforcement capacity – would increase the Council's legitimacy. Brazil's strategy towards UNSC reform has been a mix of multilateral engagement as a 'responsible stakeholder', global outreach with the diversification of its strategic partnerships, the development of regional leadership and the strengthening of South-South partnerships (Alden & Vieira, 2007). Brazil has been a UNSC non-permanent member for numerous times, together with Japan. Since Brazil lacks significant military power, it regards multilateralism as the effective way to project its power and influence outside of its borders. Brazil has argued for membership expansion and

lobbied for an alteration of the P5's veto rights. According to Brazil's Foreign Ministry:

Brazil believes that only a truly representative and transparent Security Council, one that allows more participation of the UN's Member States, will adequately reflect the current interests of the international community, particularly those of the developing countries. The admission of new permanent and non-permanent members, in the context of UNSC expansion, will help ensure the body's decisions, which affect the entire international community, are taken in a more balanced, legitimate, effective, inclusive and just way.(...) Brazil has credentials that enable it and even drive it to aspire to a permanent seat in the Security Council, strengthening its voice and ability to influence global decisions. It is a matter of enhancing multilateralism and the foreign policy principles of the 1988 Constitution (Brazil's Foreign Ministry, 2005).

However, other UN members questioned whether increasing the inclusiveness was a worthwhile exercise if it implied a reduction of effectiveness. The argument that Brazil can represent Latin America in the UNSC created coalitions from states such as Argentina, Mexico and Colombia to frustrate Brazil's attempts to gain entry as a permanent member (Stuenkel, 2010). They object to the claim that Brazil is the natural candidate to permanently represent their diverse region. For example, while Brazil and Mexico share the conviction that the world should be nuclear weapon free, Brazil is a major producer of small arms and disarmament is central to the Mexican foreign policy vision (Minor, 2010).

In 2011, Brazil abstained from the U.S.-approved UNSC Resolution 1973, which authorized a no-fly zone to intervene in Libya's civil war. Authorities from all around the world indicated that states that abstained from Resolution 1973 – not just Brazil, but India and Germany as well – were not ready for a bigger role in international affairs. Differently from the US, Brazil has enthusiastically supported Palestine's recognition as an independent state. Also in 2011, IBSA states – Brazil, India and South Africa – also chose not to adopt a UN resolution supporting sanctions against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. These disagreements have further pitted Brazil and the U.S. apart. Brazil traditionally has been reluctant to vote for any type of measures that violate sovereignty and indicates that the concept of "R2P" (Responsibility to Protect) can be easily misused as a pretext for aggressive military intervention. In the G4, Brazil sees an opportunity to join efforts with more powerful Germany and Japan to pressure the UNSC reform and, at the same time, strengthening ties with them and avoid their indiscriminate influence and opposition if they become more powerful one day. Besides, it creates another coalition with India to affect the international order, such as IBSA and BRICS. Brazil has quietly departed from the G77's more radical calls for "total democracy" which includes proposals to limit the UNSC's freedom through the General Assembly.

India has traditionally argued for UNSC reform as part of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), although the NAM never reached the cohesion of a power bloc. India has gradually diverged to the pragmatist side of the bloc. In the 1990s, India strengthened its campaign for a permanent seat on the UNSC and became a part of the G4. India argues that its inclusion would increase the UNSC's legitimacy by making it more representative of UN membership, besides the fact that it was the world's second largest state in terms of population, it had a

large economy, and it was one of the largest contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping missions. It says that it represents the "global South" and limits the influence of the established powers. Besides, many Indian decision makers think that the role of the UNSC is increasing regarding security issues while that of the UN General Assembly is diminishing. Through its continued leadership in the G77, India hopes to assure widespread support in the UN General Assembly. India's strong stance on defending sovereignty and criticizing R2P can be understood in this context. Its recent rapprochement with China, its historic nuclear deal with the US, and its continued historic friendship with Russia are all meant to assure that none of the permanent members would block India's entry (Stuenkel, 2010). Constantly its leadership emphasizes the necessity to reform the UNSC, as its prime minister says:

We must reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, and make it more democratic and participative. Institutions that reflect the imperatives of 20th century won't be effective in the 21st. It would face the risk of irrelevance; and we will face the risk of continuing turbulence with no one capable of addressing it... Let us fulfill our promise to reform the United Nations Security Council by 2015 (Modi, 2014). India defends the principles of territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in domestic affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful co-existence for international relations of non-aligned states. It considers terrorism a violation of the human rights to life and liberty and views the Kashmir-conflict as an internal affair, opposing UN intervention. India has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but calls for a global ban of nuclear weapons that is comparable to those on biological and chemical weapons, the minimum being a no-first-use convention. For India, the problems of economic development, especially the eradication of poverty and the development of social infrastructure are integrally linked to peace and security. As part of the G77, India aims to direct the attention to systemic and structural problems that are besetting the world order (Kage, 2006). Pakistan has long stood in opposition of India citing obvious fears for its national interests. Though Pakistan was enraged and alarmed by the US endorsement of India's bid, it is still fully reliant on US aid and could not retaliate with anything beyond rhetoric (Minor, 2010).

More recently, India intensified its relations with another G4 member: Japan. Japan has reportedly promised investment and financing inflows of around US\$35 billion to shore up India's infrastructural sector. Important deals were also made in trade and foreign direct investment including Japan's commitment to technology transfers in the defense sector. This will pave the way for the two states to work together in building an aircraft industry in India. The existing ties between India and Japan were reinforced not only because of commercial interests, but also geopolitical considerations: they are trying to reduce their dependence on an increasingly assertive and powerful China at a time when their respective trade volumes with China are considerably higher than bilateral trade between them. The revival of the agreement between Japan and India to trade in rare earth minerals is fundamental because China is predominant on this sector and rare earth metals are inputs for production in high-tech industries (Sahoo and Bhunia, 2014).

Final considerations

Critics say that the G4 proposals are not entirely about democratizing the UNSC or the UN itself, but rather about

creating an “expanded oligarchy”. The UNSC was not created to be a democratic institution, but to respond quickly and efficiently to issues of international peace and security. It is not possible to create a completely fair and representative UNSC membership system if states serving on the Council represent themselves and there is a finite availability of seats. However, it would be possible to allocate permanent UNSC seats to supranational regional bodies such as the EU and ASEAN (Minor, 2010). But a proposal like this faces the strong opposition of the G4 states, which want to achieve their national particularistic interests with the UNSC reform. The G4 states all want to have greater participation in international decisions related to international security and peace and delay, frustrate or undermine policies by the P5 states that damage their interests, but, while Brazil and India want to have more voice opportunities in their relations with Germany and Japan – especially if the two more powerful states conquer their permanent seats –, Germany and Japan aim to rationalize the exercise of their power on emerging Brazil and India, using the G4 to make their power more legitimate and less costly.

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