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OLIVER STUENKEL, *THE BRICS AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL ORDER*, LEXINGTON BOOKS, 2015, SS. 268

The book “The BRICS and the Future of Global Order” written by Dr. Oliver Stuenkel was first released in English by Lexington Books in 2015 and in 2017 in Portuguese by Brazilian publisher Paz e Terra. Professor Oliver Stuenkel has been researching the role of the BRICS countries for several years and this work represents a very interesting and deep analysis about this group of states.

The group of states well known as BRICS, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa has been highly analyzed in International Relations during the last years. The acronym first created for economic purposes by a Goldman Sachs analyst Jim O’Neil as BRIC became synonym of an anti-hegemonic movement in different areas.

Professor Oliver Stuenkel could write a very interesting book about the historical origins of the BRICS group. He gives a detailed historical account of the development of the group since its inception until the present moment. For those who are interested in the “post-western world”, or in subjects related to the “non-western world” this is a plateful of references for International Relations analyst.

The book brings details of the most important moments in the “evolution” of this semi-coherent group of states with a great variety of facts about the meetings of this group until now. Stuenkel tries to show that it’s not the most coherent group, not even well institutionalized, although the BRICS has a great potential to counter balance the global order.

In order to make sense of this analysis Professor Oliver Stuenkel tries to show with his historical and theoretical analysis the increasing relevance of the group in economic and geopolitical terms. The book highlights especially the moments in which the BRICS countries could succeed such as in economic cooperation, creation of infrastructure, among other features.

Beyond the successes of the BRICS concrete initiatives, also Stuenkel illuminates what the BRICS countries as a semi-institutionalized group are

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doing in terms of norms changing. In this respect, the Professor brings to light the example of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the Responsibility while Protecting, and so the importance of the emerging powers in the regard of the use of international norms and how they can be developed or not.

Beyond the norms and the concrete features of the BRICS, one of the most important aspects of the book is to show the possibility of the emergence of a renovated multipolarity, and a new world order not brought by “Western” countries. From this book, Professor Stuenkel does a good job trying to show, also, that it’s not yet an institutionalized group, but can be at a certain point. And to create this base of his argument he puts how the group is working on projects together, attending around thirty meetings per year, cooperating in a variety of projects, developing norms and trying to sooth the disagreements inside the group. Probably, one very important aspect of the dissonance of the group can be in relation to sensitive security issues regarding foreign policy. In this sense Professor Stuenkel puts how these countries are succeeding in, for example, voting harmoniously at the UN Security Council when sensitive issues for the members of the group were on the table, so he writes about the position of the BRICS countries in face of resolutions like 1973 on Lybia and resolutions on other countries in relation to humanitarian interventions.

BRICS group has gained momentum notably since the launching of the project of the New Development Bank of BRICS to help finance the group infrastructure projects. The BRICS Development Bank can be of a great relevance in world politics since it has the ambition to counterbalance “Western” institutions such as IMF and the World Bank. In this sense, it’s interesting to note that the book has a great detailed assessment of the evolution of this group of states, since the first time the group BRICs was mentioned, still without South Africa until now when large scale projects are being put in practice.

However, the leading purpose of the book is to assess the future of global order with the BRICS, and it seems that the book couldn’t reach this goal successfully, maybe it needs more time to see clearly which role the BRICS will play in the future. Or maybe the analysis misses a component of comparison to other groups of countries which have a similar purpose and how BRICS can impact or influence other institutions like G20, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) among others.