



SURVEILLANT ASSEMBLAGES AND BORDER GOVERNANCE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A CRITICAL STUDY OF BRICS SECURITY PRACTICES

ASSEMBLAGENS DE VIGILÂNCIA E GOVERNANÇA FRONTEIRIÇA NO SUL GLOBAL: UM ESTUDO CRÍTICO DAS PRÁTICAS DE SEGURANÇA DO BRICS

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: This article undertakes a critical analysis of border governance and surveillance practices within BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), employing the conceptual framework of surveillance assemblages. The primary aim is to examine how emerging technologies—such as biometrics, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and unmanned aerial systems—are reshaping the exercise of sovereign power, fostering transnational security cooperation, and recalibrating the balance between protective measures and fundamental rights in the Global South.

Methodology: This investigation adopts a qualitative and theoretical approach, grounded in critical surveillance studies (notably the works of Haggerty & Ericson, Lyon, Zuboff, among others). It consists of an interdisciplinary critical analysis that integrates theories of biopolitics, surveillance capitalism, and governmentality with empirical data concerning BRICS security practices and cooperation frameworks. The study also highlights the legal ambiguities and “normative silences” that facilitate the experimentation with surveillance regimes beyond established international standards.

Results: The study demonstrates that BRICS countries have been reinforcing their borders through the deployment of advanced technologies, integrating biometric surveillance systems, interoperable databases, drones, and artificial intelligence. These developments constitute complex surveillance assemblages that transform individuals into “data doubles,” enabling selective and predictive control over mobility. Such practices expose significant power asymmetries within the bloc, with China and Russia playing dominant roles in technological provision and management. Although framed within a discourse of security and development, these measures pose substantial risks to privacy, civil liberties, and due process—particularly in multicultural and border regions. Moreover, while cooperation among BRICS members is relevant in addressing transnational crimes such as terrorism, trafficking, and piracy, it remains fraught with geopolitical tensions, socioeconomic disparities, and challenges in legal harmonization.

Conclusions: The article concludes that border governance within the BRICS, while marked by technological innovation and advances in cooperation, tends to reproduce logics of hierarchy, authoritarianism, and inequality characteristic of the Global South. While enhancing security, these practices simultaneously undermine fundamental rights and reinforce patterns of social and political exclusion. The author advocates for deeper critical reflection on the ethical, legal, and political implications of such practices, emphasizing that the consolidation of a BRICS surveillance model may represent a distinct paradigm from that of the Global North—yet one that is equally problematic.

KEYWORDS: Surveillance assemblage; BRICS; border governance; Global South; securitization; biopolitics.

RESUMO:

Objetivo: O artigo analisa criticamente as práticas de governança fronteiriça e vigilância nos países do BRICS (Brasil, Rússia, Índia, China e África do Sul), utilizando o conceito de *assemblages de vigilância*. O propósito é compreender como tecnologias emergentes (biometria, inteligência artificial, análise preditiva, drones, entre outras) estão transformando o exercício do poder soberano, a cooperação em





segurança transnacional e o equilíbrio entre proteção e direitos fundamentais no Sul Global.

Método: A investigação adota uma abordagem qualitativa e teórica, baseada nos estudos críticos da vigilância (Haggerty & Ericson, Lyon, Zuboff, entre outros). O trabalho consiste numa análise crítica interdisciplinar que articula teorias da biopolítica, capitalismo de vigilância e governamentalidade com dados sobre práticas de segurança e cooperação do BRICS. O estudo enfatiza também as ambiguidades jurídicas e os “silêncios normativos” que permitem a experimentação de regimes de vigilância além dos padrões internacionais.

Resultados: O estudo demonstra que os países do BRICS vêm reforçando suas fronteiras com tecnologias de ponta, integrando sistemas de vigilância biométrica, bancos de dados interoperáveis, drones e inteligência artificial, constituindo verdadeiros *assemblages* de vigilância que convertem indivíduos em “duplos de dados” e permitem um controle seletivo e preditivo da mobilidade. Essas práticas revelam fortes assimetrias de poder dentro do bloco, com predominância de China e Rússia no fornecimento e gestão tecnológica, e embora se apoiem em uma retórica de segurança e desenvolvimento, trazem riscos significativos à privacidade, às liberdades civis e ao devido processo, sobretudo em regiões fronteiriças e multiculturais. Além disso, a cooperação entre os membros do BRICS, ainda que relevante para o combate a crimes transnacionais como terrorismo, tráfico e pirataria, permanece marcada por tensões geopolíticas, desigualdades socioeconômicas e desafios de harmonização legal.

Conclusões: O artigo conclui que a governança fronteira nos BRICS, embora apresente inovações tecnológicas e avanços em cooperação, tende a reproduzir lógicas de hierarquia, autoritarismo e desigualdade típicas do Sul Global. Ao mesmo tempo em que amplia a segurança, fragiliza direitos fundamentais e reforça práticas de exclusão social e política. O autor defende a necessidade de maior reflexão crítica sobre os impactos éticos, jurídicos e políticos destas práticas, sublinhando que a consolidação de um modelo de vigilância do BRICS pode representar um paradigma distinto do Norte Global, mas igualmente problemático.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: Assemblage de vigilância; BRICS. Governança de fronteiras; Sul Global; Securitização; Biopolítica.

1 INTRODUCTION

The border regions between countries are crucial to international stability. These areas, which serve as a geographical boundary among the BRICS nations are also dynamic zones where diverse cultures, economies, and political philosophies intersect. Ad criminological view, we can better understand the obstacles and possibilities for peace and security in these areas. To better understand the security concerns and cooperative efforts of the BRICS states, this international study will dive into the complexity of their border regions (Shameem & Jayaprasad, 2020).





Despite their economic and cultural differences, BRICS countries face similar security challenges in their border regions. Porous borders and weak law enforcement create fertile ground for transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, human smuggling, and cybercrime. Addressing these issues necessitates cross-border cooperation. Understanding the criminological aspects of these crimes is essential for developing effective policies and fostering international collaboration to enhance security.

In the BRICS border regions, socioeconomic and cultural factors have a big impact on security dynamics. The increasingly multicultural society of today presents new challenges for law enforcement. Socioeconomic disparities in these areas can fuel criminal activity, increasing tensions and making peacemaking more challenging. The findings of criminological research can be used by policymakers to create social and economic reforms that effectively lower crime and promote social cohesion (PTI, 2022).

The BRICS countries have emphasized the significance of joint security initiatives along their borders in recognition of these difficulties. Initiatives like intelligence sharing, capacity-building programs, and joint task forces have strengthened security cooperation. The efficiency of preventing transnational crime is increased through the exchange of criminological research and best practices. Additionally, trust is a crucial component of long-term stability and peace in these areas, and it can be developed through diplomatic discussions and cultural exchanges. According to Gschrey's (2011) analysis of European border surveillance, borders are dynamic zones of surveillance and control rather than merely physical barriers that have varying effects on people depending on a range of sociopolitical factors. This viewpoint is consistent with that analysis.

2 FROM A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: BORDER CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE ASSEMBLIES

Using critical surveillance studies, the current article analyses border security in the BRICS region, paying particular attention to Haggerty and Ericson's concept of surveillance assemblages (2003). The surveillance assemblage is a term used to describe convergent and networked systems, both technological and institutional, that





gather, analyse, and mobilise data across contexts, blurring the lines between governance domains. By abstracting individuals into "data doubles" through biometric, behavioural, and algorithmic profiles, this framework enables targeted monitoring and management.

The increasing use of drones, satellite surveillance, biometric IDs, predictive analytics, and interoperable databases for border security is an example of the BRICS nations coming together. Border security practices across BRICS reflect a surveillant assemblage (Haggerty & Ericson, 2003), where disparate surveillance systems converge to produce "data doubles" of individuals. This aligns with Foucault's notion of biopolitics, where state power is enacted not just through territorial control, but via the management of life itself. As Bigo (2002) argues, these techniques are not merely protective, they normalize insecurity through practices of governmentality.

This theoretical framework helps explain how the BRICS countries use surveillance technologies to control information flows, people movements, and trade routes in addition to border monitoring. It also calls into question the legal interoperability of BRICS, the power imbalances among their members, and the conflict between civil liberties and security imperatives.

A more thorough engagement with broader surveillance theory could improve the critical depth of the analysis, even though the idea of surveillance assemblages provides a useful lens for comprehending BRICS border strategies. Lyon (2003), for instance, emphasises that surveillance serves as a tool of governance and social ordering in addition to being about security, which begs the question of whose interests these gatherings are serving. Given that some BRICS nations are depending more and more on private tech firms to run their data infrastructures, Zuboff's (2019) critique of surveillance capitalism is especially pertinent and could turn border security into a marketable field. The ways in which automated surveillance systems and predictive analytics may reinforce prejudices and preemptively regulate populations using a logic of control rather than protection are further questioned by Monahan (2006) and Andrejevic (2007). These perspectives invite critical reflection on whether BRICS practices represent a convergence toward global surveillance norms or a distinct model with its own risks and contradictions.

By situating BRICS border practices within this conceptual framework, the article aims to contribute to the growing literature on surveillance governance beyond the





Global North, examining how emerging economies adapt and shape surveillance paradigms in ways that reflect both global convergence and regional particularity.

However, this framework calls for a more critical examination of the political aspects of surveillance in the context of the BRICS. Although surveillance assemblages are effective at controlling borders, they also create significant conflicts between the defence of fundamental rights, especially due process, privacy, and freedom of movement, and national security (Lyon, 2003; Tyler, 2022). There is frequently insufficient supervision when AI, biometrics, and predictive analytics are implemented in border areas, which increases the possibility of abuse, discrimination, or authoritarian reinforcement (Amoore, 2006; Choung et al., 2024). Furthermore, shared surveillance practices may not be reflective of democratic values or equitable governance due to internal power imbalances within BRICS, particularly the dominance of China and Russia in technology (Rodrigues, Medina and Cabete, 2024; Pant, 2023). This raises the need to question how consensus is formed in security governance among states with divergent political regimes, and to what extent surveillance infrastructures serve not just collective peace and cooperation, but also national agendas that may conflict with civil liberties or regional balance.

3.BORDER AND SECURITY CONCERN IN BRICS

Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa collectively represent a significant share of the world's landmass, population, and gross domestic product (GDP). As these countries work to grow their economies and increase their global presence, managing borders and ensuring security become vital components of their international relations. Although they encounter many similar challenges in border management and security, each nation also deals with distinct issues influenced by its specific geographic, political, and economic circumstances.

Strategically speaking, the BRICS nations have important land and sea borders that are vital for both international economic stability and national security. There are common worries about possible conflict spillovers and cross-border criminal activity because many of these borders are close to geopolitically unstable regions like the Middle East and Central Asia (Basu, 2021). Working together to lower the risks of armed conflicts, terrorism, and organised crime is essential to ensuring effective border





security. A recurring theme in the more general conversations regarding global surveillance systems is the necessity of cooperation (Amoore, 2006).

The BRICS nations play large roles in global trade and hold substantial economic interests along with key trading routes. Their financial stability is closely linked to the security of both land and maritime trade pathways. Protecting these routes is essential for maintaining uninterrupted commerce and economic resilience. Threats such as piracy, smuggling, and trafficking jeopardize these trade flows and necessitate coordinated responses (Devonshire-Ellis & Bonnesh, 2023). As Lyon (2003) points out, surveillance systems related to mobility management are becoming increasingly important in modern border governance, offering tools for real-time tracking and intervention.

The BRICS countries' border regions are home to a diverse array of socioeconomic and cultural groups. Border disputes and security concerns are potential outcomes of historical frictions and cultural differences. A two-pronged approach is required to address these issues: fostering social cohesion and fostering cultural awareness via efficient policies. To reduce conflicts and enhance human security, implement inclusive governance, participate in participatory development, and design focused outreach initiatives (Bigo, 2002).

Walters (2008) refers to this as the "politics of verticality," where borders are increasingly enforced through mobile, digital surveillance regimes rather than fixed demarcations. In addition to controlling movement, these technologies also regulate mobility differently, frequently criminalising racialised or economically vulnerable groups (Amoore, 2006). Borders serve as areas of racialised sorting rather than just lines of control, as De Genova (2013) emphasises.

In the connected world of today, cybersecurity has become yet another essential element of border security. The private sector, government systems, and vital infrastructure in the BRICS nations are all becoming more susceptible to cyberattacks. Strong cross-border cooperation, shared cyber threat intelligence, and standardised legal frameworks are necessary to guarantee the digital integrity of border operations and national networks (Kshetri, 2015). As highlighted by Deibert et al. (2008), securing cyberspace is just as important as protecting physical territory.

The growing influence of non-state actors and the persistent threat of terrorism pose significant security challenges to the BRICS nations. These threats transcend borders and are best countered through coordinated action involving intelligence





sharing, joint training, and strategic policy alignment. Efforts must also target the root causes of radicalization and support alternative, inclusive narratives to counter extremist ideologies (Kundnani, 2014).

4 BORDER AREA AND SECURITY ISSUES IN THE BRICS REGION: DEFENCE CONSIDERATIONS

Among BRICS nations, longstanding border disputes—particularly between India and China, and India and Pakistan—remain persistent sources of tension. These conflicts underline the importance of robust defence strategies aimed at protecting national borders and deterring encroachment. Such strategies must prioritize the deployment of well-equipped border forces, the use of modern surveillance, and the development of resilient infrastructure. A strong defensive posture reinforces sovereignty and discourages adversarial advances (Markey, 2023).

The BRICS nations have been making significant investments to update their military capabilities in response to growing regional threats. This involves incorporating cutting-edge technologies like unmanned aerial systems (UAS), satellite surveillance, cyberwarfare tools, and artificial intelligence (AI). In order to respond to asymmetric and hybrid threats and establish deterrence, these advancements are essential (Kania, 2020; Klimburg, 2017). Along disputed borders, technological superiority improves situational awareness and quick response times.

For countries like India and Russia, internal and external threats from insurgent groups and terrorist organisations—often with cross-border origins—remain a critical concern. Effective countermeasures require military intelligence coordination, multinational cooperation, and targeted anti-terrorism strategies (Banerjee, 2017; Rabasa et al., 2007). Intelligence sharing, synchronized patrolling, and joint military operations form the bedrock of these defensive frameworks, especially in high-risk regions such as Kashmir and the North Caucasus.

Another top priority for the BRICS nations with maritime borders is coastal defence. Protecting Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), guarding important shipping lanes, and preventing piracy and illicit fishing are all part of maintaining maritime security. This calls for increased maritime domain awareness, regional coordination, and naval capabilities (Till, 2009). Multilateral exercises and joint naval patrols improve





interoperability and preparedness in maritime areas, which are vital to international trade and energy supply chains.

Legal frameworks also play an indispensable role in defense and border security. International laws such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provide guidelines for resolving maritime disputes and managing EEZ claims (Guilfoyle, 2011). Bilateral agreements and confidence-building measures (CBMs) are essential tools for mitigating escalation and maintaining dialogue, especially in areas where jurisdictional ambiguity or overlapping claims exist.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations represent an increasingly important function of military establishments in the BRICS region. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and cyclones disproportionately affect these countries due to geographic and climatic vulnerabilities. Armed forces are often the first responders, providing essential relief and logistical support. In recent years, BRICS countries have intensified their regional cooperation by forming rapid reaction units, conducting joint HADR drills, and pre-positioning emergency supplies to enhance resilience (China Daily, 2022).

By linking defense considerations with legal instruments, technological investments, and humanitarian responsibilities, BRICS nations can develop a comprehensive security architecture that not only protects territorial integrity but also strengthens multilateral collaboration and regional stability.

Managing security issues in border regions effectively requires a multipronged strategy that incorporates strong conflict resolution procedures, military preparedness, and diplomatic engagement. It is the duty of the BRICS countries to actively support peaceful conflict resolution, preserve open channels of communication, and fortify diplomatic ties. Regional stability can be improved and possible conflicts can be avoided by putting confidence-building strategies like bilateral and multilateral exchanges into practice. Furthermore, monitoring and resolving border security issues can be greatly aided by integrating surveillance technologies and encouraging collaboration among civil society actors. When used properly, surveillance techniques can strengthen communities and aid humanitarian efforts in border areas, as Walsh (2010) emphasises.

Figure 1, illustrates key defence challenges in BRICS border regions, including terrorism, maritime security, and border disputes. It highlights the need for military modernization and technological integration. Diplomatic engagement is shown as





essential for conflict resolution. Together, these elements underscore a comprehensive approach to regional security.

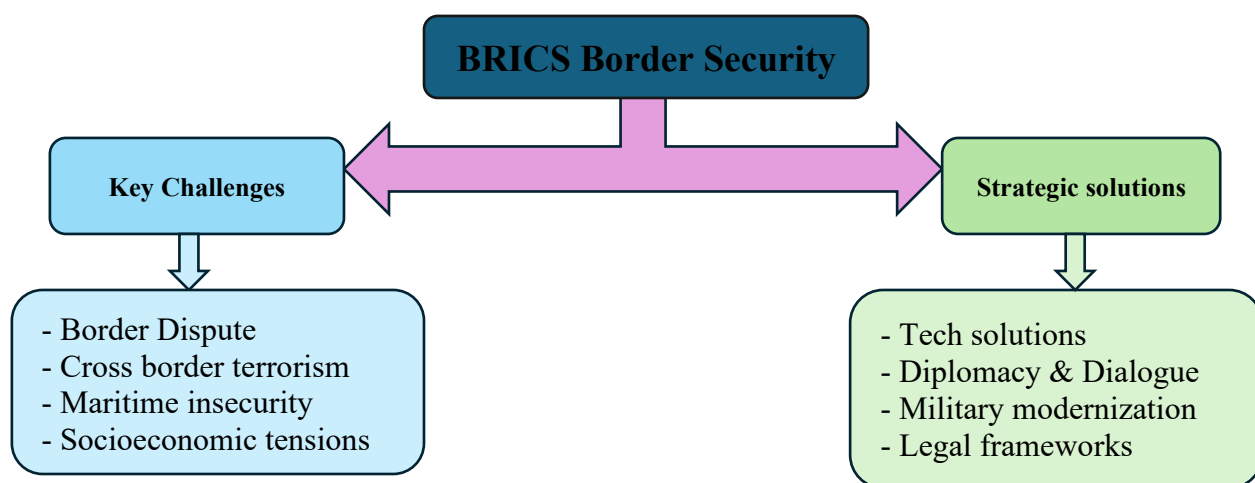


Figure 1: Border areas and security issues in BRICS Region

A key component of border management in the BRICS region is the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies to support conventional defence plans and diplomatic endeavours. Tools that improve situational awareness, speed up response, and facilitate cross-border coordination are necessary to combat today's security threats, which range from cybercrime to terrorism. The following section examines how advancements like artificial intelligence, surveillance systems, and predictive analytics are changing how the BRICS countries protect their borders and foster regional peace.

5 TECHNOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION

Technological advancements have directly led to a radical shift in the BRICS region's capacity to monitor, regulate, and secure its borders. The BRICS countries' adoption of cutting-edge technical solutions has greatly increased their ability to maintain border security. The advent of modern technology, including sensors, drones, satellites, and surveillance cameras, has improved situational awareness and surveillance. Because of this, border security officers are now able to keep a closer eye on large swaths of the border that are inaccessible to them. Authorities can react faster to potential threats like illegal border crossings, smuggling, and intrusions when there is a greater understanding of the situation at the border (Shah, 2023).



However, it is impossible to comprehend surveillance in the BRICS context without taking into account its roots in the Global South and the distinct sociopolitical frameworks that influence its use. The logics behind surveillance in the Global South frequently differ from those in the West, combining postcolonial governance structures, developmentalist rhetoric, and infrastructure deficiencies. Singh's (2024) analysis of Aadhaar in India and Breckenridge's (2014) study of biometric systems in South Africa both demonstrate how surveillance infrastructures are both exclusionary and aspirational. Arora (2019) highlights how tech adoption in the South is informal and improvised, exposing different forms of resistance and control.

The advancement of technology has made it possible to construct more trustworthy border infrastructure such as smart fencing, biometric identification systems, and automated checkpoints. These improvements to the infrastructure at the border will make it easier for lawful people and commodities to cross the border, while simultaneously discouraging illegal border crossings. Innovative biometric identification systems provide assistance with positive IDs, which contributes to the reduction of unwelcome guests (Choong et al., 2024).

The increasing integration of biometric systems and AI-driven analytics into BRICS border governance illustrates the logic of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019), where state and corporate actors extract behavioural data under the guise of national security. These systems also align with Deleuze's (1992) concept of a "society of control," where borders are no longer static checkpoints but dynamic zones of algorithmic modulation.

Data analytics and predictive policing play a crucial role in assisting border protection services by identifying trends within vast volumes of data collected from diverse sources and anticipating potential future threats. Utilising predictive policing techniques enables proactive resource allocation, which in turn maximises the effectiveness of border security activities while simultaneously reducing risks before they become more severe. (Murugesan, 2021).

Today's technological infrastructures also enable cross-border data sharing and communication. Interoperable computer systems and encrypted communication channels allow the BRICS border security forces to work together. Nonetheless, this collaboration takes place in a complicated international legal system, where regional blocs frequently have latitude in interpreting and adapting to the normative silence of international law. According to Rodrigues, Medina and Cabete (2024), these legal





ambiguities have an impact on how states coordinate cross-border intelligence sharing and how technology is used for security, especially in areas like the European Union and MERCOSUR. Efforts to combat terrorism, transnational crime, and other national security threats can be strengthened by promptly exchanging actionable intelligence and information.

Significant efforts have been made in both cybersecurity and counter-terrorism, driven by technological advancements that have greatly enhanced the ability to identify and track terrorist cells and individuals. These improvements have increased the effectiveness of operations aimed at combating terrorism. Moreover, the development of stronger cybersecurity defences has successfully protected critical infrastructure and sensitive data from cyberattacks (UN Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee, 2020). Such measures have played a crucial role in preventing various forms of cyber and terror-related attacks. The BRICS countries have actively collaborated on numerous cybersecurity initiatives, pooling their resources and expertise to strengthen their collective response against cybercrime.

The management of border security is made easier with the use of cutting-edge technology, which in turn has the effect of accelerating the flow of lawful trade and travel. Automated customs procedures, electronic visas, and secure digital documentation systems will enable the BRICS region to grow economically and become more integrated. This will be accomplished through the streamlining of international trade and travel (World Customs Organization, 2022).

The BRICS region's border security management has been greatly improved by modern technology, which has produced many benefits like improved surveillance capabilities, modernised infrastructure, data-driven decision-making, simpler communication, bolstered anti-terrorism efforts, and easier access to lawful trade and travel. These advantages only scratch the surface of the total gains made. The BRICS nations are actively attempting to improve regional cooperation and stability as well as national security by exchanging and utilising these technological developments (Chatszis & Stavrou, 2022).

The various ways that technology can support harmony and peace in border management are depicted in Figure 2. The interrelated sections highlight five major fields in which technological developments have had a major impact. Authorities are able to foresee and proactively address threats thanks to data analytics and predictive policing. By safeguarding vital infrastructure and stopping online intrusions,





counterterrorism and cybersecurity tools improve national security. Cooperation between countries is facilitated by cross-border communication and information sharing, which increases the efficacy of cooperative operations. Smart fencing and automated checkpoints are examples of improved border infrastructure that facilitates lawful travel while discouraging illicit activity. Finally, improved situational awareness and surveillance guarantee ongoing border zone monitoring, enabling prompt interventions. These elements work together to demonstrate how integrated technology systems can strengthen border security while promoting stability and collaboration in the region.

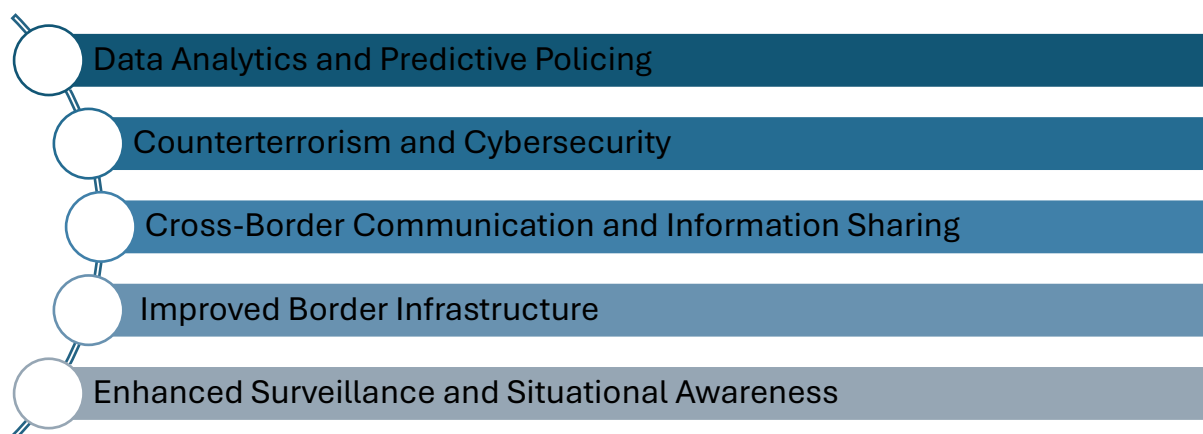


Figure 2: Role of Technology in establishing peace and harmony in the border management

While the technological advancements discussed above have transformed border security capabilities across the BRICS region, the successful implementation and governance of these innovations depend heavily on the involvement and alignment of various stakeholders. The intersection of cutting-edge technology with national security, economic development, and humanitarian considerations means that multiple actors—ranging from state authorities and private enterprises to civil society groups and international partners—have a vested interest in how border management strategies are developed and applied. Understanding these diverse stakeholder interests is essential for ensuring that technological measures are not only effective, but also equitable, transparent, and responsive to broader social and political dynamics.



6 STAKEHOLDER INTEREST

Border security in the BRICS region involves a complex web of stakeholder interests, including governments, corporations, local communities, international allies, and humanitarian organisations. Each group is directly or indirectly influenced by border management strategies, and the success or failure of such policies has wide-reaching implications for security, trade, diplomacy, and social cohesion.

With a primary focus on preserving territorial integrity, public safety, and national sovereignty, the governments of the BRICS countries are heavily involved in developing and enforcing border security policies. In order to prevent transnational crimes like terrorism, arms smuggling, and drug and human trafficking, effective border control is essential. Strong border security measures are crucial for maintaining internal stability and respecting state authority, according to the Federal Government of Brazil (2015). Strategic investments in cutting-edge technologies, such as surveillance infrastructure and biometric systems, improve state capability and political legitimacy. One example of Brazil's commitment to using technology for border security is the Integrated Border Monitoring System (SISFRON), which combines sensors, surveillance radars, and unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor its vast borders (Mlambo et al., 2022). Furthermore, international cooperation in border management allows BRICS governments to address shared threats through intelligence sharing and joint operations, as highlighted in the BRICS Johannesburg Declaration (2023), which underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in combating terrorism and ensuring security in the use of ICTs., also contribute to political legitimacy and state capacity.

Businesses and trade associations operating within the BRICS bloc also have a vested interest in efficient border governance. Secure and predictable border procedures facilitate international trade by reducing delays, ensuring compliance, and cutting operational costs (World Bank, 2019). For instance, the implementation of automated customs clearance and electronic documentation enables companies to streamline logistics and improve supply chain resilience. Stable border environments also attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and bolster regional economic integration. As noted by Lee (2014), trade flows are particularly sensitive to disruptions at borders, making it critical that infrastructure and protocols are optimized for both security and efficiency.





Effective border security management is important to the local communities that are located close to borders. The safety and well-being of these areas are at risk due to issues like human trafficking, illegal immigration, and various types of smuggling. However, these risks can be significantly reduced by upholding a secure border environment. Additionally, safe borders promote economic growth and ease trade, both of which raise living standards and generate employment opportunities for locals. By addressing the safety concerns of border communities, governments not only safeguard their citizens but also foster long-term social and economic advancement in these regions, resulting in a positive feedback loop. In order to protect vulnerable groups and improve border security, border guards are essential in spotting and stopping human trafficking (UNODC, 2012).

The administration of border security in the BRICS region could affect international relations and collaboration. When BRICS nations work together to improve border security, diplomatic ties and confidence between the nations are bolstered. It would be beneficial for the international community to have a more open exchange of intelligence, technology, and best practices to enhance their ability to confront common security challenges. As Walsh (2010) suggests, surveillance practices, when employed ethically and collaboratively, can transform border control into a means of fostering trust and humanitarian engagement. It is impossible to create strong international alliances and make progress towards world peace without first establishing a foundation of regional stability, which is helped along by efficient border security measures. This is a prerequisite for both of these goals.

Humanitarian concerns must also be recognised as a critical stakeholder dimension. Effective Border management prevents exploitation of vulnerable groups, including women and children, and aids in the fight against human trafficking. Furthermore, while preserving the harmony between national interests and international commitments, safe and compassionate border procedures guarantee that refugees and asylum seekers are treated with respect (UNHCR, n.d.). Human rights and national security can be protected at the same time by well-crafted border policies.

Yet border governance is not only a matter of institutional coordination and technological deployment; it also raises deeper ethical questions and opportunities for community-based resistance. Surveillance is not only about control—it also opens up ethical tensions and possibilities for resistance. Walsh (2010) suggests that surveillance practices at borders can, paradoxically, be used for border care rather





than just border control. However, Monahan and Murakami Wood (2018) warn that such shifts risk being co-opted unless communities assert agency and shape how these technologies are deployed.

In summary, stakeholder interest in BRICS border security is both diverse and interdependent. Governments seek sovereignty and stability; businesses demand efficiency and predictability; communities look for safety and development; international allies pursue cooperation and shared security goals; and humanitarian actors advocate for ethical, rights-based approaches. By aligning border security policies with these varied interests, the BRICS nations can strengthen internal resilience, promote sustainable economic growth, and contribute to broader global security and cooperation.

7 ROLE OF POLICY AND GOVERNANCE IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE BORDER REGION

The BRICS governments implement stringent border control policies with the primary aim of safeguarding national sovereignty, ensuring the safety of their citizens, and preserving the territorial integrity of their nations. Effective border governance is crucial to countering transnational threats such as, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and narcotics trade. By investing in advanced technologies and fostering intergovernmental cooperation, these nations enhance citizen safety, uphold political order, and stimulate economic development. (Federal Government of Brazil, 2015; Gkougkoudis et al., 2022).

Strategic policy frameworks also play a critical role in suppressing terrorism acts and insurgencies, thereby reinforcing national defence. For the business and trade sectors, particularly those operating across BRICS territories, well-managed border systems are indispensable. Streamlined customs procedures and secure border environments facilitate cross-border commerce, reducing logistical costs and increasing predictability, which directly enhances profitability and operational efficiency (Lee, 2014; World Bank, 2019, Rogovsky & Cooke, 2021).

Local communities that are close to these areas are also impacted in a cascading manner by secure borders. The safety of these areas is at risk from human trafficking, illegal migration, and other smuggling activities. In addition to reducing these risks, good governance stimulates regional trade and economic expansion, which in turn





increases local jobs and improves living standards overall. The socio-political importance of effective border governance is highlighted by the creation of a positive feedback loop in which development follows security and vice versa (UNODC, 2012; Walsh, 2010).

Figure 3 illustrates the multifaceted influence of governance and policy-making on border security and regional stability. It delineates how policies intersect with law enforcement, technological advancement, economic growth, and community safety. The visual highlights the central role of coordinated governance in establishing a secure and peaceful border environment throughout the BRICS region.

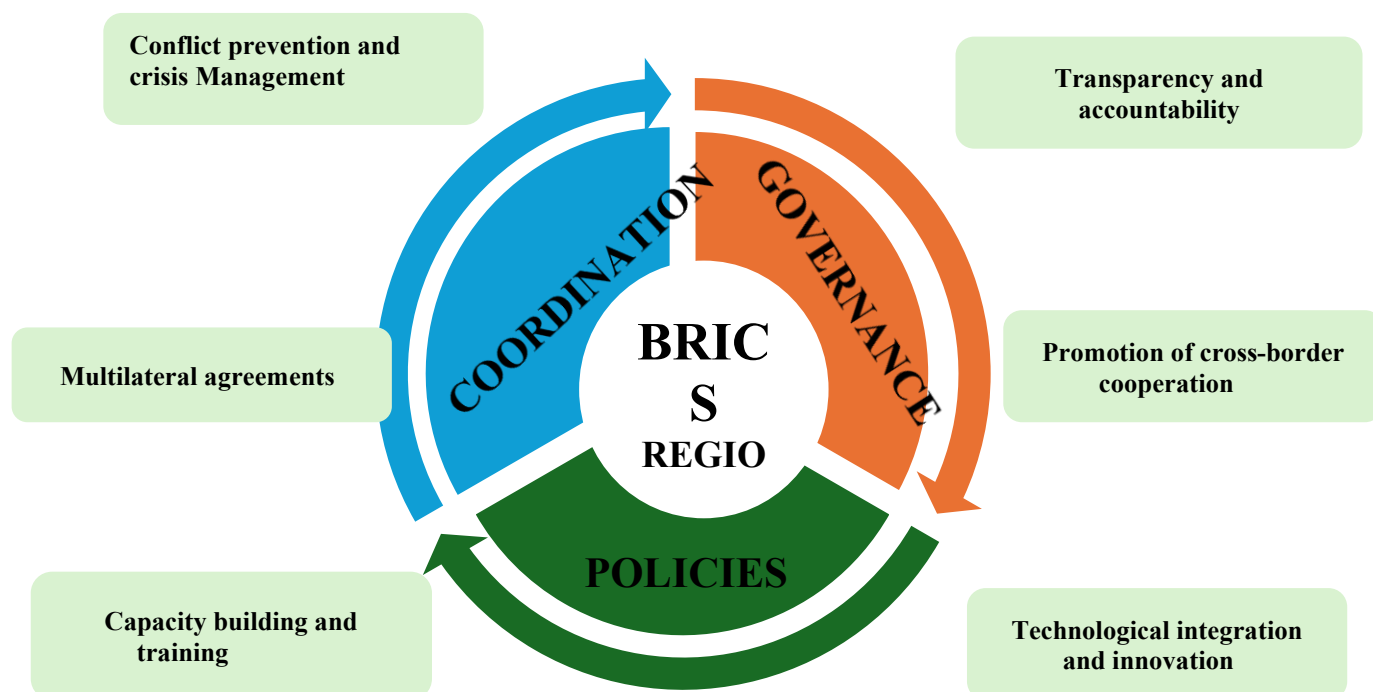


Figure 3: Role of Policy and Governance

International relations also looks at how cooperative border governance within the BRICS framework promotes diplomatic unity and mutual trust. The region's ability to respond to common threats and form strategic alliances is improved by cooperative efforts in intelligence sharing, capacity building, and legal cooperation (Plessis et al., 2023).

From a humanitarian standpoint, border governance plays a critical role in preventing human trafficking and safeguarding vulnerable populations, especially women and children. In accordance with global standards and moral commitments, it



guarantees migrants and asylum seekers respectful treatment (UNHCR, n.d.; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2015).

In order to address both established and new threats to international security, BRICS policymakers must adopt policies that are adaptable enough to change in response to shifting geopolitical environments and technological advancements. By regulating resource distribution, technology use, and capability development, strategic planning—which is based on these policies—maximizes the effectiveness of border protection measures (Gkougkoudis et al., 2022; Murugesan, 2021).

Furthermore, policies that emphasise regional cooperation – such as bilateral security accords, joint operations, and intelligence fusion—enable coordinated responses to transnational crimes. The development of shared frameworks strengthens institutional capabilities and promotes collective resilience (BRICS, 2023).

It is crucial to implement policies that encourage the widespread use of advanced tools like data analytics, biometric systems, and surveillance drones as well as those that foster technical innovation. Governance frameworks should support research and development projects for technological advancements in border security. To fully realise their potential for improving border security while simultaneously upholding people's right to privacy and other civil liberties, new technologies must be used responsibly and ethically. Regulations that are well-structured can secure this. (Rodrigues, Medina and Cabete, 2024; Tyler, 2022; Gkougkoudis et al., 2022).

The creation of training and capacity-building initiatives for border security forces ought to be a primary focus of governance mechanisms. The effectiveness and professionalism of security forces are improved by policies that place a strong emphasis on ongoing training, skill development, and knowledge sharing. A more secure border and improved threat responses are guaranteed by a workforce that is properly trained. Transparency and accountability are essential for maintaining public trust and preventing the misuse of power. Accountability is supported and corruption is decreased by policies that encourage transparency in budgeting, procurement, and policymaking. Independent oversight and routine audits are essential for assessing the efficacy of policies. (Federal Government of Brazil, 2015).

In order to maintain peace along borders, it is necessary to have policies that place a focus on the avoidance of conflict and the handling of crises. If governance structures support diplomatic discussions and early warning systems, then it will be possible to identify potential conflicts and find diplomatic solutions to those conflicts.





Procedures for good crisis management make it possible to respond in a coordinated manner to occurrences at the border. This helps to avoid escalation and promote peaceful resolutions. (UN, 2023a).

Collaboration across international borders with nations that are close by ought to be actively encouraged by legislation and administrative structures. Sharing intelligence, conducting joint patrols, and working together on infrastructure projects are all ways in which border regions might benefit from combined efforts to boost confidence and maintain peace. Reducing lingering tensions and strengthening regional peace and stability can be accomplished through the implementation of policies that encourage peaceful cohabitation and collaboration.

8 ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN BORDER MANAGEMENT IN THE BRICS REGION

International law, particularly the principles outlined in the United Nations Charter, emphasises respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. These principles require that the borders between BRICS countries be clearly defined and consistently respected. In order to prevent escalation and foster peaceful coexistence, disputes concerning territorial claims or border breaches must be resolved through recognised legal mechanisms, such as arbitration and adjudication (Guilfoyle, 2011; UN, 2023b).

Given the strategic significance of border management, BRICS countries frequently engage in multilateral and bilateral agreements, as well as international conventions. International law provides the structural foundation for these negotiations and their implementation. Agreements often address issues such as trade facilitation, environmental protection, and counterterrorism, ensuring that border management aligns with international norms and shared interests (De Schutter, 2012; BRICS, 2023).

International human rights legislation protects the rights of those who live near international borders. Fundamental rights—such as the right to life, liberty, and personal security—must be upheld regardless of geographical proximity to national boundaries. Treaties and conventions aim to prevent arbitrary arrest, forced displacement, or discrimination based on border location, thereby upholding both





safety and human dignity (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2015; Donnelly, 2013).

The control of transnational threats like terrorism, drug trafficking, and organised crime is regulated by international law. The BRICS countries have committed to cooperative strategies under international protocols to combat such threats. Legal frameworks enable intelligence sharing, coordinated enforcement operations, and extradition procedures, promoting an integrated response to cross-border crime (UNODC, 2009; Rabasa et al., 2007).

Environmental cooperation is increasingly relevant, as many BRICS borders are located in ecologically sensitive zones. International legal instruments—including conventions on water protection, climate, and biodiversity—provide mechanisms for joint management of shared resources and for promoting sustainable development in border areas (Tellis & Airski, 2013; Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022).

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its subsequent protocols establish the legal foundation for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers at international borders. These agreements define the rights of displaced persons and the obligations of states to offer protection to those fleeing violence or persecution. Additionally, international humanitarian law governs the delivery of aid in times of crisis, ensuring timely assistance and safeguarding the rights of humanitarian workers (UNHCR, n.d.).

The international legal system contains mechanisms that allow for the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes between the BRICS nations. Arbitration, mediation, or adjudication on an international level are all viable options for resolving this dispute. Adherence to the procedures established by international law ensures the peaceful resolution of disputes, which in turn decreases the possibility of war and fosters amicable relations between nations that share a border. (Abbott et al., 2000).

Figure 4 visually summarises the role of international law in maintaining border security within the BRICS region. It outlines the connections between legal principles—such as sovereignty, human rights, conflict resolution, and environmental stewardship—and their application to regional stability. This representation emphasises how legal frameworks serve not only as instruments of regulation but also as essential tools for diplomacy, cooperation, and humanitarian protection across borders.





Figure 4: Role of International law in maintaining border security in the region

9 CHALLENGES

The technological infrastructure and available resources of the BRICS nations differ significantly from one another. While some countries, like China and Russia, have systems that are at the forefront of innovation, it's possible that other countries lack the technology necessary for effective monitoring. Closing this technical gap will be difficult since it will necessitate large investments in R&D and the deployment of state-of-the-art systems. Certain border regions are especially vulnerable to security breaches because of disparities in technological capabilities. Effective security measures that are consistently applied throughout the region are therefore more challenging to implement (Utoikamanu, 2018).

Inconsistencies in the BRICS nations' laws and regulations governing border protection present a barrier to the implementation of coordinated security measures. As a result of the fact that every nation has its own legal system, it is difficult to formulate regulations that are uniform with regard to the sharing of data, the conduct of collaborative operations, and the use of cutting-edge technology. In order for the existing security systems to perform as they were designed to, there needs to be consensus over established standards and regulatory frameworks.

Challenges to Global Collaboration Geopolitical tensions and historical disputes make it difficult to promote cooperation across international borders, even though the BRICS states have a lot in common. Conflicts over the region and the established political borders may hinder the free exchange of information and jeopardise the



effectiveness of the coordinated security efforts. Pant (2023) Establishing successful coordinated efforts for managing border security is challenging because it is hard to build trust between these nations, which is essential but frequently complicated by complex geopolitical realities.

When cutting-edge technologies like biometrics and surveillance systems are used for the purpose of border protection, it raises a number of questions regarding the preservation of personal privacy and civil liberties. It is not simple to establish a happy medium between tighter security measures and the right of individuals to maintain their privacy. It is necessary to have comprehensive regulations and governance frameworks that respect the rights of the people living in the area while simultaneously enforcing safety measures. (Tyler, 2022).

To promote an atmosphere that is favourable to peace and harmony among the BRICS states, it is imperative that all parties abide by international law and any treaties to which they are parties. Conflicts and divergent interpretations of international agreements, however, could impede the advancement of cooperative efforts. International law poses several important challenges in terms of resolving issues and guaranteeing that everyone is aware of their legal obligations. Furthermore, disparities in legal frameworks and treaty interpretations may cause delays in the adoption of unified border security measures, which could make it more difficult to maintain regional peace and harmony.

Figure 5 summarises the core challenges facing BRICS countries in achieving effective border security. These include technological disparities, legal and regulatory inconsistencies, geopolitical tensions, privacy concerns, and conflicting interpretations of international law. The figure highlights how these obstacles intersect, complicating coordinated security efforts and emphasizing the need for integrated strategies that balance technological innovation, legal harmonization, and diplomatic cooperation.

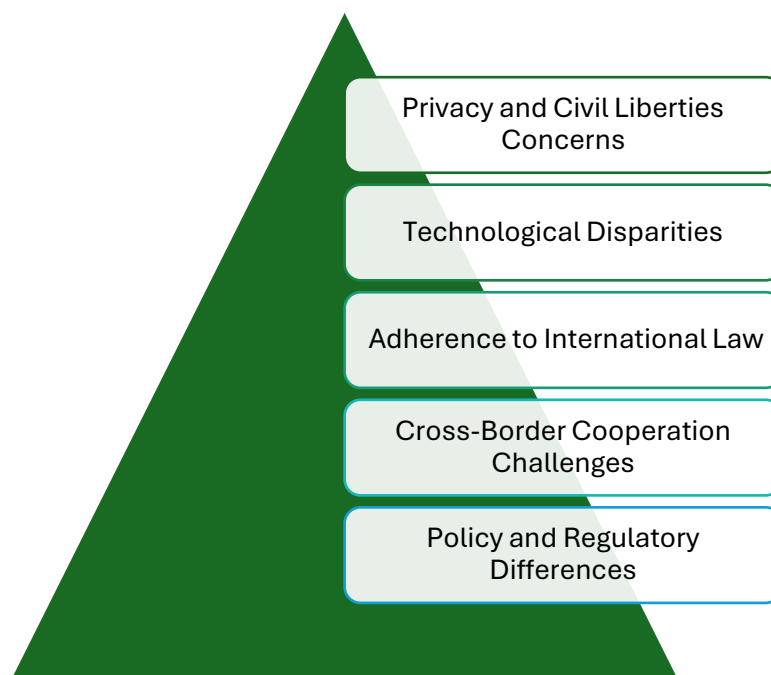


Figure 5: Challenges in the BRICS region in maintaining Border Management and security

10 FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

The BRICS countries have an opportunity to establish a more peaceful and harmonious future for the management of their borders if they make use of cutting-edge technology, have strong leadership, and comply with international law (Rodrigues, Medina and Cabete, 2024; UN, 2023b).

Real-time monitoring of border regions is increasingly possible due to the adoption of cutting-edge surveillance technologies, including biometric systems, AI-powered sensors, and drones (Shah, 2023; Choung et al., 2024). Artificial intelligence enhances threat detection capabilities and allows for proactive responses to emerging risks. Machine learning algorithms continuously adapt to new security challenges, making border management more efficient and responsive (Murugesan, 2021; Chatszis & Stavrou, 2022).

BRICS nations are expected to develop future-proof infrastructures that support secure communication and interoperability. Connected databases and encrypted communication systems will facilitate real-time information sharing about criminal activities and security threats. These efforts, supported by standardized procedures,



will strengthen joint responses and reinforce collective border safety (Gkougkoudis et al., 2022; BRICS, 2023).

Improved collaboration among BRICS nations is anticipated through the establishment of joint operations, decision-making boards, and regular diplomatic consultations. These mechanisms will enhance coordination between security agencies, fostering peace and stability across borders. Formalized cross-border partnerships are essential for sustained regional cooperation (Plessis et al., 2023; De Schutter, 2012).

BRICS members continue to affirm their commitment to international law by participating in treaties and developing shared legal standards. These frameworks are essential for resolving disputes, enhancing diplomatic engagement, and establishing trust. Regional forums will play a key role in supporting the creation of legal mechanisms that uphold the rule of law and promote peaceful coexistence (Guilfoyle, 2011; Abbott et al., 2000).

Cybersecurity has become a critical frontier in border management. As new technologies emerge, BRICS nations are investing in robust cybersecurity infrastructure to protect vital border control systems from cyber threats. Addressing hybrid dangers—those that combine physical and digital elements—requires coordinated international responses and shared technical capabilities (Klimburg, 2017; Kshetri, 2015).

Effective border governance also creates opportunities for enhanced diplomatic engagement. By jointly addressing security concerns, India and China can open new avenues for cooperation. Consistent diplomatic interactions will help address misunderstandings and encourage peaceful dispute resolution (Banerjee, 2017; Rabasa et al., 2007).

A secure and stable border environment facilitates trade and economic collaboration. Predictable and low-risk border conditions are essential for cross-border commerce, foreign investment, and infrastructure development. These economic benefits further reinforce peace, making conflict less likely and cooperation more attractive for all BRICS members (Lee, 2014; World Bank, 2019).

In the BRICS context, international law provides a reliable platform for peacefully resolving territorial disputes. Arbitration, mediation, and international adjudication offer legitimate alternatives to conflict. By respecting established legal treaties and





conventions, countries can foster a climate of predictability and reduce the risk of escalation (UNHCR, n.d.; Hathaway, 2005)

Finally, peace along borders fosters cross-cultural interactions, tourism, academic partnerships, and social understanding. Increased people-to-people engagement between India and China can reduce historical mistrust and support long-term peace and prosperity. These exchanges are essential for strengthening community ties and promoting shared values across the region (Donnelly, 2013; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2015).

11 CONCLUSIONS

India and China have a great chance to deepen their current relationships of trust and cooperation by leveraging the BRICS framework's emphasis on creative approaches to border security management. The two countries can support the development of the BRICS community and their own bilateral relationship by embracing contemporary technology, practicing sound governance, and abiding by international law. India-China relations could be improved by cooperative engagement under this framework, leading to a more amicable partnership that benefits both nations and the BRICS bloc overall.

Such a shift in direction would be advantageous for all parties involved. The combination of cutting-edge technology, responsible administration, and respect for international norms increase border protection, would not only enhance border security but also pave the way for deeper mutual understanding and trust among BRICS nations. By embracing these innovations, the member countries can create a more secure and peaceful environment within their borders—one that ultimately benefits their citizens and contributes to broader global stability.

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