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Master's Thesis

**Regional security:
A perspective on changing power dynamics in South Asia**



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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to conduct an analysis of the evolving patterns of security relations within South Asia. As the region becomes a battleground for emerging powers, so does shaping the patterns and norms that define security, trade and cooperation within the region. South Asia is experiencing exponential changes as the construction projects as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor reshape power distribution in the region and deepens China-Pakistan relations. Increased connectivity in the region permits China to deploy security forces operating alongside Pakistani military personnel, conducting naval exercises and surveillance in disputed territories along the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean Region. Moreover, the Construction of the port city of Gwadar serves as a major stopping point in the “String of Pearls” along the Indian Ocean that is effectively operational for the use of commercial and military shipping to and from China. The abstract nature of the Belt and Road Initiative has left states suspicious of the motive and means in which China seeks to establish itself as a global leader in trade and diplomacy. The framework of the BRI has long been scrutinized by the US and many of its allies for undermining international rule based law in international waters and the coercive tactics used by China in implementing the Initiative. In response, regional powers affected by BRI have since the beginning phase of the initiative been working on strategic cooperation to curb Chinese Influence in Asia. Aiming to examine regional powers such as the US, India and Japan and their respective response to wider implication of the BRI this paper focuses on the speech acts and the process of securitization employed by these countries to facilitate their stated policy goals. In this process a set of shared and identifiable goals among regional powers is identified and used as a foundation for multilateral cooperation that focuses on a common threat, identified as Chinese unlawful conduct in international and disputed territories. To summarize the findings of the paper, the securitization process of regional powers provides a basis for the achievement of overlapping national interests as expressed in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. Securitization of China strengthens the commitment of bi- and multilateral partnerships as these are framed in the context of self preservation for the state and its people. Furthermore, regional powers reconstruct previously separate geographical boundaries into a new spatial construct to empower multilateral cooperation and extend the framework in which multilateral partnerships such as the Quad can operate within.

Key words: India, China, USA, Indo-Pacific, Securitization, Regional Security.

Abbreviation List

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BECA	Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
IAF	Indian Armed Forces
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IP	Indo-Pacific
IR	International Relations
LAC	The Line of Actual Control
MSRI	Maritime Silk Road Initiative
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBOR	One Belt One Road Initiative
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACOM	US Pacific Command
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PRC	People's Republic of China
RSC	Regional Security Complexes
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
SCS	South China Sea
SIMBEX	Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
TSD	Trilateral Security Dialogue
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
QSD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

Table of content

Abstract	2
Abbreviation List	3
Table of content	4
1 Introduction	5
1.1 Research Question	7
2 Methodology	8
2.1 Research Objective	8
2.2 Research Design	9
2.3 Choice of theory	9
2.3.1 Neorealism	10
2.3.2 Regional Security Complex Theory	11
2.4 Choice of Data	12
2.5 Research approach	13
2.6 Limitations	14
3 Theories and Theoretical discussion	16
3.1 Classical realism	16
3.1.1 Neorealism	17
3.1.2 Defensive and Offensive neorealisme	19
3.1.3 Operationalization of concepts within Neorealism	20
3.2 Regional Security Complex Theory	21
3.2.1 State actors and types of complexes	22
3.2.3 Operationalization of Regional Security Complex Theory	25
4 Analysis	26
4.1 Patterns of security	26
4.1.1 Continental developments	28
4.1.2 Maritime developments	29
4.2 Securitizing China	32
4.2.1 India	32
4.2.2 Japan	35
4.2.3 The U.S.	37
4.3 Rebalancing in the Indo-Pacific	40
4.3.1 Multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific	40
5. Conclusion	42
6. Bibliography	44

1 Introduction

China has seen an unprecedented level of economic growth over the past couple of decades, leading many to speculate about the implications of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) rivaling the US on the world stage of international politics. In 2014 the Chinese economy officially overtook the US when measured in purchasing power parity, adding to the perception that the 21st century will be a “Chinese Century” (Kai 2015). Around the same time in 2013 the PRC officially adopted the “One Belt, One Road Initiative”(OBOR), a series of infrastructure, construction and development projects across the Eurasian continent. The project, known in the English speaking world as “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) promises to enhance regional cooperation boosting trade, connectivity and deepening cultural ties between all parties involved (OESC 2018). This is being done by improving and creating multiple land bridges and economic zones of regional trade that lead all the way from Beijing to Western Europe. To facilitate the initiative China created the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in 2016 to hand out loans to participating countries to ensure the financing of the projects. The BRI represents China’s efforts in reaching out to the global community, expanding soft power with material offers of assistance, ”making an effort to socialize various actors into the “Chinese way of doing things” and integrate them into the current international institutionalized structures and China-led international development projects” (Li, 2020: 281). At the same time these projects ensure the continued growth of the Chinese economy. In the period of 2014 to 2018, some 137 countries have in some capacity been involved in construction or talks related to the BRI and 190 Billion USD have been invested into the project (Scissors 2019). Beijing stresses co-operation and shared development with the future of the projects promising a “win-win” situation between China and signatories of the BRI (Sidaway & Woon, 2017). Others, particularly Western countries, meanwhile question the motives of the PRC and the ways in which the project is handled, along with skepticism about the ultimate goals of the projects. The US in particular has accused China of attempting to create a debt-trap for developing countries (Lai, Lin & Sidaway 2020). India is a member of the AIIB and was slated, early on, to become a part of the BRI, expanding on trade routes through Bangladesh into India and moving to the Middle

East and beyond. However, India has been highly critical of the close bilateral relationship between China and India's long-time rival and neighbor Pakistan. Pakistan is a long-standing ally of China and is heavily involved in the expansion of the BRI. As of 2021, Investments into Pakistan to construct and bolster the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC) are at over 49 Billion USD (AEI 2022). The CPEC is a cornerstone in the grander scheme of the BRI providing a Crucial linkage between the land bridge Connecting China and Pakistan, with a maritime trade route in the Indian Ocean as part of the sea based BRI also known as the "Maritime Time Silk Road Initiative (MSRI). Perceptions in India range from concerns about the founding and potential debt-trap of accepting funding for the BRI, to the implicit military and territorial concerns the project entails (Sachedeva 2018). The project includes revitalizing Gwadar Port as the main entrance point for shipping in the region and connectivity between sea and land based trade. Alongside the construction projects multiple measures will be taken both by China and Pakistan to ensure security in the region and maintain safety along the proposed trade routes (Qazi 2019). India has shown concern about the nature of the CPEC projects and worries about the potential expansion of a Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) as a consequence of the bilateral agreement. If realized, the security in the region would be handled by both Chinese and Pakistani officials and would have the potential to monitor the naval activities of the Indian navy. Territorial concerns in the IOR somewhat mirror unresolved tensions in the India controlled Kashmir region, which borders all three nations. China, Pakistan and India continue to have frequent and sometimes deadly altercations as a result of claims on territory by all parties (Ibid, 2019).

While there is unquestionably an economic incentive that fuels the BRI project in China and participating members abroad, the project itself cannot be ignored for its implications on geopolitics. While some commentators liken the project to the US-led Marshall Plan which in the immediate post second World War period, helped rebuild a war-torn Europe, the initiative itself in China is seen in more abstract terms. Seen as a way to develop China's connectivity with the rest of the world and thereby provide the aforementioned "win-win" situation of economic growth and development for China and BRI signatories, appears to be the governing perception (Sidaway & Woon 2017). However, military writers in China argue for development especially in the maritime portions of the BRI as a strategic and critical link in the success of the project and in the rise of China on the international stage (Ibid, 2017). The connection has not escaped American perceptions about the implications of a permanent Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean and along the CPEC. Discussion about the 'Rise of

China' often appears in the context of a battle of hegemony between the US and China, with fears about the decline of the US as a global leader exemplified in the supposed rise of China as challenging to US power (Beckley 2011). Much of this debate centers around US involvement with the Taiwan and the South China Sea disputes that have been brewing in the background of US-China relations since the 1949 victory of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War. US policy in the region can be summarized as containment, i.e. maintaining the military capacity to deny China access to key strategic sea routes, particularly the straits of Malacca, in the event of any military dispute (Wong & Yue 2014). The potential connectivity projects in Pakistan and the IOR hinders the US policy of containment and thus incorporates security concerns from adjacent regions into the patterns of security relations between India and Pakistan (Storey 2006). This further underpins the region's importance for security not only in South Asia but as a wider implication for the regional players in Asia. The Indo-Pacific region is undergoing rapid developments as nations seek to carve out their sphere of influence and secure potential alliances and agreements that protect territory and national interests. In particular the Indian Ocean is often overlooked while the future of the region holds great potential in shaping the future of emerging powers in the region and indicates shifting hegemonic powers, as the rise of China challenges US dominance of the region.

1.1 Research Question

Wishing to explore the security developments in South Asia, the following questions are raised:

Why does China's rising relative power challenge regional security in South Asia?

2 Methodology

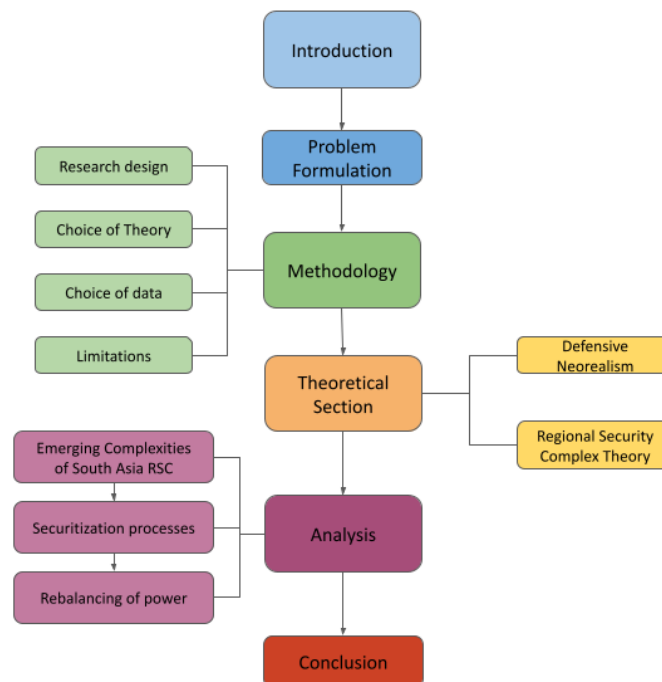
The following chapters will present the methodological approach deployed in order to adequately investigate the research questions posed within this paper. Firstly, the research objective will be presented. The intent of the thesis will be discussed with the design presenting a visualization of the research. Next, the choice of theory along with the choice of data will be clarified as to determine how the selection will be applicable in answering the research question. Lastly, there will be a short explanation of the research approach and limitations in order to establish the structure of the paper and how the theory and data combine to form a cogent analysis.

2.1 Research Objective

The goal of this research is to advance the field of security studies within a changing landscape of global and regional powers. Distinctly, this research aims to contextualize the rise of China in the regional power struggle in South Asia between India and China as both powers solidify their position as leaders in the region. To realize this goal, the research will be conducted as a case study of securitizations processes and rebalancing of power in the South Asia region. The intention is to establish how current security affairs in the region formed and how new development influences the behavior of state actors today. To accomplish this, the thesis will make use of two related but distinct theories to guide the research. Defensive Neorealism and Regional Security Complex Theory will serve as the theoretical foundation of this research. Together these theories provide a theoretical lense in which to examine current securitization efforts and power rebalancing in the region. The national interests of the principal actors in the region will be investigated as part of the research as it highlights the developing security narrative in the region. Together with the securitization of political issues it provides insight into state measures to pursue policy goals as a means of rebalancing power in the region. The bulk of the analysis will consist of examination of securitization processes within the South Asia region with the intent to juxtapose the securitization efforts to the grander scope of regional power rebalancing. Emphasis will be placed upon Indian efforts to counter the influence of China in the region

and preventing the establishment of permanent Chinese military forces in the region. These efforts coincide with US policy of containment in the concurrent US-China rivalry of which aspects will fall under this research as it relates to security affairs in the South Asia region.

2.2 Research Design



Graphical representation of progression within the research paper

2.3 Choice of theory

The goal of this chapter is to give a short overview of the theories chosen to examine the research questions presented in this paper. Each theory presented will have a brief explanation of their core assumptions and concepts as well as their relevance in answering the central questions posed. The oncoming chapters will introduce realism within the IR tradition together with defensive neorealism as a choice of theory for this paper. Next, Regional Security Complex Theory will be introduced and discussed as a addition to the theoretical framework.

2.3.1 Neorealism

Realism is one of the dominant theories within the field of IR and together with liberalism has provided the dominant narratives of IR. The theory traces its roots in philosophy back in ancient times, where ancient scholars sought to explain the nature of man. The theory eventually became adapted to transpose the conflictual nature of man upon the structure of states in the international system. Though today realists are divided between different schools of thought, they agree on core assumptions of realism such as the anarchical nature of the international system in which states operate, and the need for power as a strategy of self preservation (Loftager & Kaspersen, 2009). The assumptions realist thought is built upon prove useful in gaining relevant insights into the studying of state power struggle and power balancing which, as outlined previously, is the principle aspect of study within this research. The developments in the South Asia Region between India, Pakistan, China and the US demonstrates such a system with states like India attempting to rebalance power in the region as the rise of China erodes established boundaries. Coupled with historical conflicts and tension throughout the post WW2 period, the contemporary South Asia region lends itself to a new examination of the regional dynamic through a realist perspective. Since the partition of India in 1947 and the first Indo-Pakistani war of the same year, security concerns quickly became the main concern of the newly created states, as both feared invasion and destruction at the hands of the other. India and Pakistan have been continually involved in multiple armed conflicts since the creation of both states. Initially the conflict came about as religiously motivated in the immediate aftermath of the partitioning of India, but has since diversified becoming centered on the contested geographical area of the Kashmir region amidst competition in international politics. India, Pakistan and China all lay claim or partial claim to territory in the Kashmir region, further complicating the issue of territorial security and is an ever present geopolitical issue that frequently threatens to escalate. Indian concerns about the Chinese presence in the region was a key factor in India developing nuclear weapons in the 1970's. This itself led to Pakistan to begin developing nuclear capabilities the same decade, completing the regional nuclear triad. Tensions have thus, remained high. Since 2013 China has been working alongside Pakistan in creating the CPEC to bolster infrastructure and conductivity in the region as part of the BRI. The project also includes development in the

city of Gwadar linking the silk road along the CPEC with the maritime silk road which stretches from China to the Arabian peninsula. Development in these areas expands the current scope of power capabilities of China within the region. Moreover, the shipping lines in the IOR are within the territorial waters of India and serve as an access point from India to the rest of the world. In the absence of an international governing body and proper diplomatic resolutions, there is a significant risk of the regional security dilemma developing, escalating tensions and hostilities in the region.

2.3.2 Regional Security Complex Theory

Explored in the seminal work “Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security ” by Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, RSCT has become the linchpin of the Copenhagen school, of security studies. To summarize, the theory frames security in the context of geographical features of particular regions and states' ability to project power upon neighboring states in shared geographical clusters. The concept of security is subjective and malleable and thus can be created by states through a process Wæver and Buzan call ‘Securitization.’ The theory therefore is sometimes regarded as mixing realism with constructivism, since it ultimately deals with the ”real” of international politics and accepts the realist interpretation of the international system, yet it is the declaration of something as a security issue that makes it so (Buzan & Wæver 1998). State actors are placed within a hierarchy based on their ability to influence their immediate surroundings and the narratives which shape security issues. Most states are defined as regional powers and only capable of influencing their immediate adjacent region. A few states can be categorized as great powers such as China or Russia. These states are active in multiple security regions and due to their power capabilities are responded to by others. Great powers have the potential to become a superpower at some point in the future. Superpower status is the final stage and is exclusively used to describe the US since the fall of the USSR. Superpowers are able to extend their influence across multiple regions worldwide and possess first class military capabilities (Buzan & Wæver 2003). Regions are established by the interaction between actors within a regional complex and is the result of military capabilities of the states involved in the particular region, along with a

shared set of norms and discourse that dominate perceptions of states and what constitutes a security concern in that region.

The theory proves useful to explain the central question of this paper in two ways. Firstly, it frames the actions of regional players in the greater scope of the emerging power struggle in the South Asia security region. Perspectives around multilateral agreements and infrastructure projects are shaped by securitization processes which if successful, allow the state actor responsible for the process to gather support from their audience e.g. population or other state actors. Secondly, it provides a framework of analysis in which to explore how the rise of China has far reaching effects with regards to security for the wider South Asia region. India is distinctly challenged by an insular geography in the region with the Himalayas acting as a natural barrier to the north and Pakistan acting as a buffer to the west. This leaves the Indian ocean to the south as the gateway for India to the rest of the world. Any reshaping of the current power of balance within the region will undoubtedly be cause for major geopolitical actions. Both India and China have strong national security interests in the region, with China developing wide ranging connectivity projects in Pakistan and the Indian ocean thereby intensifying Chinese capabilities and influence in the region. The effects of the growing US-China rivalry also spills over into South Asia as both powers seek to undermine the dominance of the other wherever possible. This new development in the region gives rise to examine and evaluate the relative power of balance in the regions as China's rise to a global power becomes more imminent.

2.4 Choice of Data

For the theoretical section of this paper the choice of data will comprise the writings from the authors who originated the theories selected for this paper. This will be supplemented by additional academic literature in the form of newspapers articles and reports commenting or expanding on the theoretical framework presented. In order to conduct my research I mean to establish a framework of securitization within the South Asia region. This will be achieved by including and examining historical accounts of conflicts within the region with particular emphasis on the Kashmir region and conflicts arising from related issues. The paper will base

the foundation of its sources on both primary and secondary sources. Contemporary primary sources, such as official governmental statements and policy papers will make up the main bulk of data within this paper. This allows for the latest possible data regarding building projects and narratives surrounding security within the region to be examined. Secondary sources from scholars and security specialists are included to offer additional perspectives on regional security in South Asia. Also, as mentioned earlier in the research objective, it is a theme of this research to study not only the security developments and their causes, but to extend narratives that play a part in advancing security developments. In particular narratives about national security perpetrated by state actors allows for insights into state behavior and reasoning of decision makers. The paper will additionally incorporate sources from select international institutions when appropriate. These will serve as a backdrop to sources generated from within the state and function to illuminate how shared goals about security can lead to bilateral cooperation.

2.5 Research approach

The analysis will be conducted in 3 stages culminating in answering the research question posed in the introduction. Defensive neorealism and Regional Security Complex Theory will be deployed as a theoretical lense in each stage to examine the historical and present conditions in the South Asia region. The theories offer a perspective on state behavior that defines the region and sets the conditions to study security developments by examining power struggle and securitization processes. The first part of the analysis will predominantly focus on the paradigm shift in regional power the region has experienced in the last decade. China's role in the region has become more apparent as the expansion of BRI has allowed the PRC to influence nations globally by building infrastructure and providing financing and leases to achieve this. Specifically in this stage of the analysis the attention will be drawn to the building projects in the CPEC and how its linking with overseas bases in the Indian Ocean demonstrates a major shift in power in the region. This allows for China to have direct military presence within the Indian Ocean transposing security issues along the Himalayas into the IOR. This is a paradigm shift in the region as previously untouched domains become vulnerable in the event of conflict. The middle part of the analysis will be dedicated to

examining in which ways the new power balance in South Asia reshape securitization processes between India and China. In large parts this entails investigating efforts from the state of India in recontextualising the Chinese presence in the IOR and building projects along the CPEC as a national threat to security. While difficult to ascertain whether these claims have merit or not, the basis for this part of the analysis is to establish the means by which securitization is made, and to what ends it serves. Additionally this section also includes chapters on the securitization processes engaged by the US and Japan in efforts to securitize China and expand their respective scope of foreign policy goals to the South Asia region. In this chapter specifically, the analysis will be intent on establishing the linkage between securitization efforts in IOR as it relates to national interests in the South China Sea. Lastly, towards the end of the analysis the strategic framework of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue will be examined in relation to national interests and goals of India in limiting Chinese influence in the IOR. In particular the topic will be approached from an Indian perspective, and the actions that the Indian state pursues as a way of rebalancing power in the region. Additionally the chapter will also explore what ends the securitization process servers and what it means for the security and stability in the region and a potential supercluster of security patterns in Asia.

2.6 Limitations

The main units of analysis will be the states which occupy and shape the polarity within the South Asia RSC. This comprises India, Pakistan and China as the current dominant powers, together with the US as by virtue of being the only Superpower that is capable of projecting power in the region. Other states within the confines of the South Asia Region will only be mentioned if they serve a particularly important role in certain developments in the region. Constraining the possible actors of interest in this research is made in an attempt of keeping the analysis as concise as possible and due to the theoretical framework which emphasizes the importance of great power polarity in shaping the structure for state interaction. Another conscious choice made within this paper is to refrain from exploring the deep complex internal processes that play a role in shaping foreign and domestic policy agendas. Norms, ideas, political movement, societal changes and the form of government among other domestic elements are possible candidates to produce fleeting or long lasting changes in state behavior. However, this paper argues that while state behavior can at times be mutable and

undergo changes due to internal pressures, states conduct themselves on a macro-systematic level as predictable, with long-term strategic aims and logics, in line with the realist assertion of states as rational actors. Therefore it is possible to separate the two arenas, the domestic level and the international level and conduct a macro level analysis that is based on the commonalities of behavior and interest that states, regardless of internal factors, share. Although some assumptions can be made as a byproduct of the reasoning present in governmental and institutional policy papers and statements, the research must rely primarily upon state actors' explicit stated goals and disregard the exploration of underlying causes. Through the theoretical foundation laid in this paper, the state itself is interpreted to be a single unit capable of rational reasoning. The state thus, acts rationally according to its primary concern of survival as expressed within neorealism and RSCT, displayed in effect by maximizing power relatively or absolutely.

Inherently problematic in examining primary sources for conducting research are the implicit and frequently explicit biases found within these sources. Government sources can prove distinctly challenging as by their very nature is highly biased towards the viewpoint from which they are produced, the state itself. This can result in all parties engaged in diplomatic disputes having wildly different interpretations of the intentions and outcomes of international issues. All parties stand to gain from presenting justifications as a cause for actions and identify perceived problem areas of importance. Whilst understanding these sources can obfuscate hidden agendas embedded within foreign policy making, it in turn allows to establish a framework for the narrative that surrounds the balance of power in the south asia region. By merging differing narratives and perspectives and studying them critically with a theoretical lense allows the researcher to uncover greater truths about the growth of diversified multilateral agreements and alliance building in the research area. Carefully and critically examining official sources and scrutinizing them in relation to the theoretical backdrop of the research allows for a more nuanced perspective and is done to overcome the inherent bias contained within the sources. Lastly, given that the research is conducted as a case study the conclusions reached within this paper are uniquely tied to the subject matter and specifically in the context of South Asia RSC. Although some theoretical principles are applicable broadly to states globally, defining features within each complex region and the states which interact within them means generalization made from this research should be done cautiously.

3 Theories and Theoretical discussion

As previously stated in the methodological chapter, the theoretical approach of realism in International Relations is useful in explaining the dominant perceptions around security in the South Asia region. The chapters will provide an explanation of the differences between the main realist approaches and how they introduce concepts that will be used in the analysis of power struggle in South Asia. The last chapters will be dedicated to Regional Security Complex Theory that builds upon and expands concepts introduced in the Chapters regarding Neorealism.

3.1 Classical realism

Perhaps the first example of classical realism can be attributed to Thucydides, an ancient Athenian historian whose work on the Peloponnesian war in the fifth century BCE. explored early state warfare between the Greek city states and their non-Greek neighbors (Jackson & Sørensen, 2019). His historical accounts of the war served to accentuate early core assumptions he saw play out between the warring factions. Thereby early realism and the theoretical approach is based on the account of statecraft and warfare he documented during his studies. He observed that in a state of conflict powerful and weak states alike must adapt to the given reality of power in order to survive (Jackson & Sørensen, 2019). Conflict in a way shapes and limits the way in which states can conduct foreign policy and no state is poised to survive purely on strength, but must adapt to circumstances to survive. Similar ideas to the ones present in the writing of Thucydides would inspire other philosophers and thinkers such as Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes among others to develop their own particular brand of realism unique to them and their field of study. Scholars through ancient times into the early modern period can be identified as classical realists by drawing out common beliefs and assumptions shared between them. Classical realists share a generally pessimistic view of human nature, have a predisposition to regard international relations as conflictual in nature and view war as being the final resolution to conflict (Jackson & Møller, 2019). Particular to the foundation of the work of Thucydides is the lack of trust within the system of states. Because states operate in an anarchical system which is lacking in trust, one

cannot be sure of the intentions of others and must use foreign policy as a tool to advance and defend the interest of the state. Survival and security of the state becomes the focal point of the assumption of classical realism and continues to influence new iterations of realist thought in development in scholarly circles.

The period immediately after WW2 had a profound effect on the fabric of International Relations. The center of global power shifted away from the previous dominant European powers as they lay in ruins after the war and decolonisation was beginning to take root, destabilizing the European powers even further. The US emerged as a new superpower and the soon-to-be rivalry between the US and the USSR as two powerful nuclear powers came to dominate within the field. In the East, Marxism-Leninism dominated the field of IR, whilst in the West the US became pivotal for Western International Relations (IR) research as it domestically was largely unaffected by the war and therefore had the resources and an environment conducive for innovation in the field (Loftager & Kaspersen, 2009). Hans Morgenthau, a German scholar and immigrant to the US, published his seminal work *Politics Among Nations* in 1948 in which he set the foundation of power politics in American scholarly circles. Morgenthau was a classical realist and in his work he outlined the basic principles for modern international politics. His views stem from the assumption that people are political animals that seek power as a way to gain relative advantage over others. He further extends this view to nation-states as a structure in which the population can actualize national interest and withstand the interest of others who seek conflicting goals. In his belief, international politics becomes a power struggle between states that protect itself and its population against interference from other foreign powers as each state is inclined to interfere in the affairs of others to gain power (Loftager & Kaspersen, 2009). Morgenthau and classical realists before him view state actions as a result of the societal substructure of ethics and human nature. There was, however, a growing movement within IR theory to emphasize state behavior in a more rigid scientific method free from ethics and internal processes. The movement became aptly named 'behavioralism' and ushered in a new era of realist thought.

3.1.1 Neorealism

One of the most prominent members of the behavioralist movement was Kenneth Waltz and his work culminating in 1979 into the book *'Theory of International Politics'* which ultimately laid the foundation for what is now known as neorealism within IR studies. In his theoretical tradition of realism, Waltz incorporates many key assumptions from earlier 20th century classical realists such as E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau. For instance, states are the primary unit of analysis and states exist and operate within an anarchical system that is defined by an inevitably conflictual nature. Waltz however, as a behaviouralist, departs from earlier realists by refraining from drawing his assumptions about the world from human ethics and individual people such as heads of states. He instead, focuses almost exclusively on the structure that encompasses the modern state and in his view guides the behavior of states in a quantifiable and predictable way (Jackson & Sørensen, 2019). Neorealism takes the viewpoint that the international system, the global level in which states operate and interact with each other, takes precedence over sub-system levels of analysis. Because states operate in an anarchic system, the focus of the state becomes entirely revolved around survival and measures that can ensure the continued survival of the state. Waltz stresses that because there exists no absolute authority above the state in the international-system, the relative distribution of power within the system becomes paramount. For Waltz, power in the form of military capabilities is essentially underpinning the survival of the state (Loftager & Kaspersen, 2009). Attempts by states to alter the distribution of power within the system leads to what Waltz and others define as a security dilemma. This can occur when the rearmament and increase in relative power of one state in order to increase their security in the anarchic system, threatens the security of other states and thereby causes them to respond in kind. This cyclical relative power competition, known as an arms race, counterintuitively leads to more instability in the international system. In the post war period academic discourse in the field of international relations shifted towards the bipolarity of the international system with the US and the USSR each leading a coalition of aligned states. As Waltz puts it *"Bipolarity is used as a term that describes the alignment of states at the end of these eras rather than a term that describes political structure that conditions the acts of states and influences outcomes"* (Waltz 1979: 43). The only discernible difference between states in the international system is their relative power against one another and they must abide by the same rules of adapting to that power. Adaptation from smaller and weaker states to align with super powers increases their relative power in the system and thus is beneficial for the states of the system to gather in coalitions with military alliances to ensure their mutual survival (Ibid 1979).

3.1.2 Defensive and Offensive neorealisme

While the work of Waltz quickly grew to prominence within the field of study in IR and neorealism became accepted in the academic community there were some scholars who differed from Waltz on a number of conclusions in this theory. One of these scholars is John Mearsheimer who outlined in essays and later in his seminal work *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* the differences in his approach to neorealism from that of Waltz. A pronounced difference in the two is their view on the development of the distribution of power within the international system. Waltz contends that the international system 'pushes' states into a bipolar structure (Loftager & Kaspersen, 2009) (Mearsheimer 2001). After the fall of the USSR he predicted that other states, like China or perhaps India would sooner or later vie for superpower status and challenge the US as the dominant power, thereby establishing a bipolar world order, once again. Mearsheimer instead took note of the apparent dominance of the US in the post-Cold War period and determined that while the bipolarity that existed during the Cold War had transformed Europe into a relatively peaceful region of the world, it would not last eternally however. This is because while Mearsheimer agrees with Waltz that anarchy compels states to compete for power, the end goal of states is to become regional that dominate the system (Jackson & Sørensen, 2019). According to Mearsheimer "*States not only emulate successful balancing behavior, they also imitate successful aggression*" further elaborating "*States look for new ways to gain advantage over opponents, by developing new weapons, innovating military doctrines, or clever strategies*" (Mearsheimer 2001: 19-20) In his view states will pursue power to the point that no other dare to threaten it and secure itself essentially by raw power. In a way he viewed states as maximizing power above all else to achieve its goal of security and sovereignty and claimed the state would go above and beyond to reach the point of becoming untouchable. His viewpoint is defined as Offensive realism and is characterized by the aggressive pursuit of hegemony by states. To Waltz, this viewpoint is flawed as he views excessive power as counterproductive to states. According to Waltz excessive power only skews the distribution of power within the system to a point where it produces hostile alliances against the powerful unipolar state as a way of rebalancing power distribution. To Waltz "*In multipolar systems*

there are too many powers to permit any of them too draw clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries and too few to keep the effects of defection low.” (Waltz 1979: 168)

Accordingly as mentioned previously, it makes more sense for states in the international system to keep the power balance split evenly with leading powers becoming the linchpin for the bipolarity of power distribution. This viewpoint becomes what Mearsheimer describes as defensive neorealism in which states refrain from upsetting the power of balance within the system seeking to mitigate relative weaknesses by building and forming alliances (Jackson & Sørensen, 2019).

3.1.3 Operationalization of concepts within Neorealism

Several defining features of Neorealism are showcased within the patterns of security in the South Asia region, which makes it useful as a tool to frame the analysis. Particular to the security patterns in South Asia is the longstanding bipolarity of Pakistan and India in the region. Born from their decolonisation as two independent states from the unitary British controlled Empire of India, the two states have shaped the enmity that exist in the region. Both were involved in several of the others internal conflicts, such as India’s support for Bangladesh’s independence struggle from Pakistan, and Pakistan's support for armed groups in India controlled Kashmir. The two states view each other with distrust and cautiously. Unlike other regions of the world, no established patterns of international bidding rules or legal supranational entities govern security affairs in the region and thus the principle of anarchy between regional actors is a fitting description for the region. Additionally the theory is developed in a context of a great power and superpower dominated international system, where powerful states seek to accumulate power in the form of territory and military capabilities. These factors are what are the driving force behind the regional security development today and lends credence to the usage of Neorealism in perceiving the power struggle. Lastly, while the India-Pakistan security escalation can be treated as a security dilemma unfolding in multiple territorial zones, the inclusion of China and the US into security affairs of the region shows larger shifts in polarity in the international system and

will undoubtedly influence the regional players actions as their relative power shifts as so does their alliances grow larger and more complex.

3.2 Regional Security Complex Theory

Analogous to when neorealism was first developed as a way of understanding the post WW2 period and the global system of polarity that came to dominate it, RSCT theory offers an explanation to the post-Cold war period of international security structures. The theory is developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver and draws heavily on their previous work regarding securitisation processes e.g. understanding what separates ‘security’ from routine politics (Buzan & Wæver 2003). Politics can become securitised when a securitizing actor brings forward an existential threat to a proposed reference object. The fear of Iran developing nuclear weapons has for many years been put forward as an existential threat to the people of America and is one of many examples of securitisation occurring in international politics. Although not limited to state actors, there exist five domains in which securitization can occur; the economic, societal, military, political and the environmental sector (Buzan & Wæver 1998). The goal of the securitising actor is to authorize extraordinary measures to combat the existential threat, with the implication that the measures must be corresponding to the threat level. RSCT builds upon the foundation of securitization theory and accentuates the political process in which political issues become security issues. Securitising actors are anything from outstanding individuals to collectives of individuals, political parties, social groups and states. Notable in this paper is that the state is the sole actor in the military sector and thus directly influences all securitization processes regarding military operations and capabilities. The theory of RSCT itself also draws inspiration from neorealism in that it places great emphasis on the territory in which states operate and form complexes and the distribution of power within the regional complexes. According to Buzan and Wæver *“Processes of securitisation and thus the degree of security interdependence are more intense between the actors inside such complexes than they are between actors inside the complex and those outside it”* (Buzan & Wæver 2003: 4) Therefore, the theoretical framework of

RSCT makes use of both materialist and constructivist approaches, blending them together to form an interdisciplinary theory.

RSCT as a theory differs from neorealism in multiple distinct ways. Firstly, it has a distinct regional perspective on the post-Cold war development of security structures in the global system of states. In this perspective, the decline of the superpower rivalry between the US and USSR reduced the global power interest of said superpowers in the rest of the world, resulting in regional complexes to form. Additionally, most great powers of the international system can be characterized as 'lite powers' meaning that they favor focussing on domestic issues and causing them to refrain from engaging in military and strategic competition around the world. This effect allows for smaller states to form their own military alliances and solve disputes with less interference than previously (Buzan & Wæver 2003). This perspective as the name suggests favors the regional level of analysis in which no overarching global hegemon like the US dominates, but instead interests and security matters are localized and depended on regional features shared in clusters of states that together form complexes. The sentiment of the perspective is perhaps best put forward as *"most states historically have been concerned primarily with the capabilities and intentions of the neighbors"* (Friedberg 1998). Still the theory of RSCT is closely linked with neorealism in especially the way both theories view and place great emphasis on security and territories and RSCT can therefore be viewed as complementary to the neorealist perspective on system structure (Buzan & Wæver 2003).

3.2.1 State actors and types of complexes

A point of criticism directed by Buzan and Wæver towards the neorealist perspective among others is the overemphasis on the global level and ignoring the lower levels of analysis in which most states interact. A critical feature of RSCT is the distinct regional level that subsides between the global system level and the lower local level. The local level is essentially the state and internal affairs within it. It functions as the unit of analysis within the framework of the theory and thus is the focal point of interaction across the regional and

global system levels. The global level is defined as the macro structure which constrains and shapes behavior of the units on a global scale. The regional level occupies the space in between local and global level and is predominantly where analysis is possible within the framework of the theory. States interact on the regional level and form Regional Security Complexes that are defined by durable patterns of amity and enmity in the form of geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence (Buzan & Wæver 2003). Complexes are constructed, but not in the sense that for example the European union or NATO is constructed. Complexes are foremost constructed based on geographical features that link neighboring states together and provide natural barriers. Regions are geographically determined and the security interaction between states is mostly limited to internal interaction within the region. Buzan and Wæver point out that these regions often are accompanied by an 'insulator', a state which is between two complexes and itself is too weak to link the two regions together. Examples include Turkey situated between Europe and the Middle East and Afghanistan situated between the Middle East and South Asia.

The theory proposes a three tiered scheme of state actors and their ability to interact across the system level(global) and regional level (Buzan & Wæver 2003). At the highest level are superpowers which have the capabilities to become an active player in processes of securitization and desecuritization in all RSC. They achieve this power by having first-class military political capabilities and a first-class economy. Furthermore, by virtue of attaining superpower status they can leverage their position as leaders of 'universal values' and attain global military and political reach (Buzan & Wæver 2003). While at certain points in history there have been different and multiple superpowers at the same time, today the only real contender for superpower is the US as their military and political reach is undeniable. Great powers or 'lite powers' have to demonstrate an economic, military and political potential to attain superpower status in some foreseeable future. Their capabilities within the regional complexes in which they are engaged causes others to respond to them on the basis of calculations about the present and future distribution of power within the region. A few notable examples of great powers exist across the globe, specifically China is the one of great interest for this paper. China perhaps of all great powers has been actively engaging in greater involvement in multiple RSC in Asia and as far away as Europe, China can be described as the foremost great power of the current decade and a real contender for super power status in the near future. Lastly, is the regional power which is restricted to internal security dynamics in their respective RSC. They do not have any meaningful influence on the system level and

react to superpowers or great powers influencing the regional level. The precise arrangement of a state into different categories can vary depending on who is evaluating their relative military capabilities and involvement in RSC. Additionally great powers and superpowers can by their nature be active in multiple regions, but are not necessarily equally engaged in security dynamics of all the regions they are a part of (Buzan & Wæver 2003).

All RSC have their unique composition of states that to some degree share cultural, political and historical ties with one another and are defined in the geographical area.

Complexes are influenced in different ways by great powers and superpowers and can cause types of complexes that develop on the basis of engagement. Great powers and superpowers can seek means to shape security dynamics of a regional complex by way of penetration of the region. Penetration is when outside powers make security alignments with states within an RSC. This effect is what links the patterns of global distribution of power to the regional level (Buzan & Wæver 2003). According to Buzan and Wæver *“Superpowers must be active players in processes of securitisation and desecuritisation in all, or nearly all, of the regions in the system, whether as threats, guarantors, allies, or interveners.”* (Buzan & Wæver 2003:

35) Polarity can certainly affect the character of security relations in a RSC, but it does not determine it alone. It is the internal dynamic of the region coupled with one or multiple great powers or superpower penetration in the region that produces the unique character of security relations which comes to dominate in the complex. The theory points out that there exists a spectrum of complexes in which different levels of engagement with system level actors and the polarity they produce in the region shapes features of the complex. Most complexes are standard e.g. they are shaped by the power balance of regional power in the complex. A variety of complexes are centered, as one unipolar power dominates the security relations. An example is the North American complex which is centered solely on the US. two examples of great power complexes exist. One was pre-1945 Europe as the former colonial powers of Europe dominated the European RSC with regional actors having little effective power in the region. A contemporary example is the East Asia complex in which China, Japan and the US dominate security relations. Closing is the Supercomplexes which currently only one exists. Supercomplexes are a result of merging complexes together in a new regional supercomplex and the current contender is the merger between South and East Asia. Outlined in the theory is a historical mapping of the evolution of RSC around the globe as WW2, the Cold War and decolonization has had a profound effect on the development of RSC. The East Asian complex is a result of the merger between the previous North East and Southeast Asian

complexes as the regions became inseparable and defined by the emerging powers of Japan and China at the time. Now with the continual rise of China the strong interregional level of security between the two regions becomes less separated as spillover from one region to another blurs the distinction between the two regions (Buzan & Wæver 2003).

3.2.3 Operationalization of Regional Security Complex Theory

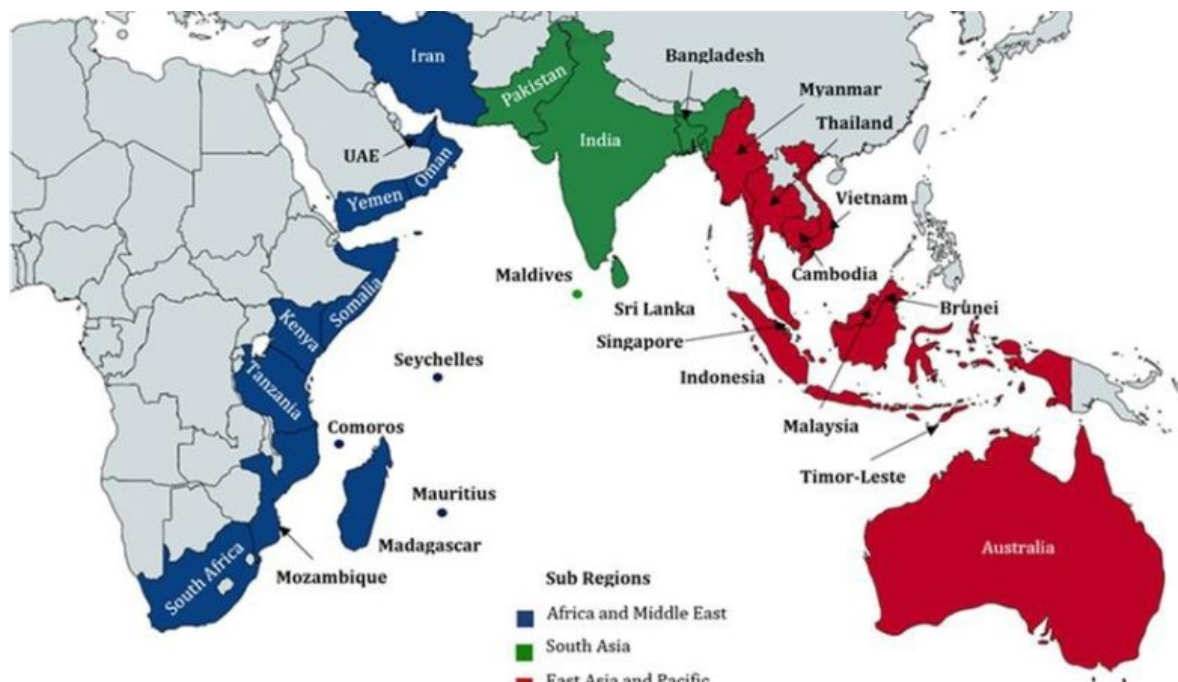
The inclusion of Regional Security Complex Theory is borne out of necessity to uncover the unique complexities within the South Asia region that shapes the balance of power in the region. As a matter of fact it builds upon the theoretical framework of Neorealism present within the paper expanding current understanding about state behavior in independent regional security complexes of the world. Understanding that security is malleable is a crucial aspect of the research, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of security concerns in what states perceive and respond to as existential threats. The ability to securitise policy issues allows for states to a certain extent shape and influence narratives about security patterns in a region and thus shift attention on pressing matters. Likewise it allows for securitizing actors to invite other states with aligning perceptions and interest to build alliances and increase their relative power. Moreover RSCT allows for a deeper examination of state behavior on a regional level. Understanding the context of security as shaped primarily in a regional context gives greater depth of analysis in security matters as they pertain less to an undefined macro structure and can be viewed as a result of concrete regional developments. Moreover, the framework of the theory allows for a comprehensive understanding of how and why superpowers and great powers become involved in security affairs in local complexes. It can contextualize the BRI development in South Asia and the accompanying security issues with the rise of China and potential spillover effects from a power struggle between the emerging powers of India and China, and the grander scope of the US-China battle for hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region.

4 Analysis

This chapter is meant to present the case study in this report. It will introduce the security and national interests of China and India in the South Asian RSC and analyze how new developments in the region transform the distribution of power within the region. To achieve this, the chapter will focus on two domains in which Indian interests intersect. Firstly, it will examine the expansion of the CPEC as part of the continental development in South Asia. Thereafter it will put forward an exploration of the Chinese presence in the IOR and the reverberations of linking the Maritime Silk Road with the CPEC and strategically placed port cities surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

4.1 Patterns of security

Security patterns in the South Asia region can broadly be placed into two distinct but overlapping domains. The first being in the interior of the South Asia region defined as the security relations of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. These countries shape patterns of local security relations inland and have increasingly been influenced by China as it strengthens bilateral trade and military cooperation with Pakistan. Terrestrial security concerns center largely around the region of Kashmir in which India, Pakistan and China lay claim to disputed territory. The dispute extends across the Himalayas into eastern India has gradually come to include disputes about water availability as India receives large freshwater supply from rivers originating in the Himalayas (Singh & Temby 2020). Still the terrestrial domain is defined by the Pakistan-India rivalry and to some degree exists independent from maritime security concerns as the disputes are highly localized in the Kashmir region.



Visual representation of states with maritime boundary to the IOR. Source: Rao R. 2013

The second domain is defined as patterns of security which exist within the Indian Ocean region. Because of the importance of resource extraction, commercial and military shipping lines, the Sea Lines of Communication that span the IOR have global implications for world trade and supply chains. The Indian Ocean connects East Asia to Europe passing through the Middle East, and importantly also connects East African countries and the wider Oceania region. As a consequence of the economic importance of the sheer volume of trade going through the Indian Ocean, bordering as well as non-bordering states of the IOR have vested interest in the operation and maritime activities in the area. Accordingly, the IOR is of significant strategic importance for great powers in the world such as the US, Japan and China in that the region is a cornerstone in global trade and critically allows petroleum from the Middle East to reach south and east Asia. The construction of the Maritime Silk Road across port cities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan poses a shift in regional power in the region as China gains a foothold in the region. In India this not only conjures up concerns about maritime conducts, but poses a significant worry as fears of Chinese vessels and security forces in the IOR can contribute to escalation of inland hostilities in the Kashmir region. As strategic and national interest manifests in multilateral cooperation with states that share a maritime boundary to the region, so too does the complexities of regional security in the IOR as boundaries and limits of international law are tested in the Indian Ocean.

4.1.1 Continental developments

The roots of the border terrestrial disputes can be traced back to disputes between China and the British Empire during the period of the British Raj. In this period improper demarcation in the territories of Jammu and Kashmir in northeastern frontiers of India and the region of Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern Himalayas prevented clear establishment of state control over the territories (Ranjan 2016). Pakistan and India subsequently inherited the border disputes following independence from the British Empire and the de facto division of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan resolved their issues with China in 1963 and ceded territory to China, although this transfer has not been accepted by India as India still lay claim to Aksai Chin which is under Chinese control (Ibid 2016). The disputed territories are defined by the Actual Line of Control (ALC) that separate IAF and the PLA in control points in multiple strategic positions along the Chinese-India disputed territories. To this day the areas involved remain the world's largest and most militarized territorial disputes (Cordesman & Toukan, 2014). Despite numerous bilateral dialogues between India and China the issue remains unresolved. In particular the region of Kashmir has been the location of multiple deadly skirmishes over the the last couple of decades, with one as recent as 2020 in which 20 Indian patrol troops and reportedly 43 chinese soldiers lost their lives (Green 2020). Following briefings points to an escalation of conflicts along the ALC in the wake of CCP General Secretary Xi assumed power in 2012 as an assertive foreign policy to clash with disputes in the IOR. In part, clashes seem to escalate as both sides conduct infrastructure projects along the disputed territory to gain access to the region, in effect ramping up military capabilities to respond to conflicts arising (Ibid 2020). India has been accusing China of tampering with the water supply that springs from the Himalayas in the Chinese controlled areas and flows downstream into India. India accuses China of pollution of the waters upstream, making it unfit for consumption or use as it drains from the Himalayan plateau along rivers flowing into India. Additionally large scale construction projects of dams threaten water availability as China can effectively use the blockade of the water as a political tool in future conflicts (Singh & Temby 2020) .

As tensions Across the Himalaya remain unresolved, the expansion of the CPEC provides new challenges to regional security between India and Pakistan. The Project will allow China access to a deep sea water port at Gwadar providing linkage to additional sea ports in Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka to complete the MSRI. The port of Gwadar however is of

strategic importance as bilateral agreements between China and Pakistan allows for further usage of the port as base of operation in the IOR. Provisions of the agreements between China and Pakistan allow for joint security forces that patrol both terrestrial and maritime securing infrastructure and shipping lines (Qazi 2019). Whilst it is logical that cooperation would dictate such an agreement this is a great concern for India as these forces display a threat to national interest in multiple ways. Firstly it bolsters the infrastructure and capabilities of China and Pakistan in the disputed territories on the western section in the Kashmir region. Although the framework of the CPEC deliberately tries to avoid the Kashmir region, some connectivity projects have been constructed that together with projects in the Chinese controlled section provides that basis for unease in India should escalations occur again (Cordesman & Toukan 2014). Another threat is the supplying of arms and sharing of military technology between China and Pakistan. China's main market for overseas arms sale were in South Asia and in the period 2000-2010 totalling 7.3 billion USD, with most of the trade going to Pakistan (Storey 2012). The explicitly stated reason for cooperation in security and defense matters bilaterally between the two countries is fighting terrorism and insurrection in the region. South Pakistan is home to Balochistani insurrections threatening trade and construction projects in the region. Nonetheless, the fight against rebel and terrorists groups in South Asia is coupled to India-Pakistan relations. The two states have a long history of accusing each other of supporting rebel groups conducting terrorism to circumvent conventional warfare (Cordesman & Toukan 2014). Owing to the fact that the problem of Baloch separatists in Pakistan and Islamic terrorists in India is closely tied to patterns of security of the two nations complicates matters as both states denies any involvement. India Accuses the Pakistani intelligence service of aiding terrorist attacks in India and fears deployment of new surveillance technology in Pakistan could exacerbate the problem (Ibid 2014).

4.1.2 Maritime developments

Maritime activities provide an immensely important issue in Indian security and economic matters. An estimated 90 percent of trade volume totaling 77 percent of the trade value of the Indian economy is transported over the sea through the IOR and over 97 percent of energy needs in terms of oil are imported or produced from offshore fields. India has a coastline of

over 7,500 km and 12 designated major ports operating shipping domestically and internationally (Singh & Verma 2015). In 2014 the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) made an assessment of the IOR outlining strategic interests and risks affecting the region and having a global impact. In the assessment they specifically outline two factors that pertain to the South Asia complex and which have implications for the wider region. The report cites the risks involved in potential future conflicts between Pakistan and India as a result of both states having a nuclear arsenal, and the overall security and maritime traffic and commerce through the entire region (Cordesman & Toukan 2014). Patterns of security in the IOR are heavily influenced by the region's importance in facilitating global trade. Gulf states and Iran exports large amounts of petroleum from the Gulf of Aden, fueling the energy demands of India, as well as China and states in South and East Asia. Many strategically important Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) pass through the region both in terms of energy import/exports but likewise in commercial shipping. Additionally, the IOR has a number of distinct geographical features that present unique challenges. The Gulf of Aden has a long history of piracy activities in the region operating out of Somalia (Ibid 2014). Pirates have the potential to disrupt SLOC and pose significant threats to international shipping and seaborne security in the region. In the western parts of the IOR is the Malacca Strait, an immensely important choke point in shipping routes. As much as 80% of oil exports to China pass through this strait. As a result of its strategic importance it has been the target of much attention by the US and Chinese military analysts (Bukhari 2021). Coined the “Malacca Dilemma” the specific choke point has a vital role in the emerging US-China rivalry as blockading this strait would pose significant issues for China should confrontations or international disputes occur with the US (Lew & Roughead 2021). The dilemma leads to posturing between the US and China and has played a significant role in the wishes of China to establish overseas ports in order to circumvent the issues the strait presents to energy supplies to mainland China (Baruah 2018). The answer from China has been the development of strategically placed port cities along the coastlines of the IOR. Gwadar is one of these strategic port cities in Pakistan, described as a Chinese ‘pearl’ in a policy of ‘string of pearls’ along the IOR (Cordesman & Toukan 2014). Fearing the circumvention of US plans to blockade the Malacca strait in case of conflict, the US is concerned that the string of pearls strategy is a move by the PRC to upgrade their capabilities to achieve a global navy capable of conducting expeditious warfare (Ibid 2014). While China emphasizes the economic aspects of the BRI in which the port cities and their construction and financing fall under, regional powers Like the US and India are skeptical of such claims. Untrusting of China’s

intentions in the IOR, fears grow that the port cities have a dual purpose in that they facilitate Chinese naval forces and surveillance technology in order to conduct illegal activities in the Region (Lew & Roughead 2021). The only official Chinese overseas naval base is in Djibouti, but reports show the port cities in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh amidst others have the potential capacity to facilitate Chinese activities and docking (Bukhari 2021).

In India the concerns overlap somewhat with US concerns for the IOR. The many port cities in close proximity to the Indian coast are identified as a potential threat of encirclement, much like US encirclement in the strait of Malacca and the South China Sea pose a threat to China. The Indian concerns further stems from the close bilateral agreements and relations that exist between the PRC and Pakistan. The CPEC framework essentially allows for greater scope of cooperation between the rivals on India's border and threatens to undermine India on several key issues (Garlick 2020). Under joint security forces, Chinese technology and data can be shared and used by Pakistani officials. This poses significant threats to international trade as well as national security in India. As discussed previously, aiding rebel and terrorist groups as a subversion of conventional warfare is a feature of India-Pakistani security patterns (Cordesman & Toukan 2014). This risks that information is willingly or unintentionally delivered into the hands of terrorists that can use this information to conduct attack in India. Illegal surveillance likewise poses a threat to commercial shipping involved in the IOR. The region is home to expansive networks of underseas cables which provides a wealth of information transmission by way of the internet. Vulnerabilities in security of communication by way of underseas cables can pose serious threats to trade if they were to be compromised in any capacity (Lew & Roughead 2021). Lastly, as the presence of Chinese vessels in the IOR increases so does fears of coercive tactics employed by the PRC. While Beijing is hesitant to deploy naval combat ships to the region, surveying vessels and other crafts have entered the IOR other small militarized vessels are in deployment in the region (Sing 2020). Significant in terms of national security of India, these developments in the IOR likewise have ramifications for grander schemes of operations in the IOR. If India or others remain idle, the international standards and norms that govern seaborne operations diminish, ultimately weakening the position of India in economic and geopolitical influence.

4.2 Securitizing China

The upcoming chapter will inspect the foreign policy and speech of the three states of India, Japan and the US in relation to the IOR. The chapter aims to uncover how each state is engaged in securitisation efforts, using China as the referent object to elevate foreign policy goals and national interests. As shared concerns about the growing influence of China converge, different regional and global actors announce policies in response. Additionally as the territory in which China becomes engaged increases, so too does the spatial area which states must cooperate within to conduct meaningful countermeasures. This leads to the beginnings of a new regional construct of the Indo-Pacific encompassing the IOR.

4.2.1 India

In many ways India and China share similar goals strategically in the IOR. As both states have seen high economic growth rates for the past couple of decades, they increasingly became more dependent on imports of natural resources and gas through the IOR (Zhu 2011). Fearing disruption to their economic prosperity the countries were eager to send forces to the Gulf of Aden and secure SLOC against piracy that still plagues the waters near Somalia. However, unresolved conflicts of the past such as the Indian defeat in the Sino-Indian border war in 1962 and competing interests in the IOR began to erode mutual trust and cooperation between the two states. In particular the Chinese wishes to build bases in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan was perceived as confrontational because the construction of such bases would allow for the encirclement of the Indian continent by Chinese Naval forces (Ibid 2011). In 1998 George Fernandes, India's defense minister remarked that "China is India's number one enemy" as distrust between the two states grew in conjunction with competition over the control of the IOR. Owing to the emphasis of deterrence in the military strategy of India in dealing with Pakistan, the close bilateral relations between China and Pakistan threaten this balance. While Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) had been in place since the 1970's conflicts with conventional arms still posed a threat to national security (Cordesman & Toukan 2014). As a response India began seeking to establish closer ties to neighboring states in the IOR building a stronger coalition that could compete with China aligned interests. ASEAN member states quickly became a focus of Indian prospects for

cooperation in the region. In a speech given by the Secretary in the Ministry of External affairs Sanjay Singh in New Delhi 2013, he reaffirmed the Minister of Defense's commitment made a year earlier to constructing and supporting an inclusive security architecture with the AESEAN member states cooperating in the IOR (Ministry of External Affairs India 2013). In the speech Mr. Singh also alluded to the fact that *"With globalization and the consequent compression of geographic spaces, 'Indo-Pacific' has come to reflect contemporary realities"* (Ibid 2013). Reflecting the changes that were happening in the broader scope of Asia at the time. As also mentioned in the speech India was at the time still pursuing the policy of "looking east". The policy had been established in 1991 partly to check Chinese influence in the IOR by committing to bilateral trade agreements in east asian and ASEAN states. The policy had been in place since then, being followed by subsequent heads of states in India. The policy however, was created in a much different environment than reflected the contemporary realities Mr. Singh mentioned in his speech. The policy at its heart was produced in a time where India and the rest of Asia were much less globalized and interconnected. The primary objective was to ensure the trade of raw material so that India should continue its growth of domestic economy, but with a much more robust and globalized economy, the policy became somewhat outdated in its stated goals. This would not go unnoticed in India and after the election of Narendra Damodardas Modi in 2014 he would go on to enact the Act-East policy as the spiritual successor to the Look East policy of the Past. The policy in many ways expanded the limits of its predecessor and sought to incorporate previously unreachable partners into the framework. A visit by Modi to Australia in 2014 produced the "Framework for Security Cooperation Between India and Australia" (Ministry of External Affairs India 2014). The framework listed a number of strategic security and defense areas in which India and Australia could engage in mutually beneficial cooperation, including annual talks with prime ministers and defense ministers. Additionally Australia would support India's bid to become a permanent member at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and engage with India in closer talks with other multilateral organizations and forums such as ASEAN and the East Asia Summit (Ibid 2014). During this period Australia had formally left the Trilateral Security Dialogue established years prior by Australia, Japan and the US. Nevertheless, the framework undoubtedly brought India and the US and close allies like Japan closer, and importantly it enhanced the visions of Modi's Act-East policy that sought to bring in allies to combat Chinese influence in the IOR. A report released shortly thereafter released by the Indian navy specifies the core goals of the navy (Indian navy 2015). Interestingly, the reports opens by announcing that sweeping

changes in the global and regional geo-strategic environment has affected Asia and therefore a shift has occurred in perceptions that puts the Indo-Pacific in the center of global economic and military power, representing a shift away from Euro-Atlantic trends of the past. This assertion has wider implications for the goals of the Indian navy and now the reconceptualization of the space in which the navy can, and should operate within has expanded. Explicit goals remain tied to the IOR in particular, stating the goals of the navy among others is to ensure “*the safety and security of seaborne trade and energy routes, especially in the IOR*” (Ibid 2015). Still, the report has a markedly international approach to prevention and resolving of disputes along the Indo-Pacific. The report calls for greater cooperation and coordination between various navies operating in international waters to counter common threats at sea, and also stresses the importance of rule-based law and international legal regime as a way of governing the Indo-Pacific, pointing out the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). These two points show a consideration for multilateral approaches to solve seaborne disputes and accentuates the differences in Chinese and Indian approaches to work within the framework of multilateral agreements and international based laws, which Indian publicly criticized China of subverting. Under Modi the construction of the Indo-Pacific grew rapidly to encompass his vision for the prosperity of Asia with India placed squarely in the Middle of it all. In a Speech by Modi at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore 2018, Modi expressed his and India’s commitment to the safety and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific, stating “*Over the past three decades, we [India] have re-claimed that heritage to restore our role and relationship in the region*” (Ministry of External Affairs India 2018). Modi envisions India in a leading role in the Indo-Pacific capable of fostering multilateral cooperation, setting international policy for the region and enforcing the international law in the entire Indo-Pacific. Modi additionally spends considerable time expressing in his views how the interconnectedness of the Indo-Pacific region and the accompanying prosperity that trade in the region can bring, binds the region together, empowering others to engage with India in his vision for the future. While Modi speaks to great lengths to the achievements and proposals that have been made through his tenure as Prime Minister, he hardly mentions China, only briefly stating “*no other relationship of India has as many layers as our relations with China*” (Ibid 2018). In 2019 the Indian National Congress commissioned a report on India’s National Security Strategy to produce a clear vision for government officials in all corners of the state apparatus to indicate state policy and the direction it is headed. The report in many ways serves as a distillation of the vision for India presented by the Modi government, and points to many

strategic shortcomings the IAF face currently. It points to the border disputes in the Kashmir region as a strategic weak point, citing Chinese infrastructure projects boosts connectivity in the region, while India has been unable to increase its own capabilities in the region (Indian National Congress 2019). However, the sentiment in the report seems positive towards a future in which India can assert itself more forcefully as a regional leader. The report proposes that India should lead in seaborne defensive affairs stating that “... *it is also time that India led an initiative to conclude a ‘Code for Unalerted Encounters at Sea’ encompassing the entire Indo-Pacific*” (Ibid 2019). Owing to the fact that Indo-Pacific terminology has become more prevalent within usage of governmental documents, it is no surprise the report comments on the possibilities of bi- and multilateral cooperation that can advance nations interests. In the report clear recommendations are made to pursue a policy of enhancing security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Likewise, the report asserts the fact that “*India must engage with other nations confidently in a multipolar framework, based primarily on her own national interests*” showing a willingness to take part in multilateral cooperation such as the Quad, as long as interests can be aligned (Ibid 2019).

4.2.2 Japan

Japan is a notable example of a regional power in the east asia complex. Article 9 in the Constitution of Japan forbides Japan from having what can be described as a conventional armed force capable of offensive warfare. Therefore, Japan is necessarily much less reliant upon or willing to engage in, military agreements in advancing Japanese policy, instead favoring economic relations as the foundation of bilateral agreements (Watanabe 2019). It does however maintain a defense force, and the strong economic and post WW2 historic ties with the US, leads Japan to rely on US support in cases of conflict. Tokyo has been keenly aware of the relative diminishing of US influence in the Pacific region as US policy shifted to the Middle East post 9/11 and formulated new strategies to compensate. Japan along with the US and Australia formed the Trilateral Security Dialogue in 2005 as strategic competition with China and Russia in the Pacific intensified (Koga 2019). The initial effort to promote the transition from an Asia-Pacific region to an Indo-Pacific region can be traced back to Japanese interests, in a speech by the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. In his speech to the parliament of the Republic of India, Shinzo first presented a quote from an early modern Indian explorer quoting “*We are now at the point in which the two confluences of the seas is*

coming into being” (Shinzo 2007). In this speech aptly named the “confluence of the two seas” Shinzo proposed a strategic global partnership between India and Japan on the basis of shared ideals and strategic interests. While the proposal is focused on the bilateral trade and prosperity the partnership can provide, Shinzo stresses that the basis for the partnership is in the democratic values the states share and their strategic position to promote these in a “broader asia” region (Ibid 2007). He goes on to further elaborate the potential growth of the broader asia region, wishing to incorporate Australia and the US into an immense network spanning the entire Pacific, hinting at expanding the TSD. (Ibid 2007). The speech accentuates efforts by Japan in reconceptualizing the Pacific into the Indo-Pacific region and although Abe does not refer directly to China as an obstacle to his vision of a “broader asia” he certainly excludes any mentions of China in his vision. Like India, Japan identifies ASEAN member states as valuable allies in the Indo-Pacific region and thus, engaged in a series of commitments during the period from 2013 to 2016 in enhancing security and defense capabilities of the member states (Koga 2019). In this period the apparent referent object, that is to say whom the security is targeted towards, becomes more visible in talks and public speeches. In 2012 after Shinzo Abe was reelected Prime Minister he authored and op-ed reiterating his speech in India in 2007 stating many of the core ideals, but at this time more expressly at China and the ongoing disputes between the two states in the South China and East China Seas (Shinzo 2012). In the op-ed Abe minces no words as he states that Japan or any state must not yield to the coercive tactics employed by Beijing as PLA navy vessels patrol unlawfully showing willingness to disregard international laws. He calls for states to pursue greater accountability for the actions of the PRC and shows willingness to engage with India which at this point he identifies as “resident power” in Asia (Shinzo 2012).

Abe would continue to press the importance of the Indo-Pacific in a speech in Nairobi Kenya 2016 in at the Sixth International Conference on African Development. In it, Abe underlines the development of Africa as “*being brought forth by two free and open oceans and two continents*” (Shinzo 2016). He expands further, stating that Japan is responsible for fostering confluence between the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific. This entails ensuring the values of freedom, the rule of law and market economy governs regional sea lines of communication that facilitate trade. While again never mentioning China by name in the speech he does however condemn coercive tactics as a tool of those who subvert Japan's vision for the future in which he sees the Indo-Pacific. Japanese effectiveness in the Indo-Pacific was still somewhat tied to US policy and engagement in the region as the US provided strategic

guarantees for Japan. With the prospects of a Trump presidency happening towards the end of 2016, Japan engages in a series of hedging strategies as worries that the next administration would not follow the footsteps of the Obama Administration (Watanabe 2019). Japan therefore launches its own strategic framework for strategic rebalancing in the Indo-Pacific called “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy”. The policy serves as a framework for the Japanese approach to maintain the foundation of free trade and rule-based international law governing the Indo-Pacific region. The policy becomes somewhat of an umbrella term for different policies and regional relations that congeal into the overarching strategy as laid out by Abe throughout his tenure as PM. However, recognition of rule-based international law and the dissipation of coercion measures became the basis for the Maritime order that Japan sees for the Indo-Pacific (Japanese Government 2021). As Trump and his Administration showed continued interest in the Indo-Pacific region the framework expanded and allowed for new possibilities in bilateral agreements between Japan and the US.

4.2.3 The U.S.

As the sole world superpower, US influence penetrates globally and has the potential, with its sheer material power, to shape new discourses of security concerns in every regional complex. The root of US power stems from the capabilities of the US network of overseas bases that in conjunction with the excellent Naval and Air Force capabilities can project US hard power globally. The US has been active in the East Asia complex since the immediate post WW2 period as a close ally of the recently defeated Japan and became involved in the protection of Taiwan after the “loss of China”, and the retreat of the defeated Kuomintang to the island in 1949. This promise of military assistance continued throughout the cold war period and beyond, despite the US’ switch to recognising the PRC in 1979. Furthermore, the US supplies arms and defense systems to Taiwan as measures to support Taiwanese independence, despite the US’ adherence to the ‘One China Principle’. US foreign policy in East Asia focused on China and the potential for China to create instability in the region, and came to a head in the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-1996 spurred on by Chinese missile tests surrounding Taiwan (Ambrosio, Schram & Heopfner 2020). At the time the US

perceived China as unable to challenge the US position as the global hegemon and in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1979 were convinced that China, as it's economy grew, would morph into a Western style liberal democracy, as South Korea had done. However, a great shift in US foreign policy would soon take place following the September 11 attack in 2001 which saw US interests shift to the Middle East and the beginning of the War on Terror under the George W. Bush administration. The exponential growth of the Chinese economy over the next decade would soon garner increasing attention in Washington as it meant a growing influence of the PRC which the US identified as a threat to its interests in the region. In a speech in 2010 the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton revealed the Obama Administration's strategy of a "Pivot to Asia" (Clinton 2010). The speech outlines a framework for promotion of security, democratic ideals and economic cooperation in Asia and encourages cooperation between the US and its close allies such as Japan and South Korea in the region. Interestingly, Clinton refrains from directly identifying China as a potential adversary in the region and India as a potential ally, framing both states as emerging powers that possess the ability to assist the foreign policy goals of the US in the region should the opportunity arise. Additionally, the speech is one of the first instances where the term Indo-Pacific is used, indicating association between South Asia and East Asia regional complexes. In the following op-ed released a year later Clinton reiterates the strategic importance of the US alliances across Asia, again putting emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region, stating that inclusion of Australia into the alliance elevates the Pacific partnership to a Indo-Pacific partnership (Clinton 2011). Furthermore, Clinton points to India as a potential ally in the region as a democratic state with which shared goals and ideals form the building block for increased cooperation while implicitly dismissing these conditions in regional cooperation with China, instead focussing only on economic partnership with China. The speech also indicates US interest in engaging in a trilateral dialogue with India and Australia, advancing the transformation of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific into a singular entity built and governed by shared democratic ideals (Ibid 2010).

As administrations in the US changed after the 2016 election, the Trump Administration took over the foundation of Pivot to Asia as laid out by the Obama administration and continued pursuing similar policy goals, though notably more aggressive in their tone towards China. In 2017 the then Secretary of State James Mattis met with Indian minister of defense Nirmala Sitharaman in a joint press conference in Washington. Mattis commented on the steady increase of defense cooperation between the two states, and praised India as leading

institutional and regional change specifically in its policy of closer relations to the ASEAN block (Mattis 2017). Perceptions in Washington at this point marked a shift from the previous administration in the clear communication of India as a vital ally and potential leader in the region, while allusions to curb Chinese influence in the region became markedly less subtle. In the same year former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson repeated the position outlined by Mattis at a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In the speech, Tillerson also pointed to India as a regional leader promoting democratic ideals and ensuring free trade and security in the region, while stating that China had failed to abide by international law and ruled-based law and order in the Indo-Pacific with its provocations in the SCS (Tillerson 2017). The Trump Administration embraced a policy of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) continuing strategic framework that Pivot to Asia that was set in motion by the previous administration. While documents produced by various state offices continue to reiterate norm and rules based law as the primary goal to facilitate and ensure trade and security of the Indo-Pacific, document such as the Indo-Pacific Strategic Report produced in 2019 by the defense department outlines measures taken by the Trump Administration to strengthen US commitment to participate in the region (U.S. Department of Defense 2019). In the report, the US ties to the region are recontextualised, going as far back as 1784 to point out US involvement in the region, tying the security concerns and the potential economic prosperity in the region inextricably to US presence in the region. The report moreover continues the trend of further identifying China as an underminer of international rule-based law and a security liability for the region. In the report China is identified as using coercion to subvert rule-based order in the region and connecting it to Chinese actions in the SCS as it relates to boundary disputes and militarizing islands to bolster territorial claims. In a report from the department of state in the same year, China is again diagnosed as a threat to international norms that govern the Indo-Pacific, accusing China of the theft of intellectual property, along with illegal unregulated fishing and cybercrime (U.S. Department of State 2019). In the report the Trump Administration recognise the US vision and approach in the Indo-Pacific closely aligns with the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept conducted by Japan and India's Act East Policy, among others, and identifies the path forward as to pursue the convergence of interests between the states in enforcing a set of shared norms and a rule-based order to counteract China (Ibid 2019). In the last year of the administration "The Elements of the China Challenge" was produced outlining the future prospects of Chinese threats to US hegemony Globally (The Policy Planning Staff 2020). The report specifies the CPEC project as a key feature of undermining internal law in the Indo-Pacific, using port

cities along the MSRI to conduct illegal surveillance and accusing the PRC of militarizing the Indo-Pacific and the SCS to provoke conflicts. The report in many ways can be viewed as a culmination of shifting perceptions in Washington about the rise of China in the Indo-Pacific. While the Obama administration initially was hesitant to directly tackle issues with China in the Indo-Pacific region, the Trump administration has not been shy about how perceptions in Washington lie in regard to Chinese geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific.

4.3 Rebalancing in the Indo-Pacific

The last chapter in the analysis is dedicated to a closer study of rebalancing efforts. Aiming to uncover the ambition behind the securitisation of China by other great powers and how the reconstruction of pre-existing geographical areas into a new spatial dimension of the “Indo-Pacific” super region. This chapter will take a closer examination on how securitisation efforts serve to galvanize regional actors into bi- and multilateral agreements that are constructed on convergence of national interests and the shared referent object. Among these agreements is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between India, Japan, Australia and the US, and the expansion of defense cooperation between the US and India.

4.3.1 Multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Interpreting the revival and intensification of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue it becomes difficult to overlook how securitisation processes produce the foundation of multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. China has used U.S. involvement in the Middle East as leverage to build alliances and partnerships with strategic partners such as Iran. Fighting against the perceived threat and aggressor in many parts of the world, alignment in opposition to US hegemony sparks an initial common strategic foundation (Cavanna 2018). Much to the same effect, states apprehensive towards a more influential and powerful China and can leverage the concerns of others to initiate common ground. India has successfully applied these processes in China to achieve national interests whilst opening new spaces for multilateral cooperation. Similar processes have been occurring in regional powers like the US and Japan as they likewise hold mutual strategic interest in the restraining of China in the

Indo-Pacific. India holds an important position amidst the regional powers as it along with China is emerging on the world stage, primed for great power status. Additionally the existence of tensions between India and China has made allies like the US keenly aware of the potential of India as a beacon against China in the Indo-Pacific. In an op-ed by Hillary Clinton in 2011 she outlines how the US is looking to engage with emerging leaders in Asia stating that “..., because we believe that India is a key player in this [Indo-Pacific] region and on the global stage”(Clinton 2011). This view has only grown to become more prevalent in Washington as the cooperation between the two powers expands. In 2020 The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreements (BECA) and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreements are two examples on how defense cooperation between the US and India has evolved (Roy 2020). Officials cite ‘trust’ among key components that allows for such strong foundation security cooperation to be agreed upon. Displays of Washingtons trust in India as a regional arbiter of US strategic interests are shown in the bilateral agreements and can be viewed as the US is willing to share technologies it previously did not allow for allies like India (The White House 2021). In many ways, the identification and designation of China as a securitized actor within Asia has allowed for the Indian state to realize many of its goals. India itself can be viewed as a non-securitized actor, allowing for greater military capabilities and capacity to display power, without state actors perceiving India as threatening (Chand & Garcia 2017). Obtaining heightened naval capabilities to secure strategic interests have long been a policy goal in India as a stepping stone to achieving the regional prominence that state needed for its economic rise (Singh & Verma 2015). Although India possesses great offensive military capabilities that achieves mutual strategic interest by Quad members in containing Chinese influence. As the Indian Navy engages in modernisation of military technology it also joins established military exercises with Quad members and SIMBEX to display the power in which the ideals exemplified by the Quad holds in the Indo-Pacific (Panda 2019a) (Panda 2019b). As exemplified by the Quadtrilateral Security Dialogue meeting in Japan 2020 the four ministers attending the meeting welcomed the fact that the vision of a “free and Open Indo-Pacific” promoted by the four countries resonated across the world and encouraged additional cooperation with key states in the construct of the Indo-Pacific, specifically ASEAN member states.

5. Conclusion

As the Belt and Road Initiative continues to progress and expand Chinese soft power globally, the realities of new modes of power are inescapable in South Asia. India rests upon the nexus of change in the current security regime of the South Asia region, being at the precipice of total encirclement as the linking of the Maritime Silk Road and interior corridors in Pakistan nears completion.

The implications of the China-Pakistan Corridor is multifaceted for India. CPEC infrastructure projects in Pakistani and Chinese controlled areas in the disputed territories proves to be challenging for the demilitarization of the Kashmir region, only furthering the entrenchment of existing zones of control established along the ALC. Diplomatically the existence of greater connectivity in the region raises a question of claims to the region, implicating a future in which the resolvment of the areas are based on ownership of property which predispose India must relinquish claims on territories outside its control. Port cities like Gwadar in Pakistan greatly expand naval capabilities of the PRC in the IOR, threatening to encircle India in the case of conflict. Moreover, port cities in tandem with military equipment and vessels deployed and operating out of them, threaten a host of concerns for the maritime conduct in the region. Specifically, the potential of China to establish a blue water navy, capable of expendentory warfare. The use of coercive tactics of China in the South China Sea likewise has drawn great attention to the region as great powers like Japan and the US fear that Chinese influence in the region can negatively impact their strategic interest in the Sea Lines of Communication of the IOR that are vital to global commercial shipping and energy supply lines.

Concurrent with the implications of the BRI in South Asia is the development of complex patterns of securitization that are crucial in deciphering threat management and construction. Stemming initially from different drivers of national and strategic interest, patterns of the

securitisation of China have emerged and essentially converged in India, Japan and the US. Through speech acts and foundational policy framework each securitising actor has constructed China as a referent object which is at the center of policy measures that contain and manage threats to strategic interests. Through the process of securitization the actors reveal the role which they position to play in regional and international politics. Additionally, the securitising actors reshape normative geographical constructs in order to institute new scopes of threat management. This is explored in the examination of how the securitizing actors contextualize the IOR and Pacific into the Indo-Pacific connecting mutual strategic interests and goals into a new spatial construct to encompass the threat of China. Through these processes a number of commonalities serves as the basis for a wider ranging multilateral cooperation, shaped in direct contrast to the threat assessment that are linked to the referent object. Shared norms about democratic values, freedom of navigation in the oceans and rule-based international law unites the securitizing actors of Japan, India and the US and informs the solutions they envision for the construction of the Indo-Pacific.

Patterns of securitization are shown to be useful by great power in galvanizing support for strategic cooperation. Moreover, spillover effects from the global rivalry between the US and China allows India to engage more in bilateral cooperation with the US and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. As both India and the US seek to limit the sphere of influence of China they both gain considerably by building stronger ties to achieve a common goal. India benefits from the superior US armed forces and power projection capabilities, while the US benefits by having another strong regional leader in the South Asia region that can enforce US strategic goals regional and without direct US interference in the region. Identification of shared policy goals and norms allows the partnership to expand further and supports the foundation of the Quad. While it remains to be seen how effective the Quad will prove to be in securing a free and open Indo-Pacific, it points to show constructions of multilateral cooperation can emerge from the underlying processes of securitisation. Construction of the Indo-Pacific can likewise be interpreted as how securitising actors reshape geographical spaces to encompass an increased number of involved actors in the geographical space and the patterns that govern it. By recontextualising the Indo-Pacific it implies a new space with newfound possibilities and actions not available previously. In this way, securitisation is shown to offer insight into the ways normative discursive processes shape state behavior.

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