
Beyond Bilateralism: A Constructivist Analysis of Identity Reinforcement in The South Asian Security Triangle of Pakistan, India and China

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Abstract

Instead of traditional bilateral studies, **Background** of this article discusses complex ideational currents inside Pakistan-India-China (PIC) security triangle. Based on constructivist theory developed by Alexander Wendt, especially ideas of so-called "CULTURES OF ANARCHY," this study examines intersubjective construction of identity & collective understandings among these three states. The **Theoretical** reasoning holds that concept of security in this triangle is not simply an equation of sum of two dyadic dynamic mixtures but rather a highly complicated interweaving of such socially created identities. Whilst China-Pakistan relationship has very high Kantian elements, India-Pakistan dyad definitely has bitter experiences & problematic securitization vis-a-vis its neighbor, so that it can only be largely Hobbesian/ Lockean. China-India dyad, in its turn, features Lockean culture of strategic competition. Based on a Qualitative Research design & **Methodology**, discourse analysis & process tracing are performed on official state documents, diplomatic communiqués & large media discourse of all the three countries. These **Major Findings** are that strong Kantian friendship between China & Pakistan tends to deepen Hobbesian/Lockean India-Pakistan relationship & increase Lockean rivalry between China and India. This inter-dyadic identity reinforcement greatly reduces possibility of a more cooperative regional security order. This paper is beneficial to body of **literature** in providing a holistic constructivist explanation of a complex multi-actor regional security complex. It **concludes** & gives a critical implementation of Wendt cultural approaches of anarchy to capture how identity enhancement within dyads is key ideational force that explains protracted security issues and narrow possibility of mutual transformation of cooperative evolution within South Asia.

Keywords: Constructivism, Alexander Wendt, Cultures of Anarchy, South Asian Security, Pakistan-India-China Triangle, Identity Reinforcement, Regional Security

Introduction

Background/Context

The South Asian subcontinent has long been dominated by a hostile relationship between Pakistan and India whose inability to resolve the problem has defined the shape of the strategic regional environment. This chronic two-state conflict, which has been embedded deep into the historical trauma involved in the partition and subsequent territorial conflict of the Kashmir region, as well as the nuclear proliferation threat to international peace and security, has remained a key regional bedevil and a key point of concern by international security scholars and policymakers. The process of this competition is complicated and goes far beyond the material potentials as it includes deep ideational aspects, comprising national narratives of one and another state, deeply fixed images of the other and different interpretations of some historical events. But

with the aggressive rise of China into a powerful regional and global force, the 21st century has seen a radical change in this regional equation. The emerging strategic and economic ties of Beijing with Pakistan, represented by the establishment of such projects as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the growing multi-facet and at times competing nature of ties between Beijing and India, have fundamentally transformed what used to be in essence a largely bilateral security dilemma into a complex multi-sided dependent dynamic. With this fluid arrangement, the doings, policies and largely perceptions of any single state always propagate across and to the other two. Conventional data analysis models, based largely in realist and liberal theories of international relations, either reify material force in the form of military power, economic strength and balance of capabilities or concentrate on institutional limitations and systems of cooperation. Although such points of view obviously provide important insights into the strategic considerations and economic interests upon which state actions are typically founded, they often fail to explain fully the inconsistent patterns of friendship and enmity, the deeply seated suspicions and the possibly irrational or historically conditioned behaviors that have seemingly typified relations in this triple alliance. The ideational sphere, which includes common notions, communal identities, norms and intersubjective conceptions, has a clearly significant, although also under-valued, influence on security options, strategic orientation and patterns of interaction between these nuclear-armed neighbors and the ambitious Asian powerhouse. The holistic concept of the way these non-material factors is built, safeguarded and, in fact, changed is therefore vital in appropriately perceiving the active security process of the region and in examining possible ways of a more stable and collaborative future.

Research Gap/Problem Statement

Nevertheless, even though a considerable amount of scholarly literature is focused on South Asian security, there is still a critical analytical gap in thoroughly analyzing Pakistan-India-China (PIC) triangle using consistent and strong constructivism paradigm. Although previous literature can be useful, the dynamics of constituent dyads (India-Pakistan, China-Pakistan & China-India) tend to be studied as isolated phenomena, or there is too much focus on material power shifts and the balancing games. Although certain studies have already started to consider the ideational dimensions of bilateral relations, there is still a severe shortage of systematic analysis of the ways these identities and norms are not only established at the bilateral level but also maintained or undermined through a whole triangular relationship. To illustrate, one of the questions it leaves unanswered is, what are the ideational effects of thickening Kantian (friendly) relationship between China and Pakistan on the Hobbesian/Lockean (enemy/rival) and Lockean (rivalrous) notions that still prevail in the India and Pakistan relationship, or Lockean (rivalrous) competition that dominates the China-India relationship?

Research Question

The major research question, through which this article attempts to obtain answers, is as follows:

- How do the intersubjectively formulated identities and common perceptions of Pakistan, India and China, reinforce or challenge each other, which help to define the changing culture of anarchy in their triangular security complex?

Objectives

In order to fully answer this general question and make a significant contribution in the field, the research aims at the following specific objectives:

- To carefully trace the pervasive "**Culture of Anarchy**" (Hobbesian, Lockean, or Kantian, as envisaged by Alexander Wendt) that defines each of the three dyads of the triangle: Pakistan-India, China-Pakistan, and China-India.

- To examine in a rigorous way the particular ideational processes whereby identities and norms have been generated to be sure and more than that, it appears and is reproduced in every one of these bilateral relationships.
- To critically explore the manner in which the ideational processes and the governing culture of anarchy in one dyad (e.g., the strong Kantian relationship between China and Pakistan) influences and possibly strengthens the ideational processes and the possession of security by other two dyads (e.g. whether India-Pakistan experiences Hobbesian tendencies or China-India is come across as Lockean-style competitive inclination).
- To establish and formulate the extended consequences of this pattern of inter-dyadic identity reinforcement in view of overall stability, prospects of cooperation and possibility of fundamental change to the South Asian security triangle.

Application of Theory/ Concept

The study also makes a number of important and unique contributions to the relevant literature on the ***International Relations Theory*** and South Asian security. It tests ***Constructivism Theory*** in PIC triangular framework. **First**, it offers an innovative and constructivist systematic interpretation of Pakistan-India-China security triangle. The article contributes to our theoretical comprehension of intersubjective identities unfixed existence as continuously constructed and reciprocally strengthened through transaction of interdependent degrees through a more comprehensive application of the ***Concept of Cultures of Anarchy*** perceived by Alexander Wendt to this multi-actor and complex situation. **Second**, experimentally, this study offers evidence of how identity reinforcement works along dyadic patterns. **Third**, study brings out the urgent policy ramifications of such endomorphic ideational systems. It implies that initiatives to promote regional stability and collaboration cannot just be based on adjustments or renovated institutions that are only related to materials. Rather, they should actively resolve the subliminal social constructs of threat and identity, actively reframe narrative and find the chances of interlocutionary transformation. Lastly, examining one of the most significant, nuclearized regions that is at the core of changing global power relationships, this article points to the practical applicability of constructivist theory in not only describing lingering security crises that bedevil relationship between states in this region but also in showing potential, albeit difficult, routes of ideational change towards a more peaceful and stable regional order.

Methodology

The article has a stringent qualitative research design, discourse analysis and process tracing as its major tools of methodology to structure in a chronicle manner the study of the social construction of identities, norms, and intersubjective understandings in Pakistan-India-China triangulation of security. The empirical research material of this project is compiled legitimately based on abundant diverse rich sources of primary and authoritative secondary sources making the research representation to be all embracive in terms of its analytical foundations.

Literature Review

South Asian security has traditionally been the subject of realist and liberal theoretical approaches to security studies, much of which centered on the long-term conflict between India and Pakistan, and now with the increasing power of China. The realist literature, especially the neorealism, focuses on the anarchic quality of international system, it is about the controlled cycle of material capabilities and the security inherent states attempt to achieve by self-help provisions. In this light, the asymmetry in power, territorial implications, and the undulatory nature of deterrence using nuclear divisions typify the environment in India-Pakistan and the conflicts that occur between the countries are normally justified on this basis. An example is the work by

Stephen Cohen who tends to focus on the military and strategic aspects of India-Pakistan rivalry where he considers this issue within the power balancing and deterrence theories. Like almost inevitably these days, the role which China plays in the region is often focused on its increased military power, economic influence, and its strategic rivalry with India in the region to achieve hegemony by playing the China-Pakistan Relationship Off India.

Liberal institutionalism perspectives, in their turn, are concerned with the possibility of cooperation provided by international institutions, economic interdependence, and the theory of democratic peace.

Constructivism rose with the limitations of materialist/institutionalist accounts of explaining the ideational aspects of international relations. The publication of *Social Theory of International Politics* by Alexander Wendt challenged the basic realist assumption of fixed material anarchy since anarchy is something that states make of it. According to Wendt, the structure of the international system is more social in nature, and it is composed of common ideas and norms and collective knowledge as well and thus create state identities and interests. He is well-known to have formulated three cultures of anarchy, Hobbesian (enemies), Lockean (rivals), and Kantian (friends), in which there are varieties of intersubjective notions of self and other that amount to various ways of interaction.

By using constructivism in the study of South Asia, an emergent literature started to examine ideational origins of the India-Pakistan conflict. Historians and other scholars such as T.V. Paul have explored how the discourses of history, elite politics and the violence of partition as trauma have led to the claims of mutually hostile identities between India and Pakistan to the maintenance of a security dilemma that is both ideational as well as material. ^8

China-Pakistan is also a bilateral connection which has had constructivist focus, although not to the same extent as India-Pakistan. This scholarship tends to revolve around the so-called discourse of all-weather friendship that dissected and commented on how mutual strategic interest and diplomatic support, economic cooperation on a large scale (e.g., CPEC) have led to a high reliance on the other and a sense of trust and an almost Kantian like relationship between the two states.

Constructivist interpretations of the China-India relationship in turn tend to emphasize the multifaceted interrelationship between cooperation and competition, which is characteristic of a Lockean culture.

The Processes of Debates/Gaps Identification

Although constructed in the general area of constructivism scholarship has contributed immensely, there are still big gaps and inconsistencies that predominate especially when it comes to the Pakistan-India-China security triangle. On the one hand, the lack of unity in current constructivist analyses is one of the most common limitations. Although there is a body of constructivist analysis of individual dyadic relationships (India-Pakistan, China-Pakistan, China-India), no one has really attempted a systematic integration of all three of these relationships into the same constructivist framework. The researchers tend to discuss the India-Pakistan dyad as a closed security dilemma, or even the China-Pakistan relations as a kind of exceptional alliance, without exhausting attempts to understand the great impact ideational processes of one dyad have on, and are affected by, others. Though this bilateral emphasis has the virtue of depth, it necessarily misses the ideational forces within the system which work on a triangular structure. There is a tendency to leave the tacit assumption that the triangular dynamic is a combination of the bilateral aspects, instead of a different ideational entity formed through inter-dyadic interaction.

Secondly, and linked directly with the former gap, is the absence of a thorough emphasis at the mechanisms of reinforcement of identity across a pair of dyads. Although Wendt, in his theory, actually furnishes the conceptual apparatus in conceiving the construction of identities through interaction, there are minimal accounts available as to how a vigorous Kantian bond in one dyad (say China-Pakistan) also may actually consolidate Hobbesian or Lockean identities in another, say India-Pakistan or China-India. As one example, how does the strategic emergence of Pakistan as the permanent friend of China strengthen the Indian view of

Pakistan as an incorrigible enemy, or how does it intensify Indian competition with China in the strategic arena? There is a major lack of literature on this mutual ideational influence which leaves a serious gap in the study of an ongoing conflict patterning even with the shift in material contexts. This particularity is especially important in the case of the South Asian security complex, which is characterized by a nuclear dimension, where misperceptions and strengthened negative identities have strong implications.

Third, constructivism focuses on the social construction of anarchy but most of the analyses of this security complex in the South Asian region, though with a somewhat constructivist inclination, has nevertheless approached the general security environment as to be more of a conflictual atmosphere, without really capturing the mixed and dynamic nature of its culture of anarchy at the triangular level. The interplays of Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian elements, to the extent that they exist simultaneously, in the various relations within the same security complex nay itself lacks the appreciation most of the time. It results in simplified comprehension that could be not exhaustive in relation to ideational shifts and transformation possibility. ^15

Lastly, more fine-grained empirical studies, which employ selected qualitative approaches, like discourse analysis and process tracing, are needed in order to illustrate how identities and norms are expressed, challenged, and reaffirmed within the official accounts and policy statements of the three states. Although certain studies are related to these points, the systematic, comparative study of the ways in which each of the states constructs both its own and the identity of the other two and how these self- and other-identifications change under pressure of the triangular interactions is yet to be performed. The theoretical statements regarding the reinforcing aspect of identity are even more feeble without such a detailed empirical basis.

Conceptual Framework

Theory/ Framework

This paper fundamentally takes its background on the constructivist theory of international relations of Alexander Wendt whose seminal work, *Social Theory of International Politics*, theorizes that anarchy is what states make of it. Wendt critiques materialist and individualism assumptions that dominated neorealism and neoliberalism by stating that structures of human association are largely defined by common ideas and not just by material forces. Wendt says that the international system is not an objective reality or something that lies beyond social interaction but a social construct where identities and interests of states are not exogenously determined but are constituted in intersubjective meanings. ^3

The dominant process which Wendt describes as central to his schema is the concept of identity which he describes as relatively stable, role specific under standings and expectations about self. Identities play the most important role, as they constitute and inform state interests; until a state realizes who it is, it cannot know what it wants. Wendt separates corporate identity (used to describe the inherently self-organizing nature of an actor) and social identities (developed through interaction with others). The latter are social labels, or labels one may associate with such things as an enemy, rival, or friend, but, contrary to corporate identities, are not intrinsic labels. These social labels are constructed through practice and intersubjective knowledge and are not independent.

The strongest contribution to this study made by Wendt is his description of three different ideal- type cultures of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian. These three cultures are various intersubjective perceptions of security and relations between states framed in an anarchic order.

Hobbesian Culture

In the Hobbesian Culture, states view each other as adversaries, the security of one is always accompanied by insecurity of the other. Interstate relations are seen to be marked by a war of all against all which intertwines the survival of a state with the demise of the others, the state aims at killing or enslaving one another, and there are no limits to violence. Trust becomes basically non-existent, and the states act on worst-case estimations of the intentions of the others.

Lockean Culture:

This culture is a center-ground version of anarchy in which states acknowledge each other's existence but only as rivals; not as existential enemies. There may be a threat of violence and competition, but there will be little or no cooperation between states, and security may be one of a zero sum game but not absolutely leading to outright war of annihilation.

Kantian Culture:

This is characterized by the most cooperative culture with states taken to be friends. Security is recognized as a collective good and states pledge non-aggression in solving disputes and mutual help against external aggression. Trust in this culture is very high and identities are so much intertwined that there is a collective feeling of security and shared destiny.

These cultures are not essentialized, but the results of continuous social interaction and education. States may travel among these cultures through a progress of socialization, in which repeated exposition, communication and absorption of new standards can alter their identities and interests. This change is an active process, instigated both by practices of agents and the structures that they collectively form.

Adaptation/Application

Although Wendt should be a systemic level theory by definition, its implications have been flexible enough to be applied to the study of regional security complexes, and, by far the most intricate of them, the Pakistan-India-China triangle is no exception. As a working definition of the cultures of anarchy in this analysis, we will surrender both of them in dyad as follows:

- **India-Pakistan Dyad:** It is hypothesized that this dynamic would have mainly China-era Hobbesian/Lockean traits. It can be evidenced by the fact that the relationship has always been springing out suspicions towards each other, their narratives of existential threat, constant military tensions and failure to build prolonged trust despite all peace efforts. The othering of national identities is also fortifying this hostile culture in which each state defines itself with regard to the other.
- **China-Pakistan Dyad:** It can be considered that this relationship has a predominantly Kantian conceptualization. That is demonstrated by the narration of all-weather friendship, the diplomatic and strategic backing, large-sized economic collaborations (e.g., CPEC), and mutual understanding of fundamental security interests. The high level of trust and sense of fates shared by Beijing and Islamabad positions imply a collective security view.
- **China-India Dyad:** This relationship may be broadly described as Lockean. Both the states acknowledge the sovereignty of each other and pursue extensive economic integration; however, beneath the surface, there exists strategic rivalry and lack of resolution of the two remaining bilateral border disputes as well as contrasting regional and global aspirations that ensure a healthy distrust. The collaboration is limited to specialized fields (e.g. BRICS, climate change) and is easily surpassed by strategic hedging or lack of mutual trust.

The important novelty of the research is as follows. The study will examine a notable phenomenon of identity reinforcement as one of the driving forces of triangular dynamic. Identity reinforcement can be defined as the process in which the ideational characteristics (identities, shared understandings, and culture of anarchy) of one dyadic relationship actively enhance or degrade the ideational characteristics of another dyadic relationship within the same security complex. In particular, this research argues that the Kantian bond between China and Pakistan (grounded in mutual trust and strategic alignment) inadvertently strengthens. These concepts are operationalized by examining the state elite discourse, state documents and authoritative media to find what we call explicit framings of the self and other as well as implicit framings of the self and other. We will seek how these are expressed in terms or phrases such as:

- **Hobbesian:** Demonization, existential threat, zero-sum security and justification of unlimited violence.
- **Lockean:** Belief in sovereignty but hostile competition, little trust, focus on relative gains and abundance of fundamental norms of co-existence.
- **Kantian:** Friendship, security of all of us, absence violence in conflicts, our fate, focus on absolute profit.

It is through the systematic study of these ideational flows that this paper will hopefully bring about a richer, constructivist development of an awareness of why the South Asian security triangle functions the way it does which goes beyond material explanations of the behavior in question to illuminating the potent part played by socially constructed identities and their inter-dyadic strengthening.

Hypotheses

- **H1 (*Dyadic Cultures*):** The Pakistan-India dyad is dominated by the Hobbesian/Lockean culture of anarchy whereas the China-Pakistan dyad is dominated by the Kantian culture and the China-India dyad by Lockean culture.
- **H2 (*Identity Reinforcement - China-Pakistan to India-Pakistan*):** The culture of anarchy set up between China and Pakistan by China-Pakistan mutual trust and strategic musical chairs resorts the Hobbesian/Lockean enmity between India and Pakistan.
- **H3 (*Identity Reinforcement - China-Pakistan to China-India*):** The Kantian culture of anarchy between china and Pakistan will intensify the Lockean competition between china and India especially when it comes to regional influence and the strategic placement.
- **H4 (*Overall Triangular Impact*):** The inter-dyadic reinforcement of identity between Pakistan-India-China triangle forms a strong ideational pattern that actively constrains the room of a deep transformation of the system of regional security as now farther to aided one based on cooperation.

Methodology

Research Design

The qualitative research design used in this article is a comparative case study research design due to the study of a case about the ideational dynamics in the case of the Pakistan-India-China security triangle. ¹ It is a qualitative, comparative design used to excellent constructivist purposes because it provides an opportunity to probe the intersubjective meanings, identities, and norms that have contributed to creating patterns of amity and enmity within this critical regional complex through time. The design can be utilized to explore the how and why of particular patterns of amity and enmity in this intriguing triangle. A qualitative design particularly lends itself to a comparative examination of the nature of these Wundtian cultures of anarchy not focused on quantifiable outcomes. ⁴

Data Collection

The method of data collection is broad based, including a variety of primary and secondary sources as the ideational territory of the Pakistan-India-China security triangle is captured. The objective is to collect rich qualitative data throwing light on the identity building process, formulation of norms and common knowledge (or non-knowledge) among the three states.

Results, Comment & Discussion

In this part of the article, the empirical evidence of the discourse analysis and process tracing is displayed and explained using both Alexander Wendt constructivist theory of anarchies and the notion of identity reinforcement. It shall begin by outlining the prevalent culture of anarchy in all of the three dyads Indian-Pakistan, Chinese-Pakistan and Chinese-Indian after which the findings on each of the dyads shall be

synthesized to show how inter-dyadic reinforcement of identity shapes the South Asian security triangle as a whole.

The India-Pakistan Dyad: A Hobbesian/Lockean Culture that Just Will Not Die

- **Presentation of Probable Results:** Observations of discourse analysis of official statements, elite speeches and authoritative Pakistani and Indian media reveal a deep-rooted mutual suspicion and a determinant aspect of framing the other, oscillating between Hobbesian enmity and Lockean rivalry. Foundation to these identity-creators, and key to the stagecraft rhetoric of Pakistani popular politics, is the historical narrative and discourse, especially the period of partition in 1947 and the Kashmir conflict. The Pakistani discourse tends to view India as a hegemonic force.

On the other hand, the Indian discourse routinely positions Pakistan as the "*Centre Of Terrorism*" and as a revisionist state who employs non-state actors as the instruments of foreign policy. Indian Ministry of External Affairs public statements repeatedly associated any dialogue with Pakistan with the end of the cross-border terrorism, they mistrust Pakistan intentions deeply. The abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir also taken place in 2019 was justified by India as an internal issue essential to integration and development, whereas Pakistan condemned it as being an act of provocation.

- **Implication Discussion:** The logic of the persistence of Hobbesian /Lockean culture in India-Pakistan dyad has larger consequences on the stability in the region. This implies that, tiny events can easily spiral out of control because of long-built-in suspicion and worst-case scenario formulation. Policy implications suggest that unilateral solutions (material: e.g., arms control; institutional: e.g., more dialogue forums) are not enough without a transformation of ideational constructs of the conflict. Peace-building must be aimed at the transformation of identities and intra-subjective conceptions of security among one another, which is rife with complexity and long-term. This correlates with constructivist positions holding that modification of material structures without modification of shared ideas will produce minimal outcomes. As well, the Ideational rigidity of this dyad causes the overall triangular dynamic to be heavily affected by it as will be seen.

China Pakistan Dyad: Kantian Or Institutionalized Kantianism

- **Presentation of Probable Results:** An examination of the China-Pakistan dyad shows it in sharp contrast with the India-Pakistan relationship and illustrating a highly institutionalized Kantian anarchy-related culture. The regular language of extreme trust, destined togetherness and unconditional assurance, with references to describing their relationship as an all-weather strategic cooperation partnership, are consistently used by both Beijing and Islamabad official establishments. The Chinese President Xi Jinping has referred to Pakistan as an iron brother, a connotation that requires no separation and a shared security. Pakistan leaders have time and again acknowledged how China has remained steadfast in its favor in most aspects thus displaying the time-tested friendship.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project within a Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) works as an effective material embodiment of this Kantian ideational connection. The two states do not present CPEC only as an economic project but also as a signifier of economic prosperity, shared growth, and a community of a shared future. Statements of commonality of purpose are often repeated on fundamental national interests such as China on Taiwan and Xinjiang or Pakistan on Kashmir. Military relations usually include joint maneuvers, and transfer of defense technology, which are uniformly shown to be enhancing peace and stability in the region, rather than a menace to third parties. Media in both countries tends to give a very affirmative picture of such cooperation with milestones lauded, and the volume of its strength emphasized in both countries.

- **Implication Discussion:** The implications of institutionalized Kantianism between China and Pakistan are far reaching; not just in the bilateral relations between the two states but also critically towards the South

Asian security triangle. This close association is a strategic strength and diplomatic advantage to Pakistan in its relations with India because it serves as a strong source of strategic depth and diplomatic leverage that influence its action towards India. Similarly, the relationship serves as a strategic strength and source of diplomatic leverage to China in its regional/global ambitions in part because it to the Chinese a strategic foothold into South Asia and a gateway into the Arabian Sea. But, as will be discussed, this strength of Kantian dyad has serious ideational implications to the other two relationships in the triangle, especially the strengthening of relations between two countries.

China-India Dyad: Playing in Lockean Statesman Land

- **Presentation of Probable Results:** The China India dyad is a mixed one of cooperation and competition, characteristic of a Lockean or anarchic culture. Despite mutual recognition of sovereignty, and substantial economic interdependence, both states have a strategic mistrust of the other and border infiltrations, and dissatisfaction over boundary disputes continue. Official Indian pronouncements commonly mention how India is beset by increasing Chinese belligerence in the Indian Ocean region and border intrusions, indicating strategic rivalry in India. The Galwan Valley incident in 2020 was a clear example of it.

The call to maintaining a peaceful coexistence, ensuring win-win cooperation and shying away hints of any containment efforts being associated with a Cold War state of mind, the Chinese discourse too would demonstrate a growing paranoia towards India, where its growing relationship with the United States (such as membership in the Quad) is characterized as a containment scenario. The Chinese press would regularly accuse India of such a Cold War projection. All this notwithstanding, the two nations also share shared platforms of multilateralism, such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which has found them negotiating on common ground in areas such as global governance and climate change. Economic relationships are still strong, and China remains one of India major trading partners despite frequent Indian complaints of a Chinese trade deficit.

- **Implication Discussion:** This Lockean culture on the China-India dyad means that the relationship is in a constant situation of strategic rivalry which has the risk of escalation especially on its contested border. Policy implications show that there is a need to establish solid crisis management mechanisms that must be coupled with serious dialogue to ensure the prevention of miscalculation even as long-term ideational shifts towards Kantianism is farfetched. The course of the relationship is likely to have a major impact in terms of the balance of power along with ideational forces within the South Asian security complex. The level of competition that exists between this dyad, including the Kantian relationship between China and Pakistan, is very important in influencing the triangular security environment, as will be explained in the following section.

Triangular Dynamics: The Intersecting Anarchies and Identity reinforcement

- **Presentation of Probable Results:** The three dyads analysis proves that there is a complex irony of different cultures of anarchy as played out in the South Asian security triangle. The dyad of India-Pakistan can mostly be called Hobbesian/Lockean, with mistrust deep and every single other is securitized. China-Pakistan dyad is surely strongly Kantian that is grounded on blind trust and stratagem congruence. The China India dyad is a Lockean relation which is characterized by strategic competitive relationship amid economic connections. The empirical data shows that these dyadic cultures are not lived in a vacuum, but indeed reinforce and shape the other. This is the main thesis of this article and the empirical data shows that indeed inter-dyadic identity reinforcements are alive.

More precisely, the robust Kantian alliance between China and Pakistan continues to strengthen the Hobbesian/Lockean enmity between India and Pakistan. As an example, India feels that the endless Chinese

diplomatic support of Pakistan on the Kashmir issue evident in statement joint statements and in public forums of the UN, is direct interference by China and endorsement of the Pakistani revisionist attitude in its Kantian relationship with China. ^33 Similarly, the Indian belief is that the growing dependence of Pakistan on China in the economic/military spheres especially with CPEC is the wish of Pakistan to change the balance of power in the region which further confirms Hobbesian/ Lockean character of India regarding Pakistan as the remorseless cousin.

Also, the Kantian culture between China and Pakistan compounds the Lockean rivalry amid China and India. The strengthening of the China-Pakistan strategic partnership especially military cooperation and the implications of CPEC on the regional connectivity are seen by India as a direct threat to its regional predominance and security interests, which further contributes to India hedging its strategies, namely, through its increasing involvement in the Quad, which is directly perceived by China as a form of containment. ^35 This action-reaction process is located in the ideational focus of the Lockean rivalry between China and India. As was also the case with the China-Pakistan relationship, the Chinese state media tends to directly conflate the Indian concerns about Chinese role in its neighborhood (e.g., Sri Lanka, Nepal) with its participation in the Quad.

- **Implication Discussion:** There are strong implications of the findings to the theoretical study of regional security and to the actual policy of South Asia. In theory, such research illustrates the absolute relevance of holistic constructivist staging of complicated security complexes. It goes beyond the confines of the purely dyadic analysis by empirically demonstrating the idea of inter-dyadic identity reinforcement proving that cultures of anarchy are not hermetically sealed but interrelate in drastic ways. This fills out Wendt framework by giving us a fine-grained picture of the way the ideational structures spread and entrench themselves across a variety of relationship of a single system. It implies that the culture of anarchy of a regional complex is a dynamic composite rather than an identical state.

conclusion

Summary of Key Outcomes

This article went into a constructivist analysis of identity strengthening of the South Asian security triangle composed of Pakistan, India and China, and answered the central research question of how the identities and shared understandings constructed intersubjectively by the three states everyday serve to reinforce and challenge each other and consequently form the emerging and evolving culture of anarchy within their triangular security complex. The hypotheses are supported strongly by the empirical findings that indicate a complex mixed culture of anarchy motivated by the inter-dyadic identity reinforcement.

The research observed that the dyad between India and Pakistan is mainly under a Hobbesian/Lockean anarchic culture, which is anchored on deep rooted mistrust, historical resentments and mutually securitization. The Lockean deterrence that exists between the two states imposes a check on its ideational structure, but overall it is hostile in nature, with each of the states repeatedly Othering of the Other, making it difficult to transform the ideational structure.

Straits and Future Studies

This research has its qualifications, even though they are little. Some of the very sensitive or classified information may also be difficult to reach out hence analysis based more on publicly availed discourse-that may be strategically rolled out- is the main tools applied. The analysis can also be subjective in analysis since analysis may be biased by the researcher-in this case-mitigated by being explicit in the methods applied. Also, isolating exactly the causal weight of ideational versus material factors of identity reinforcement is not to be confirmed easily and is a complex phenomenon. At that, the dynamics of international relations imply that the ideational

Such shortcomings, however, present attractive avenues of future research. To further evaluate the application

of the concept of inter-dyadic identity reinforcement, scholars may carry out a comparative analysis of other complex security triangles around the world. Future empirical research can focus on discussing the contribution of non-state actors, sub-national identities, and digital diplomacy in conditioning and reinforcing ideational structures within the South Asian triangle. It would also be interesting to have longitudinal research that would show how certain narratives evolved over time and how these narratives informed policy. And last, but not least, studies examining under what conditions ideational transformation may happen even under reinforced conditions, would provide invaluable information on peace-building work in this crucial part of the world.

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